# **Contextualising empowerment practice:** negotiating the path to becoming using participatory video processes

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# Abstract

Participation and empowerment are major drivers of social policy, but participatory projects often happen within contested territory. This research interrogates the assumed participation-empowerment link through the example of participatory video. Fieldwork unpacks the particular approach of Real Time, an established UK project provider. Disrupting representational framing, the emergent relational processes catalysed were explored in context, to address not whether participatory video can increase participants' influence, but how and in what circumstances. This thesis therefore builds more nuanced understanding of empowerment practice as the negotiated (rhizomic) pathway between social possibility and limitation.

Following Deleuze, a *becoming* ontology underpinned study of project actors' experiences of the evolving group processes that occurred. An action research design incorporated both collaborative sense-making and disruptive gaze. Analysis draws on interpersonal and observational data gathered purposively from multiple perspectives in 11 Real Time projects between 2006 and 2008. Five were youth projects and six with adults, two were women-only and one men-only, two with learning-disabled adults and four aimed at minority-ethnic participants.

Participatory video as facilitated empowerment practice led to new social *becoming* by opening conducive social spaces, mediating interactions, catalysing group action and re-positioning participants. Videoing as performance context had a structuring and intensifying function, but there were parallel risks such as inappropriate exposure when internal and external dialogical space was confused. A rhizomic map of Real Time's non-linear practice territory identifies eight key practice balances, and incorporates process possibilities, linked tensions, and enabling and hindering factors at four main sequential stages. Communicative action through iteratively progressing video activities unfolded through predictable transitions to generate a diversifying progression from micro to mezzo level when supported. This thesis thus shows how participatory video is constituted afresh in each new context, with the universal and particular in ongoing dynamic interchange during the emergent empowerment journey.

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# **Introduction- Questioning the participation-empowerment link:** rationale, contextual background and overview

The notions of participation and empowerment are major drivers of policy and practice worldwide. Community, health and development practitioners, in both the North and the South, have increasingly utilised a range of participatory methods to address social disadvantage. The assumption is that active involvement in identifying their own needs leads to increased agency and influence for marginalised communities. In reverse, becoming empowered is supposed to enable participation in action to instigate individual, group or community level improvements. This research interrogates the circular logic of the implicit participation-empowerment link.

In reality, the social world is paradoxical. Participatory projects are often situated within contested territory between different social interests. Participation discourse does highlight the capacity of less powerfully positioned participants to forge their own solutions to social problems, but there is little consideration of what it actually leads to for them. Such *bottom-up* intervention is contradictory, necessitating a process of negotiation between various project actors (those with active roles). Generally initiated from above, it can falter due to structural power imbalances and local relational dynamics that maintain inequalities. This thesis answers the calls within social psychology for more nuanced practice understanding.

My interest in participation stems from a background as a practitioner. Through experience spanning more than twenty-five years in many social contexts, I became increasingly aware of the mismatch between the motivating ideals and practice actuality. My starting assumption, as an insider-researcher, was that the possibilities and limitations of agency, action and consequences through empowerment practice are context-specific, but that contextual aspects are insufficiently understood. My study addressed not whether empowerment practice *can* work, but *how* and in *what circumstances.* The following questions provided direction:

| Key research questions |
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| • **What does empowerment mean in particular contexts?** (through the exemplar of participatory video practice)<br>• **What are the contextualised stages of participatory video as an empowerment process?**<br>• **What are the contributory factors that enable and hinder the emergence of participant empowerment?** |

In this thesis, I explore empowerment as a practice of interaction between practitioners, participants and the outside world. I consider empowerment practice an emergent dynamic process that intends to build participants' social power. The focus of the first question is what empowerment practice does in reality rather than abstraction, particularly for participants. The aim is to build nuanced praxis that incorporates the capacity of dominant groups to maintain control and for marginalised communities to resist. One of the predominate tasks was thus to unpack empowerment practice in situ, which necessarily needed to be via empirical study of a specific participatory intervention.

My focus is the phenomena of participatory video practice. As one of the participatory methodologies (e.g. Ramella and Olmos 2005, Shaw 2007) it provides a microcosm of participation-empowerment intervention complexity. Participatory video generally involves group video making in collaboration with a facilitator, but it is not a singular phenomenon. My second research question directs study not of universals, but of process manifestation in actual project context. I studied one particular approach in order to develop in-depth insight. In contrast to the usual representational framing, I am not interested in participatory video practice as a functional method of video production, but as a dynamic process with an essentially relational quality. My concern is in the micro-level (face-to-face) interactions as projects progress. I therefore chose the specific case of Real Time, an established UK project provider, specialising in facilitating social processes with video. Real Time's approach became my unit of analysis.

Real Time works collaboratively with disadvantaged groups to open up spaces *in-between* top-down and bottom-up where participants' social influence can emerge if conditions are favourable. The assumption in practitioner discourse is that video *can* provide a practical link between increasing confidence and capacity, group building, critical development and group action towards social benefit. However, as in empowerment literature generally, there is an absence of particular knowledge about *how* project actors create the *conditions* for empowerment through project processes. This echoes interrogation of *how* empowerment occurs through action research (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). The final research question guided analysis of the factors that help and hinder negotiation between the possibilities and limitations of participatory video in the real-world context.

## A - Professional and academic rationale

My involvement in participatory practice began using video with young people on a community arts project in 1983. I was interested in video's potential as a social catalyst, because participants responded enthusiastically and it seemed to accelerate group processes. In 1984, I co-founded Real Time, a NGO (non-government organisation) and educational charity, and since then I have used video as a tool on more than 200 group projects in a diverse variety of community settings. In addition, I regularly train other professionals in participatory video practice in the UK and overseas. As such, I am an involved observer, motivated by my own experiences to interrogate the participatory video phenomena more critically.

My initial standpoint is that participatory video is not a magic bullet despite many overtly positive claims. It is only a tool, like a piece of chalk, which can be used well or badly. There are often practical tensions applying the principles when working between different social agendas. Moreover, the gap between promise and actuality has become particularly acute in the recent UK political context. Government rhetoric has appropriated 'feel-good' concepts such as participation and empowerment, and projects instigated top-down as a quick fix are becoming the norm. I now illustrate the issues with a practice vignette:

**Conflicting agendas, tokenistic processes and compromised facilitators**

*Canley Green is a UK council estate, with typical problems such as unemployment, inadequate facilities, and minimal social infrastructure. The local council ran a series of public meetings to initiate consultation on area regeneration. These only attracted active residents, so Real Time was commissioned to involve young people using video. Practitioners attracted a core group by running video sessions both at the youth club and on the streets. Then they facilitated the group in making a video about their views.*

*The broad aim agreed was for young people to communicate their issues and needs. However, the council officer responsible for project financing disliked the resulting video. Participants expressed opinions that did not match departmental priorities. He had, it transpired, expected a promotional video providing evidence of community support for existing plans.*

**Shaw 2007:188**

Of course, if council officers truly want young people to express themselves, what is said cannot be controlled. However, this example illustrates that project stakeholders (those with an interest) in partnerships may have conflicting motivations due to their positioning (their perspective on project purpose). Participation in this case was clearly

instigated *top-down* and intended to support the council agenda. It is easy to see how this could lead to tokenistic processes, whether in conscious manipulation or naive self-deception. This project also demonstrated the difficulties of working *in-between*. Real Time accepted council funding to enable participants' *bottom-up* expression. However, the funding context positioned practitioners impossibly. The officer asked them to re-edit to fulfil departmental priorities. If they did so, they would be complicit in a shallow façade. If they did not, they risked losing income. Practitioners inspired by ideals are thus easily compromised.

Finally, what did this offer participants? Initially proud of their production, the youth group ended up feeling that they had failed in some unspecified way. Even if views are seriously considered, voicing opinion is not the same as social improvement as a result, yet the council could still say that young people were consulted. Lip-service involvement is at best patronising, and at worst coercive, with participants potentially becoming puppets in local government propaganda.

Like many others, I have been caught up in the promise of participation. The Canley Green project highlights issues in using video, neither anticipated nor tackled adequately in current writing. Grey literature, such as project reports, articles in practitioner journals and policy documents contain much practitioner speculation that video *can* be a powerful catalyst. However, these are mostly anecdotal and uncritical accounts written for project promotion, which reflects an obvious need to keep grants flowing. Academic literature on participatory video is scanty. There are some case histories in community and development literature (e.g. Braden and Huong 1998, Braden and Mayo 1999, Dagron 2001, Dudley 2003, Gomez 2003, Guidi 2003 and Nair and White 2003). There are also field guides that describe generalised activities and perceived benefits (e.g. Lunch and Lunch 2006, Shaw and Robertson 1997). This largely *celebratory* (Low, Brushwood Rose, Salvio and Palacios 2010) literature results in a discourse of *perceived possibility*. Building knowledge of participatory practices such as participatory video, which reflect the ambiguities and contradictions, necessitates deeper critical thinking. To this end, I first consulted the wider participation and empowerment literature to shed light on the practice problems I had encountered.

**B - Disrupting the empowerment narrative:** Beyond generalised potential

Three areas of literature are particularly relevant in locating this study within the political and cultural context of UK funded project work: Firstly, that related to the historical development of community arts practice and the current use of digital media as social tools. Secondly, historical and current discourse related to empowerment-focused intervention in UK community contexts (although there is overlap I did not focus on overseas development literature in this context). Finally, the literature on communication media, which is not as central due to the focus on video output rather than micro-social processes. Rather than finding easy answers, my reading highlighted theoretical issues with the notion of participation, which echoed the practice problems.

In chapter 1, I situate participatory video practice in the historical and current UK context of funded project intervention with marginalised communities. Drawing on the parallel development of community work, community arts and alternative media, I problematise participation through the exemplar of UK participatory video.

The rhetoric of *voice for the voiceless* inspires many donors, support workers, and practitioner-researchers who want to challenge social injustice. The assumption is that video is a good tool because it has the *potential* to empower participants to communicate with outside others. However, *including the excluded* is top-down discourse that has led practically to appropriation and dilution. In actuality, I show that participation is a conceptual cul-de-sac that functions to close down possibilities, with statutory decision-makers far less likely to give up control than partnership rhetoric implies.

Furthermore, I propose that the value of video lies in the possibility it creates for different social relationships to emerge, and not in the final video recordings. In chapter one, I clarify my working perspective on empowerment practice as an evolving inter-subjective process of social learning. I ground key features of Real Time's approach in relationship to the concepts of *power-over*, *power-to* and *power-with* (Starhawk 1987). To complete chapter one, I also consider social psychological literature on the use of photography (e.g. Wang, Morrell-Samuels et al 2004, Vaughn 2011) and video (e.g. Ramella and De La Cruz 2000, Humphreys, Lorac and Ramella 2001, Nolas 2007) as emergent processes. In section 1.6, I thus establish significant gaps in knowledge on the practice specifics, the contextual conditions that make participatory video appropriate or inappropriate, and how it progresses in particular settings. This justifies

my empirical focus on facilitation practice, the multiple perspectives on project processes, and the supporting and hindering contextual factors. This is where my contribution lies.

As I think context so central to understanding empowerment practice, I now introduce Real Time to locate fieldwork.

**C - The fieldwork context:** rationale for studying Real Time's approach

There is a burgeoning community of practice (Wenger 1998) connected with participatory video. Practitioners share an interest in video's social application, and engage in professional exchange of tacit knowledge (e.g. the UK PV-network – see section 1.1.4). However, within the broad family, there are many approaches. Plurality is strength in an emerging field (Balit 2003), and prematurely encapsulating definitions is a risk, when fluidity may be important (Dagron 2001:5-35). I do not think there is one right way to use video to support group processes, but I decided early on that in-depth exploration of one particular practice provided greater insight potential, than a shallower contrasting of different methods. Choosing Real Time's approach was a somewhat pragmatic decision due to my commitment to it. Nevertheless, my decision is justified for a number of reasons:

Real Time's main activity is running group-based participatory video projects. The approach typifies empowerment-focused arts and media practice in the UK, which makes it a good laboratory to explore the essential issues. Real Time prioritises those with limited opportunities due to physical, attitudinal, social or economic factors. Projects take place with groups such as those with physical or learning disabilities, refugees, homeless and unemployed people, and women, young, elderly, black and minority ethnic people from marginalised communities. Real Time averages 20 projects a year, and so this study builds on tacit practice knowledge developed in many different contexts.

Real Time is commissioned to support areas of social policy such as citizen participation, community consultation, community building, health and literacy development and self-advocacy. Most income is generated from project funding, which is the greatest organisational strain. Practitioners are therefore well placed to contribute understanding of the inherent difficulties in working between contextual interests. As an organisation with longevity, Real Time (founded in 1984) provides fertile ground to

mine. The two directors and three trustees have long-standing involvement, and other freelance practitioners have each worked in many settings. There is considerable practical knowledge of both project success and failure to draw on. This research builds on the extensive implicit knowledge provided in the Real Time context to unpack the reality of participation.

**D - Empowerment as an emergent social process:** Towards a conceptual framework

Interpersonal relations within everyday experience have historically provided direction for social psychology, with Mead (1934) viewing inter-subjective exchange as a pre-cursor to self-emergence. Social interaction stimulates reflection, and develops people's capacity to act, thus creating the possibility of social action (Cohen and Mullender 2006). Within community social psychology, empowerment is a key concept (Rappaport 1987, Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000) in theorising participatory interventions that aim to transform damaging social dynamics. Marginalisation is due to inequalities of power, and the social psychological concern is with the effect on people, and whether participation can address it.

In chapter 2, I present a conceptual framework for Real Time's empowerment through participatory video. In section 2.2.1, I firstly model practice as a staged process with three main stages and nine building blocks. I relate these stages to classical group process theory (e.g. Tuckman 1965, Hersey and Blanchard 1977). In section 2.3, I then utilise the concepts of public spheres and communicative action (e.g. Habermas 1984, Fraser 1990), and conscientisation (e.g. Freire 1972, 1974) to provide a basis for studying *how* empowerment happens inter-subjectively at the micro-level (Foucault 1980). This theoretically grounds the social psychological understanding that social spaces, dialogue and critical thinking (e.g. Campbell and Cornish 2010, Vaughn 2011) are significant to catalysing enabling relational contexts. However, social change processes are only likely to be sustainable or more widely effective through a combination of top-down as well as bottom-up effort (Campbell 2004:336). I also use performativity (e.g. Austin 1975, Butler 1990) to frame the function actually performed by communicative action using video in the wider setting. This brings to the fore the need to build understanding of the contextual conditions (Campbell and Cornish 2010) in which group action contributes to shifting social dynamics productively.

In section 2.4, I apply anecdotal theorising (Gallop 2002) to disrupt practitioners' narratives of potential using Real Time practice examples (collected ethnographically during the pilot phase). I find that inter-subjective theory does not go far enough. Although empowerment points to the possibility of change through interaction (Foucault 1977, 1980), if the doer is only realised inter-subjectively, the subjective perspective disappears. In section 2.5, I identify that Real Time's relational processes are the means servicing another social end. I conceptualise what such practice leads to for participants using the notion of '*becoming'* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), which reflects a reality in ongoing flux, and the practitioner intention to generate novel social possibilities. *Becoming* underpins my productive application of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking to analyse Real Time's emergent processes in complex social contexts.

**E - Studying practice:** from knowledge gap to perceiving process complexity through rhizomic thinking

Research into the social value of community arts and media (e.g. Kay 2000, Newman, Curtis and Stephens 2003, Carey and Sutton 2004) suggests participant satisfaction, but there are knowledge gaps engendered by the macro-theoretical orientation. Gains, such as increased confidence, capacity and self-esteem, are perceived by *particular* individuals (e.g. Matarasso 1998, Jermyn 2001 Foster-Fishman et al 2005). *Some* experience becoming experts in their own lives, through mediated self-advocacy, as empowering *(*Braden and Mayo 1999, Foster-Fishman et al 2005). Case studies also show that projects *can* encourage teamwork, develop cross-cultural understanding, and build social networks (e.g. Jones 1988, South 2004, Casteldon et al 2008). Although this literature points to *potential* benefit for particular individuals and group contexts, this is not a forgone conclusion. Knowledge is needed about how and why projects succeed.

Whilst possible to evaluate micro-level gains, it is much harder to gauge social benefit that transcends the immediate project context. The link between the micro and macro levels of social reality is a long-standing practical issue. Do individuals create society, or are they a product of social structure? Social theorists approach the problem by considering an intermediate mezzo level (e.g. Giddens 1984). However, research tackling social exclusion through arts intervention to (e.g. Williams 1997, Kay 2000, and Jermyn 2001), does not elucidate how processes open out from the group to wider

social effect. Digital media are presumed helpful because they operate across boundaries between individual and group (e.g. Shaw and Robertson 1997), between the group and the wider social world (e.g. Purcell 2007), and by combining showing with telling (Humphreys and Lorac 2002). Yet, the idealised framing encompassed by the universal empowerment narrative results in one-size fits all practice conceptualisations, blind to the difficulties.

My epistemological challenge was in researching complex non-linear processes, with multiple stakeholders and uncertain outcomes. By viewing practice knowledge as context independent (Hosking and Morley 1991), previous practice study has assumed that planned interventions progress linearly from policy needs, through practice implementation to the evaluation of planned outcomes (Long and Van de Ploeg 1989). However, the current social milieu is characterised by enormous social complexity, and the external gaze does not assist in understanding how to negotiate processes from within territories of multiple social influences. In section 3.1.1, I draw on Humphreys and Jones (2006) and Steinberg (2007a) to justify a rhizomic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) gaze on practice.

If social power results from micro-level interactions (Foucault 1980, 1984), empowerment is a process of changing relational dynamics. In reality, there is a continuum of possible levels between the micro and macro, and links can emerge and dissolve between diverse actors in many interconnected and unpredicted ways (DeLanda 2006:4-17). I apply the concepts of *repetition* and *difference* (Deleuze 2004) in conceiving Real Time's project interactions as re-constituted afresh in each new project space through the relationships involved. I thus build on Humphreys and Brézillion (2002) and Nolas (2007) in taking an actor's perspective and focussing on the dynamic processes between participants, practitioners and outside agencies, as performances that evolve *becoming* or social emergence in context (Hosking and Morley 1991).

**F - Corpus construction:** cycles of sense-making

I phased my action research design, which developed from practitioner initiated reflective practice to incorporate *both* collaborative multi-perspective sense-making *and* disruptive rhizomic analysis (Steinberg 2007b), which I present in full in chapter 3. The main task was to move beyond Real Time's practice abstractions, to understand the

challenges of the participatory video practice territory (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) - warts and all. Purposive corpus construction had three predominant thrusts: Firstly, I aimed to ensure informant diversity; secondly, to gather practitioners' honest reflections through specific critical incidents; and thirdly to explore a range of project settings to enable context-specific insight.

As Real Time's co-founder, I am obviously not a detached observer. In section 3.2, I draw on Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) to justify increasingly collaborative data collection, and the active utilisation of my practitioner voice (Holstein and Gubrium 2004) as a resource to sensitise research, and unearth praxis-actuality disjunction (Schon 1987) between perspectives (Hosking and Morley 1991). In recognition of my double involvement, section 3.2.5 describes how I applied specific techniques (e.g. Moon 2002, Gibbs 1988) to increase critical distance.

Overall, eleven different projects were selected purposely, as covered in section 3.3. There were five projects with young people and six with adults. Two adult projects were women only and one men-only. There were two projects with people with learning disabilities, and four aimed at BME (black and minority-ethnic) participants (others were predominately, although not exclusively, white). I collected data through interpersonal communication (interviews, dialogues, focus groups, and videoed testimonies) and participant-observation/ethnography (participant and practitioner research diaries, observation sheets and researcher diaries). The main data corpus consists of 29 interviews, 7 focus groups, 5 videoed evaluations, 52 diary entries, 8 session plans and 4 videoed records with 40 participants, 5 practitioners and 8 other project informants

My unit of analysis is the particular manifestations of Real Time's participatory video practice in context. I describe in section 3.5 my approach to analysis, which looked at experiences across the different project settings, rather than examining each particular project separately, as would be done in a multiple case study design.

**G - Analytical synthesis:** overview of the process and findings

My main purpose was to find out how Real Time's empowerment process works, and in what circumstances. In addressing this question, an unexpected consequence is my contribution to knowledge about how to study emergent processes. This is applicable to understanding other non-linear practices. Overall, I frame participatory video

productively as a relational process that treads a negotiated (rhizomic) pathway between possibility and limitation.

In chapter 4, I provide a bridge between the theoretical grounding and methodology, and the empirical discussions of chapters 5 to 9. In the introduction to Chapter 4, I discuss the concepts of difference-producing repetition (Deleuze 2004) and multiplicity (DeLanda 2002, Nunes 2010) and, as Chapter 4 evolves, I unpack them further. This thesis thus functions as a transparent guide to Deleuze and Guattari's thinking, because I unfold the ideas through example, in order to maintain contextual particularity and practice complexity as my empirical synthesis progresses. Nevertheless, I now draw on Manuel DeLanda's (2002:4-41) contribution in making the roots of Deleuze's ontology more explicit as a precursor and overview.

Some ontological stances tolerate that nothing exists beyond mental constructs, whether transcendent entities (Plato in Melling 2008) or social representations (Berger and Luckman 1966). Others allow everyday objects, but question whether causal relations or unobservable entities exist. By comparison, Deleuze believed both the observable and unobservable have a reality beyond human perception. However, Deleuze did not contend that *transcendent essences* (core stable characteristics) exist. He proposed that ongoing distinctiveness is conserved in the *dynamic processes* of generation, which is sometimes observable (e.g. matter and energy) and sometimes *virtual* (DeLanda 2002:4-6). Morphogenesis is thus the inherently dynamic and productive reality. Deleuze perceived that a process repeated is positively driven by *intensive differences* (DeLanda 2002:6) or *difference-in-itself* (Deleuze 2004:36) to create novel manifestations in any new environment. He then introduced the idea of *multiplicity,* as a territory of possibilities, to ensure that process similarities are not conceived as process *essences* (DeLanda 2002:10). A process repeated is *to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular… repetition at the level of external conduct (*Delueze 2004:1-2*).* I concluded that what was constant and repeated in Real Time's practice was the way of relating, backed up by video usage. Practice then manifested differently in each setting because of contextual differences and project actor responses, which I illustrate in empirical chapters 4-9.

The *multiplicity* metaphor takes inspiration from features of mathematical *manifolds,* which are *spaces of possible states* (DeLanda 2002:13)[1]. Firstly, they have a number of dimensions, and secondly, extrinsic higher dimensions (transcendent essences) are not necessary to understand them. In sections 4.4, I define four sequential dimensions (territories) within Real Time's practice, which I explore separately through chapters 5-8, without needing to visualise how they combine. Envisioning non-linear processes as trajectories in a space of possibilities also allowed mathematicians to study *long-term tendencies* or s*ingularities*[2] of complex systems. In section 4.4.1, I synthesise eight process possibilities and parallel tensions that emerged from analysing project actors' experiences of the four territories. I conclude that these are the singularities or attractors of Real Time's non-linear processes. The tensions explicate the balance that must be negotiated (in relation to contextual influences) to remain in the *basin of attraction*. In section 4.4.2, I synthesise eight global themes that encompass these practice balances. Then in section 4.4.3 and 4.5, I present eight rhizomic frameworks for Real Time's practice, each incorporating two process possibilities, parallel tensions and enabling and hindering factors for each main stage of practice.

I structure empirical chapters 5-8 according to the four presented practice territories (or stages). Chapter 5 focuses on opening new group environments conducive to the empowerment purpose, Chapter 6 on group building from internal dialogue to group agency and purpose, Chapter 7 on collaborative production action towards deeper contextual knowledge, and Chapter 8 on widening participants' social influence and re-positioning them externally through videoing activities. In each chapter, I firstly define the main purpose and consequences experienced by participants. I then expound the emergent process possibilities (2 in each chapter) and constraints for that stage. Following this, I explore a relevant sub-section of the data corpus to answer the

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[1] The idea of *multiplicities* is based on Gauss's differential calculus, which had enabled study of the surface of three dimensional space in two dimensions. Audaciously, Rieman extended the idea to explore abstract N-dimensional curved space, through intrinsic features, without recourse to the extrinsic embedding (N+1 dimensional) space. (DeLanda 2002:12).

[2] S*ingularities* act as attractors, or steady states, which the trajectories of non-linear systems tend towards, as long as they are in a *basin of attraction* (DeLanda 2002:14-15). Singularities structure the possibilities of space, even though a dynamic trajectory does not follow exactly the same path twice.

question of what helps and what hinders negotiation to achieve the possibilities against the backdrop of contextual tensions. This populates the thematic map constructed in chapter 4, with illustrations of particular manifestations.

**H - Thesis contribution:** practice between influences towards *becoming*

This thesis results in four key insights that contribute to wider theory, practice and policy, which I discuss fully in Chapter 10. I contribute to theoretical understanding of the value and place of participatory video practice by re-framing it as an emergent relational process towards social *becoming*, rather than a participatory method towards representational empowerment. I achieve this through analysis of what Real Time's projects led to for participants as summarised in Chapter 4. In chapters 5-8, I demonstrate specifically how participatory video as contextualised empowerment practice resulted in participant *becoming* at the individual, group and mezzo level. I also show how Real Time's approach was essentially relational, with video activities performing an inter-subjective driving, structuring and intensifying function.

I contribute to social psychological understanding of empowerment practices as staged emergent processes. Social psychological literature has identified theoretical dimensions underpinning empowerment (e.g. Campbell and Jovchelovitch 2000, Campbell and Cornish 2010) and participatory video (e.g. Humphreys and Lorac 2002), but limited specific detail about how the elements evolve in context. In multiplicities, process possibilities tend to unfold progressively in recurrent sequences following symmetry-breaking transitions at phase thresholds. In Chapter 9, I show how that occurred during Real Time's non-linear processes. This in *itself* generated a diversification of consequences according to context. I thus illustrate how such video usage can provide a link between micro and mezzo-level social interaction, as long as the contextual influences are helpfully tipped.

I also contribute to participatory praxis by disrupting the dichotomy between the discourses of inspiration and of failure (section 1.3). The narrative of participation that I advance is one of cultural intervention *between* social influences to change the status quo of usual relational dynamics. In chapters 4-8, I illustrate how Real Time's project work emerged in the real-life territories of positioned agendas and competing motivations. Consequently, I propose participatory video, and, by extension,

contextualised empowerment practices, are more productively perceived as the negotiated (rhizomic) pathway between social possibilities and limitation.

This framing is generative as it encompasses the reality that participatory video in the Real Time context often happened on the terms of e*xternal others*. The explicit aim was video making to an outside agenda, whilst the implicit purpose was to create space for new social dynamics to emerge. In chapter 6, I draw on de Certeau (1984, Nolas 2007) to distinguish between methodological strategies, and the tactics or tacit *way* of interactions. This explains why empowerment processes follow a convoluted route negotiated amongst project actors' interests, and better understood from a Deleuzian perspective.

My interest began in the micro-level and inner workings of participatory video as a relational practice. I unpack parallel possibilities and risks, which arose through practical tensions such as between internal and external dialogue, or between dialogic and critical intent. These were more acute where dynamics were less controllable in more heterogeneous forums. I also identified inadequate partnership understanding leading to a lack of support for ongoing processes, and inadequate commitment from external actors. The tensions between opposing practice influences that I explicate do not define particular positions of arboreal division towards universal understanding. Rather, in incorporating enabling and hindering factors (relational, functional and contextual), the rhizomic maps presented following section 4.5 help visualisation of what is important and most relevant to operating in the participatory video continuum.

Finally, in Chapter 10, I summarise the thesis findings and achievements and the implications for theory, practice and policy. Overall, the praxis synthesised in this thesis functions to ground nuanced empowerment actuality more critically. I show *how* the participatory video practice continuum operates with both universal and particular in evolving interchange during participants' empowerment journey. The encompassed practice knowledge provides a contextualised guide to future project collaborations, as well as demonstrating the practical contribution of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking in understanding socially complex practices.

# Chapter 1

# Chapter 1 **Positioned between social agendas:** problematising participatory video in the UK context

> *Enlightenment is both necessary and impossible: necessary because humanity would otherwise continue hurtling towards self-destruction and unfreedom, and impossible because enlightenment can only be attained through rational human activity, and yet rationality is itself the origin of the problem.*
>
> **Adorno and Horkheimer see Finlayson 2005:8**

In addressing the question of how new media can be harnessed to serve an empowerment purpose, this research is located within the paradoxes of late modernity. Whether the current age is perceived as a new state post modernity (Lyotard 1984), or a later high (Giddens 1991a), or liquid (Bauman 2006) manifestation, the challenge is in countering the cultural industries' (Adorno 2001) manipulation of desire so that freedom becomes the opportunity to consume (Bauman 1998). The enlightenment aim to liberate humanity from tradition and superstition, through rational thought and scientific progress, was exposed by critical theorists in the Frankfurt school. Horkheimer and Adorno argued starkly that, rather than ending poverty and injustice, reason had imprisoned people and bred misery (Finlayson 2005:6-8). The failure of the grand narratives has left a vacuum in which, Fukuyama (1992) contends, a market ideology defuses any feasible alternatives. However, complete negativity is not useful, as it provides no way forward. The point of empiricism is not to search for universals, but to locate conditions that engender new possibilities (Whitehead in Deleuze and Parnet 2006: vii).

Habermas recognised the pragmatic need to move beyond self-defeating pessimism, to encompass both ideal and reality - to not only diagnose societal problems, but also to guide progress towards a better future (Finlayson 2005:4). He provides a clear account of how the social pathologies of disintegration, alienation, and demoralisation arise through capitalism (Habermas 1975:20-4). However, he also preserves the enlightenment commitment to liberty, equality and solidarity, as ideals worth working towards. Despite being utopian, and thus never wholly attainable, they provide a direction (Pensky 2011:17). The challenge is in how marginalised people find ways forward, within a system that constrains what can be conceived.

Power, as a fundamental process, is *the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s)* (Castells 2009:10). One way to effect social power is through constructing discourses that provide meaning to frame and steer action. In *Discipline and Punishment*, Foucault (1977) showed how the enlightenment motivated (supposedly more humane) form of discipline is actually more effective than domination by force (Foucault 1977:82). He clarified how disciplinary techniques - such as hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination - expanded from prisons to other institutions like schools, hospitals and factories. As well as explaining how state power is maintained through interaction (Foucault 1977:150-200), this insight resources a counter agenda. If power is sustained relationally at the micro level, there is always the potential to change the status quo of usual dynamics, as it is constituted inter-subjectively between social actors (Hook 2010).

New media seem to offer promise as a means of cultural resistance, in that they provide a way for oppressed communities to construct and communicate their own stories and agendas. In reality, such communication dynamics are particularly nuanced. There is a possibility of disrupting power, but the normative pressure to acquiesce and conform counters this. In the constantly shifting landscape of liquid modernity, where the only constant is change (Bauman 2006), it is hard to pin down real interests. The enlightenment hope is that human intervention can improve the world (Giddens 1998). Participatory video is situated within the practical contradictions between new technology's potential to transform social dynamics, and the opposing limitations. As such, my research is located at the boundary of the ongoing interchange between efforts towards collective agency and the adaptive responses that maintain established structures.

This chapter situates the specific case of participatory practice that my thesis explores. After describing the literature search methods in section 1.1, I contextualise participatory arts and media in the historical and current UK context of funded project intervention in section 1.2. Next, in section 1.3, I problematise participation in this UK setting through the example of participatory video, which has a parallel history. In section 1.4, I explore the main theoretical and practical issues when intervening between social interests, as highlighted in the literature. This contextualises the supplementary questions my thesis addresses in the participatory video context. These additional issues, and my consequent empirical focus, are summarised in table 1.1

below, as a precursor to the discussions in this chapter. In section 1.5, I clarify my working perspective on empowerment practice as an emergent inter-subjective process with social purpose.  I also introduce the key features of Real Time's approach as participatory video exemplar (section 1.5.2) and contextualise the staged processes involved in relationship to an empowerment agenda (section 1.5.3).  Finally, in section 1.6, I discuss social psychological literature on the use of digital media to catalyse iterative unfolding social processes to clarify the contextual knowledge gap that fieldwork addresses.

**Table 1-1 Questioning the participation-empowerment link:** supplementary questions and empirical focus

| Theoretical questions highlighted by literature | Consequent empirical focus |
|---|---|
| **What does empowerment mean in particular contexts?** (through the exemplar of participatory video practice) | |
| • What kinds of changes are realistic through participatory video interventions?<br>• What do participants value in project interactions, and where does it lead? | **PRACTICE OF FACILITATION -** What is done and why?<br>**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES** – e.g. Participants, practitioners, other project informants |
| • How does intervention open spaces in-between where participants' social influence can surface?<br>• Is it possible to frame participatory video as empowerment practice more appropriately? | **CONTEXT** – Explore tensions, contradictions and ambiguities in actual practice - look for critical incidents, surprises and disjunctions between theory and reality |
| **What are the contextualised stages of empowerment?** | |
| • How does empowerment as an emergent process reduce capture of project processes?<br>• How can participatory video create inclusive frameworks and dynamics, which engage participants in negotiating their own identities, agendas and actions | **EMPOWERMENT AS PROCESS** and how video supports or limits different stages<br>**RELATIONAL ASPECTS OF PRACTICE** – Facilitators' approach, group dynamics, relational interactions, techniques and exercises<br>**DIFFERENT MEANINGS ASCRIBED TO PROCESS** – e.g. Participants, practitioners, other project informants |
| • How can empowerment practice increase capacity for group agency and collective action? | |
| • How are opportunities created for participants to exercise agency?<br>• How can Real Time's approach provide the link between critical reflection, participant-authored stories and social benefit? | |
| **What are the contributory factors that enable and hinder the emergence of participant empowerment?** | |
| • What are the characteristics (of contexts, partnerships, relationships, actions and tools) that enable or hinder circumstances conducive to the empowerment purpose<br>• What are the challenges in applying participatory video in context? | **HELPFUL AND HINDERING FACTORS** – e.g. External contexts and partnerships, functional and relational practice and use of video |

## 1.1 Summary of the literature search

In this chapter, I draw on existing participatory video and community arts and media literature. I also refer to current and historical discourse on the notions of participation and empowerment in community, health and development literature. An initial indicative search, alongside my practice reflection, resulted in four sets of key words (as detailed in table 1.2 below), which I used to structure the main search. Alternatives for the key words (see appendix 1) guided a comprehensive search, and development of understanding of the discourses and concepts in the fields of work in which participatory video is applied.

**Table 1-2 Key words - literature search**

| 1 - Topic | 2 - Tool | 3 - Purpose | 4 – Fields of application |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Participatory video<br>• Community video | • Video<br>• Digital media | • Empowerment<br>• Participation | • Community/social work<br>• Community /participatory arts and media<br>• Health and development |

### 1.1.1 A cross discipline approach

Although there are many organisations using media in community development both nationally and internationally, there is no distinct participatory video sector. The term participatory video encompasses a range of approaches with differing motivations. The practice is a minority endeavour in a number of related disciplines, with practitioners relatively isolated within these disparate fields, which has contributed to the marginalisation of practice. Finally, the discourses within these fields are many-sided and use overlapping concepts. This has resulted in the need to take a cross-discipline approach. In consequence, I have drawn on published material from the perspectives of social psychology, community development, community arts and media, participatory action research, development communication, anthropology, adult education and communication studies.

### 1.1.2 Limits of the search

The historical development of participatory video practice is relevant to its current usage, so I searched back to the first reports of film and video's usage as a social tool from the early 60s onwards. Pragmatically I searched for English language literature only, which created a reliance on translations of other work (particularly South American). However, this decision was justified, as the focus of my enquiry is the use of video in the UK context, and its development as a funded project intervention in the UK.

### 1.1.3 Search tools

I searched for books using the LSE OPAC (on line public access catalogue) as well as other national library catalogues (using COPAC), the British Library (using OPAC97 and more recently the Integrated Catalogue), the Library of Congress and the European Library. In addition, I searched Amazon.com and Sage publications on line catalogue. I then carried out key term searches for journal articles using:

- IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences)
- PsycINFO
- ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre)
- Social Science Citation Index and Arts and Humanities Citation Index via ISI Web of Knowledge

I used The ASLIB index (www.theses.com) to search for completed theses and the ESRC Regard site to search for ESRC funded research. I used the British Library Integrated Catalogue and the BUBL proceedings link to search for conference proceedings. In addition, I searched Google scholar as well as the SOSIG internet gateway. I carried out my first search in January 2004 and repeated it in March 2008. I last updated searches in March 2011. Searching produced a relative scarcity of academic literature specifically focused on participatory video, despite widening the search using alternative terms (appendix 1). The existing literature is fragmented with isolated articles across disciplines. As the academic literature is so scarce, it was particularly important to consult professional journals as well.

### 1.1.4 Professional and grey literature

I first consulted material collected over the last 20 years, and held in Real Time's library. Contained in this collection are back copies of *Independent Media* and *Mailout* – two key practitioner journals, as well as key articles and reports about participatory video from the UK and overseas. To access wider national and international discourse, I subscribed to regular updates from *Creative Exchange* (info@creativexchange.org), the *Communication Initiative for Social Change* (www.communinit.com), *Our Media* (www.ourmedianet.org), the *Institute of Development Studies* at Sussex University and PV-Net - a *JISC* discussion list for participatory video (www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=PV-NET-DISCUSS).

### 1.1.5 Building the literature base

As is usually the case, searching was an iterative rather than linear process that developed from this point onwards, as I went back and forth from the bibliographies and references from found sources to establish the key references, and identify new leads to follow. This chapter reviews the use of participatory video as cultural intervention in the UK context, to tell a story of participatory practice that reflects the ongoing interplay between resistance and incorporation. This sets the scene for my contextualised study of how empowerment practice through video can be re-conceptualised anew, to respond to the disintegration, discontinuity and uncertainty that characterises the current age.

## 1.2 **The social agenda:** between cultural resistance and policy response

From the grand ideologies to competing social representations, such as *voice and choice*, ideas provide a map to the world. They inform decisions and actions both individually and collectively (Freedon 2003). Whilst maintaining enough similarity to produce coherence, concepts are not static and shift over time to reflect the context (Gutting 2005:33). Participation and empowerment as motivating metaphors, are no different, and have been utilised by varying agendas to different purposes over recent UK history. I now firstly position participatory practice in this UK context.

### 1.2.1 Background to participatory project intervention in the UK

Participation has a long history in the UK. In the post war period, community development programmes aimed to foster self-reliance through involvement in mass education and welfare programmes aiming to change behaviours and values (Craig and Mayo 1995). These built on the Victorian philosophy of self-help as a way out of poverty, and the charitable philanthropy of the Anglican Church (Ledwith 2005). This resulted in, for example, the cooperative movement, the WEA (Workers Educational Association) and the Friendly Societies. However, community development was re-orientated less paternalistically, in the first half of the 20th century, following Batten's criticism (Popple 1995) of programmes overseas, which simply told people what to think and do to benefit colonialism.

In the UK, community work as a more radical practice with emancipatory purpose developed through the 60s and 70s, as class, gender and race awareness gathered impetus. It was a response to the soft control function of benevolent state social work. Professional community workers, based in local neighbourhoods, supported communities in setting their own agendas and carrying out specific actions (Ledwith 2005:9-12). This shift mirrored the change in development thinking worldwide to the advocation of bottom-up practice in which recipients of social interventions were actively involved in planning policy and implementing programmes (Melkote 1991).

Subsequently, against a backdrop of late 20th and early 21st century public finance limitations, coupled with ongoing social challenges, the multi-level project state has emerged (Marsden and Sonnino 2005). A significant proportion of public services are now delivered through short-term projects, involving both state and non-state actors (High and Powles 2007). Third sector (voluntary/NGO) practice is increasingly aligned with official and market-led policy (Craig and Mayo 1995). Projects are typically set up through collaboration between small and medium sized organisations from the non-statutory sector, and government agents within the professional sectors of local government, community and social work, health and education. They are financed by diverse government, charitable and business sources, usually to address a particular area of policy concern such as community cohesion, health behaviour or social exclusion. This has led to an expansion in non-state change agents, including professional arts and media practitioners, being engaged to deliver projects in diverse community settings, such as community centres, hospitals, schools, prisons and day

centres. Practitioners or facilitators (I use these terms interchangeably) are tasked with engaging participants from the target population (the particular disadvantaged community of concern) in group sessions that run for a specified period. The wider context of this study is this diverse field of funded *participatory project intervention* that exists in the UK, with participatory video a specific sub-field of practice.

In the thesis introduction, I raised the contradictions involved in working between social interests. It is apparent following this summary, that such participatory projects are located squarely amongst the practical tensions between the empowerment endeavour and institutional control. Despite this, the project environment offers a potential space for innovatory social emergence (Sjoblom, Andersson, Eklund and Godenhjelm 2006), precisely because it takes place on contested territory. Many social problems are considered w*icked* (e.g. Rittel and Webber 1973*).* This means that they are unique, contextual and have no obvious or established solutions. Moreover, they are ongoing with problem understanding evolving through efforts to solve them, which is likely to be at best good enough for now (Conklin 2005). Many contemporary issues are unlikely to be solved by any single interest group alone (Collins and Ison 2006), and this explains the need to bring together interest groups affected by an issue into the social arena (Habermas 1989) in *creating shared understanding about the problem and shared commitment to possible* solutions (Conklin 2005:17).

I now ground participatory video in the UK development of community arts and media practices as cultural interventions specifically intended to rupture usual power dynamics.

### 1.2.2 **Visioning resistance:** counter cultural intervention to disrupt the status quo

The community arts and media movement, like radical community work, emerged in the explosion of cultural and political activity that occurred from the late 1960s onwards (e.g. Kershaw 1992, McKay 1996), and is exemplified by the work of groups like Inter-action and Welfare State (Kelly 1984, Coult and Kershaw 1990). It was a form of political activism, developed by a loose network of individuals and organisations, motivated as much by a vision of an alternative society as much as the arts activities (Kelly 1984:11). The original practice discourse, although not explicitly stated, was broadly oppositional to government and arts establishment power. Guiding ideals ranged from the unfocused belief that creative opportunity should be open to all,

through the generalised objective of using creative expression to promote self-directed community action, to the notion of cultural democracy. This was a more explicit socialist agenda defined in *The Manifesto* (Cope, Kelly and Lock 1986) as the use of cultural activity to work towards citizen power.

Media such as print and photography were typical tools (e.g. Kenna 1996), which roots participatory video in the same cultural context, as a sub-section of community media practice. Initially referred to as community video, Nigg and Wade (1980) have documented its UK development during the 70s as hundreds of practitioners experimented with the possibilities inherent in video's instant replay facility. Early community video workers intended to facilitate processes of both horizontal communication (between groups) and vertical communication (to government decision-makers), not just the production of pre-conceived messages. An early example is that of West London Media using process video to involve tenants in exploring housing issues, which resulted in the strengthening of a new tenants association and in area improvements and housing rebates (Nigg and Wade 1980:33). Some practitioners were also motivated by the possible benefits of the project process to participants such as increased confidence, communications skills or teamwork (Lorac and Weiss 1981).

However, for many the inspiration was in the idea of disrupting usual production relationships by involving ordinary people in actively representing their own issues and perspectives, rather than being the subjects of professional documentation.

### 1.2.3 **The basic aspiration:** utilising digital media to foster representational capacity

Fundamentally, post-modern thought is unified by the idea that discourses shape our perception of the world and thus how we act (Alvesson 2002:46). A major constituent of social power is perceived to lie in the control over social representations (Melkote 2004:44). This can manifest through having the capability and resources to produce, interpret or reproduce stories, discourses and information about people, as well as through control over communication media. It also results in influence over the social agenda, through the power to control what gets considered, who is represented and how public debate proceeds (Melkote 2004:44). Digital communication media are widely perceived as being potential mechanisms for social change in the struggle between the dominant political and majority discourses and minority cultural expression.

This is particularly in the context of the transition from uni-directional mass communication to mass self-communication in the current digital age (e.g. Castells 2009).

> *To challenge existing power relationships, it is necessary to produce alternative discourses that have the potential to overwhelm the disciplinary discursive capacity of the state*
>
> **Castells 2009:16**

The promise of digital technology is in its capacity to turn excluded consumers of communication into active producers. Participatory video is assumed to build social power through its potential to open up the public domain to alternative perspectives. Consequently, community media and development communications literature has primarily focused on how videos made by marginalised peoples extend the media landscape to include a wider range of voices (e.g. Thede and Ambrosi 1991, Dowmunt 1993, Dickenson 1999, Couldrey 2000 and Atton 2002). Indeed the aim in much participatory video practice is that participants control their own narratives, firstly through video processes that build identity, secondly by making videos, and finally, showing them in wider social forums.

This endearing and compelling ideal can be traced back to the first documentaries. Grierson (organiser of the Empire Marketing Board film unit in the UK in the 1930s) from the beginning envisaged the purpose of documentary to be more sociological than aesthetic. Middle class filmmakers portrayed the stories of their working class subjects as specific democratic acts (Barnouw 1983:1-31). However many commentators (e.g. McLellan 1987, Huber 1999, Braden 1999, Crocker 2003) cite the Fogo island experiment as an early example of using film explicitly to engage in social improvement. Filmmakers Low and Snowdon (Morrow 1987) broke new ground in documentary practice by involving people themselves in recording their lives and issues. In the Fogo project, twenty-five tapes captured concerns of Canadian islanders faced with a government-resettling programme. Screenings started a process of video dialogue with government decision-makers, resulting in the formation of a fishing co-operative, decreased unemployment and the halting of resettlement activity (Snowdon 1984).

Although the Fogo process is often discussed because it provides an elegant pioneering example, in reality there is not one project from which all others developed.

As video has become increasingly affordable many practitioners have been motivated to experiment. Since the 60s there have been numerous examples of video being used worldwide (e.g. Dowmunt 1987, Stuart 1989, Bery and Stuart 1996, Shaw 1998; Okahashi 2000, Dudley 2003, White 2003, Dowmunt 2007). In the UK setting, community video was influenced by grassroots community activists, and the anarchist ideals of collective and non-authoritarian forms of decision-making (Nigg and Wade 1980:5-32), with the purpose of:

> *...building up people's awareness of what is going on around them – constructing a picture of the real world, often with a view to changing it ... getting people to help themselves and decide their own futures rather than having their lives controlled for them by external forces*
>
> **Wade 1980:5**

This typifies the discourse that motivated these early practitioners. In addition to the implications of the top-down language, this exposes the assumption that empowerment will result directly from participant-authored videos. This reveals the more general problem that discourse on empowerment practice has tended towards the idealised as encompassed by the empowerment narrative.

### 1.3 The shifting sands between the empowerment vision and policy agenda: problematising the dynamics of participation in UK project context

Empowerment as terminology is often used uncritically as a buzzword (e.g. Rowlands 1997, Brock and Cornwall 2005) to indicate positive intention. It is discussed as a value orientation or worldview (empowerment narrative), as a process used by change agents (empowerment practice), as well to denote effect at the individual, group or community level (empowered consequences) (e.g. Zimmerman 2000). The empowerment narrative or metaphor reflects the values that motivate much practice concerned with tackling constraints affecting people's opportunities (Giddens 1991b). Participatory video practice is usually framed within the empowerment narrative as inspiration, listing many social benefits that *may* result. However, intentional discourse does not prepare practitioners or project supporters for the reality of practice. This framing either leads to uncritical and optimistic project evaluation, where anecdotal evidence is collected to support ideals, and contradictory experiences remain unnoticed or unacknowledged.

Alternatively it can only lead to narratives of failure (e.g. Campbell 2003) when projects do not live up to impossible dreams. The field of participatory video sets itself up to fail by talking in grandiose terms about potential benefits or forecasting unachievable goals, rather than going for *small wins*[3] (Fenwick 2004). It is obvious that a participatory video project cannot instigate large-scale change as is often implied. Indeed Campbell and Murray (2004) ask whether significant changes can come from small-scale community-action. There is a need to go beyond the empowerment narrative to develop realistic knowledge of participatory video processes (Shaw 2012), which recognises the *small-scale* (Maurer and Githens 2009) gains that participants value (Vaughn 2011), and the continuum between success and failure (Chvasta 2006). Furthermore, the lack of more critical understanding of what is realistic in supporting an empowerment agenda, has led to the appropriation and dilution of practice by opposing agendas.

### 1.3.1 **Participation as policy:** a story of appropriation and emasculation

From the beginning, in an attempt to gain credibility and financial support, community arts practitioners had been deliberately vague about their more politically overt intentions. This led to two problems as the political and cultural landscape shifted in the UK through the Thatcher era. In the 80s, participatory video developed in parallel with the community media movement as part of the *independent video sector* (Shaw and Robertson 1997:9). This was a vibrant network of organisations supported by regional arts and broadcast television (particularly through Channel 4 funded workshops). Broadcast support did maintain the presence of socialist welfare principles in the public consciousness, which countered ideological Thatcherism (Ledwith 2001:172). The disadvantage was that product quality came to dominate debate. Participatory practitioners became defensive in response to criticism of the technical standard of community production, and this sidelined discussion of social purpose (Shaw 1986). The second problem was that the participatory arts sector in the UK, in not defining its own map of the territory was moulded into a diluted version of the pioneer's vision (Kelly 1984:1-31).

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[3] With thanks to Catherine Campbell for raising my awareness of this issue.

During the Thatcher years *new right* rhetoric cleverly appropriated terms like participation and active citizenship, and in so doing weakened the potency of radical practice. The notion of individual rights supported collectively by the welfare state was transformed into individual and family responsibility. Marginalised people who had stood together in class unity were held accountable for their predicament, and communities became divided by social representations such as benefit scroungers and teenage mother housing cheats (Ledwith 2001:172). Through this period, the arts establishment absorbed community arts by renaming it community-based or participatory under the access umbrella, with the purpose of creating new audiences for high art (Matarasso 2007). In perpetually re-framing to match funding priorities, participatory arts often manifested as no more than the opportunity to take part in creative activity. In my experience, this is echoed in many recent video projects where participants record other arts events, or play themselves in documentaries representing others' perspectives on their lives. These projects financed during the Blair era (1997-2007) reflect the limited participation agenda that continued during the Labour government's '*third way'* (Giddens 2000).

The *New Labour* government incorporated participation as a central precept in many strategies, such as the *New Deal for Communities* programme (Dinham 2005), where it denoted the involvement of local people in area regeneration. The espoused argument is that bottom-up processes lead to more sustainable development. More cynically, the uptake of participation can be interpreted as Labour continuing the previous Conservative governments' programme to roll back the welfare state (Craig and Mayo 1995:4) to cut costs to maintain UK global competitiveness (Mayo, Hoggett and Miller 2007). This mirrors the World Bank's uptake of participation as *efficient* practice in development projects worldwide (Mansuri and Rao 2004). In encouraging people to take part in assessing needs and planning services, participation, in current UK application, restructured the relationship between state and individual by placing more responsibility on local communities to solve complex problems (Dinham 2005:302). Why would anyone want to take on active citizenship when participation puts additional pressure on those facing the biggest hardships (Marinetto 2003)?

This dynamic is exemplified in the proliferation of video projects focused on drug use or gun crime. Government agencies appease public concern by being seen to act. Problems such as these, which are top-down social constructions, are passed on to cash strapped NGOs and stressed communities. Disregarding wider social contexts,

leads to victim blaming (e.g. Campbell and Murray 2004) with those affected held responsible for problems that are the consequence of wider societal injustice. Over the past ten years, I have observed participatory video springing up to address many areas of social policy, but how can such projects possibly solve macro social problems? There is an assumption that people should be active, but why if they are not gaining something for themselves? It is important to interrogate whose interests this really serves.

There is clearly a mismatch between the state agenda and the practice intention to transform iniquitous dynamics. Since the 2010 election, the new UK coalition government, under cover of public conviction of austerity needs, is once more pursuing an ideological dismantling of the welfare state. Hegemony (Gramsci in Forgacs 1988:195) is the power of dominant economic and political thinking to permeate everyone's sub-conscious as legitimate and incontestable wisdom and common sense. Cameron's government has constructed the Big Society notion to hijack moral debate on deeper community self-determination whilst demanding greater responsibility alongside savage cuts (Scott 2010). This audacious manipulation of hegemony by power-holders to incorporate contradictions and mask real community interest (e.g. Ledwith 1997, Blond 2010) in the discourse battlefield, suggests that alternative representations are indeed necessary. However, I now consider the myth that it is representation alone, and the resultant focus on knowledge products that is needed, rather than changed relational processes and dynamics.

### 1.3.2 **The representation fallacy:** questioning the assumption that producing social knowledge on video leads to empowerment

Social knowledge forms and propagates through the construction of shared narratives. Through (re-) presenting their experiences individuals and communities retain, order and make sense of what has happened (Jovchelovitch 2007:82). The assumption is that participatory video is a good tool, because it enables participants to tell their own stories to outside others through producing video narratives, testimonies or documentaries. Participatory video as a collaboration in which facilitator-researchers support communities in examining their own realities, and making videos to communicate new knowledge is a form of Participatory Action Research (PAR). All

action research aims for empowerment (Boog 2003), and discussion of participatory video as research methodology is increasing (e.g. Mayer 2000, Kindon 2003, Ramella and Olmos 2005, Shaw 2007). However, most of this literature is still product orientated and focused on representing previously unheard voices. For instance, Protz (2004) discussed participatory video with Jamaican women to suggest it created new understanding at the interface of knowledge domains and Krogh (2001) working with people with disabilities concluded that it enabled them to become active knowledge creators rather than passive objects of research. The key question is what is the point of this new knowledge? Not only how well does video enable representation to powerful decision-makers (Braden 1998), but more pertinently are they listening (Braden 2004)? Furthermore, even if those with social influence listen to group videos, what happens then?

Making room for the expression of viewpoints is an example of repressive tolerance (Marcusse 1964). In allowing alternative expressions and practices, liberal democracies absorb dissent and divert radical energy so they are no threat to the status quo. Calling participatory video research is a retreat from activism, because it gives legitimacy even if no benefits to participants are forthcoming. The challenge of creating links between critical reflection, participant-authored video communication and consequences of value to participants is a core challenge. Furthermore, I think it may be the new relationships that are established through *inter*action at the communication interface between social interests (individual to group, group to group, bottom to top), rather than the knowledge produced, that are of most significance. Indeed herein are the issues.

In identifying the civic realm as the most promising site for critical action, Gramsci (Forgacs 1988:431) warns against a *war of manoeuvre* (targeting state structures) and suggests a *war of position* (opening new spaces for alliance). Ledwith (2005:130) bemoans the use of military terminology, yet such language serves to emphasise the adversarial territory in which participatory video is located, which are implicitly those of power imbalance. There is a financial imperative for practitioners to accept policy-directed funding but the intention, however covert, is to turn the project situation to a more radical end. I next problematise the relational dynamics created at this boundary.

## 1.4 **The practice reality:** key practical challenges posed by working between positioned agendas

Participatory processes work at the interface between top-down agendas and bottom-up attempts to catalyse empowerment. Yet, if such collaborations are to do more than legitimise a statutory agencies' programme (Braden and Mayo 1999), it is necessary to build more adequate appreciation of how power is constructed and perpetuated (Mosse 2001), and thus how empowerment might be promoted relationally (e.g. Mosse 1994, Kothari 2001). There are many practical issues left unsolved by the grand tale of participation (e.g. Kothari 2001:138, Hickey and Mohan 2004:11, Mansuri and Rao 2004). I now unpick this in the context of new media as a participatory tool.

### 1.4.1 **The illusion of digital media itself as social leveller:** from technological methodologies to relational practice

Engagement is a key practical challenge identified within participation literature. The goal is to involve disadvantaged people in setting agendas, so that they influence opinion, and take more control over what happens in their lives. The paradox is that the most excluded are least likely to come forward and take part. In reality, provisions, such as community facilities, support structures and project processes, are often captured by established local elites (Mansuri and Rao 2004), thus empowering the most socially dominant (Braden and Mayo 1999). There is much hype in the public domain (marketing, professional and academic discourse alike) about the potential of new media to disrupt the balance of communication power. I now question this in reference to internet distributed amateur digital content.

Despite the hope that user-generated products would democratise access to the media (Buckingham, Pini and Willett 2007), the vast majority of internet users are voyeurs rather than creators (Dowmunt 2007). There is no doubt that e-mailing, social media, the blogosphere and new fora for the exchange of video content such as My Space and You Tube (Castells 2009:63-71) have changed the fabric of communication life. However, studies (e.g. Dahlberg 2001, Jenkins 2006, and Willett 2008) suggest that most active producers are young, white, middle-class, college educated and predominately male. Excluded sectors are thus under-represented as in other

communication forums. In addition, *a significant share of this form of mass self-communication is closer to "electronic autism" than actual communication* (Castells 2009:66) as there is no audience and therefore no communication relationship. Communication power in the network society lies in the control over networks. While the domain of power has become virtual, income, access and education disparity globally has replicated and augmented class, race, age and gender inequalities (Castells 2009:10-57). The digital revolution and new global culture often functions as one of consumerism serving market interests (Barber 2007). Social distribution media as opposed to the group video process are a side issue related to the main thrust of this thesis. However, this literature does support my opinion that involvement of the most excluded is not going to happen simply through providing technology. I believe that engaging disadvantaged groups in participatory video requires *active intervention* that goes beyond the provision of equipment and technical training, and includes *facilitation* by external agents.

A related problem is that practice is often depoliticised as a technological methodology, rather than a politically driven process (e.g. Hickey and Mohan 2004:11, Dinham 2005:304). Processes such as participatory rural analysis (PRA), rapid rural appraisal (RRA) (Chambers 1983, 1992, 1997), and participatory learning analysis (PLA) (Archer and Cottingham 1996), offer formulas in manuals to reproduce across context (Cleaver 2001). Such prescriptive procedures and techniques often overlook the highly personalised interactions that may be the source of success (Hailey 2001). Strategies that should be part of responsive, emergent processes become distilled into exercises divorced from the social context. The implicit assumption is they are always applicable. As I view participatory video as an essentially inter-subjective process, I think success lies in the relationships engendered not the equipment. It is necessary to build phronetic knowledge (practical wisdom) of the necessary soft social skills (High 2005). Relational practice in context is thus a key focus of my study. However, paradoxically, it is the need to intervene that is the source of much practical contradiction.

### 1.4.2 **Beyond us and them:** negotiating between influences in contested territory

As well as the wider power contexts, project dynamics can perpetuate inequity (Mosse 2001). The notion of community is often used to obscure disadvantage (Dinham 2005),

which masks differences across communities (e.g. Cleaver 2001, Hickey and Mohan 2004:17). Participatory processes taken over by dominant groups can then re-enforce the exclusion of the least powerful, such as women, or those with low status (Mosse 1995), even though a project purports to represent communal interest. It is my opinion that project structures and processes should actively promote inclusive dynamics and prevent capture by established interests. However, targeting marginalised peoples sets up an '*us* and *them'* dynamic between the project organisation (e.g. Real Time) and their agents (e.g. practitioners), and the assumed powerless from the start.

Viewing individuals through socially constructed labels such as the excluded, or the disadvantaged is patronising and limiting, and sets up a dichotomy between the helper and the helped, such as the professional and local (Kothari 2001), or the insider and outsider (Mohan 2001) that do not reflect the nuances of actual relationships. It disregards participants' power to consent, subvert or refuse participation, and assumes practitioners (often poorly paid, overworked and undervalued, or indeed social outsiders themselves) have power to invest. Taken to logical conclusion it leads to some ridiculous issues, such as practitioners pursuing participants to fit a socially constructed tag, who in reality do not exist. The question is how collaborative relationships can develop between project actors that move beyond these limiting constructs. My research thus focuses on the specific inter-subjective activities and interactions that take place between participants, practitioners and outside agents to open up different project actor's experiences of collaboration.

### 1.4.3 **Towards collective purpose:** building collaborative group dynamics

Community arts practice, in its recent guise, has prioritised individual needs and outcomes rather than the collective focus of earlier incarnations (Matarasso 2007). This followed the shift to short-term projects as Arts Council England finances decreased in the New Millennium (year 2000 onwards). Consequently, arts organisations relied increasingly on local government and lottery support, in the wider political framework of *anti-collective individualism* (Ledwith 2001p:174). Social policy functioned in this period to pathologise individuals, such as people on incapacity benefit. In a return to Victorian values, people were supposed to help themselves through capacity building (Mayo, Hoggett and Miller 2007).

In the atmosphere of accountability with its convention of audit, the arts were required to prove social benefit. In the context of state-led performance criteria, most research on the impact of participatory arts thus focused on measurement of isolated individual factors such as confidence and transferable skills (e.g. Williams 1997, Matarasso 1998, Jermyn 2001, Foster-Fishman et al 2005). Many video organisations became accredited to provide NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) and video financing agencies such as First Light (a UK Film council youth initiative) make assessments on skill levels. In an outcome-focused climate, there is an argument for providing qualifications for those served badly by traditional routes. However, this focus is ethically questionable. With exceptions, many participants, such as those in prisons or with learning disabilities, are unlikely to find future work as video makers. It is clearly unfair to set up unrealistic expectations of unlikely future possibilities. Funding bodies can more easily rationalise projects within such parameters, and professionals are distracted by managing impressions and ticking boxes (Mayo, Hoggett and Miller 2007) to demonstrate outputs geared to government targets. The notion of individual success, based on competition with others less adept, perpetuates social division. In comparison, it is working together, to achieve common goals, which may bring people most actual satisfaction through feelings of belonging (Douthwaite 1996:362). To counter the social fragmentation resulting from global capitalism, there is a need to forge a more humane world beyond market values. In this sense the failure to value the potential of new media to bring people together, to collaborate across difference on their own terms, may miss what could be its most important contemporary contribution. I think shared cultural activity, such as Real Time's group based video processes, can if conditions are favourable increase the capacity for collective action (Matarasso 2007). My interest is thus primarily on how participatory video can shift dynamics beyond individualism to social focus. To this end, it is important to realise that video can hinder rather than help.

### 1.4.4 **Process versus product:** the participatory video means and ends confusion

Discourse on participation, often reflects vagueness about whether it is a means, or whether taking part is itself the end (Parfitt 2004). This ambiguity is a particular problem on video projects, because the nature of video leads to unavoidable expectations about the product, even when the process is primary. Top-down project initiators often have product expectations, which amplify tensions in context (Shaw 2007). This was obvious

in the Canley Green project discussed in the introduction. It is also so for many video projects, considered successful in revealing new social perspectives, because the topic is frequently pre-determined, which limits participant control. Practitioners also have an interest in the video product and the capacity to influence. In evaluating a youth video project aiming to build bridges between locals and recent refugees, Mann (2006) described how:

> *practitioners would oftentimes sit uncomfortably on their hands while the young participants mooted film ideas, quietly willing them away from Star wars remakes and anything that involved car chases and guns- the participants very possibly felt influenced to explore certain themes.*

**Mann 2006:11**

Although this project was ostensibly youth-led, participants were primed as they knew the facilitators wanted to know what helped people mix. Exercises were set up to raise issues such as stereotyping, and belonging, so they were steered along a particular path. Such practitioners are under considerable pressure to produce a product of content interest to justify their involvement. Yet, there are substantial implicit but often unacknowledged challenges in balancing group content control, with the promised video. This points to the central paradox (Nolas 2007) of much participatory practice in relationship to empowerment purpose. In encompassing participants' delineated control of some aspects, and practitioners' overt control of activities and subtle content influence, participation is a contradictory combination of both empowerment and disempowerment.

There are also often unrealistic expectations about what is technically possible. Very few video workers are happy to let participants learn through mistakes, if the product will reflect badly on them.

> *There's always a tightrope to be walked between ensuring the group feels good enough about its results... But you can push them to get better results and they'll never feel good because they don't own the video.*

**Practitioner quote in Shaw 2007p:187**

This pressure to deliver videos of a particular technical quality, regardless of the project purpose, the content quality, the delivery medium (e.g. DVD, the internet, or broadcast television) or audience (local or national), has resulted from the historical link with the

community media movement. The underlying assumption behind the professional media discourse is a mass media communications model, where there is no point in communicating unless you are speaking to millions[4], which is outdated. Written language has many forms including memo, e-mail, formal report or publication. Similarly, video products have many different forms and manifestations.

The division of participatory video practice into process-orientated and product-orientated arose from the need to distinguish it from traditional production, but it has been unhelpful. Recording video material is fundamental to all participatory video projects, and working towards a product gives the process direction. It is counter-productive to ignore the basic potential to open communication channels.[5] Both process and product are significant and interrelated.

### 1.4.5 **Participation as a conceptual cul-de-sac:** reframing empowerment practice to encompass complexity, uncertainty and multiplicity

Authors such as Fraser (2005) have attempted to address the paradoxes of participation by distinguishing between target–oriented (policy-led/managerialist) and empowerment types. In many cases, there is a moral edge (Kothari 2001:146) with implicit judgement of bad or good. These typologies rest on Arnsteins's (1969) ladder metaphor. This represented engagement as an ascendant power struggle between state and citizen. Eight rungs were presented from non-participation (manipulation and therapy), through tokenism (informing, consultation and placation) to degrees of power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control). This set empowerment as the highest goal, prevented at other levels by degrees of state control. This is reflected in the many calls (e.g. Parfitt 2004, Ledwith 2005, and Matarasso 2007) for a return to the empowerment focus of early community work (Popple 1995). However, this hierarchical linear metaphor is too simplistic. Nor does it reflect participants' motivations or their satisfaction with the control attained (many do not want total responsibility), the

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[4] Patrick Humphreys in discussion.

[5] Patrick Humphreys - video recordings provide the communication potential that make participatory video more than an extended group process

nuanced power dynamic between project actors (where state actors can be positive collaborators), or the variable and changing character of individual involvement (Collins and Ison 2006). The reality of funded projects means they often cannot be located clearly as one type of participation or another, but sit in a both/and paradigm (Rifkin 1996).

Social theory is often conceived as a toolkit that provides a particular perspective to guide action. The wrong conceptual frame misses nuances and masks reality. If theory does not help, Deleuze's often cited proposal is to make up another (Deleuze 2004 in Patten 2010:86). Hazy concepts like participation serve a function in bringing together differently positioned social actors (Mosse 2006), without which most action to address injustice would not happen, and which may be necessary to solve multi-stakeholder controversies. However, participation with its discourse of voice and choice actually embodies an individualistic rather than collective ethos (Mayo, Hoggett and Miller 2007). More than that, embedded as it is within the pervasive majority framework of representative civic engagement it becomes a slave activism. Established routes for dissent easily lead to unresolved complicity because they entrap and limit practice possibilities within established boundaries (Svirsky 2010:1-6). I thus suggest, participation is a conceptual cul-de-sac that functions to restrict and close down opportunities for participants through binding them within the status quo.

Following this discussion, I conclude that empowerment practice needs re-conceptualising to value its emergent nature, the spiralling processes involved, the multiple perspectives, the negotiated progression, and the uncertain consequences. I agree with writers (e.g. Rifkin 1996, High 2005, Ison et al 2004) who have proposed re-orientating empowerment more productively as a process of social learning in the tradition of Kolb (1984), Lewin (1951) and Dewey (1991). Hence, I re-assert my interest in participatory video as an emergent process that intends to build participant influence, all be it against the unavoidable backdrop of contested territory that I have described. As such, it is necessary to focus on practitioner intention, to lift it clear from the competing agendas.

## 1.5 **Re-casting practitioner inspiration:** empowerment as an emergent process of inter-subjective learning with social purpose

Emergent processes of interactive learning, through cycles of group action and reflection, aim to open up new social possibilities in the current milieu of complexity, uncertainty and interdependency (Ison et al 2004). I regard a fluid framework, which has no pre-determined end-point, as being a more appropriate way of conceptualising evolving practices in real-world environments. Digital multi-media are perceived as offering new enabling spaces for collaborative exploration (e.g. Humphreys and Jones 2006), that assist decisions between alternative futures (Humphreys and Brezillion 2002). They can re-configure social spaces by mediating relationships more equitably (e.g. High 2005). Creative practitioners' *way* of practice tolerates ambiguity, embraces not knowing as a productive driver, and opens a fluid rather than prescribed route to somewhere unforeseen (Denmead 2010). I therefore re-focus on the practitioner intention to apply participatory video to mediate such inter-subjective processes. Of course, simply reframing to embrace emergence, and the negotiated and changing relationships involved (Hickey and Mohan 2004:15-16), does not make intervention un-problematic. However, it sets the scene for a more critical stance.

Real Time's participatory video is but one in a family of approaches using new media in this way. Others examples are the use of photography in Photovoice (e.g. Wang and Burris 1997, Wang 1999, Vaughn 2011), and similar applications of video such as on the SaRA (Salud Reproducttiva para Adolescentes) project in Peru (Ramella 2002) and the Positive Futures (2005) project in the UK (Nolas 2007). I draw on these applications in section 1.6 to clarify the gap in social psychological literature that I address. However, firstly it is necessary to consider the essentially contested (Lukes 2005) concept of power.

### 1.5.1 **Power contextualised:** relative to empowerment practice

I proposed, in section 1.3.2, that building group influence involves more than access to representational media. I suggest three categories of power provide points of reference for considering the potential of participatory video as a relational process, which are *power-over*, *power-to* and *power-with* (Starhawk 1987). Power-over incorporates

conventional understanding (Weber 1947) as the imposition of A's will over B. It can be wielded by force, authority, manipulation or coercion (Bachrach and Baratz 1970). However, this restricted view of power does not illuminate how power manifests, reproduces and propagates at the micro-level. P*ower- to,* also encompassed by the term agency (Giddens 1979), refers to people's capacity to act. Capacity to act or agency, is conceptually useful because power-over is not only exercised through action and decision-making but also through inaction, non-decision-making and other more subtle forms of influence (Lukes 2005). Individuals systematically without power internalise damaging stereotypes, and have less capacity to act. Thus, developing power-to or agency, through interactive processes that unpick unconscious hegemonic assumptions and beliefs (Craig and Mayo 1995:6) is of central importance to the empowerment mission. Empowerment practice usually aims to develop participants' psychological confidence to act, and the belief that action will be successful (symbolic change), and/or observably obtain resources (material change).

Power-to is a capacity, not the concrete exercising of agency, and Foucault's perspective (Baudrillard 1987, Hook 2010) on power's relational manifestation suggests that power only finds form through exercise. My empowerment practice interest is both in the intention to develop group agency, as well as whether this leads to opportunities to exercise agency (action) to influence what happens in a particular situation. This brings into focus *power-with* (Starhawk 1987), a cooperative power, such as Real Time's practitioners' exercise of their own agency. Power-with can be wielded with inducement, encouragement or even authority, but there is no conflict of interests between the collaborating actors (Lukes 2005). This power can be productive and compatible with dignity. However, it is potentially paternalistic and can be wielded unequally or abusively (Gordon 2008). The facilitator relationship is often characterised by mutuality (Kreisburg 1992), and yet the factors affecting it are often absent from discourse, which justifies my focus. Knowledge of practice specifics in context is needed to understand how participants' power and influence might change, so I now introduce Real Time's approach.

### 1.5.2 **Real Time's approach:** key emphasis on social purpose, facilitation, structured processes and an evolving balance of control

Real Time's projects take place with small closed groups (6-8 people), in familiar venues based in community contexts (although several groups may work in parallel). A project proceeds through workshop sessions, which aim to create an enjoyable, inclusive and supportive environment. Each Real Time session engages participants in experiential learning through structured video exercises (Shaw and Robertson 1997:12). Projects then proceed through progressive cycles of videoing action and reflection after playback, as described in detail in section 4.2.

Real Time's approach is fundamentally a *group-based activity* using video to support *social processes (*Shaw and Robertson 1997). As in critical pedagogy (Freire 1972), participants' experiences are placed at the centre of the action as subjects of their own exploration (which I unpack further in section 2.1.4). Individuals *do* develop specific video production skills, and group-members *do* record each other, and the world around them, to create their own stories. However, engendering productive new relationships at a group, organisational or community level is the key purpose. This is not a traditional use of video. In fact, many basic techniques (such as taking turns on the camera), run counter to standard production processes. My belief is that it is not the equipment per se that helps or hinders, but the way it functions to back up the intended social processes.

As video production is not the end itself, but the means to drive interaction towards group benefit, it is constructive to redefine video making as part of that process. This also means recognising that video recording and playback have different functions as a project progresses. The question then shifts to what video itself contributes. To address the practical issues, which I explicated in section 1.4, participatory video needs to tackle the challenges of engagement and establishing collaborative dynamics. To achieve this it must stimulate mutuality against external agendas, whilst incorporating individual differences (Ledwith 2001).

Table 1.3 summarises the key Real Time perceived benefits, as supported by other practitioner writing.

**Table 1-3 Key components of Real Time's video usage**

| Empowerment practical challenges | Real Time's perspective on benefit (Shaw and Robertson 1997:20-6) | Supporting practice literature |
|---|---|---|
| **Engagement** | Video is accessible and motivating. It provides purpose through focus on participants' lives | Stuart 1989; Kindon 2003; White 2003 |
| **Individual confidence and capacity** | Videoing stimulates self-expression. Recording and playback builds communication skills and confidence. | McLellan 1987; Bery and Stuart 1996; Bery 2003 |
| **Group building – dialogue and commonality** | Video encourages teamwork. Video exercises provide a rationale for discussion. Agreeing on a message bring people together in common purpose. | Mayer 2000; Okahashi 2000; Guidi 2003; |
| **Critical awareness and sense-making** | Exploration through video recording can aid stepping back from experience. Creative expression can assist problem posing, meaning making and future directions. | Braden 1998; Frost and Jones 1998; Humphreys, Lorac et al. 2001 |
| **Control over communication (extended language)** | Video mediates external communication without reliance on writing or public-speaking | Humphreys and Brézillon 2002; Humphreys and Lorac 2002; Dudley 2003 |

The other main practice identifier is active facilitation throughout. Real Time believes that participants' hands-on use of technology is essential in developing informed content control, and so group-members use equipment from the start. However, practitioners provide the structured activities that guide videoing interactions. A second gap thus emerges from this summary, with regard to context-specific knowledge. I have given a sense of the building blocks of Real Time's participatory video, but this does not illuminate how practitioners negotiate the multiple elements in parallel, or how the process unfolds as participants respond. It is now important to move beyond universals to particulars. I thus turn to a specific example.

### 1.5.3 **Real Time's staged process:** trawling for the participants' outlook

In 1995, a Community Health Council commissioned Real Time to explore the difficulties homeless people faced accessing healthcare. This example illustrates how *power-to* builds in stages during participatory video processes.

Firstly, Real Time's approach involves using video to open the environment for social dialogue. Secondly, it provides the framework in which participants think about their lives to increase awareness, and negotiate their own social understanding, agendas and actions. In the homeless project initial exercises concentrated on building participants' communication confidence and sharing experiences. Video exercises developed discussion and reflection to assist participants in refining their opinions on what would help them, and how best to communicate it. If time is taken over building processes, then video is thought less manipulating than media requiring written literacy (Satheesh 1999).

As a next stage, using video provides the means to exercise agency through collaboratively authored production. In the homeless project, only after several weeks of development, were statements and interviews recorded for a final video. The group videoed health services (traditional and homeless focused). Effective messages were constructed with participant control informed by their previous practical experience and reflection.

Finally, showing videos in wider social forums creates the possibility for groups to influence the social agenda. As a project progresses, the groups often wants to communicate externally. This can be organised if there are significant others prepared to listen. In this case, there was a ready-made audience. The Health Authority wanted to find out what homeless people perceived would help. The video produced identified factors such as chaotic lifestyles, which make it difficult for them to keep appointments, and the attitudes and interactions that make them uncomfortable in doctor's surgeries. Participatory video can thus promote communication both horizontally (within group or between similar groups), and vertically with powerfully positioned decision-makers (Johansson 2000). Following this project, the DVD was used to train nurses, GPs and surgery staff in how to provide better services for homeless people.

Therefore, the potential of video, in creating a link between internal reflection and external improvement, revolves around its application to progress both group

agency and dialogue. However, there are issues even on projects considered a success. Despite the apparent achievement of the homeless project in changing healthcare provision more generally, it is clear that the participants' voice is absent. Nobody asked these particular people what the project was like, or whether they gained anything lasting.

People feel empowered when they are actually are empowered (Wallerstein 1992), but empowerment as process is a particular journey, which means different things to each person in every setting. The search for universals is counter-productive. Success depends on the starting point, the actual circumstances and the time available. This might mean that participants actually act to gain material benefit, or they now feel they can act, or there is a change in what they imagine possible (Vaughn 2011). Empowerment is related to subjective feelings, and given that it is striking how little research asks participants what it means to them (Cornwall and Edwards 2010). I next look at social psychological literature on the use of digital media to establish the gaps in processual knowledge and 'lived' experiences.

## 1.6 **Social psychological research on digital media:** the gap in practice knowledge

Most social psychological writing on the use of visual media for empowerment is about Photovoice (e.g. Wang and Burris 1994, Vaughn 2011), which is a systematised and staged process like participatory video. Firstly, participants take photographs showing community issues, with themes arising from participants' concerns (at least in theory). Secondly, they discuss the photos in groups. Finally, they show their photos to pre-recruited policymakers in a wider forum. Thus, like Real Times' approach, Photovoice attempts to catalyse interaction in two kinds of social space, characterised as '*safe'* and '*in-between*' (Vaughn 2011). I now look at what Photovoice literature tells us about such emergent processes.

### 1.6.1 **Iterative unfolding processes:** current knowledge on contextual contributors to project experiences

Equating to Real Time's first stage, a Photovoice project with African-American men concluded that racism, male socialisation and social networks affect health (Ornelas, Amell et al 2009). Illustrating a further iteration, young Appalachians showed Photovoice images at community health forums, and this assisted those who attended in proceeding from problem definition to specific action steps (Downey, Ireson, and Scutchfield 2008). Following oppression in Guatemala and South Africa, Photovoice went beyond linear development from silence to voice, through long-term iterative processes with women whose narratives evolved through interaction in many different social spaces (Lykes et al 2003). Illuminating issues through people's narratives is perceived to bring humanising insight to audiences (Washington and Moxley 2008). However, whilst attributing success to the iterative processes involved, there is no discussion about what participants gained.

Participation costs, in time and role limitation, were discussed on a Photovoice project with Chinese women (Wang, Yi, Tao and Caravano 1998), as well as potential despondency if changes are not forthcoming. Successfully progressing from need definition to plan completion is dependent on ongoing support (Foster-Fishman et al 2005). Beyond this, there was a knowledge gap about contextualised contributors. More recently, Vaughn (2011) addressed what empowerment means to participants' own lives in context (Cornwall and Edwards 2010). Theorising Photovoice through the concepts of social space, dialogue and critical thinking, she showed the subtle ways that young people in Papua New Guinea experienced becoming-empowered, such as shifts in their imagined future possibilities. She also identified the importance of communicative and procedural pre-conditions in opening spaces for dialogue, and the parallel need for the more powerfully positioned to support receptive 'listening' spaces (Vaughn 2011).

Although there are comparisons between photography and video, they have different possibilities and risks. For example, Photovoice enables individual interpretations, rather than artificially communicating as one, which can mask difference. Moreover, it is difficult to show the intangible or non-observable using photography (Castledon et al 2008). Turning to video, the SaRA (Salud Reproducttiva

para Adolescentes) project in Peru showed specific changes for participants through participatory video (Ramella et al 2000 ). In promoting sexual health in fifteen rural and urban contexts, marginalised adolescents produced videos in groups, and then met to watch each other's stories. Controlling their own spaces, they became social players and influenced resources. This led to an increase in health service usage and a decrease in unwanted pregnancies. Success was in providing creative contexts that invested the adolescents with agency (Ramella et al 2000). Video, as an extended language that shows and tells, provided the opportunity for them to act for themselves, rather than participate in service-providers agendas (Humphreys et al 2001). This empowered young people by generating a spiral of communication over time outward to the wider community (Humphreys and Brézillon 2002).

However, there were contextual factors that contributed to success. Firstly, long-term, multi-location support was available. Participants not only produced their own dramas and documentaries on sexuality, but they also discussed videos made with other adolescents in combined workshops. In addition, powerful decision-makers in the locales, such as the mayors and health personnel wanted the project to happen, and provided considerable support (Humphreys - personal communication 2008). I wondered whether, as young people in Peru are likely to be more independent at a comparable age, responses in the UK would be different. Different approaches are suitable for different contexts, and my research builds on the need for specific knowledge about what helps and hinders possibilities emerge in the wide variety of UK applications.

### 1.6.2 **Addressing the contextual knowledge gap:** empirical research questions

Real Time's praxis (Shaw and Robertson 1997) is a motivational metaphor that has functioned to inspire practitioners. There is not anything inherently wrong with the activity descriptions in themselves. Yet, I realised that attempting to synthesise a straightforward framework by extracting exercises from contextualised application, results in abstractions that mask the practice nuances. In reality, there is no global solution, and methodologies that do not encompass the real-world complexity become rarefied rhetoric. This section has clarified the lack of understanding of the diversity of particularised manifestations and actions, and participants' views of what helps and

hinders in context. Consequently, table 1.4 below summarises the empirical research questions that direct fieldwork:

**Table 1-4 Empirical questions with relation to gaps in practice understanding**

| Key theoretical questions | Gap in practice understanding | Empirical questions |
|---|---|---|
| **What does empowerment mean in particular contexts?** | • Different positions on intent<br>• Realistic view of possibilities in relationship to constraints<br>• Positioned view of what practice does | • What is the purpose of Real Time's participatory video?<br>• What are the participant perceived likes, dislikes and gains? |
| **What are the contextualised stages of participatory video as empowerment process?** | • Specific practice at each process stage<br>• Processual links<br>• Practice emergence through dynamic interaction | • What happens in a participatory video project and how and why? |
| **What are the contributory factors that enable and hinder the emergence of participant empowerment?** | • Diversity of response from different types of group and individual project actors<br>• For whom, when and what circumstances | • What meanings are ascribed to project experiences?<br>• What helps, and what hinders in context? |

## 1.7 **Synthesis:** between inspiration and reality

In this chapter, I have suggested that participation has lost its edge as a productive driving metaphor. Rather it functions, in the UK context I have examined, to dilute, impede and limit opportunities for participants through binding them in established frameworks. I started this chapter with Western philosophy's despondency and cynicism (Bignall 2010), and my narrative has made the difficulties of challenging the status quo clear. However, this provides no way out. In re-casting practitioners' intentions, I carve out space to re-consider the value of the *pedagogies of hope* (Freire 1994), all be it with a dose of realism. Karl Marx asserted that *the point is not to understand the world, but to change it* (Reason and Bradbury 2001). However, the Marxist paradox is that anything positively affirming is compromised, as only negation is deemed valid critique (Nunes 2010:109). Alternatively, Deleuze and Guattari's (1983)

concept of desire, compared to desire-for something pre-determined, is a productive creative force, which can be invoked to drive inter-subjective collaboration to yet unknown possibilities.

The application of new media to kindle people's capacity to find creative routes forward attempts to harness productive desire or de Certeau's everyday creativity (Humphreys and Jones 2006, Nolas 2007). Participatory projects by their very nature intervene in contexts of power imbalance, and so tensions are inevitable between agendas. Real Time projects may always be partially successful, due to the plurality of motivations and valued consequences.[6] Nevertheless, optimistic practice discourse may also perform a social function in rousing resistance  It is important to recognise that, rather than being a distraction, emotion may play a role in creating the conditions for change. Personal empowerment is about how people subjectively feel, which drives action. The '*becoming'* ontology behind Deleuze's unambiguously generative philosophy (Bignall 2010:8-10) counters negativity with an open-ended perspective on the world (DeLanda 1999) towards the possibility of a different future.

Foucault's insight that the status quo must be perpetually re-enacted at the micro-level, means that power relations are intrinsically unstable and can unravel if tipped (Patton 2010:88). Practices such as participatory video, are a mindful experimentation between the direction provided by practice inspiration, towards an imagined better world, and the way action plays out within contextual constraint. Ongoing attempts to realise new possibilities can create the conditions for novel emergence, even if (or particularly because) what happens is unanticipated.

Theory attempts to generalise the empowerment specificity by defining it as a multi-levelled construct, that manifests at individual, group, organisational or community level. (e.g. Rappaport 1987, Zimmerman 2000 and Campbell 2004)  However, the different levels are not processually related. What is missing is a breakdown of the stages, as well as how practice progresses through them. To ground contextual exploration, I proceed in chapter 2 to define a preliminary staged model for Real Time's process, which I relate to inter-subjective theory.  This provides a theoretical foundation for my study of the subjective lived experiences of taking part, against a backdrop of external influences.

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[6] With thanks to Catherine Campbell for raising my awareness of this issue.

# Chapter 2

# Chapter 2 Towards a social psychology of empowerment through participatory video: the disjunction between abstraction and actuality

> *Practice may have to be changed into discourse in order to be analysed: specificities may have to be subjected to generalisations for their significances to be understood and communicated, however incompletely: but, equally, practice should be allowed to expose the incompleteness of theory, … and … assert the value of that which generalisations overlooks or excludes*
>
> **Fiske 1992:165**

The symbiotic and sometimes contradictory relationship between theory and practice forms the boundary between academic thought and social reality. Applying theory to frame practice is a first step toward developing understanding. Accumulated knowledge can assist the building of praxis. In turn, contextualising practice particulars can increase social awareness. The boundary between researcher and practitioner, encompassed by my dual research stance, has the potential to generate insight. In this chapter, I construct a theoretical framework for Real Time's inter-subjective processes. However, mapping specific social phenomena to concepts and back to actuality is a significant research challenge, as I explain.

The endeavour to theorise practice inevitably collides with academic (and indeed professional) *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990). In elevating the value of *distance* (Fiske 1989), researchers tend to favour the search for abstracted universals and practice generalisations, rather than concrete actuality that spoils neat congruence (Fiske 1992:156). The other problem is the ontological riddle created by studying practice, which turns it into discourse; so that by definition it is no longer practice (Bourdieu in Fiske 1992:158). To address these paradoxes at the heart of practice study, I begin in section 2.1 by describing the pilot data collected to assist with opening up the theory-practice gap. In section 2.2, I construct an initial model for Real Time's staged group process. Then in section 2.3, I ground the stages in relationship to Tuckman's (1965) group process theory, and Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) progressive facilitation model. My theoretical endeavour is underpinned by the Foucauldian insight that empowerment happens at the micro-level (see section 1.7). In section 2.3, I also draw on three social psychological frames (communicative action, conscientisation and performativity), to ground exploration of *how* empowerment happens inter-subjectively.

In section 2.4, I clarify my initial approach to opening disjunctions between theory and practice. Then in the sub-sections 2.4.1 - 2.4.4, I interrogate this gap by considering each of the main stages of Real Time's *espoused theory of practice* (Schon 1983), as synthesised from pilot interviews (section 2.1), using one of the three theoretical lenses. This involves disrupting Real Time praxis through practice examples collected ethnographically. Finally, in section 2.5, I introduce the ontology of '*becoming'* to set the scene for methodological chapter 3.

## 2.1 Pilot phase data methods: accessing Real Time's voice

As a pilot phase, before the main empirical study, I conducted 10 interviews to capture praxis discourse. I purposively selected nine Real Time personnel, to provide a range of perspectives. To assist my researcher-self in including, yet standing back from, my practitioner voice, one interview was with me. Table 2.1 shows the distribution of interviewees by primary role.

**Table 2-1 Description of pilot interviewees**

| Main Role | Second Role | No. | Male | | | Female | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 30-40 | 41-50 | 51-65 | 30-40 | 41-50 | 51-65 |
| Trustee | Practitioner | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| | Participant | 1 | | | | | | 1 |
| Director | Practitioner | 2 | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Practitioner | No second role | 3 | | | | 2 | 1 | |
| Funder | Support worker | 1 | | | | | 1 | |
| | Practitioner | 1 | 1 | | | | | |

Six of the nine interviewees were women, and all were aged 30 to 65, with most aged 41-50. All were white and European. I analysed the pilot interviews using a coding frame that focused on three elements: motivation and potential, practice (functional and relational), and contextual realities (problems and issues). I thus synthesised Real Time's starting perspectives on participatory video's possibilities and limitations, and I draw on the data in this chapter. Table 2.2 introduces the interviewees.

**Table 2-2 Pilot interviewees**

| Pseudonym | Role | Background | Date & Duration |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LUKE** | Trustee (Practitioner) | • Participatory Arts Worker<br>• Manager Community Arts Centre | 6/11/06 47'16" |
| **HELEN** | Trustee (Ex-participant) | • Voluntary sector and public sector manager<br>• Course participant 22 years ago<br>• Real Time administrator - 5 years | 6/11/06 38' 20" |
| **ALISTAIR** | Staff (Practitioner) | • Full time employee | 2/10/06 -59'30"<br>16/10/06-42'44" |
| **JESS** | Staff (Practitioner) | • Was full–time now part time employee | 13/11/06 - 59' |
| **MAGDA** | Practitioner | • Film-maker and ethnographer<br>• Real Time freelancer | 5/11/06<br>107' |
| **SARA** | Practitioner | • Freelancer - was full time employee<br>• Video-maker trained by Real Time | 20/11/06 - 80' |
| **CATHY** | Practitioner | • Freelancer - trained by Real Time<br>• Was disabilities support worker - now project manager | 15/11/06-35'33" |
| **RUTH** | Arts grant officer | • Arts manager unitary authority<br>• Grant liaison officer | 6/11/06 -54'34" |
| **OLLIE** | Financing agent (Practitioner) | • Was teacher now education project manager<br>• Freelancer - trained by Real Time | 24/7/06 - 46'27" |

During the pilot phase, I also met with Real Time colleagues five times between 2006 and 2007, to review past projects and discuss practice issues. I recorded these informal discussions in research diaries. I used a double entry diary technique. This involved writing initial entries on one side of a double page. Later I used these as stimulus for reflection with hindsight, which I recorded on the opposite page. I also mined formal Real Time documentation (see table 2.3 below), for practice examples to catalyse discussions and reflections, which is the source of this chapter's examples.

**Table 2-3 Real Time documentation**

| Document type | Documents | Source |
|---|---|---|
| **Policy documents** | • Real Time constitution and articles of association<br>• Real Time mission statement<br>• Real Time 5 year business plans (2000-2005) | Real Time archives |
| **Annual reports** | • 22 Real Time Annual Report – 1985 – 2006 (inclusive) | Real Time archives |
| **Project reports** | • 20 project evaluations selected after internal discussions | Real Time archives |
| **Research report** | • Manchester literacy project | Real Time and Council for British teachers |

## 2.2 **The theoretical starting point:** building a conceptual frame for participatory video as inter-subjective process

Viewing empowerment practice as an iterative learning process (Rifkin 1996) is fundamentally helpful. Becoming educated is not fixed by completing a particular course. Likewise empowerment is an ongoing process, and so it is ridiculous to suggest that someone is definitively empowered or not, after a particular project. Everyone feels empowered in some aspects (e.g. friends influencing peers) but not others (e.g. limited work influence). Kolb (1984), drawing on Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, provides an elegant model of the iterative cycles of experiential learning, as an adaptive process where new synthesis follows experience (Kolb 1984:25-38). Similarly, Lewin's social learning cycle, incorporating *unfreezing, moving,* and *re-freezing* (Lewin 1951, Lewin and Gold 1999, Maurer and Githens 2009), is a goal-directed process that deliberatively stimulates critical inquiry (Kolb 1984:8-11, 21-2). Dewey recognised that such processes are not cyclical but a spiral moving forward in time, which gives the potential for social movement (Kolb 1984:22-3, 132). Moreover, transformation often occurs through multiple, interconnected spirals (Maurer and Githens 2009:268). I see the Real Time context as providing the framework for inter-subjective learning, through repeated cycles of videoing activity and group reflection, towards participant-authored videos (which are the means to sustain effort towards new synthesis (Humphreys & Brézillon, 2002)). Collaborative production also directs development from group to external focus.

As my purpose is to understand specifically how it progresses, I now model Real Time's process.

### 2.2.1 **A staged process:** modelling Real Time's approach

As a beginning, I propose that Real Time's participatory video process consists of three main stages with nine building blocks, synthesized in the table 2.4 below.

**Table 2-4 Real Time's staged process**

| Staged process | Building blocks |
|---|---|
| **Stage A - opening and developing conducive social space** | • Engaging participants<br>• Increasing individual self-efficacy - confidence, capacity, and sense of 'can-do'<br>• Establishing inclusive, supportive and collaborative group dynamics |
| **Stage B - from expression to collective agency** | • Motivating social dialogue - group communication processes focusing on participants' lives and concerns<br>• Developing criticality - group reflection, questioning and re-framing<br>• Building collective agency - group identity, group purpose and collective capacity to exercise control if conditions are favourable |
| **Stage C – exercising agency and beyond** | • Group communication action through video production<br>• Social influence - showing video in wider social forums to influence others<br>• Social consequences |

Using linear models to theorise non-linear processes conceals the complexity of practice (Carr 2003). I recognise that progress through each stage is not actually linear. Breaking down a multifaceted practice into component parts risks losing flexibility and generating a potential gap in understanding how the components work together. This model misses the complex inter-relationships between the different building blocks. Nevertheless, a linear model assists as a (necessarily flawed) analytical step, especially in recognition of the time-based occurrence of these main stages.

Real Time's praxis (Shaw and Robertson 1997) does emphasise the parallel development of individual capacities alongside various aspects of group development such as exchange and team working. Rather than being one process, I view participatory video as multi-layered with several processes happening alongside each other. This model provides an initial framework before contextual exploration of how the

interconnections actualise. Next, I ground the staged process in relationship to group process theory.

### 2.3 Iterative group processes

The ongoing tension between individual and group is an essentially social psychological phenomena (Jovchelovitch 2007:72-8), between individual psychology and social context. It combines the psychological needs to both belong and assert individuality. Our identities form and evolve through participation in various groupings. Conversely, through coming together individuals negotiate shared identities, involving some subjugation to the group. In the last section, I defined a staged model for Real Time's process. To theorise this, I relate the linear main stages to Tuckman's (1965) foundational representation of the progressive dynamics of group building as summarised in table 2.5.

**Table 2-5 Unfolding group processes**

| Tuckman (1965) | Hersey and Blanchard (1977) |
|---|---|
| Forming | Directing |
| Storming | Coaching |
| Norming | Mentoring |
| Performing | Delegating |

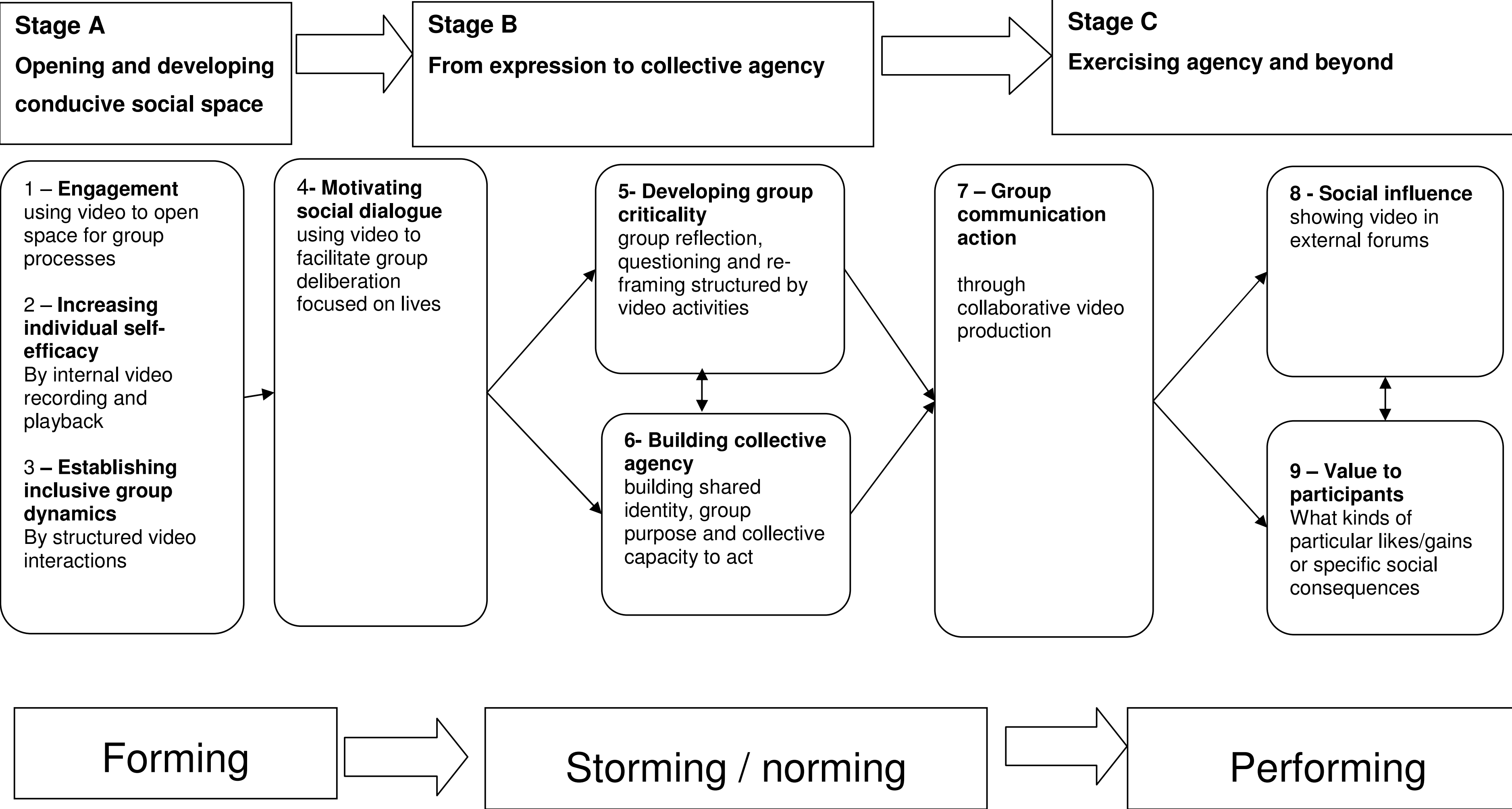
*Forming* is when the collaborative space is established, during which participants become acclimatised to the environment and group dynamics. It is characterised by both interest and reserve, as a stage of pretence (Hampton 2011) or pseudo community (Peck 1990), because participants are likely to hold back on deep perspectives and avoid controversy. During forming, individuals get to know each other through the sharing of experiences to build trust. S*torming* represents the testing that occurs as individuals find a balance between independence and group membership, as they feel more confident exploring shared group norms and divergence. It can be relatively gentle, if the participants are from similar backgrounds, or volatile if forming has repressed fundamental differences (Hampton 2011).

*Norming* occurs when participants find common ground, a shared identity and mutual purpose. Finally, the group can *perform* through putting its energy into collective action (Tuckman and Jensen 1977). This four-stage model is comparable with other conceptualisations (e.g. Lewin 1947a, Randell and Southgate 1980, Schultz 1958 in Srivastva, Obert and Nielson 1977).

Hersey and Blanchard (1977) also identified an evolving facilitation dynamic as responsibility progressively transfers to group participants. At the first stage, leaders engage in comparatively detached task directing. At the second stage, they work alongside people to guide activities and instruct as necessary. At the third stage, they step back to follow participants' interests, but remain involved to assist. Finally, practitioners hand leadership roles to participants during the fourth stage. This provides a framework for considering Real Time facilitation.

In section 2.1.1, I acknowledged that Real Time's overall process is not really linear. Figure 2.1, represents an initial conception of the non - linear building blocks of practice in relationship to Tuckman's four-staged process. This is in recognition of the temporal initiation of the main stages. For example, individual capacity building starts earlier than critical reflection (although it is ongoing). The arrows in the figure represent the interconnected building blocks. However, this framework is too general to encompass the multiple ways that processes emerge in context. Long-term projects may cycle through all these elements several times, whereas a time-limited project may concentrate on spiralling through one or two building blocks within the model.

**Figure 2-1 Initial conceptual framework for Real Time's staged video process**



As I mentioned in section 1.7, Foucault's view of power as a process of emergent social dynamic, rather than a fixed social structure (Foucault and Faubion 2000), underpins the potential of change at a micro-level. I now turn to three Foucauldian-influenced theoretical lenses, to provide insight as to how empowerment focused group processes might happen inter-subjectively as summarised in table 2.6 below.

**Table 2-6 Inter-subjective theoretical frame for Real Time's process**

| **Real Time staged process** | **Group process (Tuckman 1965)** | **Public sphere and communicative action (Habermas 1984,1989)** | **Critical pedagogy and conscientisation (Freire 1970)** | **Performativity (Butler 1990) and everyday performance (Goffman 1990)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Opening new social spaces** | Forming | Opening type 1 semi-public sphere | Critical pedagogy | Rehearsing back stage |
| **From expression to collective agency** | Storming / Norming | Communicative action – group dialogue /deliberative discourse | Internal awareness-raising or problem-posing and re-synthesis | Developing internal /external performativity |
| **Exercising agency and beyond** | Performing | Opening type 2 public spheres - communication action through showing video | External awareness-raising or problem-posing and re-synthesis | Performance front stage |

To elaborate, I introduce public spheres and communication action as the first theoretical lens.

### 2.3.1 Public spheres and communicative action

Habermas' work is part of the linguistic turn in critical theory, which identified the discursive construction of the social world (Fultner 2011:54). The challenge is how to act usefully towards commonality against the colonisation of *life worlds* (integrative socio-cultural formations) by structural interest (Heath 2011:85). Pragmatically, Habemas was interested in language's socially binding and directing force. Public spheres are social spaces, positioned between family and state, in

which people discuss matters of concern. In *The Theory of Communicative Action,* Habermas (1984) introduced the concept through the relatively brief emergence of a bourgeois version in 18$^{th}$ century Europe coffee houses, as new sites of civic influence, which informed wider social and political processes. Habermas (1989) details their decline as critical journalism took over as the main shaper of public opinion (Dalberg 2001), and currently influence is constrained by marketing, public relations spin and information overload. However, the ideal of participatory democracy rests on a just government's need to listen to public spheres (Olson 2011), and the notion is useful in grounding digital technology's application to open up new communication space. Habermas conceptualised the ideal public sphere as an accessible forum that disregards social status and economic or political affiliation (Jovchelovitch 2007:88). The notion of communicative action (Habermas 1984), or deliberation, encompasses the supposedly free and inclusive exchange amongst peers that ensues. The purpose of this dialogue is not to pursue particular strategic goals, but to establish an inter-subjective relationship of mutual understanding on a common concern (Fultner 2011:56).

In pointing to significant gender and class exclusions, and the replacement of repression with mainstream rule, Fraser (1990) amongst others (e.g. Thompson 1995) confronted Habermas' assumption that bourgeois public spheres cultivated these qualities. However, the notion can theoretically frame not only this ideal but also the many types arising in different cultures worldwide (Jovchelovitch 2007:90). Fraser (1990) proposed that counter-publics provide alternative culturally embedded forums, parallel to the mainstream, in which marginalised groups negotiate, re-frame norms and propagate their own contextualised understanding.

Real Time projects attempt to make the link between the group and the wider civic realm by instigating two sorts of positioned public spheres or counter-publics. Initially, a new social space is created in which participants interact internally alongside practitioners between the individual and the group. These type 1 spaces are semi-public, as they are not open to all. Moreover, the closed nature provides the necessary 'safe' or 'conducive' relational conditions for engaging marginalised people. Later in Real Time's processes, the focus is on opening up broader based type two publics 'in-between' the group and the outside world (whether horizontal or vertical). This means that theorising Real Time's processes involves unravelling the basic social psychological tensions as project actors interact in these two types of social space. Furthermore, the idea of conducive social space does not encompass the need to facilitate bottom-up communicative action (section 1.4.1), which I frame by considering Paulo Freire's pedagogy.

### 2.3.2 Critical pedagogy and conscientisation

Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy (1970, 1974) provides inspiration for many in its call to transform the educative relationship. The teacher-student dynamic in Freire's (1972:45) model encourages participants to build their own knowledge of reality, through thinking critically about forces that shape their lives. He contrasts this with *banking education*, where teachers deposit knowledge into passive students. His emphasis on the crucial importance of the teacher's *approach* echoes my concern with the practice interactions between Real Time's participants and practitioners.

The relationship between Freire's *pedagogues,* or Gramsci's *intellectuals* (Gramsci in Ledwith 2005:119), and their students is envisaged as *active and reciprocal,* so that every participant also teaches. This focus on the importance of power sharing usefully frames study of how relational practice is *experienced*. However, Freire is also criticised because his ideal relationship sets up impossible expectations (Blackburn 2000). Practitioners, however well intentioned, have to juggle multiple demands and commitments. As with the other motivational narratives discussed (e.g. section 1.3), critical pedagogy provides inspiration against which reality can be compared, but it is important to face up to the contradictions and ambiguities of facilitated empowerment. For instance, Freire has been reproached (e.g. Ellsworth 1989) because his language implies a relationship of domination, which is what makes practitioners feel uncomfortable:

> *I don't use empowerment as terminology … I am a bit frightened that it might be patronising... the process …help[s] bring people's own existing power into play… but I don't want that mixed up with me.*
>
> **Magda- practitioner**

I do not think practitioners impart power to their indebted participants or control change. Participants are not inert victims, but major actors in shaping project processes. Even the least assertive can refuse to engage, whereas practitioners are obliged to be there. However, viewing practitioners as disinterested rather than active agents obscures their role. Professional empowerment practice, as I have identified (section 1.5.1) is a form of agency characterised by mutual dynamics (Kreisburg 1992) between project actors. Indeed, to not own or under-use practitioner agency is misuse of power (Barstow 2008). Practitioners' exercise of power-with is thus not a bad thing, but this is sometimes misunderstood, leading to uncertainty.

> *if it were real empowerment, wouldn't people just do it? There are then conflicts – is it what the worker wants to happen, or is it the participants … Is it wrong that the worker decides? What's the right balance of that?*
>
> **Luke – Real Time**

The implied superiority contained in terms such as change agents, animateurs, or intellectuals is discomforting, but it is important to remember that there is no associated inequality in human dignity. The power differential implicit in the helper/helped roles is part of the function (Barstow 2008:300). My practical experience leads me to agree that the practitioners' approach, and the dynamics they catalyse, are vital to good practice (e.g. Rowlands 1995), as reflected in participatory video writing (e.g. Henault 1991, White 2003). *Empowerment is a process that cannot be imposed by outsiders – although appropriate external support can speed up and encourage it* (Rowlands 1995). More significantly, inappropriate facilitation can disempower, as when video projects run by technicians become product-led (White 2003:40-4).

Because methodological discourse has overlooked practitioners' agency, there is a lack of understanding about the particulars of how relational practice helps or hinders, and this too is context-specific. For some, facilitation is transitory, and some (e.g. learning disabled people) may always need collaborators alongside them or they are set up to fail. Practitioners must recognise their power-over the group, and own their agency with eyes wide open to the necessary negotiations to prevent the re-enforcement of existing power structures to the detriment of the group.

> *Part of our task then must be to specify what these relationships are like for people, organisations, and communities. What is the nature of the settings in which empowerment is developed or inhibited?*
>
> **(Rappaport 1987:130)**

Next, I introduce Freire's (1970, 1974) method to position Stage B of Real Time's process. Freire developed *conscientisation* in Brazil, whilst teaching illiterate people in contexts of extreme poverty. In contrast to the imposition of *expert* knowledge in traditional pedagogy, he used participants' everyday life experiences to involve them in what he called a *dialogical encounter* (Freire 1974). This is comparable to deliberation, but Freire, like Gramsci, placed more emphasis on the need to counter Nietzsche's legion of metaphors (Reason and Bradbury 2001:6) supporting the status quo by addressing false consciousness.

Of course, many oppressed people understand the causes of their predicament very well, but lack the means to address them. However, I agree with Gramsci and Freire that often the drive for change does not arise spontaneously because of the insidious nature of hegemony (Ledwith 1997 see section 1.3.1). Our minds are colonised by dominant norms about how we should think and be, resulting in unquestioned consent to the status quo (Forgacs 1988:422). Freire (1970) believed everyone has the capacity to break through the *culture of silence,* in which marginalised knowledge is latent, through c*onscientisation*.

As a first step participants diagnose their situation (Jovchelovitch 2007) in a collaborative process at the boundaries of knowledge domains. Participants are experts on their situation and practitioners in facilitation skills. Practitioners use structured techniques to stimulate group interaction and to prompt participants in unearthing contradictions through specific questions. However, participants' priorities direct the process of contextualised problem identification. Then, in the next phase of the process, participants re-frame their experiences and synthesise new less damaging group norms before identifying collective ways forward.

Using literacy as the engagement hook, Freire (1974) maintained that *understanding words* was inseparable from *reading the world.* These ideas have inspired many similar processes, and visual projections such as diagramming and mapping are considered useful (e.g. Pretty, Guijt, Thompson and Scoones 1995:77-80). In the communication age, there is a need to develop audio-visual literacy, as well as fluency in the new digital communication arenas. Digital media are thus thought suitable tools for Freirian processes (e.g. Laney 1997; Chambers 2005), and parallels are drawn between conscientisation and Real Time's processes (Shaw and Robertson 1997:170-1).

I now introduce performativity as the third theoretical lens.

### 2.3.3 Performativity and performance in everyday practice

Performativity usefully frames exploration of what participatory video does in context for those involved, because it resources a shift beyond representation. The concept developed from Austin's (1975) recognition that speech does not merely describe or reflect reality, but in many cases does something in itself. Speech-acts are thus performed as a type of productive action (Austin 1975:6) that can build social co-ordination or bonding/binding relationships. Habermas saw illocutionary force as what is accomplished by the performative act, or the communicative function of the

utterance (Fultner 2011:58). Perlocution refers to the supplementary affects on people (Loxley 2007:18). For instance, if a practitioner says 'it is your turn on the camera', the illocutionary intention is to ensure individual participation, but the perlocutionary effect may be for that person to feel encouraged or put on the spot.

Speech acts (Searle 1979:16) include assertives (e.g. reports and statements), directives (e.g. orders and requests), commissives (e.g. promises and swearing) and expressives (e.g. congratulating or apologising). Although the categories are not always practically distinct, when participants use video to tell how things are, to ask questions or make requests, to commit to plans, or to express what they feel, they are engaged in performative actions. This thesis explores what such practice does in actual context, in terms of its illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect.

The related notion of everyday *performance* (Goffman 1990) is also useful. All social practices are public performances through which the self is actualised. Two aspects are particularly pertinent. Firstly, Goffman's everyday actors are fundamentally plural, or polyphonic (Bakhtin 1984), playing out different versions of themselves (Highmore 2002a) depending on contextual expectations within the *game* of modern life (Jagger 2008:23). This avoids the dilemma created in distinguishing between authentic or inauthentic performatives. Secondly, Goffman (in Highmore 2002b:51-6), like Austin (Loxley 2007:144) used theatrical metaphors, such as front and back stage, to highlight the different way social actors behave depending on whether they are in formal situations (on set) or behind the scenes. I have initially characterised Real Time's type one semi-publics as back stage and external video screening forums as front stage.

Building on Foucault's conception that inter-subjective processes shape subjectivity, Judith Butler re-moulded performativity with a distinctive Foucauldian twist (Jagger 2008). In *Gender Trouble,* Butler (1990) argued that gendered identity is not dependent on pre-given binary sexual difference, which merely seems innate and essential. Instead, it forms through the repeated performance of recognised stylised acts conditioned by heterosexual norms. These reflect tacit collective agreement about how women should be (Loxley 2007:120-1). We thus become women through speaking, moving, dressing and interacting in particular ways, as a kind of obligatory cultural performance (Jagger 2008:20). This suggests that identity is not a foundational inner core of being, that is externalised through representation, but a consequence of active doing.

Butler's insight that *doing* gender requires a *sustained* performance is also productive. Although *the embodying of norms, is a compulsory practice … it is never quite carried out according to expectations* (Butler in Loxley 2007:124). This means that gender identity is always in a state of becoming rather than fixed and unmoving. This provides the performative potential for change. By extension, all identity categories are vulnerable and could be subverted through alternative rupturing performances.

Butler's (1990) contention that identity is not foundational, but a consequence of active doing is theoretically innovative. All social life can be perceived as a process of *becoming* (emergent) rather than in a state of *being* (Deleuze 1988). This underpins my theoretical inclination towards the ontology of '*becoming'* (e.g. Chia 1997:695-7), as an appropriate orientation for studying emergent practice (Steinberg 2007b). Performativity and everyday performance from the *becoming* perspective productively frame Real Time's practice, with the project opening a space between social boundaries in which to perform something different. Positioning participants in new roles and unfamiliar situations is performative in enabling change to unfold (Hiller 2005). Through *doing* social action, participants are indeed *becoming* social actors.

In the next section, I problematise praxis by discussing Real Time's practice in relationship to the three theoretical lenses I have defined.

## 2.4 **Feeding the double hermeneutic:** problematising Real Time's praxis through anecdotal theorising

When studying an evolving practice such as participatory video, it is appropriate to first look at practitioners' perspectives. Real Time practitioners are the natives, with intimate understanding of the territory beyond abstractions. They have much practical experience navigating the slippery paths and bumpy terrain along the way, such as the conflicting agendas and contradictory roles. Part of my task is to uncover this tacit knowledge through exploring the multiple dimensions (who, what, how, why, and what for) of practitioner knowledge (Jovchelovitch 2007:16). However, practice is itself socially constructed. Actions result from practitioners' beliefs, and create and maintain their reality (Berger and Luckman 1966:20-1). Despite being major actors in forming practice boundaries, professional practitioners necessarily have biases and blind spots due to their immersion (e.g. Haraway 1988).

*Reflection (knowing)-in-action* (Schon 1983:49-69) is how experienced practitioners think creatively on their feet to deal with unique and difficult situations. Reflective practice or explicit *reflection-on-practice* (Schon 1983) is a way for practitioners to consider real-life field experiences, particularly if they do not fit current models, to make this knowledge explicit. It is a mental processing, which moves beyond basic certainties, to deal with the uncertain and the provisional (Moon 2005) and thus extend and transform praxis. Reflection is an evolving capacity with five stages (noticing, making sense, making meaning, working with meaning and transformative learning (Moon 2002)), which is why making sense of critical incidents, or everyday events that manifest disjunction is a good start. There is also value in considering a range of similar incidents or different perspectives to help deepen insight (Van Manen 1991).

I conceptualise my initial reflections as anecdotal theorising (Gallop 2002, Nolas 2007:230), where stories about practice are mined (Gallop 2002:2) as prompts and pointers for the nuanced understanding offered. This provides a way of rupturing the inspiration/ frustration dichotomy of typical practice narratives and negotiating between the universal and the particular.

In section 2.4, I consider in turn each Real Time practice stage. In each sub-section I firstly summarise Real Time's perspectives synthesised from pilot interviews. My theoretical framework in table 2.6 makes it clear that each area of inter-subjective theory is applicable across the overall Real Time process. However, pragmatically, I consider each Real Time stage in relationship to one of the three main theoretical lenses. I thus problematise Real Time's *theory of practice* (Schon 1983), by looking at disjunctions between espoused praxis and actuality. To do this I draw ethnographically on practice examples that arose during the pilot reflective process, documented in my research diaries, as explained at the start of this chapter. Firstly, I consider the function participatory video performs at the opening stage.

### 2.4.1 **Opening conducive social spaces:** Problematising Real Time's practice at stage A

I identify three main problems in the practical endeavour to open up new type 1 counter-publics. Firstly, the problem of engagement, which continues the discussion of the intervention dynamic started in section 1.4.2. Secondly, although individual development is an important first step towards group agency (section 1.5.1), the question of where it leads remains. Thirdly, the issue of how well group processes

actually achieve inclusive communication dynamics (section 2.1.3.) Table 2.7 synthesises Real Time's perspectives on what participatory video offers in establishing a conducive environment in the type-1 project spaces.

**Table 2-7 Stage A: Opening and developing inclusive forums**

| **Process themes in pilot interviews** | **Researcher's synthesis of Real Time perspective** | **Real Time illustrative quotes from pilot interviews** |
|---|---|---|
| **1- Engaging participants** | • Video is an enjoyable medium that provides the rationale for participation in a group process | ***Magda*** *Video provides the group with a common focus that... gives them something to work on together …*<br>***Jess*** *There's a lot of learning that can be done in an informal way, it's not based on reading and writing* |
| **2- Increasing individual self-efficacy** | • Gaining technical and communication capacity builds overall confidence<br>• Showing participants talking knowledgeably builds positive self-image<br>• Being listened to values participants<br>• Succeeding at video tasks increases self-efficacy | ***Sara*** *On an individual level, people have ... used equipment they didn't think they could use... overcoming that breaks down lots of other barriers*<br>***Alistair*** *They're talking... to the camera in a focused and articulate way. They come over very strong, in a way that they haven't experienced*<br>***Magda*** *People have said things like 'nobody ever listens to me', and when I had the camera on me I really felt they were listening*<br>***Jess*** *Making video ... can change peoples' view of themselves and what they can achieve in the future* |
| **3 – Establishing inclusive and collaborative group dynamics** | • Facilitators manage activities to create an inclusive dynamic | ***Jess*** *Everyone takes part in every activity, so everyone has a go at the camera, everyone is given space to speak on the microphone...* |

I now problematise Real Time's *espoused theory of practice* on the opening of new social spaces by turning to actual experience of those *theories-in-use* (Schon 1983).

**Problematising participant engagement**

Opening inclusive or 'safe' spaces needs appropriate organisation (Dalberg 2001). Structured engagement, like Real Time's practice framework, is crucial to involving marginalised people, as they are unlikely to enter the civic arena directly. Real Time thinks video is a good hook (see table 2.7 above), because it generates motivation and revolves around participants' lives. Many regard video as suitable because it is accessible to all, regardless of literacy, creative confidence or academic

achievement (e.g. Stuart 1989; Tomaselli and Prinslo 1990, Braden 1999). However, engagement needs context- appropriate ways of attracting participants in that it can deter as well as attract. Additionally, the asymmetrical power relationship (Giddens 1991b) created by the '*othering'* dynamic identified in section 1.4.2 leads to further practical issues, as in the following example:

**Table 2-8 Project example- young people**

**In 2006, Real Time ran a project to explore identity with second generation BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) young people:**

> *It's actually quite hard to engage young people in a project that they didn't devise or understand the point of …. Real Time did a lot recruitment … there were a good proportion of black participants - we couldn't say those white friends can't take part - they gelled as a group … and they understood the themes and wanted to learn video-making …. then the organisers arrived … and said, 'the problem is …. they're all middle class'….*

**Sara**

**Practitioners then had to chase people who fitted the stereotype of BME disadvantage:**

> *we interviewed one of the managers contacts … he was playing up to the camera … 'yeah, it's hard on the streets, man' but he was engaging and funny and I felt truthful about school. The organisers said 'well … it's a load of clichés'. He was allowed to speak but then not considered mature enough. Some were too middle class, and some not middle class enough, but certainly all of them were wrong*

**Sara**

Categories (institutions, classes, cultures) and registers (ideologies, and prejudices) predicate projects arising from the binary view of power (Rabinow and Rose 2003: xv). Table 2.8 shows these participants had their own motivations. They exerted power by using participation for their own ends, or by playing with attempts to categorise them. However, framing them as *disadvantaged* was limiting and clearly problematic in real world practice.

### Problematising capacity building

Perceived self-efficacy (Bandura 1977, 1995), or *can-do*, encompasses the extent to which people believe they can achieve in a context. Self-efficacy is influenced by experience, comparison with others, encouragement or discouragement and stress responses (Bandura 1994). People with high self-efficacy perceive challenges to overcome, whereas those who lack it avoid action in case they fail. Real Time

practitioners believe video is particularly confidence building because many participants are techno-phobic. Discovering that they *can* operate the equipment, or speak up on camera, is assumed to transform their overall sense of can-do (e.g. Mayer 2000, Guidi 2003). In addition, practitioners think that being heard on playback increases participants' confidence that they have something worth saying.

However, there are problems with these assumptions, in addition to the tendency of constructing practice from practitioners' partisan perspective alone. Firstly, it expects a lot from participants' use of equipment and appearing on a monitor. The assumption is that such gains are context-transcending but they may be context bound. Secondly, if watching yourself on playback can be powerful, it could also be damaging. The point is what helps some might hinder others, emphasising the importance of understanding the diversity of possible responses. Finally, there is an assumption that creating the conditions for eureka moments, which expand horizons, is necessarily a good thing. For instance:

***An elderly woman on a project in sheltered accommodation said 'I could have worked for the BBC'. Is it fair to set up potential regrets about a life not lived. Similarly, a mental health support worker, talking about a project with patients at a psychiatric hospital, said a participant still identified the video project as the best thing he had ever done fifteen years later. She meant it positively, but it is fairly damming that despite his enthusiasm, he had no chance to continue.***

**JS - Researcher diary**

Is there any value in increasing self-efficacy, if it does not result in the chance to realise new aspirations? Research (e.g. Lewin 1946, Gergen and Gergen 2004) does indicate that group processes increase the likelihood of individual change transcending the project context This is illustrated by classic action research on US eating habits in the Second World War (Lewin 1946). Women given information by lecture only were compared with those who took part in discussions afterwards. Changes in eating habits were shown to be more likely to be implemented in the home if the impetus followed a group decision. Group interaction is thus often seen as an important part of empowerment-focused practices, and the third building block in Real Time's Stage A is concerned with establishing an environment in which all can participate.

**Problematising facilitation of inclusive group dynamics**

Most criticism of Habermas' inclusive model for communicative action arises because of its idealism, as opinion exchange is never completely free (Jacobson 2000). It is clearly naïve to think that pure understanding is the only motivation in participatory project processes. Returning to the BME project discussed earlier in this section, this was obvious:

> ***we did work with some recent refugees.... the thing that came across was they didn't think of themselves as outsiders ... and they faced similar difficulties to other young people … That did not go down very well …. we were not funded to find that BME young people face the same problems, but that … they're special needing special solutions because that's what the organisation exists for***
>
> **Sara**

In addition, social psychological knowledge on group dynamics indicates there are other limits on free expression such as *risky shift*, the *Abilene paradox*, *group think* and *coercive persuasion* (Cooke 2001:103). For instance, the Abilene paradox is that group-members may second-guess what others want to hear, leading to collective decisions that no one agrees with.

Real Time practitioners intervene purposely in the group dynamics to create opportunities for all the participants. One specific example of how video is applied to support inclusive dynamics is that each person takes a turn on the microphone during videoed exercises, which intends to open space for everyone to speak, and prevent particular individuals dominating or remaining silent. This action to level the playing field is a foundational aspect of Real Time practice. However, equality is utopian, and enforced access does not sound very empowering. Some Real Time interviewees did indeed question whether this approach benefits everyone:

> ***In 1995, a project took place with, long-term unemployed people. Participants had low self-esteem after failure to gain work. The group made a video about employment barriers including skill currency, age and disability discrimination and the benefit trap. One man was extremely overbearing, and usually took group decisions. Practitioners acted overtly and repeatedly to enable others to speak, which meant exercising their own agency assertively and unequally to prevent him talking for and over others.***
>
> **JS - Researcher diary**

It is clear that this action might have destabilised this particular man, especially as he had low self-esteem. Practice can be this contradictory mixture of both including

some and excluding others, as this and the previous identity example shows. This paradox was reflected in the wider UK context during Positive Futures (section 1.6). Positive Futures (2005) was a national multi-million pound initiative that aimed to reduce youth crime by providing sports resources, with participatory video used as a participatory evaluation process. One insight was that in including young men's stories, young women were excluded (Nolas 2007:260). Yet, before assuming engaging young women requires a different intervention, it is necessary to know more about the specifics of application. What helps and hinders depends on the particular approach, activities and context, and is not always straightforward or intuitive. The illusion of neutral facilitation, which arises from the positivist myth of objectivity, is highlighted as a major misunderstanding (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Real Time's approach is clearly not passive, and I do not think it should be, but it is necessary to be more honest about its purpose and effect. In the following, I look at stage B practice.

### 2.4.2 **From social expression to collective agency:** problematising Real Time's practice at stage B

At stage B, Real Time applies video processes to raise awareness and build purpose through group interaction on mutual concerns. Real Time places great faith in video's capacity to stimulate participants' exploration. Recording exercises provides the catalyst for social exchange. Practitioners think videoing likes and dislikes in the locality prompts participants to examine their situation, and that video focuses attention as synthesised in table 2.7 below.

**Table 2-9 Stage B: criticality and group agency**

| Process themes | Researcher's synthesis of Real Time perspective | Real Time illustrative quotes |
|---|---|---|
| **4– Motivating social dialogue** | • Basic video recording capacities catalyse group interaction<br>• Video content is based on context of participants' everyday lives | ***Alistair*** *we focus on people and their lives so they all have things to say and … that motivates them further*<br>***Cathy*** *It's good fun … people like to talk about themselves*<br>***Sara*** *although we also do... drama, this comes out of real experiences* |
| **5- Developing criticality** | • Playback promotes group reflection<br>• Video is a tool for exploration and questioning<br>• Discussion after recording builds participant views | ***Jess*** *talking about yourself... and then watching back and thinking about.... what you said...it provides a way of stepping back*<br>***Magda*** *the immediate playback after each activity ... helps self-reflection*<br>***Ollie*** *going out videoing, you can look at your situation ...in a more considered way... what you like and don't like* |
| **6- Building collective agency** | • Finding shared experiences builds group identity<br>• Deciding on a video provides purpose<br>• Making a video focuses and directs group action | ***Jess*** *developing the group's ideas and views – they find a common theme... and then video provides a way to take them forward*<br>***Alistair****- I saw video as way of upholding a collective working principle - the whole group engages in the content creation* |

Table 2.7 also shows the practitioner intention is that reflection and critical re-framing follows video activities, but I now problematise conscientisation in actual practice.

Freire believed that naming the world through reflective dialogue changes it (Freire 1972:62, Freire and Macedo 1987), because fresh perception in itself transforms participants' positioning. However, can empowerment really result from awareness-raising alone (Bourdieu 2000)? I perceive three main practical issues: developing criticality takes time and input, the idea of powerless participants and powerful educators does not encompass the nuanced relationships involved, and finally whether inciting discontent is justified.

The first two result from problematical false consciousness. The assumption that people do not comprehend their own real interests without awareness-raising is paternalistic (Lukes 2005:149), but acknowledging this haunts practice attempts to stimulate criticality. The result is an 'anything goes' approach because practitioners feel unable to challenge. However, without input, there is a tendency for participants

to perpetuate usual media representations and damaging stereotypes. For instance, on youth projects I have encountered several occasions when the only black participant volunteered to act as the criminal in a video. I think it is necessary to engage with false consciousness even if uncomfortable, as there is no point in a practitioner being there if they are not able to exercise agency. Participants are experts in their own experiences of inequality, which they can draw on. However, hegemony means that unravelling contradictions takes time for most even with input. Further, conscientisation is not only intellectual, but also a dynamic cyclical process of action and reflection (Blackburn 2000). An initial group video is unlikely to lead to radical re-framing, as participants are finding their feet developing new communication skills. For example:

> ***Learning-disabled adults at a day centre, first made a drama about going to a nightclub. Their desire to show themselves doing something most would take for granted, reflects the restrictions on their lives. However, funders were disappointed as they hoped for a hard-hitting issue-based documentary.***
>
> **JS - Researcher diary**

To reach new insight, participants need adequate time to develop in-depth reflection. Real Time's process is iterative, and more than one cycle of production action is necessary to progress criticality and creativity. Lack of sustained support for further iterations is one reason why videos confirm majority views or outside agents' expectations. However, the assumption that further reflection and action cycles will lead to increased criticality, rather than re-producing hegemonic norms, is questionable however long a project runs (Campbell and MacPhail 2002).

In the context of a two-year project with young people in Northern Ireland (Bryson 2003), despite personal gains and increased self-advocacy, participants were unable to engage substantially in contentious political issues This was because they wanted to escape previous divisions, and also because of the real risks of disclosure. This project highlighted the lack of realism in expecting participants to reach commonality on issues that had been unresolved for many decades in adult society (Bryson 2003). In discussing a project challenging the stigmatisation of sex workers in India, Cornish (2006) asks how people are to find alternative visions when faced with the weight of entrenched symbolic exclusion. It is unfair to expect stressed groups to find solutions to difficult problems alone. Moreover, Freire's educative relationship positions project actors awkwardly in this respect, as it is not apparent when or if practitioners should bring up difficult issues.

***The learning-disabled adults were then funded to make a video about bullying. As practitioner, I felt very uncomfortable raising an obviously painful issue. Interviewing required participants to talk about long past experiences, which was difficult for them. The context thus placed me in a position where I considered that I misused group trust in order to satisfy the desire for a meaningful product. This was not justified, as there was no benefit to them and no support available to help any emergent feelings.***

**JS - Researcher diary**

Raising awareness by asking people to disclose themselves can easily leave participants feeling worse, and it is ethically questionable to kindle discontent, even if participant driven, unless there is a way to move forward. Developing criticality is a step in empowerment processes, but greater knowledge is necessary about the conditions that enable action towards something better. In the following, I look at the consequences from inter-subjective action using video.

### 2.4.3 Exercising agency and beyond: Real Time's practice at stage C

Real Time believes that part of video's potential comes from its relationship to the dominant media. Because Western culture places values in technology:

> *Video is particularly useful … because it represents television, which is such an everyday influence … It's a symbol of power*
>
> **Magda**

Having control of video technology is perceived to re-position participants more powerfully in *itself*, as it instigates new social dynamics.

> *the camera sets up an interaction between you and the world around you … you have a group … they just ask and people talk … suddenly there's dialogue with others*
>
> **Alistair**

.

Furthermore, I suggest that video production conventions re-position participants more powerfully in these interactions. Convention is an important aspect of illocutionary force because performative acts invoke usual procedures (Loxley 2007:51) and require particular responses. For instance, a participant interviewer is more likely to get a question answered, because that is the norm of the production relationship. This is also a factor in video screenings, as conventionally an audience watches and listens.

As I discussed in section 1.5.2, the overall purpose of Real Time's process lies in the social consequences. However, because practice is open-ended, there is no specific indication as to what participant re-positioning will do for them. In this respect, Real Time's discourse is unfalteringly one of potential:

> *I think when you run a video project, it just has a capacity to evolve. People can be actively involved being interviewed... then it opens dialogue... it brings different people together and gets them talking informally... it builds networks and connections ... but in an organic way*
>
> **Alistair**

I now problematise Stage C of Real Time's process.

### 2.4.4 **Playing with fire:** finding agency within a story of unpredictable, uncontrollable and unintended consequences

In exploring gender, Butler (1990:525) did not underestimate the weight of women's systematic subjugation, or the need to transform hegemonic thinking. However, like Foucault she contended that the micro-processes that constrain also provide resistive possibility. I identify two main problems here. Firstly, performative action cannot control the perlocutionary consequences, and secondly, if the doer is only realised in what is done inter-subjectively, what it means subjectively is lost.

Bertrand Russell (1938) characterized power as *the production of intended effects* (Russell in Lukes 2005:76), but exercising social power whether by action or inaction often has unintended consequences beyond the actor's control (Lukes 2005:70-80):

> ***In 1990, Real Time worked with council tenants to make 'A Funny Kind of democracy', which responded to the legislation requiring council tenants to vote to avoid council houses being sold to private landlords. The local councillor responded negatively when the video was shown in a council meeting. Subsequently he was de-selected in local elections.***
>
> **JS - Researcher diary**

Council officers and participants perceived this unintended consequence as a positive result for the locality, but using video can be playing with fire. Sometimes participants are burned:

.

***In 2002, Real Time worked with an organisation that brings together physically disabled and able-bodied people. The biggest contextual issue emerged early on. Disabled participants were actively involved in every aspect of videoing. However, it soon transpired that able-bodied members generally acted for them (whether help was wanted or not). The project had created space for disabled people to disrupt attitudes to them, which seems a good outcome. Unfortunately, some committee members reacted aggressively to the unintended challenge to normal dynamics. The atmosphere became so unpleasant for some disabled members that they left***

**JS - Researcher diary**

Video's power to disrupt can be viewed as a way of tackling oppressors. For example, parents in Vietnam used video to confront the headmaster of a corrupt school, where pupils were barred unless they paid (Braden and Huong 1998). However, encouraging groups to use video as a stick to beat individuals or confront authority is potentially divisive and ethically questionable. It can encourage bullying by those with camera control. In addition, expressing dissident views can bring participants up against powerful interest groups, and leave them not only exposed but sometimes actually in danger.

Video ethics are contradictory in practice. The Vietnamese villagers recognised there were risks, but felt their children's education was too important not to speak out. However, practitioners thought they placed more faith in Oxfam's (project initiator) ability to protect them than was realistic (Braden and Huong 1998:56). Consequences ignited by video are obviously not controllable, and it is irresponsible for cultural outsiders to leave participants vulnerable.

In the UK context of the Positive Future's (2005) project outlined in section 2.2.2, an ambiguous picture was painted in terms of the empowerment agenda (Nolas 2007). In one setting, young men's and youth workers' control of the equipment was used to discipline young women's behaviour (Nolas 2007:196). Not only are the perlocutionary affects of video projects unpredictable, but it is not always obvious what constitutes success:

***In 2006, a project with travellers on a permanent site intended to initiate interaction between the council and this excluded group. The community worker and practitioners thought the project a success because participants used video to celebrate and value cultural traditions. However, participants did not want to show their video to outsiders, and thus refused the possibility of communicating their needs to the council.***

**JS - Researcher diary**

These participants have valid reasons for subverting projects to their own ends and refusing council agendas. Furthermore, this identifies that there are differing perspectives of not only motivation, but also what is valued in consequence. It is necessary to develop positioned parameters for success, but this highlights the limits of Foucauldian theory.

While inter-subjective theory provides a framework for understanding how empowerment can happen through the back and forth of micro-interaction (Foucault 1977, 1980), it does not go far enough. Butler's understanding of identity performance stems from a post-structuralist view of the subject, as constituted through discourse. The subject is thus not the cause of action but produced through *doing* (Butler 1988:520), which is in contrast to Goffman's plural selves who perform various roles. This means the underlying 'I' of humanist concern becomes an illusion, as there is no core being that pre-exists action (Jagger 2008:18). This creates an issue for agency. How can social relationships change, if there is no antecedent subject outside them to initiate resistance? How are new possible selves formed, if there is no doer to actualise what is done (Assister 1996:10-12)? Such theory does not help to clarify particular motivations or what those involved gain for themselves. I now complete this chapter by establishing '*becoming'* as the most appropriate meta-theory to ground my study of practice.

## 2.5 **Synthesis:** Studying emergent practice – tactics towards *becoming*

*Reality is ever changing and the challenge is how to live with that change*

**Williams 2003:5**

My discussion of Butler's performativity has underpinned my shift towards studying practice from the perspective of '*becoming'*. The dynamic and constantly evolving nature of reality has often escaped attention because of habits of Western thinking (Chia 1997:695). Discrete attributes of the world that positivists discover, and the pervasive tendency to study '*being'* (stable states, isolatable entities and enduring dichotomies) simply reflect an entrenched ontology. An alternative view of reality as in perpetual flux - of emergence, transformation and retreat (Whitehead 1985), is intuitively more appropriate to studying evolving practices intending to catalyse the possibilities for new dynamics to emerge, or space for what might be.

A *becoming* philosophy is not new. It can be traced back to Ancient Greece and Heraclitus' focus on the emergent world (Gray 2004:17), as well as the Chinese Daoist view of nature as an ongoing changing balance between different energetic

tendencies (Lao Tze 2002). It re-surfaced through Whitehead's (e.g. 1929, 1948) flux philosophy and Bergson's interest in movement and transition (e.g. Bergson 1913). Complexity scientists have also re-empathised dynamic transformation (e.g. Prigogine 1980), with stable states in far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics considered an illusionary and temporary condition in the flow between intensity differences (DeLanda 2002).

*Becoming* as a process-based ontology prioritises a focus on doing, relatedness, interaction, movement, and transformation (Chia 1997:697). Despite introducing many unfamiliar terms, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) provide a meticulously hewn philosophy to guide study of the dynamics of emergence. Experimenting with what might happen through new interconnections between multiple influences can move social dynamics beyond the status quo so that something new can arise. This addresses the Lacanian/Freudian catch caused by favouring the psychological over the social and the Habermasian reverse misconception (Hillier 2005:279). Moreover, *becoming* is appropriate to understanding the uncompleted and changeable reality of people's lives, in which difficult conditions cannot be simply overturned, as it acknowledges progress towards something better against unavoidable contextual constraints.

As a narrative, at least in part, of operating on adversarial territory (section 1.3), I also draw on the Michel de Certeau's investigation of the inventiveness of everyday practices (de Certeau 1984, Nolas 2007). Foucault's insight was in how power re-produces not in explicit force or rules, but at the everyday micro-level (e.g. Highmore 2002b:10, Hook 2010:78). De Certeau's (1984: xiv) complementary contribution was to highlight the creative tactics used by those caught in the dominant social order to subvert or de-stabilise from within. My study is of Real Time's tactics towards *becoming*.

In this chapter, I have grounded participatory video's inter-subjective processes through communicative action, critical pedagogy and performativity. This provides a framework for conceptualising *how* empowerment happens. I also clarified the knowledge gap about what such processes do subjectively, and grounded this through the ontology of *becoming*. In chapter three, I narrate the development of the study methodology as I progressed from action research design and data collection process to capture '*becoming'*.

# Chapter 3

# Chapter 3 **Researching participatory video practice:** between practice disjunction and multi-perspective sense-making

> *Action research is directed towards studying, reframing and reconstructing social practices. If practices are constructed in social interaction between people, changing practices is a social process*
>
> **Kemmis and McTaggart 2005:563**

Action research is concerned with praxis, a concept that integrates practice and theory. Indeed, Parker declares that '*there is nothing as theoretical as a good practice'* (Parker 2005:125) needs to supplement Lewin's original statement of the reverse (Lewin 1947b). Action research is the meta-methodology considered most appropriate to exploring lived practical knowledge in order to inform a community of practice (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Practitioners' essentially active role and the centrality of their experiences (e.g. Noffke and Somekh 2005:90) convinced me of its suitability as an overall design.

Although all forms of action research aim to improve practice through active fieldwork (Reason and Bradbury 2001), it is not a singular phenomenon. It has evolved from diverse roots including (amongst others) Aristotle's phronesis, Lewin's social experiments, Gramsci's teaching, Fals Borda's liberation praxis and Heron's co-operative enquiry (Reason and Bradbury 2006:3). There is distinction between conventional, critical and dialogical action research processes (Maurer and Githens 2009:273-9). Most organisational action research is *conventional*, usually instigated top-down to solve problems through a (supposedly value free) linear process. Practitioners often have any subversive, critical or dialogical intention severely constrained by management interest. *Critical* action research (or participatory action research), like critical pedagogy, is highly value-led, and concerned with the intention to change iniquitous social contexts through overtly questioning assumptions and power dynamics. *Dialogic* action research, akin to Habermas' deliberation (Fultner 2011), is a pragmatic social inquiry (Greenwood and Levin 1998) specifically concerned in evolving mutual understanding (verstehen) between different social positions and cultures. The goal is to open ongoing dialogue (Flyvbjerg 2001) with all the actors affected (Habermas 1989), so it often requires at least double-loop engagement (Maurer and Githens 2009).

Action research about practice, or reflective practice is carried out by insiders (Kemmis and McTaggart 2003, Noffke and Somekh 2005), with practitioner-researchers unearthing implicit knowledge through a cyclical process of action and

critical reflection. This was my starting point as described in section 2.4. Critical reflective practice is a way to move beyond good intentions (Greenwood and Levin 2005). However, as I have said (section 2.4), practitioners' own culture cannot be so easily escaped (e.g. Foley and Valenzuela 2005:218). To generate knowledge of *how* practice works in a socially constructed world (Reason and Bradbury 2006:3), it was essential to explore the experience plurality (Cheek and Gough 2005), and the *double hermeneutic* (Gergen 1973, Giddens 1984, 1987) of practice formation. As the study progressed, I drew on the idea that action research is communicative action in itself (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005), to justify an increasingly collaborative approach, and used my practitioner voice as a resource to improve research dialogue (Holstein and Gubrium 2004), rather than denying and suppressing it.

This chapter describes how I assembled data to answer my empirical questions on contextualised practice. In section 3.1, I discuss the action research approach, the macro-theoretical orientation and the data collection methods. In section 3.2, I narrate how methodological choices were refined as I progressed through the phased design. The resultant data corpus was collected through interpersonal communication and participant-observation /ethnography, and I detail the specific project contexts, particular research interactions and observations in section 3.3. I discuss ethical considerations in section 3.4, and section 3.5 summarises my approach to thematic analysis as a precursor to the empirical results that follow.

## 3.1 **Action Research:** a phased process

Action research often involves repeated cycles of planning, action and reflection (Smith 2001), and this study proceeded in phases of data collection and evaluation. Firstly, ten pilot interviews and a practice review accessed the Real Time perspective as described in section 2.1. In the next phase, I explored Real Time's practice retrospectively through three past projects (*We Care*, *Our Voice*, *Listen Up*), and currently near the project end through six projects (*Knife Crime*, *Tough Tales*, *Speak Out*, *Street Expression*, *Youth Exchange*, and *Ungrounded*). In parallel, I studied two short projects (*Communicate* and *Women Reflect*) concurrently to build detailed knowledge of early project processes. Next, I discuss my macro-theoretical orientation to practice study, which informs the kind of practice knowledge that can emerge (Steinberg 2007a).

### 3.1.1 **Macro-theoretical orientation:** from social construction to rhizomic gaze

Action research encompasses the intention to explore the reality of practice in order to improve praxis. However, it is not a method of data collection or analysis, and it is important not to limit methodological development by being too rigid at the start (Parker 2005:130). There are many different ways to study practice, which are not value free, and serve different knowledge domains (Gray 2004:15) depending on ontological orientation.

Complex social practices, such as participatory video, can be conceptualised as a maze or labyrinth negotiated by project actors (Humphreys and Brézillon 2002). The macro-theoretical approach affects what it is possible to learn about the routes through. Entitative assumptions persist in practice study, as a legacy of the Cartesian view of knowledge as building blocks that individuals possess in their minds (Hosking and Morley 1991:40-2). This results in gazing into the maze from outside, and perceives one way in and one way out, like Eco's classical labyrinth (Eco 1986 in Humphreys and Jones 2006). This orientation leads to the enormous simplification when planned interventions are assumed to progress linearly from policy needs, through practice implementation to the evaluation of planned outcomes (Long and Van de Ploeg 1989). For instance, the disintegration of traditional communities is identified as an issue. Then, social cohesion is constructed to drive top-down policy solutions. Planned projects such as participatory video follow, which are assumed to build social cohesion through developing community identification and connections. Project evaluation completes the linear cycle by measuring social psychological factors, such as social capital.

Conceptualising intervention in this way is misleading (Long and Van de Ploeg 1989). This gaze can identify certain parameters of practice, the people involved, and formal strategies, but it does not increase understanding of the practice nexus. Moreover, it presumes too much individual agency in getting from a to b. Designing practice from outside does not help project actors inside the maze work out how to proceed when swayed from prescribed routes as they interact between influences on the journey (Humphreys and Jones 2006).

Practice study can be from an individual or social, as well as an objective or subjective perspective (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). As an insider, I am interested in practice both as individual intentional action influenced by values, and structured through a community of practice's discourse. I view practice as socially constituted, but then reformulated through a combination of individual agency and social interaction. Following the social psychological view of practice as a dynamic,

inter-subjective process (Steinberg 2007a), I began data collection from a social constructivist (Gergen 1973, Shotter 1993) (or phenomenological and process-orientated inter-actionist) perspective. This constructionist gaze assumes social reality is inter-subjectively constructed (e.g. Berger and Luckman 1966, Moscovici 1984) and focuses on the meaning of social processes to the people involved (Patton 2002:132). My intention was to build praxis through both being an actor-observer and incorporating other views (Mead 1934) in multi-perspective sense-making (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005, Cornish 2007).

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with data produced in this way, but there can be in the way it is then analysed and synthesised. Social constructivism produces Eco's second labyrinth type (Humphreys and Jones 2006). Based on Hegelian dialectics (Markova 2003), it explains the route from within the maze as one of binary choices. This creates a hierarchical repeatedly dividing or tree-like framework for practice knowledge with too many *blind alleys* and only one way out (Humphreys and Brézillon 2002:698). Squashing participatory video into this restrictive framework may miss the very essence. For instance, framing the video project above as social glue that brings people together is limiting, when the real value may be to develop dissident and unpredictable possibilities (Putland 2008).

As discussed in section 2.5, the ontology of '*becoming'* is a more appropriate macro-theoretical orientation for exploring fluid, responsive and emerging practice in uncertain and changing contexts (Steinberg 2007b). This study thus built on Humphreys and Brézillion (2002) and Nolas (2007) in focusing on the dynamic processes between participants, practitioners and outside agencies as performances that create the emergent social context (Hosking and Morley 1991:64-7). This led to a move beyond social constructivism as analysis progressed, underpinned by a rhizomic (Deleuzian and Guattari's 1987:3-28) gaze on practice. The rhizome is a different sort of underground stem, exemplified by the potato or couch grass. It spreads horizontally with new growth branching off or connecting at any node, which generates complex networks of connections. A rhizome structure thus provides an alterative to the *tree-like* organisation of knowledge. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:7). Eco's third type of labyrinth is rhizomic with no middle and no outside edge (Humphreys and Brézillion 2002:701). As a map, which can be detached, reversed, adapted or entered and exited at any point (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:15), a rhizome provides a better way of visualising emergent practice. It acknowledges the ongoing re-constitution over time, as well as the unanticipated and uncontrollable direction it can take (Steinberg 2007a). Rhizomic thinking thus became a productive orientation.

### 3.1.2 Selecting methods fit for purpose

Action research can use either qualitative or quantitative methods (e.g. Kemmis and McTaggart 2005; Parker 2005). However, as this study was exploratory and focused on contextualised understanding of processes and meaning patterns (Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke 2000:3), I decided that a qualitative approach was appropriate. The table in Appendix 2 summarises the data needs relating to research focus. The use of multiple methods or triangulation (Flick 2005) adds breadth and depth to a study (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), and is a quality indicator for qualitative research (Gaskell and Bauer 2000:345). I identified ( see appendix 2) the following methods as the most appropriate to answer my research questions to facilitate triangulation:

- **Semi-structured interviews and dialogues**
- **Focus groups**
- **Participant observation/ethnography documented through diaries and observation sheets**
- **Project documentation**

I selected semi-structured interviews and dialogues as the main site of interpersonal communication during the first research phase. These forms of qualitative interviewing lie between the more structured survey interview and the *ongoing conversation of participant observation or ethnography* (Gaskell 2000:38). I thus set out to explore practice contexts, processes, and interactions through the multiple meanings of differently positioned project actors. Reflection on initial data collection influenced methodological refinement as summarised in table 3.1.

**Table 3-1 Adaptation of data collection methods as research progressed**

| Highlighted by phase one data collection | Researcher reflection | Choice refinement | Phase 2/3 data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Tendency for interviews to become discursive<br>• Interviewees introduce their own examples and agendas<br>• Most interesting discussion after formal interview | • Impossibility of objectivity - practitioner voice is resource in generating dialogue | • Shift to active interviewing conceived as dialogue between co-participants | • Collaborative research approach<br>• Active interviewing /dialoguing |
| • Research conceived and led by myself<br>• Attempt to interview objectively not utilising my participatory knowledge | • Greater collaboration would improve action research process | • Turn to collaborative forms of sense-making - value of researcher, practitioner and participants' narratives | • Focus groups |
| • Examples tend to be anecdotal<br>• Need co-researcher data | • Focus groups suitable for many participants<br>• Written evaluations/diaries less suitable for participants | • Utilise methods that maximise participant contributions - focus groups and systemised verbal evaluation | • Videoed reflections<br>• Peer interviews |
| • Insider/outsider status not clear cut<br>• Outsider role increased own developing research awareness | • Action research is an awareness-raising process - outside knowledge best utilised | • Mutual understanding through sharing methodological knowledge with participants | • Structure critical dialogues and reflections |
| • Practice in the real-world is not ideal<br>• Interesting insight generated when practice is not as planned | • Practical challenges illustrate contextual reality<br>• Initial process stage is crucial | • Find realistic cases<br>• Focus on Real Time project beginnings | • Diaries – entries structured |
| • Critical thinking increased through dialogue | • Contradictory events provide stimulus for reflection<br>• Structured reflection help critical thinking | • Collaborative dialogue -group reflection<br>• Use Gibbs (1988) and Johns (1994) structured reflection<br>• Structure diaries entries | • Video sessions<br>• Use examples and observations arising ethnographically |
| • Tendency towards generalisation<br>• Difficulty of capturing process emergence | • Necessary to focus on particular and concrete<br>• Concurrent rather than retrospective data | • Set time points in project timeline for data collection<br>• Encompass ethnography | |

## 3.2 Action research process: development of methodological choices

In this section, I discuss the main ways I adapted the methods of data collection as I progressed.

### 3.2.1 Making it real

At the start, I had envisaged raising finance for a long-term project to explore participatory video potential. However, the wider context (section 1.4.3) meant recent Real Time projects were particularly *un-ideal* from the perspective of practitioner intention. For instance, many were diversionary youth projects or with scattered individuals rather than a group. In an outcome-focused context, many were product driven with little time for the journey. Observations during initial data collection modified my thinking. Firstly, some of the most informative contributions arose from the problematic short-term projects. I changed my focus to identify projects that exemplified the complex and contradictory practice reality.

Action research by definition should examine actual practice through concrete and specific application (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005:564). The pilot interviews (section 2.1) indicated that Real Time thought the early process stages critical to success. Rather than looking for an all-encompassing longer project, I also studied the beginnings of Real Time's participatory video in depth through two short projects (*Women Reflect* and *Communicate*).

### 3.2.2 Questioning insider-outsider dualism

I had assumed that Real Time personnel would see me as an insider-researcher. Whilst there was good access, trust and co-operation in general, some colleagues found interviews more uncomfortable than I had anticipated. Insider/outsider status in context is not clear-cut (Bishop 2005:111). Those who believe themselves cultural insiders may neglect other factors (such as age, ethnicity or education) that affect the research relationship. In addition, insiders can apply research methods in a way that marginalises their contemporaries. In other words, insiders can act like outsiders. My temporary withdrawal from practice to study theory and methodology, positioned me outside to a degree. Some colleagues clearly felt threatened by the intention to explore critically. Insider/outsider dualism is more productively replaced by the recognition that researchers move between changing relationships and power

dynamics, and all should reflect on the research interactions that ensue (Narayan 1993 see Bishop 2005:113).

### 3.2.3 **Collaborative sense-making:** facilitating dialogue between co-participants

As an individual researcher, I conceived and led the research, but some incidents led me to question my initial interviewing approach. Whilst probing interviewees for greater depth, it was hard to stay uninvolved and not input any views. Conversely, interviewees did not stick to the project examples that I had selected, and I did not want to stop them introducing examples on their own terms. Finally, the most fruitful interactions often happened after the formal interview. These issues typify the practical negotiation of the narrator/listener relationship in interview-based research (Chase 2005:660). In actuality, an interview is a two-way venture to find meaning, but there is a different dynamic from a normal conversation (Gaskell 2000:45). However, even a structured interview can become semi-structured in practice, revealing the interviewees' power to subvert the agenda (Parker 2005:53 - 4).

Action research can be improved if knowledge creation is undertaken collaboratively (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). Although I wanted to involve Real Time colleagues, to begin with this was predominantly as interviewees, or through practice review meetings. I asked Alistair, as Real Time colleague, to interview me to change this dynamic, but the interview broke down because he couldn't relate to my topic guide and I found the questioning stark.

> *This feels less of a dialogue than most interviews - I suppose I haven't bought into it. I may not ask different questions, it's just .... we'd talk together first… you'd both have a view of where were both trying to get to as a joint thing*
>
> **Alistair**

A discussion ensued about the difference between this research interview and a participatory video interview. Acknowledging the time constraints, I needed to work harder to create a sense of joint exploration. In attempting to be objective, I also realised I had not applied my mutual understanding to assist with unearthing implicit knowledge. Parker (2005:54) suggests radical action research should recognise two co-researchers in the interview context, and enable contradictions between agendas to emerge. Such active interviews embrace the interviewer as an unavoidable agent in meaning-making conversations (Holstein and Gubrium 2004). Moreover, as the

purpose of action research is social, it is best undertaken socially as a collaborative endeavour.

> *Change practices … are not the domain of the practitioner* ***or*** *the marginalised* ***or*** *the academic alone. Instead, change is the meeting of the practitioner* ***and*** *the academic* ***and*** *the marginalised in the production of a 'rhizome'*
>
> **Nolas 2007:59**

As I progressed, I saw my research process as a form of communicative action between project actors, enabled by the social space of research interaction (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005:563-581). I decided to use my knowledge of participatory processes to create forums for more mutual dialogue. I re-conceptualised two-way interactions as dialogues, which positioned me as co-collaborator with other insiders. It was also more consistent with the desire to capture rhizomic development (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: ix). During dialogues, I could use my practitioner voice as a resource, especially as my knowledge is part of the story, which my researcher self would study with hindsight. I also experimented with peer interviews to give participants some control of the research agenda.

In addition, I collected data through focus groups or group interviews. Focus groups are in themselves collective conversations, through which new insights can emerge (Wilkinson 2004). They provide forums for building understanding between co-participants in a relatively democratic way by reducing researchers' control (Kamberelis and Dimitriadis 2005). They are also suitable for informants who may be less comfortable with individual interviews (Wilkinson 2004). Finally, I extended the idea of collaborative forums practically, by organising the *Communicate* and the *Women Reflect* projects specifically as spaces for collaborative learning between practitioners and participants.

#### 3.2.4 Disrupting the narrative fallacy – the ethnographic turn

In choosing interviews as the main data collection method, I also encountered another disadvantage, which is the narrative fallacy. There was already a tendency for interviewees to talk in abstractions about practice, but interviewees narrate stories about their experiences in retrospect even when considering concrete examples. Practice stories are supposed to help practitioners to reflect and improve (Schon 1983, Orr 1996). The difficulty is that interaction processes are not explicit and may lie beyond conscious awareness. Narrating creates a sense of coherence

that only partially resembles the more messy actuality, and there is thus the risk that the map is mistaken for the territory (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:14-5, 347-61).

To address this, I took an ethnographic turn in collecting participant-observation data concurrently alongside project processes as they evolved. Rhizomically orientated, I aimed to access sensed experience, narrative disjunction and process discontinuity to break away from usual concepts (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: xiii). I also used participant-observation methods such as diaries, prompted evaluation and videoed observation at particular time points. Although still interpretative, diaries facilitate the capture of subjective responses more immediately, before they become synthesised after processes are finished (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:383). Practitioners and participants in the *Women Reflect* project made diary entries each session. However, I had doubts about asking *Communicate* participants, as new arrivals to the UK with limited English, to keep written diaries. I therefore used participatory video techniques to systemise the collection of verbal evaluations from participants as projects progressed. In addition, I videoed some project sessions to enable me to compare reflections, with my observations on watching them.

Despite collaborative efforts, I still recognised my overall control and the need for reflexivity in distancing myself from my practitioner voice.

### 3.2.5 **Reflexivity and criticality:** developing researcher and participant voice

Reflexivity encompasses the importance of the researcher as human instrument thinking critically on how their subjectivity affects research (Guba and Lincoln 2005:210). Reflections on fieldwork both develop the research processes and provide data to assist analysis (Flick 2002:6), as another quality indicator (Gaskell and Bauer 2000). Insiders stepping back critically is no more challenging than outsiders avoiding going native. Neither positioning is objective as all researchers bring their biases to bear. In fact, a binary distinction is too simplistic. Carrying out and narrating research is more like a journey of discovery, which incorporates both the plural self and others' voices (Guba and Lincoln 2005:210).

To shift reflective practice beyond the descriptive, it is necessary to gain some distance from events. I initially withdrew from everyday practice to step back whilst developing the research through theoretical and methodological reading. I accessed my nascent researcher voice through open reflection in research diaries. I

also continued to capture and consider my researcher voice through diaries, notes and memos as data collection and analysis proceeded.

I created some distance between my researcher and practitioner selves, firstly by recording two interviews with myself to analyse with hindsight alongside the other data. Producing a thesis normally includes dialogue with self through research writing, and with others through supervision. However, I also drew on other practical techniques to structure both my own and other research participants' dialogic reflection (Moon 2002) as follows:

**Internal interaction**

I regularly talked to colleagues about the research. I structured sessions to re-visit what was said previously with hindsight, or to present collaborators with feedback from the data, particularly when it challenged assumptions. I documented both formal and informal interaction through research diaries (as section 3.2.4 above).

**Purposively unearthing critical incidents**

Critical incidents when a disjunction emerges between ideal and reality can facilitate collaborative learning (Moon 2002). Following my genuine surprise after a narrated incident that contradicted Real Time's basic practice guidelines, I encouraged colleagues to talk openly and honestly about particular disjunctions. I purposively mined practitioner experience for critical incidents. Then I applied structured techniques including Gibbs' (1988) reflective cycle (appendix 3) and Atkins and Murphy's (1994) model of reflection to structure both my own and practitioners' reflections.

**Diaries**

I incorporated diary exercises to structure and deepen research journal reflections (Moon 2002:194-202). I used focusing questions to sharpen diary entries, I conducted dialogues with events (using Gibbs cycle above) to guide diary writing and I applied double-entry diary writing (see section 2.1). Participants on the *Women Reflect* project also kept double-entry diaries, assisted with prompting questions, and reflective diary sheets

**Structured reflection**

Project support workers suggested that participants require structured processes to evaluate in any depth. I accessed some completed evaluation sheets from *Tough Tales* participants. I also used participatory video activities, such as handing a microphone from person to person for structured responses at appropriate points as projects processed. This captured more spontaneous, less filtered expression.

In this section, I have described how my research methods developed to address limitations. I next discuss the data corpus.

### 3.3 **The data corpus:** assembling research materials

Corpus construction is a structurally different but functionally similar alternative to representative sampling for qualitative research (Gaskell and Bauer 2000). Real Time's specific participatory video approach was my unit of analysis, and I set out to study its application in a range of settings to enable contextualised understanding to emerge. When constructing a corpus, full variety of expression is more important than people types (Bauer and Aarts 2000). This informed the choices about how wide to cast the net. I focused on environments that offered the greatest potential for learning, in terms of the particular rather than the ordinary (Stake 2005:447). I searched purposively for contexts and individual contributors who would add to the processes and meanings captured. I involved Real Time colleagues in project selection, but also used events that arose ethnographically during practitioner interviews.

#### 3.3.1 **Project contexts:** purposive selection towards variety

The resulting corpus includes data from 11 different projects that cover a range of group types, purposes and project lengths. Overall, there were five projects with young people and six with adults. Two were women-only and one men-only. There were two projects with people with learning disabilities, and three specifically set up for black participants (four other projects involved both white and black participants). Projects range from 4 sessions to very long term (> 15 years). Table 3.2 presents a preliminary introduction:

**Table 3-2 Project contexts – rationale for selection**

| Project | Thumbnail sketch | Rationale for selection |
|---|---|---|
| **Commun-icate** | Project with recently arrived refugees attending a UK citizenship class | • Participant access<br>• Illustrates early processes<br>• Concurrent exploration<br>• Language barriers |
| **Women Reflect** | Project with women (mixed background), who wanted to use video to develop critical reflection capacities. Co-researchers and critical friends | • Collaborative action research<br>• Access to participant Illustrates early processes<br>• Concurrent data collection |
| **Speak Out** | Self-advocacy project with learning disabled adults. | • Participant access<br>• Time pressured production<br>• Questions of voice and control |
| **We Care** | With informal adult carers (women) looking after ill or disabled family members at home | • Access to participants<br>• Time pressured production<br>• Issues of control |
| **Tough Tales** | With men at a drug rehabilitation centre. | • Access to pre-and post project participant evaluations<br>• Issues of multiple stakeholders<br>• Questions of exposure |
| **Knife Crime** | Long-term project initiated by young people, who wanted to address Knife Crime after a friend was killed. | • Access to participants<br>• Youth initiated<br>• Issue of practitioner agency |
| **Our Voice** | Very long-term project supporting learning disabled adults in self-advocacy and peer training using video | • Participant access<br>• Long-term possibilities<br>• Balance of control<br>• Issues of ongoing support |
| **Street Expression** | Mid- term project initiated by a local authority with young people about graffiti | • Access to financing officer<br>• Issue of follow on support |
| **Listen Up** | Long-term project with looked-after young people to explore the difficulties they faced accessing education. | • Engagement<br>• Enabling project partnerships<br>• Follow on support |
| **Youth Exchange** | Mid- term project with young people from an deprived housing estate | • Critical incident<br>• Issues of coercion<br>• Issues of success criteria |
| **Un - grounded** | A council authority aimed to work with young homeless people to explore housing issues | • Critical incident<br>• Issues of multiple stakeholders<br>• Issues of project set up |

### 3.3.2 **Corpus construction:** organising the data

The data corpus has two main sections that reflect the methodological spine: the first contains data collected through interpersonal communication (e.g. interviews, dialogues, focus groups and videoed evaluations). The second encompasses data collected through participant observation/ethnography (diaries and observation sheets). A third corpus section includes the pilot interviews and Real Time documentation used, as described in section 2.1, to interrogate practitioners' discourse and practice examples. Table 3.3 summarises these sections.

**Table 3-3 Data corpus - summary of research interests**

| Interest | Research action | Research materials | Level of analysis | Voice |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Project actors' retrospective process experiences | Interpersonal communication | **Interviews/dialogues** (individual/group/peer)<br>**Focus groups**<br>**Videoed evaluations** | **Practice narratives** | **Project actors**<br>Participants<br>Practitioners<br>Other informants |
| Projects actors concurrent reflections | Participant-observation /ethnography | **Direct involvement** (documented through researcher diaries, practitioner diaries participant diaries and evaluation sheets<br>**Observation of videos**<br>(Documented through diaries)<br>**Session plans** | **Process over time**<br>**Narrative dis-junction** | **Project actors**<br>Participants<br>Practitioners<br>Researcher |
| Real Time practice knowledge | Observation/ interpersonal communication | **Literature review**<br>**Real Time reports**<br>**Pilot Interviews** | **Abstract praxis** | Real Time people |

The overall corpus fulfils my aim to triangulate through looking at practice from different vantage points. As well as through such methodological bricolage (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:4), qualitative research needs to incorporate a range of voices.

### 3.3.3 **Accessing multiple voices:** particular research interactions and observations

The concept of triangulation as a validating strategy has been extended through crystalline imagery (Guba and Lincoln 2005:5-6), as there are far more than three sides to reality. Crystals provide an appropriate metaphor because they reflect light in different directions, as qualitative research presents a montage of perspectives on a theme (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005:963). I have emphasised the intention to incorporate all project actors' perspectives. Within each type of project actor, there are also pluralities of experiences. This justifies collection of data across different contexts to enable crystalline variety to emerge.

In particular, the literature review established the overarching necessity to capture participant voices and so a key thrust was to gather participant alongside practitioner narratives. Where possible, I also collected data from other project informants, such as finance providers, managers, council officers and support workers. However, to bound the task pragmatically, capturing these peripheral actors' perspectives was less of a priority than unearthing the key practitioner/participant dynamic. This means the corpus encompasses a range of other project informants across the data set, rather than within each setting. Finally, some projects had no participant input, but were included as they satisfied the need to unearth critical practice incidents. I now summarise the actual data.

### 3.3.4 **Data summary:** interpersonal communication

Interviews/dialogues and focus groups were semi-structured following topic guides developed from the empirical questions. I piloted a general guide at each research phase. I then adapted it to form generic guides for participants, practitioners, and project informants and reviewed it before I used it within each context. Two topic guides examples are contained in appendix 4. Broadly, they focused on:

- **Beginnings –** Purposes/Involvement /Motivations/Expectations
- **Process –** What happened/How and why/ Process evolution
- **Consequences -** Likes/ dislikes/ gains/ disappointments/ achievements/ failures/ challenges/ surprises
- **Helpful and hindering factors –** Contextual/ relational / functional use of video

I recorded interviews on video and then transcribed them before analysis. Although a video camera can be intrusive and change the interaction dynamic, it was justified, as most interviewees were familiar with it from the project context. It was a convenient recording medium that enabled interactions to be replayed and silent communication (e.g. body language, eye contact or silences) to be taken into account. Table 3.4 shows participant interpersonal data for the concurrent projects and table 3.5 other participant interpersonal data.

**Table 3-4 Interpersonal communication – participant data for concurrent projects**

| Project | Method | Name | Description | | Duration and date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Women Reflect** | **Focus group 1** | Grace | Female 40-50 | Black - African/ Caribbean | 50' – 5/7/08 – T5 |
| | | Angela | Female 40-50 | Black - African/ Caribbean | |
| | | Maya | Female 40-50 | Black - Asian/ Caribbean | |
| | **Focus group 2** | Callie | Female 40-50 | White – British disability from birth | 48' 30" - 5/7/08 – T5 |
| | | Ruby | Female 60-70 | White - British | |
| | | Lilla | Female 20-30 | Mixed – Iranian/ Serbian | |
| | **Peer interviews** | Maya, Grace | As above | | 6' - 14/6/08 |
| | | Ruby, Angela | As above | | 12' - 28/6/08 |
| | **Videoed Evaluations** | All as focus groups | As above | | 8'- 31/5/08 7' - 28/6/08 |
| **Commun-icate** | **Focus group 1** | Nalini | Female 30-40 | Asian - Pakistan | 23' 40" 23/3/08 – T4 |
| | | Veena | Female 30-40 | Asian - Kashmir | |
| | **Focus group 2** | Sahil | Male 30-40 | Asian - Pakistan | 21' 20" 23/3/08 – T4 |
| | | Ahsan | Male 40-50 | Asian - Nepal | |
| | **Videoed evaluations** | Nalini, Veena, Sahil, Ahsan | As above | | 3' - 6/2/08 |
| | | Vesa | Female 40-50 | Iranian | 3' 30" - 13/2/08 |
| | | Sarita | Female 30-40 | Asian - Indian | 4' – 5/3/08 |
| | | Maria | Female 40-50 | Tanzanian | |

**Table 3-5 Interpersonal communication – participant data for current and retrospective projects**

| Project | Method | Name | Description | | Duration and date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knife Crime** | **Group interview** | Kim | Female 15-20 | White - British | 39' 2/4/08 |
| | | Jamie | Male -15-20 | White - British | |
| **Speak Out** | **Group interview** | Peter, Ged, Jasper, Kevin, John, Mike. Andrew | Male 25-65 | Learning disabled | 38' 25" 28/4/08 |
| | | Mary, Janet, Amanda, Jennie, Ann, Hazel | Female 25-65 | Learning disabled | |
| **Our Voice** | **Group interview** | Amy | Female 30-40 | Learning disabled | 14' 15" 15/11/06 |
| | | Peter | Male 50-60 | Learning disabled | |
| | **Interview** | Lesley | Female 40-50 | Learning disabled | 26'45" |
| **We Care** | **Interview** | Dena | Female 40-50 | Carer | 28' 50" 4/12/06 |
| | **Interview** | Susan | Female 60-70 | Carer | 33' 20" 4/12/06 |

Table 3.6 shows practitioner project interviews and table 3.7 interviews with other informants.

**Table 3-6 Interpersonal communication – practitioner interviews**

| Project | Practitioner | Description | | Duration and date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Knife Crime** | Cathy | Female | 30-40 | 7' 40" - 2/4/08 |
| **Tough Tales** | Sara | Female | 40-50 | 15' 35" - 8/9/08 |
| **Speak Out** | Alistair | Male | 50-60 | 18' 40" - 27/8/08 |
| **Street Expression** | Jess | Female | 40-50 | 13' 55" - 17/3/08 |
| **We Care** | Alistair | Male | 50-60 | 5' 15" - 4/12/06 |
| **Our Voice** | Jess | Female | 40-50 | 9' 50" - 20/11/06 |
| | Alistair | Male | 50-60 | 8' 15" - 4/12/06 |
| **Listen Up** | Sara | Female | 40-50 | 22' - 20/11/06 |
| | Alistair | Male | 50-60 | 5' 30" - 4/12/06 |
| **Youth Exchange** | Cathy | Female | 30-40 | 7' 50" - 2/4/08 |
| **Ungrounded** | Sara | Female | 40-50 | 24' 30" - 8/9/08 |
| | Alistair | Male | 50-60 | 2' 25" - 27/8/08 |

**Table 3-7 Interpersonal communication – other informant interviews**

| Project | Informant | Description | | Duration and date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Commun-icate** | Bella – centre manager | Female | 40-50 | 12' - 23/1/08 |
| **Tough Tales** | Nancy – arts charity manager | Female | 50-60 | 59' - 30/9/08 |
| **Speak Out** | Thomas – project support worker | Male | 50-60 | 34' 50" - 24/4/08 |
| **Street Expression** | Henry – project manger | Male | 50-60 | 34' 20" - 17/3/08 |
| **We Care** | Sally – project support worker | Female | 40-50 | 37' 30" - 20/11/06 |
| **Our Voice** | Cathy – project support worker | Female | 30-40 | 29' 30" - 15/11/06 |
| | Ruth – Council grant officer | Female | 50-60 | 5' 10" - 6/11/06 |
| | Luke – Real Time trustee | Male | 50-60 | 7' 40" – 6/11/06 |

Overall, tables 3.4 to 3.7 show that interpersonal communication (in addition to the pilot interviews) consists of 29 interviews, 7 focus groups/group interviews and 5 videoed evaluations with 33 participants, 4 practitioners and 8 other project informants. In total, there are 5 hours 50 minutes 40 seconds of participant communications, 2 hours 25 minutes 40 seconds of practitioner and 3 hours 40 minutes of other informant communications.

### 3.3.5 **Data summary:** participant-observation

Practitioners made diary entries following all *Communicate* project sessions, as did participants and practitioners following the four sessions of *Women Reflect*. I wrote entries in my researcher diary after each project engagement. I provided participants with prompts, and asked them to write on every other page within the session, as well as to reflect later on the opposite page in hindsight (double-entry diaries). I used reflective cycles as described in section 3.2.5 to engage with critical incidents that occurred. Table 3.8 summarises the participants-observation data in the corpus.

**Table 3-8 Participant-observation – participant and practitioner data**

| Project | Participant data | Practitioner data | Other project data |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Women Reflect** | **Participant diaries**<br>6 participants<br>(entries after sessions T1, T2, T4 and T5) | **Practitioner diary**<br>1 practitioner<br>(entries after sessions T1, T2, T4 and T5<br>**Practitioner observation**<br>1 practitioner<br>(after watching videoed sessions at T2 and T3 (107' and 114') | **Session plans**<br>4 sessions<br>**Video record**<br>2 sessions |
| **Comm-unicate** | | **Practitioner diaries**<br>2 practitioners<br>(entries after sessions T1, T2, T3 and T4 )<br>**Practitioner observations**<br>(after watching videoed sessions at T3 & T4 (36' and 25') | **Session plans**<br>4 sessions<br>**Video record**<br>2 sessions |
| **Tough Tales** | **Pre-project expectation form**<br>7 participants<br>**Post project Evaluation form**<br>5 participants | | |
| **Total - All projects** | **36 entries**<br>**(6 diaries, 2 evaluation forms)** | **16 entries**<br>**(3 diaries, 4 videoed sessions)** | **Documented In researcher diary** |

Table 3.8 shows that I considered 52 diary entries, 8 session plans and 4 videoed records with 13 participants and 2 practitioners in addition to my researcher diaries.

### 3.4 **Ethics:** towards mutual research relationships

Ethics forms an important element in contemporary social research involving human subjects (Christians 2005). I considered this fieldwork as part of the supervision process in the Institute of Social Psychology following LSE guidelines and the British Psychological Society code of practice. It presented no ethical issues needing referral to the departmental ethics committee, as it did not put participants at risk or subject them to emotional stress. Fieldwork interactions were within my own limits of competence and I obtained consent from informants as section 3.4.1 below. I

interviewed young people (under 18) from the *Knife Crime* project. Permissions had been arranged with parents as a normal part of the Real Time project and all Real Time staff are CRB checked. I also interviewed adults with learning difficulties, but there were no new interventions with them, and appropriate permissions were sought and granted.

### 3.4.1 Informed consent

All informants received a written summary of the purpose, methods and intended use of the research (see appendix 5). I also explained this to them verbally in all cases. I enlisted support workers to help the adults with learning difficulties understand what they were agreeing to. Interviewees signed a consent form (see appendix 5) and most also gave verbal consent as part of the interview or focus group recording. There was no coercion in participant recruitment and they could withdraw data at any stage without question.

### 3.4.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

I changed informant names in data transcripts to ensure anonymity. I used pseudonyms rather than code letters or numbers to aid the reader in sensing individual contributors. I have also used pseudonyms for projects, and omitted any information that reveals the specific project location such as towns, counties or financing authority. When using particular quotes I specify whether the informant is from Real Time, a participant (which group), or other project informant (e.g. financing agent, manager, or support worker). I anonymised my own practitioner narratives to aid distance, but I use **JS** to indicate my researcher voice in the text.

### 3.4.3 Beyond duty and utilitarian ethics

The guidelines established by institutional review boards follow the principle of avoiding harm to participants. Whilst they can prevent the extreme exploitation and manipulation of past psychological research, practical difficulties and controversies continue when applying a utilitarian approach to secure participant well-bring (Christians 2005:146-7). Many researchers suggest going beyond universal principles, to follow an ethics of care (e.g. Gillagan, Ward and Taylor 1988) that incorporates compassion and nurturing. Communitarian ethics (e.g. Kvale 2007:23 - 26) aim for mutual, empathetic and collaborative research relationships. Research interaction from this perspective is a moral enterprise, and considers the consequences of involvement for research informants. There is clear comparison here between the call for more ethical research practice and the purposes of action

research, which is relevant in two ways. Firstly, participatory video is itself a form of participatory action research. In exploring project relationships from the perspective of those involved, I hope to contribute to understanding of what such processes offer, and how practitioners negotiate the ethical risks (such as the use of good rapport to encourage exposure). Secondly, ethical practice must consider not only the interactions that ensue when practitioner-researchers straddle the line between caring friend and data conduit (Kvale 2007:29). The notion of interpretative sufficiency (Christians 2005:152) encompasses the necessity of research narratives reflecting cultural diversity and complexity within the synthesis. In chapter 4, I further discuss how I maintained depth, detail and nuance through the analytical synthesis. I firstly introduce my analytical approach.

## 3.5 **Analytical approach:** unpacking the thematic process

The researcher's job is to place interpersonal communication and participant observation data into an interpretative framework to answer the defined research question. To account for analytical process as well as the interpretive frameworks (Sell-Trujillo 2001), I now introduce thematic analysis, as a precursor to detailed discussion of how analytical synthesis progressed in Chapter 4.

### 3.5.1 **Thematic analysis:** the basic process and initial steps

Thematic analysis is an often used but inadequately defined method (Attride-Stirling 2001, Braun and Clarke 2006). It developed from theoretical coding (Flick 2002:185) used in inductive grounded theory but is a method in its own right (Braun and Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis sets out to identify the main themes in a data corpus. Moreover, through unearthing, organising and presenting patterns in the data and by building thematic networks to interpret the web-like connections between themes, it can inform insight (Boyatzis 1998). I followed a systematic stepped approach based on Braun and Clarke (2006) and Attride-Stirling (2001). Firstly, individual viewpoints contained in the data narratives are coded and particular codes are mined to identify basic themes. Next, basic themes are drawn together in organising themes, and finally global themes are synthesised from clusters of organising themes (Attride-Stirling 2001).

To gain data familiarity, I transcribed interviews from video. During the transcription process, I wrote diary entries and transcript memos to capture initial coding ideas. I then read the transcripts for an initial sense of the data, bearing in

mind the sensitising concepts from the theoretical framework. Then, I coded the narrative data collected in the first phase, which resulted in a preliminary coding frame (see table 3.9) to direct subsequent mining of the data to identify basic themes. I considered using Atlas/ti software to support the analysis process. However, discussions [7] suggested that, although it can assist with data management, it could also impede sense-making through over segmentation and removing text from context. I was not sufficiently convinced of its value in this exploratory research, where I anticipated coding themes would evolve as analysis progressed, so I used traditional paper coding, backed up by Word software. Within each section of the analysis (as defined in the following section 3.5.2), I looked for possible basic themes and placed relevant data in Word sub-files. I also colour coded data perspectives by interviewee type (such as practitioner, participant or support worker) for nine interviews as pilot, to gain a sense of the pattern of responses. I continued to document my thinking through memos as I proceeded. I printed out the files on each preliminary basic theme, and then cut up and sorted hard copies into further organisational themes within each coding frame before starting the ongoing process of reviewing and defining themes as analysis progressed.

### 3.5.2 **Organisational elements:** units of analysis and coding frame

Preliminary analysis of the first data collected resulted in four broad coding units of analysis, which I used to structure analysis of the complete corpus. I related these elements to the empirical research questions in table 3.9:

Analysis has been an iterative process. As I had constructed a large corpus, I decided to focus on in-depth exploration of particular aspects related to the empirical research questions. I began by looking at participants' experiences. I engaged in some measure of theme counting in evaluating participant perceived likes and gains. However, this led me to dispense with looking for universals as I describe in full in section 4.3.1. My focus became building rhizomic understanding of the territory of participatory video, through the multiplicity of positioned experiences and process manifestations.

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[7] In conversation with Patrick Humphreys and e-mail communication with Melissa-Sevasti Nolas

**Table 3-9 Coding unit of analysis**

| EMPIRICAL RESEARCH QUESTION | CODING UNIT OF ANALYSIS | EXPLANATION OF CODING UNIT |
|---|---|---|
| **What is the purpose of Real Time's participatory video?** | Purpose | What are the motivations, intentions and expectations of different project actors in relationship to their specific contextual positioning? |
| **What are participant perceived consequences?** | Experiences | What are the positive and negative consequences of taking part in the project process from different perspectives? (e.g. likes/ dislikes, achievements/ failures, gains/ disappointments/ challenges/ surprises) |
| **What happens in a participatory video project and how and why is it done?** | Practice - what happens and how | What are the relational and functional aspects of participatory video process? |
| **What meanings are ascribed to the project experience?** | Evaluation | How do different project actors understand and integrate the why and what for of their experience? |
| **What helps, and what hinders the processes involved?** | Helpful/ hindering factors | What are project actors' perspectives on what helps and hinders practice ?(relational, functional contextual and practice) |

## 3.6 **Synthesis:** Perceiving multiplicity

> *In a multiplicity, what counts are not the terms, or the elements, but what there is 'between' …. to trace the lines of which it is made up … to see how they become entangled, connect, bifurcate, avoid or fail to avoid the foci … between the terms … a narrow gorge like a border … turn[s] the set into a multiplicity.*
>
> **Deleuze and Parnet 2006: vii, 99**

In the first part of this thesis, I have reviewed the contextual background and discussed the academic and professional rationale to frame the research purpose. In chapters one and two, I grounded my research questions by revealing the disjunction between praxis and actuality, and the consequent gap in understanding. In chapter three, I have narrated the development of the research design, and the approach to data collection and analysis. This creates a transparent record of the study process to help interpretation of the synthesis. I began data collection from social constructivism, but in section 3.1.1, I argued that analysis from this perspective is not suitable to the open–ended and fluid nature of participatory video.

Multiplicity is a philosophical concept that encompasses the way actuality evolves as a collection of process pathways or connections, or in Deleuze's terms, *a*

*set of lines or dimensions which are irreducible to one another* (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: vi). In other words, practice does not emerge as tree-like divisions or neat universal categories, but has a rhizome structure. The potential of participatory video intervention to lead to new social dynamics lies in realisation of the potential in the multiplicity of influences that are activated. Practice multiplicities results from the folding or connection of the different elements in the rhizome. However, a multiplicity is a unique occurrence, rather than a replica (Tampio 2010). From the rhizomic perspective, participatory video practice is not defined specifically, but is fluid and re-articulated anew in each context.

My analytical purpose evolved with the macro-theoretical development. I concluded that what was needed to answer the how and why of participatory video was a rhizomic map to the participatory video territory. Practitioners could negotiate the map afresh in each future project, but it could guide practitioners on the journey from inside the maze (Humphreys and Jones 2006). Rhizomic re-orientation resulted in the need to capture patterns of disruption and combination, unpredictable dynamics and counter-intuitive experiences that work. My analysis proceeded by purposively searching for contradictions, tensions and agreements across project actors' narratives in order to synthesise new praxis. In the following chapter, I show how I used both rhizomic thinking and social constructivism to maintain contextual particularity and process complexity during analysis of Real Time's participatory video multiplicity.

# Chapter 4

# Chapter 4 Mapping practice multiplicity: rhizomic synthesis of contextual particularity and process complexity towards insight

> *Multiplicities specify the structure of spaces of possibilities, spaces, which in turn, explain the regularities exhibited by morphogenetic processes… A Deleuzian multiplicity … [has] two traits … its variable number of dimensions and, more importantly the absence of a supplementary (higher) dimension imposing extrinsic coordination … this alone makes it natural and immanent*
>
> **DeLanda 2002:10-12**

Practice towards unspecified and unknown future possibilities does not mean it is unstructured or unplanned. *Becoming* is immanent rather than transcendent. The future is not linearly produced by past events - immanence results in new emergence. Yet, it is inevitably influenced by the contributory factors that shape it (Chia 1999), including practitioners' actions.

> *Practice does not come after terms and their relations have been established, but actively participates in the tracing of lines, confronts the same dangers as and variations as them*
>
> **Deleuze 2004 see Nunes 2010:124**

The idea of difference-producing repetition (Deleuze 2004) encompasses the reality that practice repeated never manifests in the same way but is flexibly responsive. In section 3.1.1, I explained that the social psychological tendency to take the constructivist gaze has resulted in obscuring dynamics not dialectically arranged. Steinberg (2007b:5-6) argues that innovative understanding evolves through a dynamic interplay between inter-subjective knowledge creation and meaning disruption. To capture practice emergence, a praxis rhizome should incorporate fluxes, thresholds and discontinuous ruptures, which informed my exploration of practice disjunctions and surprises even if they only occurred once. The map should also incorporate influences, attractors and tendencies, which includes rigid and binary segmentation as the *necessary enemy* (Deleuze and Parnet 2006: x, 99 and 107). However, because of deeply ingrained thinking patterns (Chia 1997) there is a danger that in searching for practice boundaries, transitory universals are taken as static fixtures. This chapter

describes how I attempted to counter this tendency and uncover multiplicity through analysis.

Firstly, in section 4.1, I introduce the variety of contexts studied through defining key project features, and in section 4.2, I summarise Real Time's overall methods. Next in section 4.3, I synthesise participants' generalised project experiences, to support the case for contextualised analysis of differently positioned voices and the search for contradictory narratives. In section 4.4, I describe how analysis progressed from the preliminary coding frame presented in section 3.5 to maintain contextual particularity and process complexity as I followed the emergent thematic threads. I here define four key stages of Real Time's process. Then in section 4.1.1, I define the different types of organising theme, including process possibilities and linked tensions at each stage. I also clarify the relationship between the initial data codes, basic themes and the organising themes identified. In the following section 4.4.2, I synthesise eight global themes that encompass the practice balances negotiated during Real Time's projects. Finally, in sections 4.4.3 and 4.5, I present eight thematic networks (tables 4.14 to 4.21) each one focused on one of the resultant global themes. These provide a succinct guide to the empirical chapters 5-9 that follow.

## 4.1 **Contextual variety**: introducing the key project features

In this section, I illustrate the diversity of contextual environments and project manifestations studied. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 present the group types, settings, project purposes and drivers, and the macro project structures. Table 4.1 below, summarises the seven projects with participant data, which formed the backbone of the analysis.

Table 4.1 shows three projects had a predominately process-orientated purpose, three were production-focused and one mixed. However, this classification reveals the problem with trying to simplify complexity, as it masks underlying differences between different actors' views of the project purpose. Practitioners involved others through the promise of video making, but were motivated by the potential process benefits even on production projects. In contrast, all projects, including the process-orientated, involved video recording. Additionally, in many cases participants most valued aspects of the process, although they had been initially motivated by video making. Defining projects as either process or product focused, rather than both, is thus misleading.

**Table 4-1 Key Project Features in projects with participant data**

| | Group & Setting | Purpose | Driver & Funds | Structure & Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Commun-icate** | **Refugees and asylum seekers – women and men**<br>Support centre for immigrants | Process - capacity and confidence | Real Time internal | **Short term**<br>4 sessions x 1 hour (4 hours contact )<br>7 participants |
| **Women Reflect** | **Women – mixed background**<br>Afro-Caribbean community centre | Process - group reflection | Real Time internal | **Short term**<br>5 sessions x 3 hours (15 hours contact)<br>6 participants |
| **Speak Out** | **Learning disabled adults**<br>Centre in empty high street shop | Production - issue based | Participants / support worker<br>Church funded | **Mid term**<br>8 x 2.5 hours production sessions plus 3 days editing (24 hrs contact)<br>15 participants |
| **We Care** | **Women carers**<br>Community venue and carers homes | Production - issue based | Carer support worker<br>Local authority and trust funding | **Mid term**<br>2-hour taster, 8 x 2 hours production,<br>2 days editing plus final screening<br>(28 hours contact)<br>10 participants |
| **Tough Tales** | **Recovering drug users - men**<br>Residential drug rehabilitation | Production /Process - issue based creative journey | Arts charity director<br>Funded by community foundation | **Mid term**<br>12 weekly sessions x 2 hours plus 5 days editing (34 hours contact)<br>7 participants |
| **Knife Crime** | **Young people - mixed**<br>Youth club | Production - issue based | Participant initiated<br>Community foundation funded | **Long term**<br>Over two years – approx 200 hours contact<br>20 participants |
| **Our Voice** | **Learning disabled adults**<br>Arts Centre | Process - advocacy and peer training | Participant driven<br>Various finance e.g. lottery, trust and local authority | **Very long term**<br>(Approx 30 sessions /100 hours a year<br>Core group of 6 |

In table 4.2 below, I present the remaining projects analysed, with the same caveat about process and product classification. These projects emerged ethnographically during interviews with practitioners and other project informants. Although there is no participant data, they are included as sites of critical learning because they provided praxis insight that disrupted or expanded current thinking.

**Table 4-2 Key Project Features in projects without participant data**

| | Group & setting | Purpose | Driver & funds | Structure & group size |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Un-grounded** | **Young BME – homeless**<br>YMCA and Community centres | Production<br>Action research | Central Government | **Taster sessions**<br>2 hours in 5 venues (10 hours total)<br>50 people |
| **Youth exchange** | **Young people-BME**<br>Youth centre | Process<br>Dialogue and reflection | Youth service | **Short term**<br>6 sessions at 2 hours each (12 hours contact)<br>20 young people |
| **Street Ex-pression** | **Young people and elderly**<br>Community centre and street | Production<br>Action research | Local authority initiated and financed | **Mid term**<br>8 sessions at 2.5 hours plus editing (25 hours)<br>6 young people |
| **Listen up** | **Looked-after young people**<br>community venues | Production<br>Action research | Unitary authority initiated and financed | **Long term**<br>9 months<br>Approx 100 hours contact time<br>16 young people |

Most video sessions in the projects studied followed Real Time's generalised practice methods. Hence, I now summarise the basic principles before exploring how these played out in context.

## 4.2 **Real Time's generalised practice methods:** a relational, functional and contextual toolkit

Project sessions proceeded through structured video exercises. In basis, each exercise involved some participants in action (e.g. speaking, interviewing or performing) in front of the camera, whilst other participants took on production roles (e.g. camera operation, sound recording and directing) to record the activity. The group then watched and discussed the recording. Following this, participants swapped roles before another exercise.

A number of ground rules guided facilitation of the inter-subjective videoing activity, as detailed in table 4.3.

**Table 4-3 Ground rules synthesised from practitioner interviews**

| Ground rule 1 | All participants take turns operating equipment and in production roles - roles are rotated every exercise/shot |
|---|---|
| **Ground rule 2** | All participants perform in front of the camera each session |
| **Ground rule 3** | All video material is played back on the monitor after each recording |
| **Ground rule 4** | Video recordings are confidential and only shown externally if all participants decide and agree |

Practitioners expressed clear rationale for using ground rules. They thought Ground Rules 1 and 2 created opportunity for each participant to experience every aspect, with structured recording opening space for all to speak. Video's playback facility enabled immediate viewing of recorded material, which practitioners perceived a major benefit of the medium. The rationale for Ground Rule 3 was that listening to playback valued everyone's contribution (conversely, Real Time personnel thought not watching playback might be interpreted as particular people being less worth listening to). Ground Rule 4 intended to develop participants' trust in practitioners and a safe space for dialogue.

**Table 4-4 Two basic exercise structures**

| Exercise structure | Procedure | Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| **Statements in a round**<br>**(or questions)** | **Set up** One participant is camera operator. Others sit in a semi-circle facing camera. Camera operator sets up mid-shot of person at end of the row, who holds the hand-mike.<br>**Recording starts** First person makes a statement on pre-arranged topic, and hands mike on. Camera operator pans to the next person, who in turn speaks. **Recording stops** when all have contributed.<br>**Play back**. Recording is watched and discussion<br>(Can be adapted with each participant asking the next a question) | • Self-expression<br>• Content - experiences, perceptions , opinions or evaluations<br>• All speak and all heard on playback<br>• Creates space for opinion diversity<br>• Question version – develops questioning skills, or initiates topic exploration |
| **Shot-by-shot documentary**<br>**(or drama)** | **Preparation** One participant is first director and chooses a shot (pre-arranged topic or free choice)<br>**Recording** Other participants take on camera, sound, presentational, and floor management roles to record shot.<br>**Swap** next participant becomes director and all change round roles to record following shot. Exercise finishes when all performed directing role | • Teamwork outside<br>• Active understanding of shot sequence<br>• Each participant performs decision-making role |

As mentioned in section 2.2.1, Real Time thought that various individual and group possibilities, such as communication confidence, teamwork or shared purpose, developed in parallel as sessions progressed. To achieve this, a number of basic exercise structures were utilised repeatedly, with greater role complexity and participant content control in successive iterations. To exemplify, table 4.4 above contains the procedure and purpose for two exercise structures, with others detailed in Appendix 6.

The issue is that distilling activity structures from the contexts of application, as happens in handbooks (e.g. Shaw and Robertson 1997, Lunch and Lunch 2006), results in a one-size fits all practical conceptualisation as discussed in section 1.6.2. This produces a sense of coherence and order, which is blind to the tensions of actuality. Neither does it encompass the way that project actors adapt the basic exercises in situ to respond to the everyday, the uncertain or the difficult. In reality, these structures emerged differently, depending on the particular situation. In particular, the recorded content varied according to participants' interests. Real Time's toolkit involves relational, functional and contextual aspects and this study explores how they manifested in order to build contextualised praxis.

### 4.3 Participants' generalised experiences

As discussed in section 2.4.1, the Real Time people who were interviewed saw video as a good medium for group work because it motivated participants. One aim of analysis was to explore participants' experiences to compare and contrast. Led by the *experiences* coding unit contained in the preliminary coding frame (section 3.5.2), I first mined data from the seven projects with participant data for likes, dislikes, gains, challenges, disappointments and surprises. In support of practitioners' perceptions, this initial analysis suggested that taking part was a generally positive experience for most participants as illustrated in table 4.5. This table also indicates the number of participants reflecting this theme out of the total number surveyed.

**Table 4-5 Participant general positive experiences**

| Project | Number reporting out of total | Participant illustrative quotes |
|---|---|---|
| **Communicate** | **7/7** | ***Veena -*** *Very interesting – a good experience for the future* |
| **Women Reflect** | **6/6** | ***Callie-*** *it exceeded all expectations*<br>***Angela-*** *I feel very glad to have worked on such a useful project - to learn something really, really valuable* |
| **Speak Out** | **12/13** | ***Janet -*** *I loved doing it*<br>***Trevor*** *- I really liked everything … it was interesting taking turns on the camera* |
| **We Care** | **2/2** | ***Dena*** *- It was a personal achievement. The whole experience was quite unique …I enjoyed everything …as I've never done anything like it before* |
| **Tough Tales** | **5/5** | ***Manesh*** *– I had a great experience - I am amazed at how I took to it – like a duck to water*<br>***Paul-*** *It was a good laugh … new and different* |
| **Knife Crime** | **2/2** | ***Kim*** *- I think it's been really useful … gone really well*<br>***Jamie -*** *I still can't believe how far we've come and what we've gained from it* |
| **Our Voice** | **3/3** | ***Amy*** *– I enjoy myself… I like being part of it* |

Table 4.5 shows project participation was generally described in positive terms such as being enjoyable, a good laugh, or interesting. Many participants related this to the new experiences provided by learning how to use video equipment and appearing on camera, backing up the perception that video is an attractor. Analysis suggested that most individuals who contributed data gained a considerable sense of achievement from producing videos, particularly if they previously thought this was beyond them. Many participants also expressed surprise at how much of value to them they gained from the project process, which often exceeded their expectations.

### 4.3.1 **Likes and gains analysis:** the need to contextualise generalisations

Over all seven projects, participants reported a range of individual, group, and wider social-level likes and gains, but obviously not all participants in each context expressed the same meanings. In table 4.6 below, I visually summarise the predominant likes and gains that emerged from analysis of the *experiences* thematic coding unit. Grey cells in the table indicate a theme's presence, and dark cells the predominant themes for each project. (Appendix 7 describes in detail how I evaluated thematic predominance, through a combination of theme counting and assessment of the strength of expression).

Table 4.6 shows that some participants on some projects valued individual gains (e.g. time for themselves, increased confidence, or being heard), some group level gains (e.g. exchanging ideas, learning about others or working as a team), and some wider gains (e.g. changed contextual positioning, *becoming* and being seen as social actors, and getting their message across in social forums). Most of these projects contained some interpersonal data pertaining to all three thematic levels (individual, group and wider social) - with the exception of *Communicate* and *Women Reflect*, which were short projects focused on early Real Time processes. Nevertheless, there are differences between projects in which likes and gains predominated (by which I mean the theme is expressed strongly, repeatedly or by a majority of participants).

**Table 4-6 Participant expressed likes and gains**

| **KEY**<br>No fill = theme not present<br>Grey fill = theme present<br>Dark fill = theme predominant | **Communicate** | **Women Reflect** | **Speak Out** | **We Care** | **Tough Tales** | **Knife Crime** | **Our Voice** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual level themes** | | | | | | | |
| Time for self | | | | | | | |
| Increased confidence | | | | | | | |
| Skill development through active learning | | | | | | | |
| Expressing self and being heard/views valued | | | | | | | |
| Increased sense of 'can do' – personal achievement | | | | | | | |
| **Group level themes** | | | | | | | |
| Exchanging experiences, ideas or issues | | | | | | | |
| Listening to and learning about others | | | | | | | |
| Interviewing and asking questions | | | | | | | |
| Reflecting on issue as a group and re-framing views | | | | | | | |
| Working together as a team – value of group collaboration | | | | | | | |
| Production control (technical, creative content, editing) | | | | | | | |
| **Wider social level themes** | | | | | | | |
| Going out to record (external to project base) | | | | | | | |
| New roles and responsibilities in the outside world | | | | | | | |
| Being seen as social actors– changed contextual relationship | | | | | | | |
| New community connections – peer and vertical | | | | | | | |
| Getting voice across in wider communication forums | | | | | | | |
| Influencing social learning and improvement | | | | | | | |

Table 4.6 does show an unsurprising general trend from individual to wider social gains as the project timeframe lengthens. However, as analysis progressed it became clear that attempting to generalise participants' reported experiences into broad thematic categories, *detached from context*, misses practice complexity. For instance, these projects all aimed to build confidence in general terms. Indeed preliminary analysis suggested that increased confidence was a process gain identified by some participants on five of the seven projects. However, confidence increases manifested differently in each case, as illustrated in table 4.7.

**Table 4-7 Contextualised and particular confidence gains**

| Project | Type of confidence | Project actor's meanings |
|---|---|---|
| **Communicate** | Communication confidence | ***Sahil*** *we can speak on camera…so is more confident speaking in public.* |
| **We Care** | Confidence that views matter | ***Sally*** *one particular carer gained a lot of confidence… because her views were valued* |
| **Knife Crime** | Confidence to initiate community action | ***Kim*** *I know now that I can organise things – I know I can make a difference* |
| **Our Voice** | Confidence can succeed – self-efficacy | ***Lesley*** *I have a lot more determination to succeed … not thinking shall I do it, will I be able to do it [but] yes I can do it* |

For example, *Communicate* participants started unconfident about speaking up in social settings, and they all thought they had gained communication confidence. Specifically they felt their confidence in public speaking had increased because they successfully overcame the challenge of speaking on camera. In contrast, participants on the *Knife Crime* project, who were young people from secure backgrounds, started with greater confidence. This project also had increased scope, as it was long term. In this context, Jamie reported gaining confidence from being seen taking responsible roles in public, and Kim gained confidence to act in the wider community.

Similarly, being in control through video production was a theme highlighted in six projects. Yet, this is meaningless without contextual details about what participants relationally influenced or hands-on controlled, or whether control was project bound or context transcending. Universal framing concepts, such as confidence and control, drawn from the entire data set thus hamper understanding of *how, for whom and why* practice is appropriate. This substantiates my view that process evaluation is only

meaningful in relationship to the particular context and the starting point of individuals.

It also clarifies the problem with treating qualitative data as if it is quantitative through theme counting. In fact, I had to supplement the theme counts with my own assessment of how strongly the themes were articulated. Counting can miss important themes expressed by a minority, as well as theme nuances. For instance, *working together as a team – value of group collaboration* was highlighted on three projects, but during *Women Reflect*, it was being in a women only group that was felt important. It can also miss conflicting views between group-members, as well as within particular individual narratives. My aim was to maintain complexity through the analysis, in order to maximise the potential for contextual learning. I therefore dispensed with theme counting to encompass the full diversity of views, and focused in the remaining analysis on particular contexts rather than whole data corpus. I also structured the analysis purposively to search for outliers, reflect multiplicity and disrupt the universal with specific contradictory occurrences.

### 4.3.2 **Unearthing contradictory narratives:** video as an enabler versus video as a hindrance

Although positive participant meanings predominated, when I purposively searched for participant dislikes, challenges and surprises I located contradictions. This was particularly on the two concurrent projects, where (as was hoped) gathering data as projects progressed enabled narrative disjunction to emerge. For example, some *Communicate* participants' initial reactions to the idea of video suggested that it was a barrier as well as a motivator. Some *Communicate* participants also reported discomfort in the early sessions. This highlighted the significant challenge for participants presented by video, which was absent from previous practitioner discourse.

I used matrices, which are tables with defined rows and columns (Miles and Huberman 1994:93-141), not only for data display but also to aid analysis. Through the exploratory stage, they assisted me in identifying evolving processes, in comparing and contrasting differently positioned voices and in perceiving connections between different practice elements. In general, I entered participants' quotes as *thick* (Geertz 1973) close-up descriptors, alongside researcher interpretation (Miles and Huberman 1994:242). The quote selection is unavoidably *thinner* than the entire data corpus. Nevertheless, in presenting descriptive and explanatory matrices throughout the

empirical chapters, alongside contextual specificity and process detail, I support my aim to bring to the fore project actors' voices. I also make my analytical process more transparent. For example, I constructed the matrix below (table 4.8) from the *Communicate* focus group data. This demonstrates contradictions within individual narratives, not just between different participants' version of events.

**Table 4-8 Communicate – contradictory experiences**

| **Participant experiences** | **Women**<br>(Focus group 1 and videoed feedback) | **Men**<br>(Focus Group 2 and videoed feedback) | **Researcher synthesis** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Most liked activity** | ***Veena*** *Recording interviews!*<br>***Nalini*** *Speaking in front of camera … And after making video we watch all recorded, we listen to what we said on camera, we feel very good* | ***Ahsan*** *To learn how to use the camera and express your ideas in public.*<br>***Sahil*** *This is a very, very nice experience to speak on the camera...to see our scene again, to listen to ourselves, watching…what we did in past and watch in present again* | **Liked process of recording and watching play back** |
| **Most valued gain** | ***Nalini*** *We learning English in class but …before we used the camera - we're not confident to speak English …but now we're confident we can speak* | ***Ahsan*** *Before I was a bit nervous…when speaking in public…now I'm a bit confident. Everyone gains confidence to speak*<br>***Sahil*** *- is more enjoyable than English class and get more confident* | **Speaking on video builds communication confidence** |
| **Disliked** | ***Nalini*** *Very nervous the first time.*<br>***Veena*** *Very, very nervous* | ***Sahil*** *I was very nervous, how can I speak before camera, I cannot get the courage.*<br>***Ahsan*** *When I have seen myself in mirror, it seem different than...on TV. I think a little bit bad different.* | **Being videoed and watching playback is a significant challenge** |

Table 4.8 shows participants in both focus groups enjoyed being recorded and watching themselves on playback, which feels 'very good', and attributed their increased communication confidence to the project process. Yet in parallel, they expressed feelings of discomfort when in front of the camera and watching play back. This raised the question of whether it is appropriate to put an unconfident group in this position.

Addressing this highlighted that contradictory narratives needed time-based consideration. In this case, participants were initially nervous, but expressed enjoyment as they gained confidence over time. I mention this here to back up the necessity of studying practice as an evolving transition, but unpack it further in section 5.2.

## 4.4 **Analysing process complexity:** towards understanding practice progression and staged connections

I realised that to gain enough insight on practice actuality, I needed to explore the stages of Real Time's process separately. My reading of the data led me to re-define four rather than three main stages as presented in table 4.9. Practitioners used video to mediate the progression, but at each stage video performed different functions.

**Table 4-9 Re-conceptualisation of Real Time's main stages**

| Main stages | Aspect of video | Covered in |
|---|---|---|
| **Opening conducive social spaces** | Video motivates and drives engagement of individual participants in inclusive group processes | **Chapter 5** |
| **Group building** | Video recording and playback structures and builds social interaction towards group agency and purpose | **Chapter 6** |
| **Collaborative video production** | Video mediates group authorship of contextualised narratives and deeper social learning | **Chapter 7** |
| **Becoming-performing** | Video production and playback mediates interaction between the group and the wider world to create new social possibilities | **Chapter 8** |

The discussions of rhizome multiplicity in the chapter introduction and section 3.1.1, make it apparent that the stages in table 4.9 were not independent. There is no specific beginning point or prescribed linear practice route. Nevertheless, the territory of each main stage was distant enough to warrant separate exploration. Compared to the starting conceptualisation presented in section 2.2.1, I found group building a qualitatively different practice activity from collaborative video production. I cover the practical problems when they were not separated and group building was rushed in depth in chapter 6. I also re-named the fourth stage, once it was clearer what practice led to for participants.

I structured my detailed data analysis in sections, each focused on a main Real Time stage, which in turn provided the focus for each of four empirical chapters, as summarised in table 4.9. I first identified a subset of cases most relevant to the specific stage. I based this selection on the project purpose and the experiences of project actors. This was a somewhat pragmatic decision to make the task manageable given the large number of contexts studied. However, afterwards I cross-referenced the thematic frameworks produced with the full data set, to ensure that I did not miss additional viewpoints.

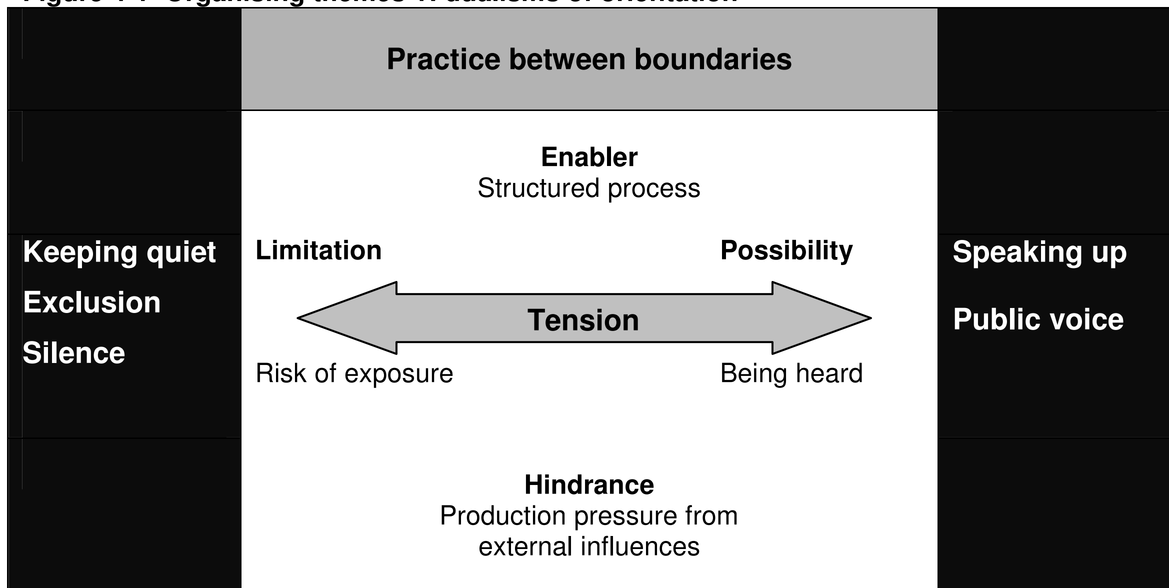
### 4.4.1 **Practice in-between:** the intrinsic connection between process possibilities and practice tensions

My analysis developed in stages, following the thematic method (Braun and Clarke 2006, Attride-Stirling 2001) presented in section 3.5.1 In appendix 8, I describe this process in detail for one complete example. In summary, I first generated initial codes for the particular views expressed. I then gathered codes together under basic thematic headings. Appendix 9 contains one fully coded interview that I refer to in appendix 8. Appendix 10 contains an example thematic table, which shows how basic themes related to data codes at stage A. Appendix 11 contains the preliminary thematic structures for the four main Real Time stages.

Analysis thus generated the insight that the possibilities and limitations of participatory video are connected intrinsically, because at each stage participant likes and gains were matched by contradictory experiences. For instance, at the group building stage, some participants valued the chance to express themselves, yet there was also a risk of feeling exposed. Such contradictory experiences existed in parallel both for different participants within particular projects, as well as within individual's narratives. The conflicting responses need to be viewed within a both/and paradigm (rather than either/or). For example, intervention to encourage those who have previously not communicated publicly, due to barriers (such as confidence, language or social marginalisation), happens at the boundary between the possibility of participants being heard and the risk of inappropriate exposure. The presence of both/and responses, such as participants feeling both enjoyment and discomfort, are a fundamental factor in the particular contextual journey towards becoming more communicative in the social realm.

I proceeded to generate thematic networks by organising the basic themes that emerged. I identified four types of inter-connected organising theme. The first pair consists of a process possibility (encompassing intended direction and temporal movement) and a linked tension (between the possibility and opposing limitation). My insight is that such practice tensions are an intrinsic aspect of managing the balance of multiple *internal* processes such as the path towards greater public expression. These tensions will not somehow disappear if *external* project contexts (such as participant engagement or the balance of external influences) are perfectly realised. I therefore realised the main job of the remaining analysis was to discover the contributory factors that assist practice in its intended direction to achieve possibilities in the context of constraining influences. The other pair of emergent organising themes are enabling and hindering factors synthesised from the data for each stage. As example, I represent the relationship between these different types of organising theme for the practice of voice building in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4-1 Organising themes 1: dualisms of orientation**




Related dichotomies, such as between silence and public voice in figure 4.1, define the boundaries of practice multiplicity, regardless of how well a project is set up and run. However, they are not dualisms as in actual existent states. Rather they are *dualisms of orientation* or *dyads* (Nunes 2010:117-20) that define the territory or field of influences, connections and relations that Real Time operates within.

> *A dyad … is nothing other than a continuous multiplicity that changes in nature (that is differentiates into a discontinuous multiplicity) when divided …. Dualisms of orientation are such continua, it is necessary to conclude that the oppositions they establish define two indefinite virtual directions along which actualisations take place.*

**Nunes 2010:117**

The dyads that I identified thus define a continuum of possibility in which Real Time's actual practice multiplicities played out. However, the two extremes are virtual. For instance, in the example above complete silence/exclusion or speaking up in all public circumstances are virtual concepts rather than existent states, which bounded the terrain. As thematic analysis progressed, I identified participatory video dyads or process possibilities and linked practice tensions for each stage of Real Time's process, as presented in four tables (4.10 to 4.13) below.

**Table 4-10 Opening conducive social spaces**

| Process possibilities | Linked Practice Tensions |
|---|---|
| **Increasing self-efficacy** | • Feeling of can't-do versus feeling of can do |
| **Establishing co-operative dynamics** | • Individual needs versus group needs<br>• Practitioner control of process versus participant choice |

**Table 4-11 Group building**

| Process possibilities | Linked Practice Tensions |
|---|---|
| **Developing voice through group interaction** | • Encouraging open expression versus risk of inappropriate exposure |
| **Sustaining productive group relationships** | • Balance of internal relational dynamics versus external influence/control |

**Table 4-12 Collaborative video production**

| Process possibilities | Linked Practice Tensions |
|---|---|
| **Collaborative-authored production action** | • Commonality/similarity versus diversity/difference<br>• Participant creative content control versus practitioner direction<br>• Ownership/authorship in action versus static understanding |
| **Deepening contextual understanding** | • Genuine indigenous message versus external stakeholder influences<br>• Superficiality versus deeper critical reflection or dialogic synthesis |

**Table 4-13 Becoming-performing**

| Process possibilities | Linked Practice Tensions |
|---|---|
| **Widening social dialogue and influence** | • Ongoing conversation versus ossification<br>• Bridge-building versus risk of entrenching conflicting positions |
| **Disrupting positional dynamics** | • Transcending boundaries to open new pathways versus opposing barriers/support |

Once I had identified the process possibilities and linked practice tensions, I synthesised global themes that reflect the practice balance negotiated at each stage.

### 4.4.2 Practice as the negotiated path between influences: managing the balance of multiple parallel processes

Based on data analysis I propose that participatory video is fundamentally a boundary practice operating in-between different influences and foci. What is also apparent from synthesising the predominant process themes at each stage is that practice encompasses multiple parallel processes. These different internal processes are sometimes in confluence and sometimes compete and conflict, such as in the practice back and forth between individual development and group building in the early contact work. It became increasingly clear that a major part of what Real Time practitioners did was to facilitate negotiation of the competing processes in relationship to the empowerment agenda. I synthesised eight global themes that encapsulate the practice balances involved. The full name of each global theme, as listed below, includes a first

part reflecting the process intention, and a second part that encompasses the practice balance that project actors negotiate to accomplish it:

- **FROM 'CAN'T-DO' TO 'CAN-DO':** Video as individual enabler/ barrier versus time/space for particular needs (individual /contextual)
- **TOWARDS INCLUSIVE GROUP DYNAMICS:** Practitioner management of the balance of individual/ group process needs versus participant choice
- **FROM KEEPING QUIET TO SPEAKING UP:** Appropriate building of participant expression versus speed of/time for process
- **TOWARDS MUTUALITY:** Appropriate control of internal relational processes versus external production needs/agendas
- **NEGOTIATING COLLABORATIVE- AUTHORED PRODUCTION:** Balance of group ownership versus external production commitment
- **CONTEXTUALISING SOCIAL MEANING:** Synthesising new/deeper group understanding versus speed of/time for process
- **FROM CONVERGENT TO BRIDGE-BUILDING DIALOGUE:** Expanding group influence through external video processes versus obstacles to ongoing dialogue
- **TOWARDS NEW SOCIAL DYNAMICS:** Participatory video as social re-positioning influence versus external barriers/ support

The first part of this complete global theme name is used as a short form for indexing, titling and referencing purposes. I represent the relationship between the different organising themes encompassed by a global theme in figure 4.2.

**Figure 4-2 Organising themes 2: relationship between different theme types**

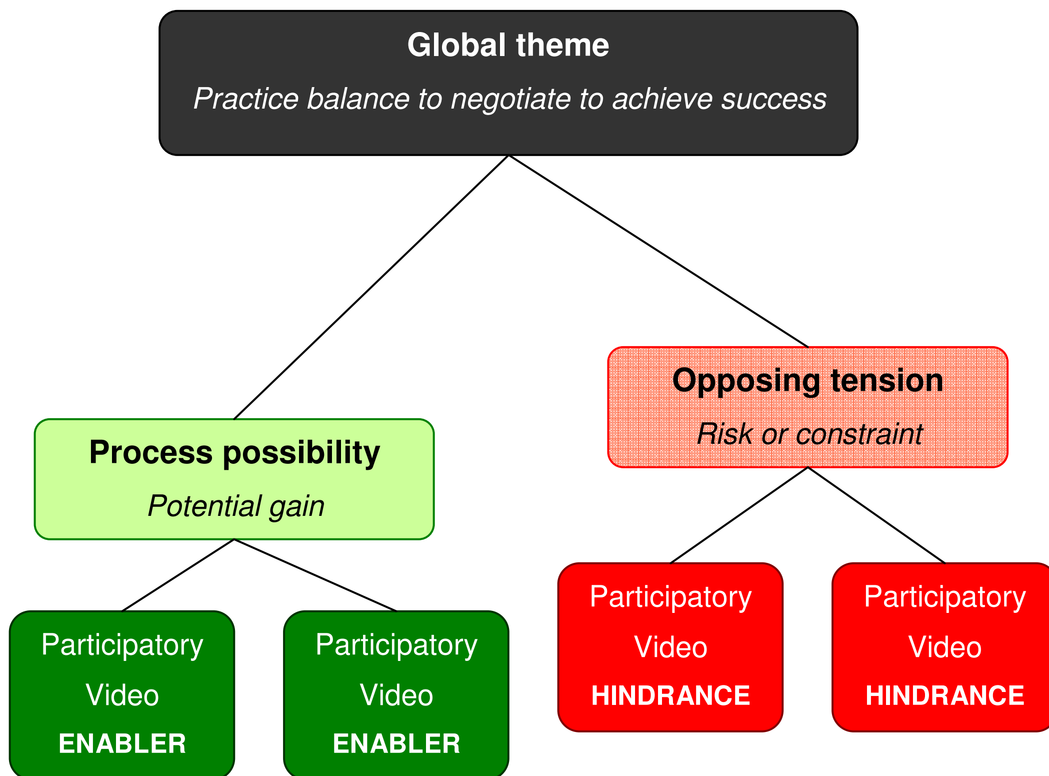



Figure 4.2 also highlights the next question that I addressed, which is what tips the practice balances towards success.

### 4.4.3 Rhizomic map of global themes: Real Time's practice balances

At the end of this chapter, and before the detailed analytical chapters 5-8, I present eight tables (tables 4.14 to 4.21). Each table presents a network of organising themes relating to one of the global practice balances listed in section 4.4.2 above. In total, the eight tables present 57 basic themes identified during this research. I do not intend that the thematic networks contained in tables 4.14 to 4.2.1 are digested in full at this stage in the thesis narrative. Rather they serve three functions as a precursor to the empirical chapters that follow. Firstly, they provide a succinct overview of the enabling and hindering factors in negotiating each global practice balance to achieve the process possibilities of that stage. Secondly, they provide a summary of how I linked basic

themes from the preliminary codes identified into organisational and global themes (there is a full example of how I linked basic themes to codes covered in appendices 8-10). Finally, tables 4.14 to 4.21 provide a guide to empirical chapters 5-8, as I list particular contextual and practice factors in the tables in relationship to the specific chapter sections where they are discussed in depth.

### 4.5 **Synthesis:** Towards the actual

> *What the dualisms of orientation offer us is a series of bipolar axis and double registers with which to consider the potentials of the actual: to guide our choices when acting – not choosing one pole over the other, as if they could be treated as actualities … because one can only ever choose between*
>
> **Nunes 2010:120**

In this chapter, I have described how I synthesised thematic networks during data analysis to define the terrain of Real Time's participatory video multiplicity. In producing them, I demonstrated the need to use both social constructivist and rhizomic thinking. Dyads were perceived following Deleuze and rhizomes through Hegelian dialectics (Steinberg 2007b). Whilst emergent practice is not pre-destined or externally controlled, it does not involve lack of agency. To realise the possibilities for *becoming*, Deleuze talks of decisive and creative power (Nunes 2010), which acknowledges the present is reliant on the past and involves choices. The networks constructed create a map to inform practitioners of the potentials, risks and contributing factors in eight continua. This guides choices in a particular participatory video context, rather than identifying prescribed pathways.

The challenge in working towards understanding participatory video multiplicity is that the territory is not mistaken for the map, as well as the reverse. Deleuze and Guattari (1987:14) propose that *the tracing should always be put back on the map*. I have encompassed actual project experiences and events in the rhizomic map through analytical synthesis. In chapters 5 to 8, I create an image from the map by unpacking how such processes manifested in the projects studied, so that the participatory video multiplicity can be more readily perceived. Each chapter follows the key thematic threads for one Real Time stage as defined in section 4.4. It summarises what that stage meant to participants, the emergent process possibilities (2 in each chapter) as well as what helped and hindered in negotiating the practice balances involved.

# The Participatory Video Rhizome

**Table 4-14 Global theme: From 'can't-do' to 'can-do'**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Increasing self-efficacy** | | **1.** Video provides opportunity to succeed at new challenges | • New and novel challenge<br>• Range of skills<br>• Individual needs | Section 4.3<br>Sections 4.3.1 and 5.1.1 |
| | **Discomfort of challenge versus feeling of success** | **2.** Participants feeling of 'can do' | • Diversity of confidence responses<br>• Changed self concept (esteem, determination, drive)<br>• Context | Sections 4.3.1, 5.2 and 5.2.2 |
| | | **3.** Participants feeling of 'can't-do' | • Videoing as significant challenge<br>• Negative feelings (e.g. technophobia, exposure)<br>• Practice as balance | Sections 4.3.2, 5.2 and 5.2.2 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E-i** Iterative structured process supported by video | | **4.** Basic functional practice | • Framework of structured video activities<br>• Cycles of recording action and playback<br>• Learning by doing | Section 5.2.1 |
| | **H- i** Challenge of video versus individual contextual factors | **5.** Individual contextual factors | • Individual differences in response<br>• Impacting past experiences<br>• Hindering social stereotypes | Section 5.2.2 |
| **E-ii** Creating an encouraging, supportive and collaborative environment | | **6.** Basic relational practice | • Specific relational practice<br>• Functional practice to support dynamic<br>• Importance of collaborative group context | Section 5.2.3 |
| | **H- ii** Time for process - individual | **7.** Macro-structure of project – individual needs | • Time restrictions<br>• Particular need for pre-project time | Sections 5.2.2 and 5.4<br>Section 5.4.3 |

**Table 4-15 Global theme: Towards inclusive group dynamics**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Establishing co-operative dynamics** | | **8.** Video builds group dynamics | • Video provides common activity and group focus<br>• Video used to promote team work and co-operation | Sections 5.1 and 5.3 |
| | **Competing individual needs versus collectivity** | **9.** Balance of individual /group needs | • Group/individual level gains are both valued and interdependent<br>• Group/individual develop in parallel<br>• Practice balance between individual and group needs | Sections 4.3.1 5.1 and 5.1.1<br><br>Section 5.1 and 5.3.4 |
| | **Management of dynamic versus participant choice** | **10.** Balance of practitioner direction /participant choice | • Balance between persuasion/direction and participants' choice | Section 5.3.2 and 5.3.3 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E-iii** Contextualising exercises and activities | | **11.** Contextual functional practice | • General exercise frameworks are adapted to context<br>• Contextualisation individual /group balance | Section 5.2.3 and 5.3.1<br><br>Section 5.3.3 and 5.4.1 |
| **E-iv** Practitioners intervention to establish group dynamic | | **12.** Way of applying relational practice | • Importance of way practitioners manage taking turns/ ground rules<br>• Participant experience of practitioner control of dynamic<br>• Gradual pulling back of direction | Section 5.3.2<br><br>Section 5.3.3<br><br>Section 5.3.3 |
| | **H-iii** Management of multiple processes | **13.** Multiple practitioner roles | • Parallel process of individual and group development means multiple roles<br>• Number of practitioners needed | Section 5.3.4<br><br>Section 5.3.4 |
| | **H-iv** Time for process - context | **14.** Macro-structure of project – group needs | • Time needs dependent on group type<br>• Contextual need for longer single experience projects<br>• Limitations of short projects | Sections 5.4 and 5.4.1<br><br>Sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 |

**Table 4-16 Global theme: From keeping quiet to speaking up**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Developing voice through group interaction** | | **15.** Video stimulates group interaction | • Participatory Video context provides rationale for exchange<br>• Exercises structure internal group dialogue | Sections 6.1 |
| | **Balance of encouraging opening up and risk of exposure** | **16.** Individual expression<br><br>**17.** Group dialogue | • Participants like expressing selves and listening to others<br>• Being heard is valuing – particularly if specific barriers<br>• Participants like group exploration of issues | Sections 6.1.2<br><br>Section 6.1.2 and 6.2<br><br>Section 6.2.2 |
| | | **18.** Risk of exposure | • Contextual feelings of exposure – related to process speed, depth and emotional rawness<br>• Individual difference and particular issues | Section 6.1.2 and 6.2<br><br>Section 6.2.2 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E-v** Structured process of staged voice building | | **19.** Staged voice building | • Stages building through exercise process<br>• Encourages slow opening as trust and awareness builds | Section 6.2.1<br><br>Section 6.2.2 |
| | **H-v** Risk of inappropriate exposure due to production time pressure | **20.** Production pressure - threatens appropriate expression | • Internal development versus external videos<br>• Too little time to build voice, awareness and control<br>• Ethical disclosure issues<br>• Group decision-making masks individual needs | Sections 6.2.3 |
| **E-vi** Separate voice-building stage | | **21.** Macro-structure of project – building stage | • Need separate period of voice building before production | Sections 6.2.3 and 6.4.1 |

**Table 4-17 Global theme: Towards mutuality**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Sustaining productive group relationships** | | **22.** Video promotes group control of the agenda | • Exercises identify and develop the group agenda<br>• Practice promotes co-operative and collective working | Sections 6.1 and 6.3 |
| | **Balance of internal relational dynamics versus external relational influences /control** | **23.** Group agency and action | • Participants liked technical and creative influence and control<br>• Participants liked being part of a collaborative creative process | Section 4.3.1<br>Section 7.1.1 |
| | | **24.** Threat from external relational influences | • External contextual agendas and influences threaten collaborative relational dynamics and group control | Sections 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3, and 6.3.4 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E- vii** Facilitated process of group building | | **25.** Facilitated group building | • Practitioner intervention to support group agenda<br>• Balance of practitioner /participant and majority/ minority control<br>• Sustaining against external pressures | Sections 6.2.2 , 6.3 and 6.3.1<br>Section 6.3 |
| | **H-vi** Relational influences and agendas | **26.** Contextual influences threaten collaborative dynamics and group control | • Multiple stakeholders with conflicting agendas<br>• External coercive /destructive influence<br>• Support workers under/over control<br>• Participant disruption, competition or take over<br>• Project partners' lack of awareness<br>• Practitioners' frustration | Sections 6.3.2, 6.3.3, 6.3.4, 6.3.5 and 6.3.6 |
| **E- viii** Relationally enabling project partnerships | | **27.** Contextual partnerships – enabling practitioners' agency | • Need to recognise, resource and empower relational practice<br>• Negotiating boundaries of practitioners' role | Section 6.3.4, 6.4.2 and 6.5.1 |

**Table 4-18 Global theme: Negotiating collaborative-authored production**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Collaborative-authored production action** | | **28.** Video mediates group-authorship | • Provides group communication medium<br>• Need for production collaboration<br>• Authorship in action | Sections 7.1 and 7.1.1 |
| | **Participant content ownership in action versus practitioner direction** | **29.** Facilitating group's production agenda | • Pride in production success<br>• Facilitated balance between ownership and video output | Sections 4.3.1 7.1.1, 7.2 and 7.4 |
| | | **30.** Threat to active group ownership | • Practitioner/group control versus competing agendas (individual/external) | Sections 6.3 and 7.4 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E- ix** Structuring and staging group production process | | **31.** Staged video production | • Staged and structured video construction<br>• In-camera editing<br>• Section storyboarding and chunked planning methods | Sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 |
| | **H-vii** Video production complexity | **32.** Complex production process | • Involves multiple skills<br>• Complexity limits participant control (capacity / time )<br>• Need for practitioner input | Section 7.2.3 |
| **E- x** Facilitating group ownership between order and spontaneity | | **33.** Facilitated content authorship | • Asking questions and, identifying decision points<br>• Supporting choices through informed guidance<br>• Opening bounded space for creative spontaneity | Section 7.2.2 |
| **E- xi** Contextual negotiation of control balance | | **34.** Production process management | • Prioritising participant content control<br>• Process timing<br>• Building trust in practitioner intention | Section 7.2.4 |
| | **H-viii** Editing as a sticking point of participant authorship | **35.** Challenge of editing control | • Editing in devolving decision-making<br>• Impracticality of editing involvement | Section 7.2.5 |
| **E- xii** Awareness of collaborative relationships | | **36.** Contextual–partnership awareness | • Need to raise awareness of possibility of social learning from process | Sections 7.3.1 and 7.4 |

**Table 4-19 Global theme: Contextualising social meaning**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Deepening contextualised understanding** | | **37.** Video catalyses exploration and reflection | • Group exploration, reflection and re-framing<br>• New insight from involved social actors | Sections 7.3, 7.3.2, 7.4.1 and 8.2.1 |
| | **Deeper reflection and authenticity versus superficial/ externally influenced synthesis** | **38.** Deeper reflection and dialogic re-framing | • Participants' value of reflective process<br>• Individual awareness and social learning from process | Sections 4.3.1, 7.3.1 and 7.3.2 |
| | | **39.** Risk of superficial or influenced synthesis | • Contextual prompts<br>• Majority/minority views<br>• Time for deeper/wider reflection | Sections 7.3 and 7.3.1 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| | **H- ix** Lack of support for double loop or divergent dialogue processes | **40.** Limited time for wider social processes | • Restriction of scope of exploration (depth, ideas, integration of positioned views)<br>• More likely to be contextually influenced | Section 7.3.1 |
| **E- xiii** Process of group directed reflection and sense-making | | **41.** Group reflection and re- framing | • Reflective questioning - asking and answering<br>• Depth helped by time, control and peer sharing<br>• Insight from interaction between positioned views | Section 7.3.1<br><br>Section 7.3.2 |
| **E-xiv** Extended time for convergent dialogue and further production action | | **42.** Macro structure of project – processes after video production | • Support for processes after production to increase potential<br>• Further cycles of video production | Sections 7.3.2, 7.4.1 and 7.5 |

**Table 4-20 Global theme: From convergent to bridge-building dialogue**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Widening social dialogue and influence** | | **43.** Video mediates link to external world | • Video showing as dialogue catalyst<br>• Powerful decision-makers 'hearing' motivation<br>• New learning can influence provision | Sections 8.1, 8.2, 8.2.3 and 8.2.5 |
| | | **44.** Generating wider dialogue and awareness | • Variety of social forums<br>• Participants' views valued<br>• Nuanced awareness and debate between positions | Sections 8.2, 8.2.1, 8.2.3 and 8.2.5 |
| | **Ongoing dialogue versus ossification** | **45.** Risk of ossification | • Video product as end rather than beginning<br>• Emergent views becoming final word | Sections 8.2.4 and 8.2.5 |
| | **Bridge-building versus entrenchment** | **46.** Risk of audience mis-understanding | • Audience mis-hearing<br>• Lack of ongoing participant involvement<br>• Risk of increased conflict | Sections 8.2.3, 8.2.5 and 8.5.1 |
| **Organising themes** (Helpful and hindering) | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E- vii continued**<br>Relationally enabling project partnerships | | **27. (continued)** Contextual - enabling practitioner agency | • Practitioners' freedom to be responsive<br>• Practitioners' role in negotiating in-between | Section 8.2.2 |
| **E-xv** Flexible responsive project structure | | **47.** Flexible project structure | • Adequate time – rolling engagement<br>• Flexible, organic process<br>• Impromptu planning | Section 8.2.2 |
| | **H-x** Lack of opportunity to establish boundaries and relationships with external project actors | **48.** Relationships with external actors – parameters and dynamics | • Limited understanding of dialogic purpose<br>• Partners' attachment to own view, commitment to hearing and capacity to read video intention | Sections 8.2.3 and 8.5.1 |
| | **H-xi** Limiting project structure | **49.** Macro project structure– limitation of single-loop model | • Traditional, linear structure<br>• External agendas<br>• Lack of pre-arranged support for ongoing project processes | Sections 8.2.5 and 8.5.2 |

**Table 4-21 Global theme: Towards new social dynamics**

| Organising themes (Possibilities and limitations) | | Basic themes | Synthesis of particular perspectives | Empirical chapter cross-reference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Process possibilities** | **Linked practice tensions** | | **Factors discussed** | |
| **Disrupting positional dynamics** | | **50.** Video positions participants more influentially | • New roles and responsibilities<br>• Video conventions aid participants' social becoming | Sections 8.1 and 8.3 |
| | **Open new social pathways versus opposing barriers/ support** | **51.** Disrupting social positioning | • Being seen performing-challenging perceptions and showing capabilities<br>• Extended social roles | Sections 4.3.1, 8.3.1, 8.3.4 and 8.4 |
| | | **52.** Barriers to changing status quo | • Challenging usual dynamics - discomfort and vulnerability to backlash<br>• Varied support needs<br>• Lack of follow on support<br>• No change forthcoming | Sections 8.3.2 and 8.3.6 |
| **Organising themes (Helpful and hindering)** | | **Basic themes** | **Synthesis of particular perspectives** | **Cross-reference** |
| **Enabling factor** | **Hindering factor** | | | |
| **E- xvi** Using video power to socially re-position participants | | **53.** Performative agency of video conventions | • Video recording and playback conventions assist participant agency<br>• Process generates new connections | Section 8.3.1 |
| **E- xvii** Ongoing relational support from external partners | | **54.** Ongoing relational support | • Participants developing independence and control<br>• Importance of ongoing external support<br>• New horizontal and vertical partnerships | Section 8.3.5 |
| | **H-xii** External responses to processes | **55.** External responses and barriers | • Negative responses<br>• Consequent external barriers | Section 8.3.2 |
| | **H-xiii** Balance of support needs / independence | **56.** Lack of ongoing support (financial, relational or structural) | • Lack of ongoing financing<br>• Misunderstanding of participants' capacities - risk of manipulation<br>• Lack of awareness of dialoguing possibilities | Section 8.3.6 |
| **E- xviii** Extended project structures | | **57.** Macro project structure-extended project structures | • Iterative/double-loop production cycles<br>• Distribution processes /media<br>• Support for project activity after production<br>• Multi-site projects | Sections 8.3.2, 8.4.1 and 8.5.2 |

# Chapter 5

# Chapter 5 Opening conducive group spaces: establishing the relational environment for communicative action

> *What I saw happening was … good engagement … to start by giving something. To just say 'what do you want to do?' … is not engagement. …Something is done around … the technical side … to engage interest … once they've done a little bit … people can then start thinking about where they would like to take it*

**Bella- Communicate manager**

As discussed in section 1.4.2, encouraging involvement from those who would not ordinarily take action in the public sphere, whether due to attitudinal, cultural, physical or economic barriers, needs structured and facilitated intervention. Establishing a safe intermediary space for dialogue is an important factor in creating an appropriate relational context (section 1.6.1 and 2.3.1). In sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.1, I unpacked Real Time's intention to develop sheltered, secure and relationally enabling environments during early project sessions, as a vital first step. Developing a conducive social space is thus the predominant focus of Real Time's first stage, which I refer to as opening, forming or familiarisation in relationship to group process theory (section 2.3). I defined this space as a type 1 or back stage semi-public in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.3.

Group forming (Tuckman 1965) is characterised by inclusion (Srivastva, Obert and Nielson 1977) and nurturing (Randell and Southgate 1980) in comparable group process models. In the Real Time projects studied, the practitioners utilised video as an attractor to bring individual participants together in the new social context, to drive group interactions and to build particular relational dynamics. However, these intentions raised a number of practical paradoxes. Firstly, the people targeted may be those most likely to be put off or discomforted by video, which can create an additional barrier. Secondly, although video is the hook, the purpose is to catalyse group processes. Practitioners are not inert agents but highly value driven, and their implicit purpose can conflict with the explicit video-making aim that motivated individual participation. Finally, both these factors demand strong facilitative structure and direction, and this seems on the surface to contravene the very premise of empowerment.

To unravel these paradoxes it is constructive to unpack group process theory further. Lewin's (1947a) model of change assumes that any social dynamic remains in current equilibrium without external stimulus. He believed that a necessary first step towards social transformation is that practitioners act deliberately to destabilise, stir-up

or *unfreeze* the status quo, by intentionally altering the balance of forces within a social field (Maurer and Githens 2009:270). Real Time's action to challenge participants to step outside their comfort zone through taking part in videoing roles reflects this deliberate action. Lewin's theory also implies some emotional discomfort is not only likely, but a necessary part of change and it is how practitioners assist participants through the challenges that matters. Thus, shifting previous dynamics in the required direction (the *moving* phase), is accomplished through the addition of helpful and reduction of hindering influences. The main purpose of this chapter is to explore how participatory video was utilised in context to maximise its supportive aspects and minimise constraints during group forming and familiarisation.

Firstly, in section 5.1, I define Real Time's opening stage. I next present the main process possibilities and intrinsically linked tensions that emerged from thematic analysis of early project interactions, as well as the global practice balances that were synthesised. In section 5.1.1, I introduce the two concurrently researched projects, which formed the backbone of the data relevant to opening new social spaces. Then in section 5.2, I consider the participant journey from 'can't do' to 'can-do', and in section 5.3, the development of inclusive group dynamics. Each of these sections covers factors that helped and hindered achievement of the emergent process possibilities in context. Finally, in section 5.4, I consider the contextual insights from this exploration.

## 5.1 **Opening inclusive spaces:** using video to engage individuals in collaborative group processes

At the group forming stage, Real Time operated at both the individual and group level with the predominant purpose being two-fold:

- **Increasing participants' confidence, capacity and sense of can-do**
- **Group bonding and building**

Video provided the reason for establishing the type 1 group space. In section 4.3, I summarised data that suggested taking part in sessions was motivating, enjoyable and confidence building for most participants, even if uncomfortable at first. However, although individual gains drove initial involvement, Real Time's primary intention at this stage was to catalyse group processes. Practitioners thus acted purposively to

establish and promote inclusive, supportive and collaborative dynamics, rather than allow take-over by dominant group-members.

In addition, it was apparent from the data that individual and group level aspects of practice were intertwined. In essence, the possibility of individual benefit resulted from group activities, and conversely group consequences arose from the pull and tug of individuals. In summary, table 5.1 below shows the emergent process possibilities, linked tensions and global practice balance identified during Real Time's first stage.

**Table 5-1 Using participatory video to open conducive social spaces**

| Possibilities | Progression tendency | Practice tensions | Global themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Increasing self-efficacy** | From individual challenge through increased confidence and capacity to individual agency (self-drive) | • **Feeling of can't-do versus feeling of can do** | **From 'can't do' to 'can- do':** Video as individual enabler/ barrier versus time for particular needs |
| **Establishing cooperative dynamics** | From individual needs/likes and gains through group forming and bonding to inclusive, collaborative group dynamics | • **Individual versus group needs** • **Practitioner control of process versus participant choice** | **Towards inclusive group dynamics:** Practitioner management of balance of individual/ group process needs versus participant choice |

The first global theme at the opening stage encompasses the tensions that arise between video's enabling and hindering aspects. There is a need for time to balance the discomfort of the video challenge with the potential sense of accomplishment, which is dependent on individual responses and particular contextual circumstances. The second emergent global theme reflects the practice balance between the different processes in relationship to the group purpose. At this stage, this manifests particularly in the necessary negotiation between individual/group needs in relationship to the balance of control.

To explore Real Time's first stage, I focused on the *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* projects, as these were set up to explore concrete practice during the beginning and early project interactions. There were two additional advantages as a starting point. Firstly, these projects were research focused and unfunded so allowed study of Real Time's basic processes without the additional pressures created by external influences. Secondly, they were both process-orientated, so avoided the process /product tension

that is the primary issue of chapter 6. In this chapter, I draw predominately on data from these two projects, but also on others when data contributed additional insight.

### 5.1.1 Main cases at Real Time's opening stage

#### Communicate

The *Communicate* project was a very short-term project (4 hours contact time), with the Real Time practitioners and the centre manager agreeing on the intention.

**Table 5-2 Communicate project purpose**

| Real Time/researcher | Centre manager- Bella | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| • To build communication confidence<br>• To collect concurrent research data | *I hope they improve confidence levels in terms of speaking, asking questions, authorising themselves.* | ***Nalini*** *- we thought… it's not very important*<br>***Veena*** *- We thought no, it's not right for us, we can't* |

As a group of refugees and asylum speakers, participants faced communication challenges because of their limited English language and a lack of confidence in speaking up. The project intended to build confidence through creating opportunities for participants to succeed at new communication activities, which clearly reflects the first process possibility in table 5.1.

Most participants reported acquiring technical skills and confidence during the project, leading for some to increased feelings of independence or 'can-do'. However, all participants emphasised repeatedly in focus groups, video evaluations and face-to-face project interactions that the most significant gain for them was a greater confidence in public speaking. This was a surprise for some who felt initially that the project was not for them.

#### Women Reflect

The *Women Reflect* project was also short, but with 15 hours contact time it provided greater scope for group building. It took place at a community centre with a group of six women from various backgrounds. It thus provided the chance to open up differences in participants' responses to Real Time's early processes. As a practitioner participant-observer, I presented three project aims to the group:

- **To develop video skills – both as individuals and to increase understanding about Real Time's approach**
- **To explore an issue using video - particularly as a group of women**
- **To develop reflection skills - in the context of my research need for data on participants' experiences**

Table 5.3 narrates participants' self-defined backgrounds and motivation to participate.

**Table 5-3 Women Reflect participant backgrounds**

| | Participant self-defined background | Participation motivation |
|---|---|---|
| **Grace** | *A black woman of African descent. Born in the Caribbean, but lived most of my life in England.* | *For me it is a time to reflect. I don't do it as much as I would like* |
| **Angela** | *Black from an African/Caribbean background. Born in Jamaica and came to England at the age of 11.* | *We don't take time in busy lives - you explained about reflecting and I thought 'that's interesting'* |
| **Maya** | JS- declined to self-define as dislikes being categorised | *I would like to improve my critical reflection… and to explore a topic as a group. I don't...take time out to do that* |
| **Callie** | *Born in the southwest of England - would describe myself as working class. Experience of living with a disability from birth* | *I'm here for respite from looking after my children. This is a lovely opportunity to take time out for me...* |
| **Ruby** | *62-year-old white British. Born in Kent, to working-class parents of English, Welsh and Irish forefathers* | *I do use a reflective journal, but I'm not sure how critical I am.* |
| **Lilla** | *24 years old. Single. British but tick the mixed box as my father is Iranian and my mother Serbian* | *I want to get knowledge of different activities to use with groups* |

Women participated predominately due to an individual desire for time for themselves outside their normal lives. However, most wanted this time to be spent reflecting as a group. Thus, implicitly the individual motivator of time for self was linked to the group context. Participants identified likes and gains related to the three aims above, and most valued both individual and group level outcomes as summarised in table 5.4.

**Table 5-4 Women Reflect likes and gains**

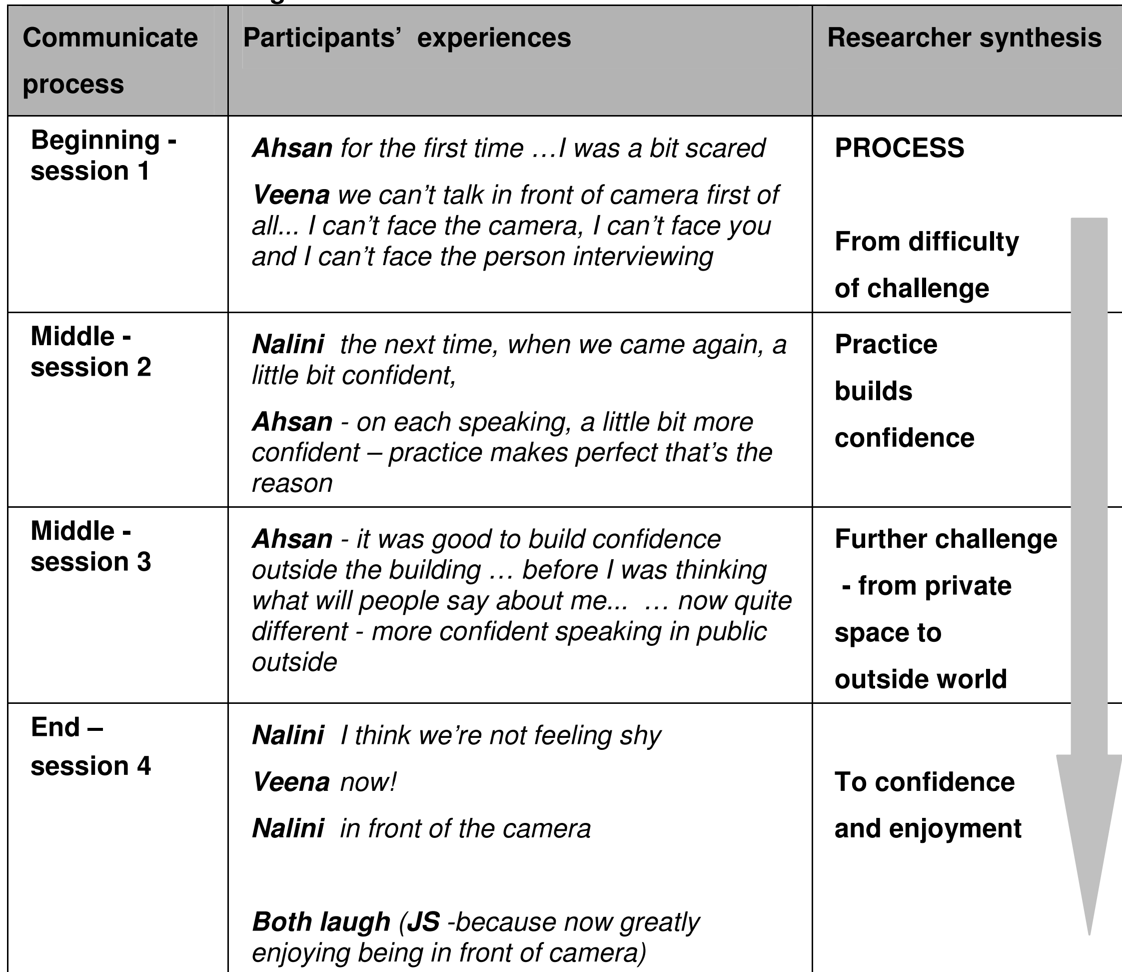
| Individual level:<br>Increasing self-efficacy | Group level :<br>Bonding and building |
|---|---|
| • Technical/production skills and confidence<br>• Knowledge of video as a tool<br>• Increased can-do | • Expressing views<br>• Listening to other women<br>• Learning about diverse others<br>• Reflecting together<br>• Interaction opening mind on issues<br>• Team working with women<br>• Value of collaboration |
| **Space/time for self ……. …………** | **to interact with others** |

In comparison to *Communicate*, participants attributed confidence gains to the increased technical and production skills, rather than appearing on camera, which some found overly challenging. The group level likes and gains reflect the second process possibility (table 5.1), which is 'establishing co-operative dynamics' and related to group bonding and building.

## 5.2 **Global theme:** From 'can't do' to 'can do'

This section explores the global theme encompassing the practice balance between video as individual enabler/ barrier versus time/space for particular needs (table 5.1). As in the other five projects with participant data (section 4.3.1), *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* participants expressed a marked sense of achievement from using equipment and recording video material. As presented in section 4.3.2, *Communicate* participants liked being on camera and watching playback, but they also found it nerve-wracking and uncomfortable. Analysis thus unearthed the emotional challenge of using video, which is underplayed in participatory video discourse. Unpacking progression clarified that the apparent mismatch between enjoyment and discomfort is a function of a misleadingly time-flat analysis, and the contradiction makes more sense when considering the time-based process with intended direction. In synthesising participants' narratives in relationship to the project time line, table 5.5 illustrates the shift from discomfort towards greater communication confidence as sessions progressed.

**Table 5-5 Increasing communication confidence**



| Communicate process | Participants' experiences | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|---|
| **Beginning - session 1** | ***Ahsan*** *for the first time …I was a bit scared*<br>***Veena*** *we can't talk in front of camera first of all... I can't face the camera, I can't face you and I can't face the person interviewing* | **PROCESS**<br>**From difficulty of challenge** |
| **Middle - session 2** | ***Nalini*** *the next time, when we came again, a little bit confident,*<br>***Ahsan*** *- on each speaking, a little bit more confident – practice makes perfect that's the reason* | **Practice builds confidence** |
| **Middle - session 3** | ***Ahsan*** *- it was good to build confidence outside the building … before I was thinking what will people say about me... … now quite different - more confident speaking in public outside* | **Further challenge - from private space to outside world** |
| **End – session 4** | ***Nalini*** *I think we're not feeling shy*<br>***Veena*** *now!*<br>***Nalini*** *in front of the camera*<br>***Both laugh*** *(**JS** -because now greatly enjoying being in front of camera)* | **To confidence and enjoyment** |

This time-based process from challenge to achievement was a consistent factor in participants' narratives in the other projects studied as well. For example, an adult carer in *We Care* said:

> *To begin with, I thought video no. I didn't want to be in front of the camera. Then I though what the hell. Then I wasn't bothered. …. They gave everything I needed to feel I could do something.*

**Dena – We Care participant**

As with Lewin's (1947a) unfreezing phase, Real Time intended that the participatory video context provided participants with the opportunity to stretch themselves through new challenges. It is, I propose, because videoing was a significant challenge for many that it offered the possibility of the participants transforming their self-perceptions

(Lewin's moving phase). It is precisely because using video and speaking on camera is something participants find initially difficult, that it can increase self-confidence.

The insight is that the seeming contradiction between the discomforting challenge and the following enjoyment is thus a fundamental practice tension, which existed because Real Time's process took participants on a journey to overcome apprehension. The answer to whether it is an appropriate process for an unconfident group lies in how Real Time supported participants in facing the challenges. In other words, what constituted the '*everything needed*' that helped Dena feel '*can-do'*, and what hindered the progress towards it? Table 5.6 summarises enabling and limiting practice factors identified in this respect.

**Table 5-6 From 'can't-do to 'can-do' - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Video as enabler/barrier versus time/space for particular needs** | • Iterative structured process supported by video<br>• Creating an encouraging, supportive and collaborative environment | • The challenge of video in relationship to individual/contextual factors<br>• Time for early process in relationship to contextual needs |

I explore these factors in sub-sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.3.

### 5.2.1 **Basic functional practice:** iterative process of structured learning supported by video

Ideally, projects start with four to six development sessions, which *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* exemplified. Project sessions progressed through iterative learning and development following repeated cycles of videoing action and reflection on playback, as described in general in chapter four (section 4.2). This iterative process of structured learning supported by video was a functional enabling factor (E-i in table 4.14) of Real Time's practice. For example, *Communicate* participants felt that recording, followed by watching and reflecting, was important in building their confidence, as narrated in table 5.7 below.

**Table 5-7 Participants' perspectives on what helped build communication confidence**

| Participant identified enabling factor | Basic functional practice |
| --- | --- |
| ***Sahil*** *I liked record, then watch playback … decide what like, what do not, and repeat again. Watching back is important* | **Iterative cycles of structured videoing action followed by reflection** |
| ***Nalini*** *After play back we see we should say like this, not like that* | |
| ***Ahsan*** *This learning through real live action and watching what we did is fun* | |

However, there is more to Real Time's approach than simply placing participants in front of a camera and expecting them to talk. As using video or watching playback is a significant challenge for many, and overly challenging for some it is especially important to be aware of the risk of participants feeling exposed. I next open up contextualised differences in responses.

### 5.2.2 The challenge of video versus individual contextual factors

*Women Reflect* illustrated a greater diversity of participant responses to the challenge of video and thus a hindering aspect (H-i in table 4.14). These women started the project with greater communication confidence than *Communicate* participants, as all apart from Lilla were experienced community actors.

> *I think we're all strong, independent women. People that can hold our own by and large*
>
> **Grace –Focus group**

Nevertheless, recording and watching video was still a significant challenge. In contrast to *Communicate*, the challenge was not speaking up in public, but seeing themselves played back on the monitor, as well as using technical equipment. Once more, this needs to be considered as a time-based process, so table 5.8 illustrates the range of responses as sessions progressed.

**Table 5-8 Progressive response to video challenge**

| | Session 1 | Session 2 | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Angela** | *I actually hated the first time I saw myself on the playback – I felt very exposed and I was thinking... how do I look, what was I saying, what were other people thinking, … it was a surprise that I was so terrified the first time* | *Strangely enough the second time I … thought 'it's not a big deal'. … I was more able to focus on what I was saying and what others were saying …. – And I was quite surprised how quickly that changed.* | **Challenge of seeing self – rapid change in self-consciousness** |
| **Callie** | *Seeing myself on camera has been quite shocking. I feel that I am at the beginning of a journey to find myself and some self-confidence.* | *I feel much more confident in front of the camera this week, although I still don't recognise myself on playback. I am beginning to see things more positively* | **Seeing self overly challenging – from terrified to first step in confidence** |
| **Maya** | *I'm a technophobe. I think I'm going to break something if I press a button. It was uncomfortable, but… positive when I've got to the other side* | *I... know that I can do it, and I'm not conscious… of the camera. Now I'm thinking about our discussion* | **Technical challenge – focus shift to interaction once knows can do** |

All *Women Reflect* participants felt uncomfortable seeing themselves on video in the first session apart from Ruby. She had been on television before so, although *that was very scary*, she was least affected. Everyone else expressed strong feelings of discomfort (exposure, embarrassment, shock). For Maya this was predominantly connected with the technical challenge, and for the others watching play back. Nevertheless, these participants all felt less self-conscious or more confident by the second session. The difference was in the degree. Four out of the six participants got over seeing themselves to the extent that they said they were not conscious of the camera and three were surprised how rapidly that happened.

Real Time recognised that watching themselves on play back is difficult for many at first. However, practitioners identified progression through the first couple of sessions, as a key dynamic transition towards becoming can-do. Participant' data substantiated the view that for most discomfort was transitory. I propose that this reflects Lewin's transformation process (Maurer and Githens 2009:270) with the emotional destabilisation of the challenge leading towards fixing a new sense of

personal capacity. This emphasises the need to learn further about the relational practice that assisted in diffusing the discomfort so rapidly for most, which I discuss in section 5.2.3.

However, although Grace was no longer aware of the camera she continued to dislike watching herself acutely, in particular her '*facial expressions and general body language'*. Even more worryingly, Callie had not thought what it would feel like '*to be on the end of the camera'*. She found watching herself particularly distressing due to previous experiences:

> *Seeing myself on camera, given my personal history having my 'development' as a disabled person documented medically, has made me feel negative. This project has raised a lot of issues for me about disability images in a personal sense, and I have not had the time/opportunity to deal with the emotional impart …*
>
> **Callie- Participant diary**

Within any group there will be a diversity of response due to contextual factors. Certain individuals are more vulnerable to strong feelings of exposure, due to their particular background, which is not always possible to predict. Although Callie went on to say that she had '*made important steps forward through this project'*, there was not enough time due to the short timescale to address her individual needs. Thus, the project stirred things up emotionally without providing necessary support to leave her in a more positive state. In section 5.3, I discuss further the contextual implications of time and thus the speed of the process for project structure and group formation. I now discuss Real Time's relational practice.

### 5.2.3 **Basic relational practice:** creating an encouraging, supportive and collaborative environment

It was apparent from the data that it is not only the activities that take place, but the way that practitioners interacted when running them, that helped participants in the early sessions. I suggest that it is this relational practice, encompassed by enabling factor E-ii (table 4.14), which contributed most to Real Time projects being a positive experience despite the challenges. It was also evident that practitioners intertwined relational, functional and environmental aspects of practice, in order to amplify their impact. I now look into the relational factors that supported participants in the early stages.

The first session of the *Women Reflect* project involved five video exercises. Following ground rules (section 4.2), all participants appeared in front of the camera. However, practitioners structured activities to provide participants with specific things to do and say. For instance, in the first round each participant said their name and one thing about themselves, next time they introduced themselves more formally, and in the third round each stated what they wanted to gain from the project. As everyone performed on camera, the entire group went through the first experience of seeing themselves on playback together. Relational practice involved practitioners emphasising that embarrassment is a usual response after the first round, and creating time after each exercise for participants to share experiences.

> *… It's uncomfortable for everyone and that's why we discussed how it felt so people know everyone feels like that*
>
> **JS - Practitioner diary**
>
> *JS explained that feeling embarrassed was normal, almost everyone felt like that even herself*
>
> **Ruby – Participant diary**

Environmentally the session took place in a quiet, closed room. At one point, a worker from the centre tried to watch through the service hatch (JS – observation of video record). The practitioner immediately stopped the action and shut the window to maintain the privacy (relational). The practitioner also countered a typical tendency when participants made overly self-critical comments (*I thought you came across very strongly* –session video). The last exercise made participants seem to appear and disappear, which generated laughter and a consequent high to end the session.

Table 5.9 summarises environmental, functional and relational aspects of practice that emerged from analysis of the opening or familiarisation stage. It was the combination of the factors shown in table 5.9 that supported participants through the videoing challenge.

**Table 5-9 Familiarisation stage - environmental, functional and relational practice**

| Aspect of practice | Environmental | Functional | Relational |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Safe, supportive environment** to assist participants in stepping outside comfort zone | Quiet, private space. Chairs set in semi-circle equi-distant from camera. | Participants learn through active doing but tasks set up so they can succeed – difficulty is incrementally increased as appropriate | Practitioner generates supportive atmosphere through positive feedback and countering participant criticism of self and others. Builds trust that won't be undermined |
| **Encouragement** 'You can-do' - backed up by making video accessible | Camera on tripod at seated eye height so not towering over participants. Chair for operator so accessible for all. | One-to-one practitioner support on camera. Teach by guiding and facilitating not taking over and showing. | Participants enabled through encouragement. Backed up by providing individually tailored information and guidance as needed |
| **Group collaboration** with practitioner alongside | Challenge is helped as all go through shared experience together | Video provides base-line experience. Video roles used to develop team work and shared responsibility | Backed up by practitioner 'being there' alongside participants, and acknowledging discomfort of challenge |

I now look at participants' perspectives on what helped them most. In both *Communicate* and *Women Reflect*, participants felt that the practitioner telling them they were *able* increased their self-confidence (relational), and the practitioner *trusting* them with equipment backed this up (functional).

> *You say, yes you can do this… You trust us … using your camera, it's expensive camera … but you trust us, so that's a big thing*
>
> **Veena – Communicate**

Angela contrasted this approach with her previous experiences:

> *There was always this 'you can't touch that' and … 'don't break it', and 'that cost thousands of pounds' - so I felt scared... Whereas … you enabled us to just touch*
>
> **Angela - Women Reflect**

Practitioners backed up their trust in participants by communicating information (relational) to make the equipment less intimidating:

> *just telling me that the camera won't fall was important because in my head there was that 'don't touch, be really careful' message I've always received*
>
> **Angela**
>
> *A big thing for me was being told ' hold on to the camera stand- it won't fall over'*
>
> **Callie- Women Reflect**

The equipment was also set up so that it is accessible for all (environmental):

> *whoever's on the camera we all sat down to begin with… it makes it comfortable … it's right in front …you can see everything … and it's really easy to touch*
>
> **Lilla - Women Reflect**

However, one of the biggest factors participants identified as helping them through the challenges was that it happened in the group context (relational). Counter-intuitively, Real Time practitioners actually utilised the initial discomfort of video to promote group bonding.

> *that first seeing yourself on video ... might be uncomfortable, but they've been through something together … that's a fundamental contribution to generating the group.*
>
> **Alistair - Practitioner diary**

In that sense, the challenge was acceptable because it created a shared experience rather than putting one or two people on the spot.

> *Accepting that everybody … found that first time uncomfortable… actually places everyone on a equal footing. If people are in the same space, at the same time, experiencing something similar, then it feels OK*
>
> **Callie**

Data from all the projects studied backed up the notion that experiencing it *together* generally turned the discomfort around for participants.

> *Filming each other from the beginning was really fun …. Everyone came together and did something silly or serious… and it took away the embarrassment ….*
>
> **Susan – We Care participant**

This is one example of how Real Time organised video activities to promote group bonding, which leads on to exploration of the second process possibility in table 5.1, which is establishing cooperative group dynamics.

## 5.3 **Global theme:** Towards inclusive group dynamics

In chapter one (section 1.2 and 1.4.3), I identified the desire to use new media to counter social fragmentation through opening arenas for group dialogue and collaborative processes (Greenwood and Levin 1998). In section 2.2.1, I also identified Real Time's practice commitment to actively shaping inclusive dynamics. I found participants in both *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* valued group level aspects of their experiences (section 4.3.1). I next tackle the question of what practitioners did in these contexts to negotiate project progression towards group focus, which is to manage global balance between individual/ group process needs in relationship to participant choice. As a precursor, table 5.10 summarises helping and hindering aspects of Real Time's participatory video in this respect.

**Table 5-10 Towards inclusive dynamics - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Practitioner management of the balance of individual/ group process needs versus participant choice** | • Contextualising exercises and activities<br>• Practitioner intervention to establish group dynamic | • Management of multiple processes versus number of facilitators<br>• Time for early processes in relationship to contextual needs |

I now discuss the first of these enabling factors (E-iii in table 4.15).

### 5.3.1 Contextualising exercises and activities

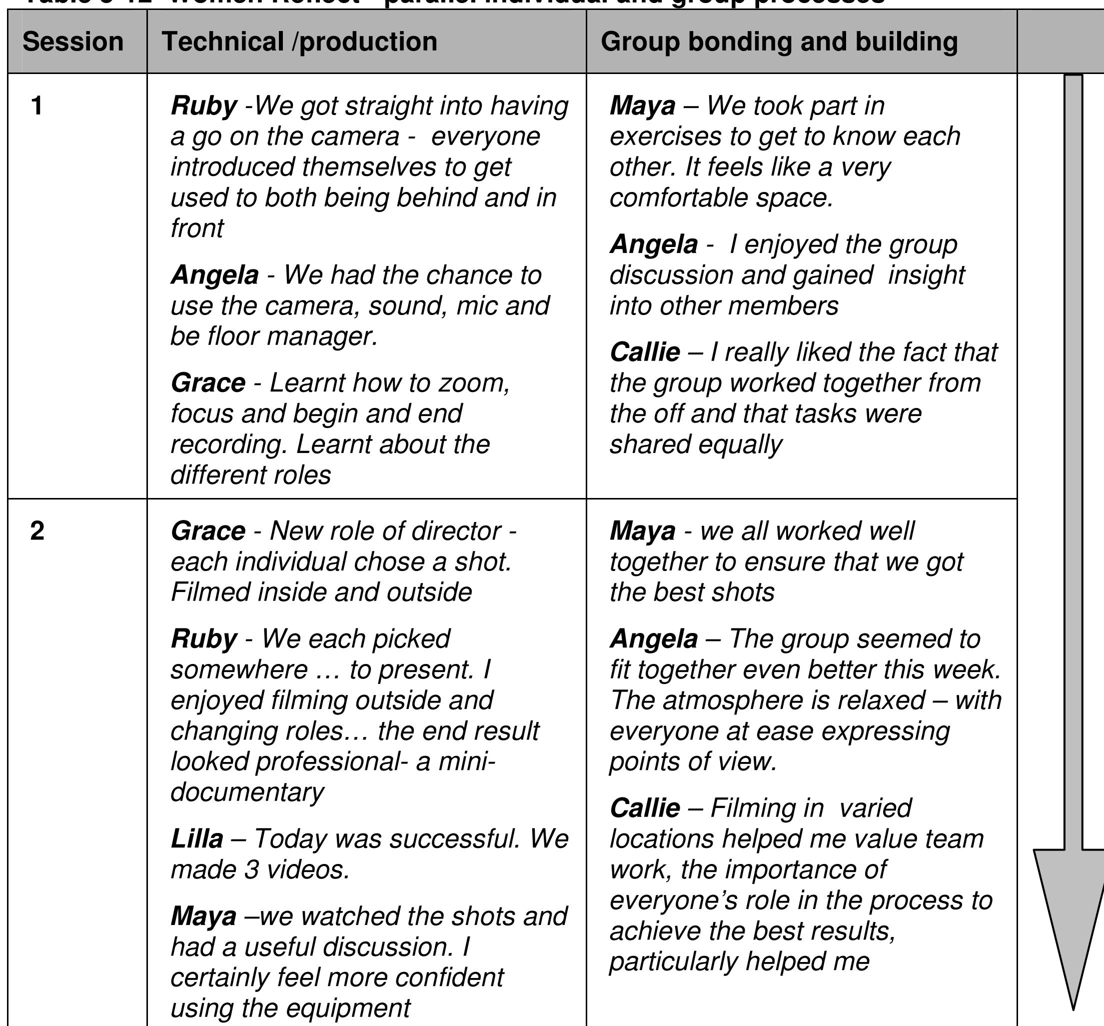
The video exercises used during the opening stage followed the basic structures described in section 4.2. There I identified a gap in sufficient knowledge of how these generalised exercises play out in actuality. Table 5.11 shows how exercise structures manifested in the context of the first two *Women Reflect* sessions.

**Table 5-11 Women Reflect activities - session 1 and 2**

| **Session** | **Activities - functional practice** | **Exercise format – see table 4.4 and Appendix 6** |
|---|---|---|
| **1 – Supported transition through discomfort** | Name game<br>Introductions<br>Why here/what want to gain | Statements in a round |
| | Rivers of Life | Chat show format |
| | Disappearing game | Shot – by shot format |
| **2 - Expression and exploration** | Questions in a row | Questions in a round |
| | Shot-by-shot video consequences | Shot-by-shot documentary format |
| | I feel strongly about … | Edited statements format |
| | Topic to explore | Group discussion |

In section 5.2.3, I described the exercises used in session one. The main difference in session two is that participants had greater control over the content matter. Each contextualised exercise intended to progress various areas of competency (such as communication skills or team working) incrementally for the group. As stated in sections 2.2.1 and 4.2, Real Time practitioners believe different capacities develop in parallel. In support of this perception, table 5.12 below draws on *Women Reflect* participant diaries to narrate the development of individual production skills in parallel with group building during the first two sessions. (By comparison, similar ground was covered over all four sessions of *Communicate*).

**Table 5-12 Women Reflect - parallel individual and group processes**



| Session | Technical /production | Group bonding and building | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ***Ruby*** *-We got straight into having a go on the camera - everyone introduced themselves to get used to both being behind and in front*<br>***Angela*** *- We had the chance to use the camera, sound, mic and be floor manager.*<br>***Grace*** *- Learnt how to zoom, focus and begin and end recording. Learnt about the different roles* | ***Maya*** *– We took part in exercises to get to know each other. It feels like a very comfortable space.*<br>***Angela*** *- I enjoyed the group discussion and gained insight into other members*<br>***Callie*** *– I really liked the fact that the group worked together from the off and that tasks were shared equally* | |
| 2 | ***Grace*** *- New role of director - each individual chose a shot. Filmed inside and outside*<br>***Ruby*** *- We each picked somewhere … to present. I enjoyed filming outside and changing roles… the end result looked professional- a mini-documentary*<br>***Lilla*** *– Today was successful. We made 3 videos.*<br>***Maya*** *–we watched the shots and had a useful discussion. I certainly feel more confident using the equipment* | ***Maya*** *- we all worked well together to ensure that we got the best shots*<br>***Angela*** *– The group seemed to fit together even better this week. The atmosphere is relaxed – with everyone at ease expressing points of view.*<br>***Callie*** *– Filming in varied locations helped me value team work, the importance of everyone's role in the process to achieve the best results, particularly helped me* | |

Maya expressed surprise that the group gelled so quickly despite the project time limitations, which she attributed to video's levelling function.

> *we've had to work together because none of us had a background in video … basically we started from the same place so we had to co-operate... there wasn't the opportunity as often happens in group processes, for any one person to dominate*
>
> **Maya – Women Reflect**

I would argue that it is not video itself, that creates co-operative dynamics, but the way that Real Time managed group dynamics to involve all participants. However, this highlights the intrinsic contradiction of empowerment practice being highly controlled by the practitioner through the familiarisation stage.

### 5.3.2 Practitioner intervention to establish group dynamic

The way that practitioners facilitated role swapping, within structured video activities, was shown to enable access for all. Indeed, participants thought that taking turns in specific roles was one of the most helpful factors in encouraging them to participate actively in spite of any apprehension (enabling factor E-iv in table 4.15). For example, in *Women Reflect* session two, following the shot-by-shot documentary format (see section 4.2, table 4.4), each participant took turns, as director, to choose a shot in the locale. To record the shot other participants took on camera, sound, presentational, and floor management roles. Then participants all swapped roles. This continued until everyone had picked a shot. The result was a mini-documentary about the centre (unplanned like a game of consequences).

Participants in both the *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* projects (and indeed, all other projects) identified this exercise as being a *particular highpoint.* This was because they enjoyed videoing outside and working effectively as a team, and were impressed by the results. Practitioners also identified this as a key exercise in the transition to becoming a group. This is partly because participants are physically linked when carrying equipment outside and have to work together to keep safe. Practitioners' diary entries reflected satisfaction at the emergence of successful teamwork and participants' enthusiasm.

Yet, whilst Callie spoke generally of the importance of choosing whether to participate in project processes, in actuality, swapping roles appears to be an enforced process. Table 5.13 shows the disjunction in my own practitioner discourse between the turn-taking rationale and my discomfort at the extent of control during the first two *Women Reflect* sessions.

**Table 5-13 Practitioner discourse disjunction**

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Practitioner narrative (JS-diary entries)</th><th>Researcher</th></tr>
<tr><td>Real Time Ground Rules</td><td>• All participants operate the equipment with technical and production roles rotated every exercise/shot<br>• All participants appear in front of the camera each session</td><td rowspan="4">Mismatch between enforced participation and empowerment purpose</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practitioner rationale</td><td>We are insistent on people taking turns. My experience is that otherwise people who are already confident get more confident, and those who think they can't use equipment or are too shy to speak, never find they can.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practitioner disjunction – session 1</td><td>Some participants were terrified by the camera. I firmly persuaded them but aware I am purporting to develop participants' control whilst insisting that everyone must use the equipment</td></tr>
<tr><td>Practitioner disjunction – session 2</td><td>I am genuinely shocked to observe myself as a bossy woman in the middle, telling everybody what to do. Is this empowering? I am controlling the environment. I'm controlling the activities. I'm setting up the interactions.</td></tr>
</table>

I think it is practitioners' worry about *appearing controlling* that results in the kind of participatory video practice in which practitioners simply provide cameras and minimal training before participants go off to record alone. I believe that this is often a disempowering experience, because participants either don't know what to do or are disappointed with what they achieve. It is necessary to face up to the need for a high level of facilitator control at this stage, to acknowledge the reality of practice. As in the case of the enjoyment/discomfort contradiction (section 5.2), what is needed here is to dig deeper into the data in order to apprehend how participants experience practitioners' overt direction (relational), and to examine the processual development of the balance of control. It is only through doing this that the seeming contradiction between coercion/enforcement and the empowerment purpose can be unravelled.

### 5.3.3 Participant experiences of the practitioner management of group dynamics

One of the things that adult learners most dislike is group processes being taken over by dominant individuals (Dimock 1987, Jarvis 1995). This is a major issue with

participatory practice (Mansuri and Rao 2004) as I identified in section 1.4.1. Grace described the common dynamic in which, even if also beginners, one or two participants eclipse those who are less confident. Her narrative supports my opinion that practitioner intervention is critical initially, so that those who hold back are not pushed out. Social loafing is an established social psychological phenomenon (e.g. Karau, Williams and Kipling 1993), in which one or two group-members tend to be most active, whilst others take a back seat. I propose that it is necessary for practitioners to intervene so strongly in the first few sessions, because they are working hard to counter these usual group dynamics.

Consequently, I found that Real Time's practice intervention to disrupt typical group dynamics to create an environment in which all can contribute is one of the most important factors to their success in establishing co-operation. This is another example of the way practitioners deliberatively de-stabilize or unfreeze the status quo (Lewin 1947a), as a first step in generating a shift in dynamics (Maurer and Githens 2009). Practitioners in these contexts used their influence and controlled activities assertively to avoid take over. The strength that is needed to disrupt the default dynamics is what shocked me on watching playback. However, it was not experienced by participants as overly directive, as narrated in tables 5.14 to 5.17 below.

**Table 5-14 Structure versus freeform**

| **Participant meanings** |
|---|
| ***Callie*** *– It's absolutely essential that everybody is given a part to play because… if you don't feel confident you tend to stay in your comfort zone. I would have … stood at the back and never actually had a go with the camera* |
| ***Lilla*** *- I liked the structure … it helped us get to know each other - otherwise I might have been quiet and not spoken up* |
| ***Maya*** *- if you gave me a camera and sent me off, I'd probably go and sit on a wall. All that would do would make me think oh shit, I can't do this* |

Table 5.14 suggests providing structure and giving roles creates access by providing boundaries to help participants step safely towards something new.

**Table 5-15 Gentle persuasion versus enforced participation**

| Participant experiences |
| --- |
| ***Veena*** *– I thought I'll just say no, no, no, but when you called my name… I thought 'OK, fine, let's try!'* |
| ***Maya*** *– That intervention… was an absolute necessity … because I'm a technophobe, I would do nothing if someone didn't actually get me to - I wouldn't have done it otherwise* |
| ***Ruby*** *– It's too easy to choose to opt out. You certainly weren't, dictatorial like 'you WILL do this' - you were gentle, but there was that ongoing push backed up by guidance* |

Table 5.15 confirms my view that practitioners need to be directive initially to encourage reticent people and prevent take over, but that this was experienced as gentle persuasion or encouragement.

**Table 5-16 Persuasion balanced with practitioner encouragement and input**

| Participant experiences |
| --- |
| ***Nalini*** *– I was nervous and said 'No, I can't do it' but you said 'come with me, I'll help you'. You encouraged us and stood by us.* |
| ***Ruby*** *- there has got to be practitioner input, whether technical, or posing questions or giving choices. Otherwise it is disempowering* |

Table 5.16 illustrates that what made the difference was the approach, which was relational practice to generate a sense of mutuality backed up by giving input.

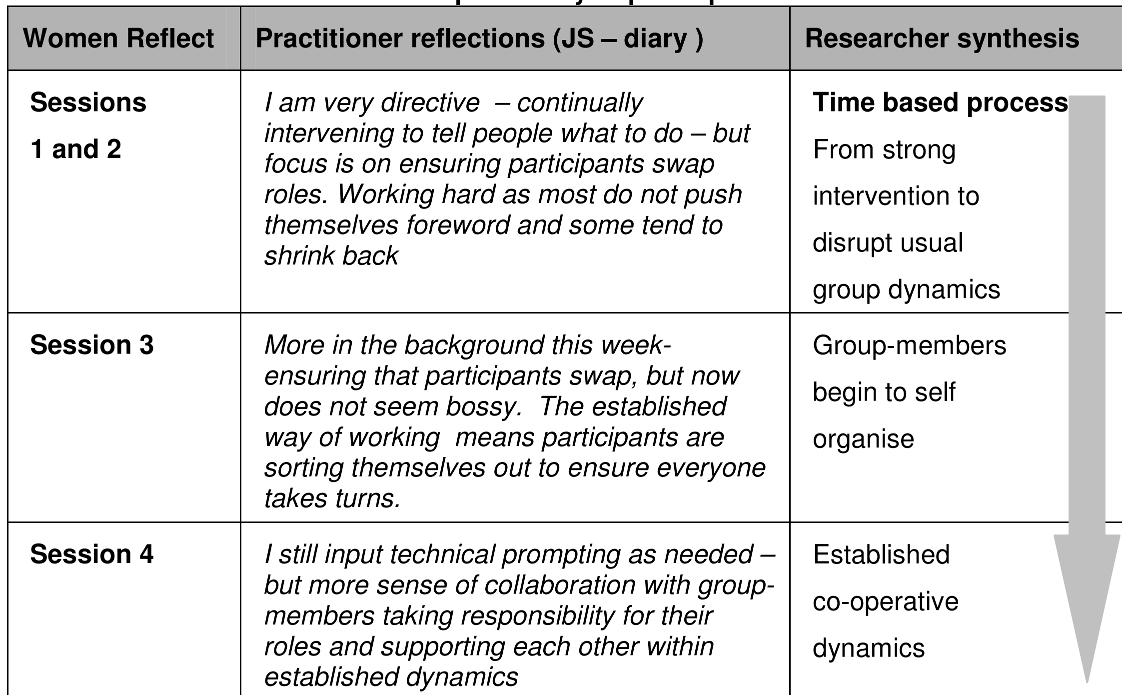
**Table 5-17 Participant choice in how they participate**

| Participant experiences |
| --- |
| ***Callie*** *– If it feels like you don't have choice... you feel powerless … but although everyone had a role - people could come at a task in different ways and find their own niche.* |
| ***Angela*** *- I didn't feel we had to… do absolutely everything, or it had to be this way or that. Although the structure was there, it was flexible and moveable. I felt that this was our project, so we had the opportunity to contribute at whatever level we wanted to* |

Finally, table 5.17 demonstrates that despite the structure and direction participants still felt they had a choice. The participatory video framework structured opportunities but participants controlled the particular way they took part. Overall, these four tables illustrate participants' positive responses to the different ways that Real Time practitioners interacted to level the playing field.

Practitioners did intervene strongly in the early stages. Nevertheless, although this is counter-intuitive in relationship to the empowerment purpose, my analysis showed that participants found this action helpful. What is apparent is that, as with the journey from ‘can’t do’ to ‘can do’, it was the way that practitioners established inclusive dynamics that stopped it feeling controlling. Participants experienced practitioner direction as a gentle ongoing push rather than compulsion. Persuasion/coercion was balanced with encouragement and an individually tailored sharing of knowledge. Although there was a push towards everyone using equipment and appearing, there was flexibility, which gave individuals choice about how to contribute. Grace and Lilla both spoke in their diaries about holding back in how much they opened up. There was no compulsion to reveal anything, and participants handed on the microphone if they didn’t want to speak. Angela suggests that as she ‘d*idn’t feel that we were being controlled as a group’,* the facilitation of the group dynamic should be re-framed as management rather than control. I agree that a re-articulating to avoid emotive words like choice and control might help practitioners avoid the discourse impasse and practical confusion surrounding the application of their influence to structure a helpful environment. Additionally, It is instructive to look at practitioner management of the group dynamic as a time based process as presented in the table 5.18.

**Table 5-18 Gradual transfer of responsibility to participants**



| Women Reflect | Practitioner reflections (JS – diary ) | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|---|
| **Sessions 1 and 2** | *I am very directive – continually intervening to tell people what to do – but focus is on ensuring participants swap roles. Working hard as most do not push themselves foreword and some tend to shrink back* | **Time based process** From strong intervention to disrupt usual group dynamics |
| **Session 3** | *More in the background this week- ensuring that participants swap, but now does not seem bossy. The established way of working means participants are sorting themselves out to ensure everyone takes turns.* | Group-members begin to self organise |
| **Session 4** | *I still input technical prompting as needed – but more sense of collaboration with group-members taking responsibility for their roles and supporting each other within established dynamics* | Established co-operative dynamics |

As I have emphasised, strong intervention was necessary initially to establish the group dynamic that participants valued. The question is what happened next. There was a clear sense of a pulling back and transferring more responsibility to participants as the sessions proceeded, which emerged from the data as another process intention at this stage. In table 5.18, my practitioner diary entries at sessions 3 and 4 reflect this gradual retreat from the overt practitioner control of session 1 and 2. This resulted in Angela's satisfaction at using the equipment in her sub group without practitioner presence at session 4.

Once taking turns was established as a way of working, the participants organised themselves to swap round, and make sure everyone was included. Normalising co-operation resulted in inclusive collaborative dynamic emerging form the group context, with participants supporting each other rather than competing.

> *It's been a hard transition for me to play centre forward, whether in front or behind the camera ... that's where the team comes in. I don't have to worry about doing it alone. Everybody is interdependent and you can rely on each other.*

**Callie**

John from the *Speak Out* project felt that involving everyone in every role generates a sense of collective creative ownership, in contrast to '*otherwise ending up thinking ... that isn't really mine*' when roles are delineated.

It is clear that this dynamic was helpful to the least confident members of the group, but I wondered how it affected those who would otherwise dominate. Lilla already knew how to use video. In the focus group, she narrated her experience.

> *having worked a lot with video alone, I found working in a team …quite frustrating initially. I remember saying I didn't like swapping – I wanted to use the camera all the time. I reflected afterwards and thought 'that was really silly '. I told myself to step back*

**Lilla**

As the project progressed, the prevailing group dynamic provided a means for her to re-channel her experience into supporting others:

> *One thing I've learned … I'm not going to stop other people achieving…. I know how to use a camera but everyone else can too. I don't mind sharing what I know now – which is something I got from the activities*

**Lilla**

I thus think practitioner management of individual needs to establish a co-operative group dynamic was successfully realised in the *Women Reflect* project, where Angela found the management *'almost seamless in… the different aspects*'. However, my practitioner diaries painted a more problematic sense of frantic paddling below the surface in contrast to the perceived calm above, which I explore in the following section.

### 5.3.4 The practice challenge of managing multiple processes

In this chapter, I have established that Real Time's opening (forming or familiarisation) stage juggles the needs of at least three parallel processes - increasing individual self-efficacy, establishing co-operative group dynamics and the incremental transfer of control to the participants. This is even before considering the development of video content that is the subject of chapter six and seven. I thus found participatory video a complex negotiation between the needs of these multiple processes, which was a hindering aspect of practice (H-iii in table 4.15).

One way that Real Time balanced individual and group needs is through having two practitioners working together on projects where possible. This meant one managed the group dynamic, whilst the other dealt with individual needs as they arose. Specifically, as it is the most challenging aspect for many, one practitioner worked with the camera operator, whilst the other facilitated the group activities in front of the equipment. This enabled the sense of *being there alongside*, which participants valued when operating equipment.

> *I feel quite strongly that one-to-one attention on the camera creates a safe zone in which support can be individually tailored. For some it is presenting a choice 'do you want to point the camera in this direction or that?'. For some it is detailed technical knowledge... the skill is in getting it right for that person.*
>
> ***JS* - Practitioner diary**

> *He would go at….our speed. Even if there was a delay in filming he would make sure each one understood rather than say 'I've explained this'... he was good on that*
>
> **John – Speak Out participant**

*Women Reflect* only had one practitioner (myself), which made it very hard to manage the different processes, as reflected in my practitioner diaries and shown in table 5.19.

**Table 5-19 Difficulties of balancing process needs**

| **Women Reflect practitioner (JS –diaries)** | |
|---|---|
| **Session 1** | *Just too much to do as one worker. Cannot create intimate one-to-one relationship on camera at same time as making sure rest of group are engaged* |
| **Session 2** | *Very hectic this week. Watching back it seems calm but I am stressed. Too much for one person* |

As Lilla was technically proficient, she offered some support, but several participants recognised that two practitioners would have been better. *Communicate* participants had a comparison as there was one practitioner for the first two sessions, and then two for the rest, and concluded that two was more helpful. I agree that effectively managing multiple participatory video processes requires two practitioners, at least in the early stages. However, this is not always supported, as financing partners do not perceive practitioners' role in structuring and facilitating group dynamics.

### 5.3.5 Time for forming and familiarisation processes (opening stage) in relationship to contextualised needs

The biggest dislike for all participants on both the *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* projects was the short project timescale, which was a major hindrance (H-ii and H-iv). This was even though some had also identified the opposing difficulty of finding enough time to commit. Participants valued time for themselves, and based on this study, the *Women Reflect* project timescale is an absolute minimum for the opening stage, as even this limited scope. I next discuss the contextual lessons from these two projects.

## 5.4 **Contextual insights:** a question of time

In this section, I consider the insights from exploration of Real Time's opening stage, which reflect consistently present theme of time.

### 5.4.1 Single experience or mixed experience groups

Too little time was a common participant complaint. In addition, this research emphasised the additional time needed by particular individuals. In section 5.22, I mentioned the lack of time for Callie's to deal with the emotional issues raised. Ruby also had a personal rationale for wanting much more project time.

> *As an older person, new information and skills take longer to absorb. More time would be essential in my opinion for future projects with older people,*
>
> **Ruby**

Real Time aimed to open new type-1 spaces as a helpful intermediate arena between the private and wider public sphere. However, the *Women Reflect* data highlighted the considerable differences in broad community categories such as women (Howarth 2001), which can contribute to project take-over. In addition, participants bring both positive and negative past experiences with them to projects (Long and Van der Ploeg 1989). The purpose in *Women Reflect* was to bring together those from different backgrounds, but I found some participants disadvantaged in a diverse environment. In reality social spaces manifest in multiple ways each appropriate to different context (Jovchelovitch 2007).

The implication was a need for time/space to address particular interests, which means either working separately with those disadvantaged in a wider group, or considering how to address individual issues better within a diverse framework. Pragmatically this leads to my perspective that single experience projects, such as disabled only or elderly only, may be more appropriate as a preliminary step before a wider community project. (Although any such category also takes in a variety of experiences and capacities, and so balancing needs will always be a practice aspect). Nevertheless, single experience environments create a relatively safe space where particular common issues can be addressed, for instance, the damaging media portrayal or stigmatisation of particular groups. Most Real Time projects were run with single experience groups for this reason. The potential for using participatory video to bring together a more heterogeneous grouping is best approached as a second iteration in an ongoing process of engagement, as I discuss in chapter eight.

### 5.4.2 Confidence gains - context bound or context transcending

*Communicate* participants related their increased confidence in public speaking to the experience of appearing on camera in the project. However, this seems a lot to expect from four short sessions. I questioned whether it is realistic to expect confidence gains to transcend the project context. Nalini felt strongly that there had been an external effect and narrated an illustrative incident:

> ***Nalini*** *- we go to hospital … and I speak with lady receptionist, and he [my husband] says 'I thought you can't speak'. Before we use camera we can't speak with people…– we know the word but we were not confident. But now we are. I speak to lady and I know I do all right and my husband says 'oh you are confident now'*
>
> ***JS****- your husband has noticed changes?*
>
> ***Nalini*** *- Yes – all family, my mother-in-law, father-in-law, all said you're very changed*

It was hard to believe, and I asked whether the changes could be attributed to the English lessons, which formed part of the citizenship class, rather than the video project.

> ***Nalini*** *- since the video. This project makes a very big difference*

Nalini's insistence was surprising, especially given the time constraints, but Sahil also thought he gained more communication confidence from the video project than the English class. This is consistent with Real Time's exploratory study (Real Time 2002) with young Somali refugees at a supplementary school, which found speaking and listening skills, assessed by an external literacy expert, increased on average by one key stage (UK national literacy stages) during a week-long participatory video project. As concluded for these Somali youth, it was unlikely that new language was acquired in the *Communicate* timeframe. However, the project context seemed to increase these participants' confidence in using language previously taught more formally.

Other *Communicate* participants were more credibly '*a bit more confident'*, which raised the question of why Nalini responded so dramatically, and thus for whom the approach is most appropriate.

*People like us … most not confident … they came different countries and … they feel very shy. When they attend a video class … they I think feel very confident… so this approach is very important, for like us people*

**Nalini - Communicate**

Other data also suggested communication confidence building through video was appropriate for other unconfident participants such as those with learning disabilities.

*A lot of them lack confidence – an awful lot of them. For me – seeing people grow, from those that would hardly say a word to those that now speak….is quite a revelation*

**Lesley – Our Voice participant**

This implies that those with least confidence to speak up will have most to gain from processes such as Real Time's. However, this is counter-intuitive in that these people are likely to be most shy, and therefore find the initial challenge most testing. It is also risky to jump to this conclusion based on one person's response, as happens when researchers and practitioners alike *scramble for evidence* (Nolas 2007:235). Caution is needed, as unconfident groups are also likely to be more vulnerable to feelings of exposure, as discussed in chapter 6.

Nalini, although unconfident, was the most confident in that group, and had the personal capacity to run with the opportunity provided. For most progress is likely to be slower, and quick fix short-term projects are at best unlikely to lead to sustainable change, and at worst leave participants exposed like Callie. In addition, Nalini's enthusiasm for participatory video could be interpreted solely as her desire to continue – '*in just five weeks… we're more confident, innit. If five weeks more get so much more'.* Without ongoing input in *fixing* gains, they are liable to be short lived, as people regress to previous states (Maurer and Githens 2009:270).

Confidence gains were also one of the main outcomes valued by participants in the *Our Voice* project. The support worker spoke of Gary:

*he'd listen to what you said, and then repeat it back …. so he sounded quite articulate, but it was difficult to know how much he really owned. Then he changed. He had been quite good-natured, but as time progressed he started to be not so affable and really say how he felt, and that was a big leap.*

**Cathy - Our Voice support worker**

However, these perceived changes followed several years of participatory video input. Alistair also reflected (practitioner diary) on the difficulty of eliciting ideas from *Communicate* participants. This highlights the difference between the confidence to speak at all, and the confidence to express underlying opinions, which is highly context specific. The confidence to voice genuine perspectives rather than re-produce expectations, particularly if they challenge group norms, takes longer to develop for many. In addition, if it happens it can disrupt the notion of harmonious partnership by giving voice to discordant and conflicting perspectives, which can leave participants vulnerable. These issues are discussed further in chapter six and seven.

### 5.4.3 Implications for participant engagement

Most participants on *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* successfully overcame the video challenges, and this contributed to an increased sense of 'can do' for some:

> ***Veena*** *- We can do it, we can make videos so we can do anything else*
> ***Callie*** *- Doing it has been empowering … I can do something that I didn't know I would be able to do*

These same participants did not think video was for them, or were initially discomforted. By the last session, they were self-motivated and wanted to do more. However, participants often do not know what to expect when they join a video project, which confronts the notion of informed consent. Those such as Gary may not have the confidence or capacity to say they don't want to participate, which leads to further implications. Project set up needs to consider and allow time for interactive processes before the face-to-face group forming and familiarisation session, if it is to create informed opportunities. A taster session is the very least, but this research suggests that a longer pre-project process would help participants.

## 5.5 **Synthesis:** towards group process complexity

In this chapter, following thematic analysis, I have discussed Real Time's practice in using participatory video to open conducive group spaces, which practitioners refer to as familiarisation. I have framed this stage in relationship to the forming stage of group process theory (Tuckman 1965), and emphasised the importance of safe backstage

counter-publics (Fraser 1990) as an engagement strategy. I conclude that Real Time's approach was largely successful in establishing relationally conducive contexts, as a foundation. Practice also shifted the dynamics productively in two directions.

Firstly, many participants gained a sense of can-do, particularly if they previously felt unable to use video. In acknowledgment of the *becoming* ontology, I view this as a becoming can-do rather than a final stable state. The second key transition was towards becoming-group, rather than individually focused. Practitioners and participants identified this as a critical and valuable transition. I found Real Time's practice particularly successful at evolving inclusive and cooperative relations, and thus avoiding the take over tendency of typical group dynamics (e.g. Jarvis 1995 Karau et al 1993). This was accomplished through strong practitioner intervention at the beginning.

In this chapter, I also illustrated how practitioners negotiated the intrinsic project tensions and multiple processes by combining relational, functional and environmental aspects of practice. Video performed (Habermas 1998:56-64) a group bonding and building function. The analysis also led to unforeseen insight about group processes. Firstly, Lewin's model, which guides many action research processes (Lewin 1947b, Maurer and Githens 1998) characterises change as a single-loop process (Greenwood and Levin 1998). It is apparent that, even within this opening stage, two Lewinian type processes spiralled alongside each other. Practitioners destabilised the status quo both through setting up individual video challenges, and by intervening to disrupt usual group dynamics, which demonstrated how social dynamics shifts in complex incremental iterations rather than linearly.

Comparing Lewin's (1947a) process of unfreezing, moving and re-freezing with Tuckman's (1965) storming, norming and performing this insight also suggests that Real Time's opening stage already encompasses different kinds of repeated storming, norming and performing cycles that happen through internally focused project interactions back stage (Goffman 1990). Moreover, this disrupts the notion that forming is necessarily cosy and nurturing (Randell and Southgate 1980). Although practitioners' relational skills made it acceptable, it is apparent that Real Time people were active agents who stirred up dynamics. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) characterised the facilitation style in the early group process as directing, and research into social phase transitions suggest that strong leadership is a major factor in social shifts (Holyst, Kacperski and Schweitzer 2000). I conclude that practitioners exercising their power-

with agency assertively was a major contributor to success at this stage. What is at issue is how practitioners then let go as participants' informed control grows

The other major insight was that achieving process possibilities was greatly hindered by time limitations, particularly in relationship to the kind of contextual needs that exist for many of Real Time's target groups. The importance of this opening stage was rarely recognised by project partners, who tended to view Real Time's approach as a technical method, rather than relational process. Consequently, the issue of time became even more problematic on the short-term product-focused projects that formed the majority of recent Real Time commissions. I explore the resulting tensions between process and product in relationship to the empowerment purpose in the next chapter.

# Chapter 6

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# Chapter 6 Between internal processes and external products: from social dialogue to creative group relationships

> *We actually did get some good material that was genuinely what people thought. And it did reach some decision makers. But that's the problem - the thing I'm proud of is the product, which was worked on by us to quite a degree … rather than being proud of the participant ownership created by the collaborative group relationship, which is what we pertain to be about.*
>
> **Alistair - Speak Out practitioner**

A fundamental tension in actualised participatory video is that between process and product (e.g. White 2003, Shaw 2007) as raised in section 1.4.4. Participants and project supporters surveyed in this study were motivated by the idea of communicating group-members' lived reality on video. Indeed, successfully making videos was a source of considerable pride for many (e.g. section 4.3 and 4.3.1). However, in some projects, it was the requirement to make a particular product in a limited timeframe that compromised appropriate building of public expression, and informed group control over communication processes. Furthermore, I found process and product intertwined, with the practical challenge in negotiating the unavoidable contradictions to achieve the parallel intentions of video creation alongside productive group possibilities.

In actuality, this practice paradox is inherent in Real Time's intervention between social agendas (see Chapter 1). In section 2.5, I introduced de Certeau's (1984) productive distinction between strategies as the public face of methodology, and practice tactics or the tacit *way* of interactions. Translated to participatory video, strategies are the project boundaries, structures and explicit procedures agreed with external partners, which function to position intentions within a financing framework (Mosse 2006). Strategies encompass the binding agreements between Real Time and other project stakeholders about what would happen, which supported the work. These established that video activities would take place with a target group over a specified time, and generally committed to delivery of a video to an external agenda. However, the unspoken Real Time purpose was to use the video-making framework to make space for new alliances and catalyse the conditions for group emergence. Tactics are the way that Real Time appropriated the externally defined project space to serve this interest, which emphasises the somewhat clandestine nature of practice, as well as need to manoeuvre amongst both explicit and implicit agendas.

This chapter explores how Real Time attempted to create time/space to build genuine participant expression, against the backdrop of positioned interests. It also clarifies the considerable practical problems created in negotiating the process/product balance in actuality. The overall issue was how to maintain positive collaborations that furthered group agency, rather than becoming complicit in exploitive dynamics.

In section 6.1, I establish the purpose of group building, as well as the two practice balances that emerged from analysis. In section 6.1.1, I introduce the main cases explored in this chapter, and the participants' reported likes and gains. The next sections consider the practical negotiation of the intrinsic tensions towards the key process possibilities at this stage. Section 6.2 explores enabling and hindering factors in building expression and section 6.3 the progression towards mutuality against contextual influences. In section 6.4, I discuss the implications for project structure and project partnerships.

## 6.1 **Group building:** using participatory video to stimulate interaction towards group agency and purpose

As I illustrated in chapter 5, Real Time's participatory video practice incorporated multiple processes unfolding alongside each other through the project interactions. During the group building stage there were two main intentions:

- **To build participant expression through group interaction**
- **To sustain productive group relationships towards collaborative action**

Real Time utilised videoing activities to support these aims in two main ways. Firstly, video exercises structured and guided group exchange. This was both to develop individual expression and to support group-members in exploring shared issues to build contextualised understanding. Secondly, practitioners applied video processes to identify and sustain the group agenda, whilst continuing to avoid take-over by particular individual or external interests.

In section 2.4.2, I presented practitioners' perceptions that participatory video was useful both for stimulating group reflection and for developing group purpose. Participant likes and gains, synthesised in section 4.3.1, supported this perception. However, as at the opening stage, some informants narrated contradictory experiences.

Table 6.1 summarises the process possibilities, fundamentally linked tensions and global themes that I identified during analysis of the group building stage.

**Table 6-1 Using participatory video for group bonding and building**

| Possibilities | Progression tendency | Practice tensions | Global themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Developing voice through group interaction** | From individual expression, through internal group exchange to group communication purpose | **Encouraging open expression versus risk of inappropriate exposure** | **From keeping quiet to speaking up:** Appropriate building of participant expression versus speed of/time for process |
| **Sustaining productive group relationships** | From established inclusive dynamics, through external control influences, towards collectivity | **Balance of internal relational dynamics versus external influences/control** | **Towards mutuality:** Appropriate control of internal relational processes versus external production needs/agendas |

The two global themes shown in table 6.1 encompass the practice balances at this stage of Real Time's process. The main purpose of this chapter is to explore how practitioners negotiated them in context, in order to build understanding of what helps and hinders in achieving the intended process possibilities. These themes were particularly evident in the 'quick-fix' production projects that formed the majority of Real Time's work in the recent economic climate (see section 1.3.1).

### 6.1.1 Main Real Time cases at the Group Building stage

Four production projects (*Speak Out*, *We Care*, *Tough Tales*, and *Knife Crime*) form the backbone of this chapter, because they contributed the most pertinent data to the group building stage. I now introduce these cases.

**Speak Out**

*Speak Out* is a self-advocacy group for learning disabled adults, which is one of a growing number of similar UK groups formed during the transition from centralised provision to smaller community living units. The aim was to improve understanding of

the needs of people with learning disabilities, in particular when they interact with social workers, doctors or dentists. The project was church funded but financial control lay with the group's ten trustees. The project had a very small budget and apart from an initial group meeting there were no development sessions. There were eight production sessions and 3 days editing (24 hours contact time) with 15 participants.

**We Care**

A carer is an unpaid family member or friend who looks after an adult or child at home, often round the clock, who otherwise could not cope. The *We Care* group was brought together specifically to make a video about the difficulties carers face, in order to raise awareness during Annual Carers Week. The project involved 28 hours contact time with 10 participants, and was financed by a trust and local authority. It started with a two-hour taster session, followed by eight production sessions and 2 days editing. Most production sessions were with sub-groups (two or three people) due to carers' restricted availability.

**Tough Tales**

This project took place with seven (after drop out) male participants attending a residential drug and alcohol centre. They were part of an intensive rehabilitation programme that focused on participants' lives and what leads to drug use, as well as on developing life skills. The director of a creative arts charity (Nancy) initiated the project following a request from a participant after a previous writing project. A Community Foundation funded 12 weekly sessions and five days editing, with a total of 34 hours contact time.

**Knife Crime**

A group of young people instigated this long-term project, to raise awareness about knife crime. Real Time supported them in securing funding and making the video. The project took approximately 200 hours contact time over two years and involved 20 participants.

Relevant corpus data included participants' perspectives, predominantly from interviews and focus groups, but also from observational feedback sheets (*Tough Tales*). I also drew on practitioner and support worker interviews that illustrated the significant

practice issues. In addition, I return in this chapter to the concurrent *Women Reflect* data to illustrate specific functional practice, as well as introducing *Youth Exchange* in section 6.3.6, which was a critical example that emerged ethnographically in a practitioner interview.

### 6.1.2 Purpose, motivations and participant likes and gains

As presented in section 4.3, I found video itself was an attractor in the seven projects with participant data. Table 6.2 summarises the project initiator and motivations for the four main projects of this chapter. Although the particular driver varied, inevitably both participants, and project supporters, were motivated by the awareness-raising promise of participant-authored videos. So for instance, self-driven young people (aged 15/16) initiated the *Knife Crime* project because they wanted to use video to influence others after the death of a friend in a knife attack.

**Table 6-2 Project initiation and motivation**

| Project | Driver | Motivation – participants unless stated |
|---|---|---|
| **Speak Out** | Participants<br>(JS – probably prompted) | ***Thomas (support worker)*** *- it stemmed from the members themselves, who wanted... the public to be more aware of their ... needs* |
| **We Care** | Carer support worker | ***Susan****- the idea was wonderful ... everyone could have a big voice in it ... [to] make people more aware of what we go through ….15-20 years of sleepless nights* |
| **Tough Tales** | Arts charity director– participant request | ***Fin*** *- To tell ... about true life drug use, and how it effects users and their families*<br>***Pete*** *- [so] more people realise how important rehabilitation is* |
| **Knife Crime** | Participants | ***Kim*** *- we thought something… needed to be done about the risks of carrying knives*<br>***Jamie*** *- we knew about it, but other people didn't - we wanted to tell them* |
| **Research Synthesis** | **Varied project drivers**<br>(bottom up and in-between) | **Awareness-raising –** participants are not passive victims |

There were additional potential benefits perceived in advance by project informants. For example, participants in the *Tough Tales* expressed the desire to develop communications confidence and capacity (e.g. self-expression, public speaking and presentational skills), and the project supporter in *We Care* thought the project provided isolated carers with time for themselves to re-build esteem. These mirror the participant 'likes' and 'gains' that actually manifested in *Communicate* and *Women Reflect* as discussed in chapter 5. In addition, Thomas from *Speak Out* placed value on the potential of participatory video to transfer control to the participants. However, the idea of conveying their experiences to help others was, as for the *Knife Crime* project, the major motivator for participants in *Tough Tales* and *We Care*. Similarly, project supporters in *Speak Out*, *We Care* and *Tough Tales* saw video primarily as a way for participants to communicate with the wider world. What is apparent is that these participants neither perceive themselves, nor are seen by their supporters, as passive victims as positioned by the empowerment narrative (section 1.4.2). Participants in all these projects had 'lived' knowledge and wanted to communicate it to help others. They are not empowered as experts through the project (e.g. Foster-Fishman et 2005), but already see themselves as knowledgeable collaborators. Informants in these projects also expressed a definite rationale for using video as the communication medium. For instance, *Knife Crime* participants thought it provided a way for them to connect directly with young audiences, and Thomas thought it provided a way for learning-disabled participants to focus and control communication with others.

An awareness-raising video was successfully realised on the four projects, which satisfied the participants, and I discuss collaborative production in chapter 7. Next, I consider the likes and gains reported by participants in relationship to group building as summarised in table 6.3.

**Table 6-3 Participant likes and gains - group building**

| Project informants- participants unless stated | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Janet*** *(Speak Out)- I liked having that chance to say how you feel, because…. before I didn't have that chance or choice to say how I felt inside*<br>***Hazel*** *(Speak Out)- Video helped me nerves speaking* | **Expressing how think and feel** |
| ***Paul*** *(Tough Tales) - Asking questions was good and getting answers – finding out more about people in general* | **Learning about others** |
| ***Susan*** *(We Care) - After thirty-five years caring, when they know we're there, but we're managing to carry on. You do think after all this time, someone is listening*<br>***Sara*** *(Tough Tales practitioner) - There was something about their stories being seen by other people that was valuing* | **Being heard and views valued** |
| ***Kim*** *(Knife Crime) - it's such a good feeling to know that everyone has come together and done it*<br>***Jamie*** *(Knife Crime)- I think like we could do it because we were a team* | **Value of group collaboration** |

Despite the product-orientated nature of these projects, participants also thought aspects of the process were beneficial. Table 6.3 shows the chance to be heard, listening to and learning from others, and working as a group were particularly liked. This supports the application of video to stimulate group interaction. Yet, informant narratives also unearthed counter possibilities. For instance, whilst participants liked expressing how they feel, I identified a parallel risk of inappropriate public exposure, and although participants liked being in communication control, there were considerable internal and external pressures on dynamics that threatened group agency. As at Real Time's opening stage, I suggest these tensions are intrinsic to intervening at the boundary between the group and the wider world.

Next, I open up the functional, relational and contextual factors that enabled and hindered practice in these contexts towards participant expression (section 6.2) and sustaining the group agenda (section 6.3).

## 6.2 **Global theme:** From keeping quiet to speaking up

The global theme considered in this section is the practice balance between building participant expression and the speed of the process. In all the projects studied, Real Time used structured video activities to create a context in which participants spoke and

listened to each other. Practitioners and project supporters believed that this made participants feel valued (e.g. table 2.7). Indeed, informants' narratives, as presented in Table 6.3, suggested they agreed. However, the assumption in much discourse about participatory practice is that encouraging participants' expression in the social arena is necessarily a good thing.

> *I'm sure that people were delighted to see themselves on screen, talking about how they felt, so it's got to be positive, there can't be any negatives*
>
> **Susan - We Care participant**

In contradiction, the alternative possibility of inappropriate exposure also emerged from analysis of participant data in the *Speak Out*, *We Care* and *Tough Tales* projects, as shown in table 6.4.

**Table 6-4 Narratives disjunction between being heard and the risk of exposure**

| Speak Out - participants | We Care | Researcher |
|---|---|---|
| ***Geoff*** *- I liked seeing video of when I was outside*<br>***Jasper*** *- I liked talking because… it's recorded and watched* | ***Susan (participant)*** *– Everyone… quite liked to see themselves … up on video*<br>***Sally*** *(* ***support worker****)- they were … pleased about the way they presented themselves... and wanted videos for their families* | **Liked being on video** |
| ***Geoff*** *- they took…. [video] of me outside in my coat and pyjamas … it was quite… embarrassing*<br>***Ann*** *- I liked the video coz I was talking about my nervous breakdown. I enjoyed that…* | ***Sally*** *- there were one or two who were very honest … and I think when they watched it they were almost shocked by how honest they were.* | **Possible inappropriate exposure** |
| ***Geoff*** *-there's no… wheelchair access… in my girlfriends house*<br>***Thomas*** *- so you can't visit her. How did you feel, when she said that on video?*<br>***Geoff*** *-it was…. a bit upsetting* | ***Sally*** *- maybe … it brings feelings home more … dug down thoughts that … hadn't quite registered. Maybe, it makes the feelings more acute* | **Potential upset** |

Table 6.4 implies that although participants liked seeing themselves, there was a parallel risk of exposing vulnerable people, which is dependent on the particular individual and timing.

> *If someone's wife has just got Alzheimer, if it's very new, they may not want to exploit their experience … they may feel embarrassed.*
>
> **Susan – We Care participant**

Although Lewin (1947a:35) proposed that an emotional stir-up is part of generating change, I am sure this is not what he had in mind. It is inappropriate and ethically dubious to ask participants to disclose deep emotions as video material, when the experience is still raw. It is also a question of distinguishing between communicating internally to other group-members in the closed forum back stage (Goffman 1990), and to outsiders front stage via the video medium.

Susan went on to say that at this point (taster session) it was not necessary to tell in depth life stories, as speaking on camera was '*getting used to what we were doing … a nice way of introducing the camera'.* Furthermore, that '*people wouldn't do it if they didn't want to'*. Unfortunately, I think participants are sometimes unable to make informed choices about what to reveal at the beginning, because they lack awareness of the possible emotional consequences of speaking up, or how to structure communication appropriately for the audience. Therefore, I suggest a need for a period of internally focused communication, during which participants' expression is built slowly in confidence back stage, before considering externally focused video making. In this closed environment, participants can develop informed decisions about what they are prepared to communicate beyond the safe confines of the group.

The following table 6.5 presents the enabling and limiting factors identified at this stage, in relationship to the tension between encouraging open sharing and the risk of exposure.

**Table 6-5- From keeping quiet to speaking up - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Appropriate building of participant expression versus speed of/time for process** | • Structured and staged process of voice building<br>• Encouraging slow opening and building trust and informed choices | • Risk of inappropriate exposure due to production pressure |

To set the scene for exploring how these enablers and hindrance actually manifested in context, I firstly return to the *Women Reflect* project to illustrate the specific project activities that Real Time used to structure participants' slow opening as trust and awareness of the video medium grew.

### 6.2.1 From 'I am' to 'our opinions': structured process of voice building

I found Real Time's structured approach to voice building an enabling factor (E-v in table 4.16) in gradually developing participants' expression. In section 5.3.1, I presented the exercise structures utilised to expand production skills and build the group dynamic in the first two *Women Reflect* sessions. In parallel, Real Time developed group interaction through the *same* staged video activities as illustrated in tables 6.6 and 6.7.

**Table 6-6 Women Reflect inter-subjective activities session 1**

| Session exercises | Participants' experiences (diaries) | Building expression |
|---|---|---|
| **1.Name Game**<br>**2.Self-presentation** Each introduces self<br>**3.Gain** - why here<br>**4.Rivers of life** - Present 3 life transitions | ***Ruby*** *- We had to say something about ourselves and what we wanted to get out of the project*<br>***Grace*** *– An exercises consisted of discussion and presenting three key life turning points*<br>***Callie*** *– The exercise taught me about other people in the group. I realised that we shared similar experiences in different contexts* | **Self-expression - from 'I am' to 'we are'** |

Table 6.6 shows that the pre-exercise discussions and recording content in session one was concerned with self-presentation with a past focus on what brought participants to

this point in time. Table 6.7 shows how discussions and video content shifted from individual to group focus during session 2.

**Table 6-7 Women Reflect inter-subjective activities session 2**

| **Session exercises** | **Participants' experiences of group interaction (concurrent diaries)** | **Process of building expression** |
|---|---|---|
| **1.** Questions: each asks a question<br>**2.** Documentary: each presents individual shot choice<br>**3.** I feel strongly about …. each contributes an opinion statement<br>**4.** Issue discussion: negotiated focus | ***Ruby* –** *we started by asking the person next to us a question- after each exercise we analysed what we saw*<br>***Maya*** - *We worked on individual topics that were of particular interest … it was interesting listening to the issues raised*<br>***Angela*** - *Each subject chosen for videoing was different. I chose poverty.*<br>***Grace*** - *Diverse subjects chosen reflects differences in a microcosm. Then we discussed a topic to all agree on to film*<br>***Ruby* -** *we chose the impact modern technology has on our lives* | **Getting to know each other - from 'what do you think' to 'I feel strongly about….'** |

Session 2 began with participants asking questions to find out about each other. Later on they were encouraged to open up further by contributing personal interests and opinions. The progression contained in the two tables demonstrates how practitioners actively shifted the focus of the exchange from the past to the present. Exercises systematised participants' expression in iterative steps from '*I am'* and '*who are you?'*, to '*my view is …* 'and '*what do you think?'*. These two sessions finished with a group discussion (*what is our interest*?), to identify a common concern to guide participants' first content-controlled video production during the remaining sessions.

At this stage, practitioners addressed possible feelings of exposure, through encouraging gradual development in the depth of exchange. At first, participants merely said something, but by the end of the second session they expressed opinions as trust in the context grew. Individuals chose how much to reveal, and were instructed to pass on the microphone if they didn't want to contribute. The structured progression intended to assist the comfortable development of expression. However, particular differences in response affected individual control over the pace of opening up.

### 6.2.2 Individual differences in response

Most *Women Reflect* participants enjoyed learning about each other and reflecting on issues through the group interactions. Nevertheless, even in this project, which was process orientated, individual responses demonstrated practical issues with the endeavour to systemise a gradual opening. In this context, feelings of exposure were expressed by both Grace and myself as practitioner-researcher at session one, because there was insufficient time for trust to build as gradually as intended.

**Table 6-8-Women Reflect – feelings of exposure**

| | Grace – Participant diary | JS - Researcher diary |
|---|---|---|
| **Feelings of exposure** | *I'm struggling with the sharing aspect of the project, I find it hard to discuss personal issues* | *I feel embarrassed to have opened up too much too soon, in an attempt to push the process further in the limited time* |

In this project, my desire to gather data on as much of Real Time's process as possible within the research timeframe created pressure. Although in theory group-members decided what to reveal, Lilla said '*I felt I could have opened up more'*. There is no doubt in my mind that because some (including myself) opened very readily during session one, this put pressure on the more reserved. I was already aware that I was hurrying a process that should take at least four to six sessions rather than two. There is obviously a link between praxis and time-based factors, such as session length and frequency, or activity sequencing and repetition when catalysing a journey. This is why time hindrances manifested so often in thematic analysis of Real Time's processes.

Based on collaborative group reflections, there was not a major problem in this project. Participants were all articulate professionals who made informed decisions about how much to disclose, based on knowing what would happen to the video material and research narratives. Whilst the project context is front stage (Goffman 1990) relative to participants' private lives, there was also a clear separation in this project between video recordings produced back stage (Goffman 1990) to assist internally dialogue, and the transition to externally focused video production.

However, I found the issue of inappropriate exposure a major concern in the short-term production projects, in which front stage/back stage was not clearly demarcated. I now turn to *Tough Tales*, to examine particular problems in this respect.

### 6.2.3 **Too much too soon:** risk of inappropriate exposure due to production pressure

Real Time's processes of staged opening and development of informed control over exposure was compromised by video production pressures on the short-term projects. This hindering factor (H-v in table 4.16) was exemplified in the *Tough Tales* project.

Nancy, the arts charity manager running the project alongside Real Time, said participants felt exposed in the group, especially when talking on video. Yet there were conflicting agendas apparent in the partnership narrative, which made this an inevitable consequence. The arts charity perceived therapeutic benefits in participants telling stories about what they'd been through, in order to find a path forward *towards wider vistas* (Nancy –project collaborator). However, Nancy, and the participants, also wanted to use their particular knowledge in a positive way, through making a video to communicate externally. Indeed, this is the contested territory mentioned in section 1.4.4, because all project actors had a stake in the video product. Nancy had financing agencies behind her needing evidence, and practitioners needed *to 'get stuff out of people, to fulfil targets'* (Sara-practitioner).

Practitioners proposed that video recording and playback aids participants in standing back from experiences to gain perspective (section 2.4.2), and data on all four projects suggested participants liked talking about life experiences in a group (table 6.3). However, it is important to consider the ethics of recording participants' deep feelings on video, which was a particular risk in this therapeutic setting because participants were used to talking freely. In the *Tough Tales* context, there were also particular issues because Real Time was working within the project sessions alongside the arts charity personnel, which is not a usual occurrence. The practitioner narrative in the table below highlights the issues.

**Table 6-9 Tough Tales – lack of separation between voice building and production**

| Sara – practitioner | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *We were practising interviewing … early on. I was focusing on making it comfortable and developing awareness about production …possibilities. They started … whoosh – one question and 20 minutes reply* | **Building activity - Voice and awareness** |
| *One participant was talking frankly and it felt too early … he was not opening up in a safe way. And yet the arts charity people were 'that's great, give us more'. I felt pressurised into producing product at the wrong time.* | **Product needs compromised appropriate voice building** |
| *People talked openly because they were in a therapeutic environment, but I wasn't a … counsellor. It was inappropriate … for that information to be recorded. I wasn't going to use those materials, but … I was concerned about participants' exposure.* | **Ethical issue – danger of internal interactions being disclosed publicly** |
| *It's not about us trying to extract whatever we can. It's about ensuring people understand the implications of speaking up, to inform choices … subsequently. I would have said 'why don't you talk generally and we can think later about what you want to say for the video'.* | **Need to build informed understanding of consequences of speaking out** |

It is obviously questionable to stir up feelings with no possibility of further support. Nevertheless, if disclosure is in confidence behind closed doors and, following Real Time's ground rules, nothing watched externally without participants' consent there is less of a problem. Yet, video projects prompt inevitable expectations that material will be available for wider consumption. In this project, this clearly resulted in the danger of inappropriate public disclosure.

Table 6.9 shows that the problem was caused by the collaborating partners from the arts charity working at cross-purposes during early workshop interactions. Sara did ensure that none of this particular material was used and participants were later involved in deciding whether material was too sensitive to show (Sara - practitioner). Sara felt *if the trust is not sufficiently there before production starts, I'm not doing my job.* However, this incident shows that facilitators can be under pressure to misuse trust (Kvale 2007) when producing videos about people's personal experiences. It is also necessary to be alert to this issue occurring more subtly, especially when working with less articulate and more easily influenced participants.

Furthermore, *Tough Tales* narratives raised the problem of building informed understanding of the consequences of choices when participants have to make them in advance of any personal costs. In table 6.10, Nancy narrates a critical incident that

happened when the group decided to video a prison scene in an unused cell at the police station.

**Table 6-10 Tough Tales – issue of informed consent**

| Nancy - Project co-collaborator/manager | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *The guys wanted to do that … They interviewed the police and … re-enacted being in a cell. Most of them said they felt at home …. but also they didn't want to go back. But one guy, because he had gone into prison after a really serious personal tragedy found … the experience difficult.* | **Group decision-making masks particular needs** |
| *Going into that police cell … brought back the memories, sorrow, and mourning. He could have said no, but he wanted to come. Until he arrived, he didn't realise how difficult it would be* | **Lack of awareness of consequences of choice** |
| *Sometimes it is painful to hear stories or to face our demons, but that's part of the healing process. I felt that it was a step forward for him.* | **Video-making as questionable context for therapy** |
| *Robert, Sara, and the other guys just got on with videoing. It was good there were enough people so that I could deal with the upset one-to-one. I don't know how inexperienced people would have coped.* | **Need for enough experienced practitioners for individual needs** |

There are a number of problems highlighted by this incident - not least, whether video making is an appropriate context for a healing crisis, as well as the need for enough practitioners to interact with individuals one-to-one, which I identified in section 5.3.4. Nancy had thought issues would come up at the police station, but the centre manager had assured her that everybody had really taken it on board before deciding to go. It is clear that informed consent is another knotty practical issue and time dependent process.

I thus established how the requirement to produce a product could compromise appropriate development of participant voice. Recording material for internal reflection is entirely different from recording material to edit and present externally. Ethical practice should involve participants developing enough knowledge of basic video production processes, presentational skills and possible audiences in confidence backstage, to equip their decisions on what to show externally. In chapter 4, I showed that generating a conducive dynamic is a major part of what practitioners contributed to the participant experience. A period of familiarisation and group building is necessary before production starts as proposed in section 6.2. This is to create space for slow opening, trust building, sustaining supportive dynamics and facilitating the transfer of

content and technical choices to the group appropriately, as their awareness grows.

However, I have illustrated that group building and production process were muddled in the *Tough Tales* project causing ethical risks. *Tough Tales*, as well as *We Care* and *Speak Out* data, showed that if production time is short the process became concertinaed, which compromised the internal group processes. The product needs tended to take precedence to fulfil funding requirements. Then processes that should have been separated and sequenced happened alongside production or not all. This threatened trusting relationships to the detriment of participants in these collaborations. I thus have demonstrated the need to separate group building process from recording video for external viewing, which I recommended in section 6.2. I also identified the gap in partnership understanding of why this is important. In the following section I further unpack this issue, by exploring how external influences as well as internal relationships hindered practice attempts to support cooperative group dynamics.

## 6.3 **Global theme:** Towards mutuality

This section explores the global theme that encompasses the practice balance between appropriate control of internal dynamics and external production needs (see table 4.17). In section 6.2.1, I used *Women Reflect* data to illustrate how Real Time's group building process can unfold to build group ideas and purpose, and in section 6.2.3, I emphasised that this stage should preclude and be separate from externally focused production. During the group building stage, Real Time actively facilitated group processes, with the intention of maintaining the established group dynamics (to sustain the enabling factors discussed in section 5.3). Group process theory assents that specific input is essential to *fix* and *maintain* new group dynamics. This is to avoid regression to previous states, or the development of undesired dynamics (Lewin 1947a, Maurer and Githens 2009). Additionally, I propose that *fixing* is not a single event. In the Real Time sessions, practitioners repeatedly consolidated new dynamics through the iterative action of videoing exercises (4-5 each session). However, in the real-life contexts that are the focus of this chapter, there were external relational factors that also affected the practice dynamics. The 'towards mutuality' global balance reflects the necessary practice negotiation between control of the internal group processes and the

external influences. In table 6.11 below, I summarise the participatory video enabling and limiting factors pertinent to this endeavour.

**Table 6-11 Towards mutuality - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Appropriate control of internal relational processes versus external production needs/agendas** | • Facilitated process of group building before production | • External influences threaten collaborate dynamics and group control |

I next look at how these enablers and limiters played out the in project contexts.

### 6.3.1 Intervening between influences: contextual influences threaten collaborative dynamics and group control

Maintaining collaborative relational dynamics towards group agency and purpose was also problematic when set against delivering a particular video. Aspects of facilitation (both relational interaction and functional application of video) became further complicated in context due to external relational influences that affected the internal dynamics. I thus identified these contextual influences as a hindering factor of this stage (H-vi in table 4.17).

The four projects of this chapter exemplified particular issues of control (between participant, practitioner, and project partners), which affected development of group agency. This included under/over supporter influence, coercion, multiple/conflicting agendas and compromised practitioner agency, which I cover in sections 6.3.2 to 6.3.5. To unpack this further I consider the *Speak Out* project.

### 6.3.2 Speak Out: appropriate control over project processes

In *Speak Out,* the support workers' (Thomas') influence compromised the internal processes of building both participants' genuine voice and collaborative group dynamics. From the start, the practitioner (Alistair) thought that the *Speak Out* aims were good, but that the tiny budget combined with unrealistic expectations would cause

problems. There were multiple stakeholders (a board of ten including local authority, trustee and church people), who unrealistically expected a video they could sell. There were only five production sessions and no face-to-face group building time. Alistair's unfolding narrative (table 6.12 below), made apparent his belief that the context (un-conducive room, badly structured) and interactions (rushed, coercive) were questionable.

**Table 6-12 Speak Out - support worker over influence**

| Alistair - practitioner | Issue awareness |
|---|---|
| *If time is short … you inevitably take short cuts, and make assumptions. There'd already been group work [facilitated by Thomas] ... they'd talked about … issues beforehand. The difficulty was I didn't know … how much was fed in* | **Initial doubts about unknown support worker** |
| *It ended up with words being put into their mouths … A woman was interviewed …. [Thomas] is saying, 'you went to the doctors -it wasn't very good was it? And she was going 'yes, yes'. .. To be honest, he could have said 'there are penguins in Antarctica' and she'd have said 'yes, yes'. That was my gut feeling* | **Specific example of support worker over control** |
| *I had a slightly sick feeling that they were all directed … it wasn't really their views. I felt I was taking part in something morally dubious - asking people their opinions but putting them in a position where they weren't able to articulate* | **Resulting practitioner discomfort** |

With inadequate financing, there is a reliance on support workers to assist participants in deciding what they want to say. In this case, Real Time's lack of relational input, and Alistair's observation of interactions, led him to doubt genuine participant expression. Tellingly, Alistair often referred to the '*guy in charge*', which reflects his view of Thomas's positioning. However, digging a little deeper into the project narrative it seemed Thomas was not maliciously manipulative.

**Table 6-13 Practical paradoxes of self-advocacy**

| Alistair (practitioner) | Thomas (support worker) |
|---|---|
| *Obviously … some people can't articulate and you have to help. … Video production put an awful lot of pressure on the worker to .. get results from the learning-disabled people… He was actually saying, 'come on, you told me last week? Tell me again'. But, maybe they'd changed their mind … didn't think doctors were so bad?* | *To utilise time... most economically I primed the group so …they were able to talk about some relevant experiences… Real Time weren't actively involved with ….deep conversations beforehand… that's a role I'd taken. It didn't always work… because …people talk about what they want to talk about* |

Table 6.13 shows that Thomas was faced with the problem of delivering video self-advocacy by people with communication difficulties, in an impossibly time pressured situation, to external agents who did not understand the problems. However, table 6.14 shows Thomas lacked understanding of Real Time's relational practice, which might have helped.

**Table 6-14 Inappropriate relational forum**

| Alistair (practitioner) | Thomas (support worker) | Researcher |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *I was invited to do a taster session. I … expected to do 45-minutes of interactive video exercises with the group. But. .. I was an agenda item given five minutes near the end. I was allowed to explain what would happen - a complete waste - people needed to actively participate to understand* | *We had two budgets for two proposals… The trustees were quite happy for either. Alistair then met the members at one of our meetings … we gave participants the option … they decided to go for the cheaper proposal- because it required less time* | **Inappropriate forum leads to uninformed choice** |

Table 6.14 suggests the meeting structure was actually disempowering, and resulted in participants making an inadequately informed decision. However, my diary observations following a research visit suggested that this was Thomas's usual approach to group decision-making.

> *I planned a focus group with prompting themes. Instead, I was an agenda item at a formal meeting. I am shocked. They all sat round a long table …making it very hard for any but the most confident and articulate to say anything. How is this self-advocacy - with no attempt to structure speaking space and no work in small sub-groups*
>
> **JS - Researcher**

Within these critical incidents there also appeared to be an assumption that self-advocacy necessarily means participants make every decision. This reflects a common misconception within empowerment practice. It is clearly inappropriate for participants to decide which project structure to follow, with no knowledge of what taking part will mean, or how their choice would effect the experience. In this context, Thomas seemed to be making plenty of other decisions for participants, so handing over this particular one was rather tokenistic. This led to both practitioner and support worker frustration at wasted opportunities (trustees were prepared to finance longer engagement), because

Alistair felt unable to contribute his relational knowledge, or get to know the group, and Thomas recognised a longer project would have benefited participants.

The problems created by Thomas's lack of awareness ('*used to running formal meeting in an industrial context'* - Alistair) are apparent. Real Time's relational practice could have assisted participant involvement. However, Alistair was actively prevented from applying his own agency.

> *I … wasn't in control of the process. I was harangued continually by Thomas to do this or that … and trustees … ten people … pitching in. In the end, I gave up.. 'whatever you think' … I couldn't answer to the group because I was prevented from building a relationship with them. … I felt… dirty … complicit in someone else's bad practice.*

**Alistair - practitioner**

As well as threatening genuine expression, Real Time's inability to influence the relational dynamic also compromised the sense of shared creative ownership

**Table 6-15 Speak Out – lack of practitioner influence over process dynamics**

| Alistair (practitioner) | Thomas (support worker) | Researcher |
|---|---|---|
| *I wanted to make sure that everyone appeared … some couldn't articulate well. I could have created opportunities [for] … positive roles with less speaking requirements. I needed time without [Thomas] telling me who … to work with and how* | *The ones … actively involved … have been very proud ….and very competitive amongst themselves about who did the most*<br>***JS** - **Participants are saying 'I did more than you'?***<br>*Most definitely. We…. filmed every single person who wanted to - but because of their disabilities … those that… are more independent were able to… take that more pro-active role* | **Barriers for less articulate and competition between participants** |

Table 6.15 illustrates that rather than creating space for all, and a sense of shared ownership, this process was inaccessible for the less able and resulted in competition between group-members. Limitations on Real Time contributions to relational dynamic also caused problems in the other projects. For example, although John (*Speak Out*), Dena (*We Care*) and Jamie (*Knife Crime*) identified being in control as a particularly liked aspect of their experience, production choices did not involve everyone.

As elucidated in Chapter 5, input into relational dynamics is a key aspect of the Real Time approach, and practitioners intervene strongly initially to avoid take over. Yet practitioners were unable to contribute their expertise to the *Speak Out* collaboration, and the most physically independent and articulate participants' influence dominated. If project structures do not empower practitioners' agency, it is hard to see what they add to collaborations. However, I now explore *We Care* to illustrate that this is not a simple matter of right and wrong, but that relational practice is a nuanced balance that needs contextualised understanding.

### 6.3.3 **We Care:** limited relational input threatens collaborative authorship

There was some building work in the *We Care* project, unlike *Speak Out*. However, this consisted of one taster session before production, which again placed reliance on the support worker (Sally) to facilitate project processes. The intention was that carers would share creative ownership, but transferring responsibility needs strong encouragement and support initially (section 5.3.3). Table 6.16 shows Sally faced difficulties getting the project going.

**Table 6-16 We Care – negotiating the balance of control**

| **Sally – Support worker** | **Researcher** |
|---|---|
| *Initially, I thought I'll do this and that. But then I thought … I need to pull back. I said 'I'm not organising it'. .. They said 'ohh [*mimes fear*] why not?' … they felt a bit miffed* | **Practice balance between participant and support-worker responsibility** |
| *I think I pulled back too far - because of that it faltered on a couple of occasions. We were [*hands like scales*] jostling for wherever we were supposed to be* | **Support worker stepped back too soon** |
| *Then one of the carers … took the reins. She already had a good relationship with the others who wanted to be involved and… it gathered momentum* | **Individual carer took on leadership role** |

Rather than over controlling like Thomas, Sally stepped back from overt control early on. She perceived that this left participants floundering, which backs up the importance of staging and supporting the transition to participant control. One of the carers then took over the project lead, which seemed at first analysis to be a good outcome. Sally thought the particular carer (Dena) gained a lot of confidence in the role, and Dena was

generally very positive about her experience. However, her narrative in table 6.17 reveals problems.

**Table 6-17 We Care – limited time led to lack of group responsibility**

| Dena – participant | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *Sally said she was taking a back seat, so I ended up doing a lot …. Apart from Susan and Carrie, the majority was down to me to organise. I would have liked more carers involved. If we had had 2 initial meetings, we could have sorted it out.* | **Lack of shared responsibility and individual over burdened** |

With more time, practitioners could have helped engage more people in shared responsibility, rather than over burdening Dena. Data also showed the common lack of awareness of time needs amongst external partners pre-project if group control is not to be limited. As Dena, the emergent 'leader,' wanted her influence to predominate, it also highlighted further issues that can be created when there are barriers to practitioners promoting a collaborative dynamic.

Analysis revealed convincingly that purposeful action to catalyse collective creation, rather than take-over by individuals is a key Real Time strength (section 5.3.2), but in both *Speak Out* and *We Care*, time limitations and production pressures compromised practitioner agency. The reliance created on unknown support workers' practice (over-influencing or under-influencing) in these 'un-ideal' projects exposed the notion of an appropriate balance of control over project processes. Real Time's processes incorporate a structured, staged, supported and gradual development of group responsibility, which is needed to engage marginalised groups (e.g. section 1.4.3). However, this section has illustrated the project take-over (by particular participants and/or external stakeholders) and reduced participant involvement (or drop out) that can occur. Nevertheless, in focussing on these two time-limited projects, it would be easy to jump to the conclusion that improving relational practice is just a question of more time. I question this assumption by turning to the *Knife Crime* project.

### 6.3.4 **Knife Crime:** empowering practitioners' agency in collaborative practice

*Knife Crime* appeared very successful in the degree of participant ownership from idea and creative drive to the final edit. Indeed, both participants interviewed identified production control as a major 'like'. Yet, the practitioner (Cathy) painted a more nuanced picture about the balance of participant and practitioner control during the project process, as narrated in table 6.18.

**Table 6-18 Limits on practitioner agency**

| **Cathy – Knife Crime practitioner** | **Researcher synthesis** |
|---|---|
| *One or two young people were very good at rounding the rest up … but they were never on time …. several occasions … they'd forgotten altogether. If control means not bothering to turn up, even though some poor idiot has driven over with... gear that's taken 1 ½ hours to prepare … then yes, they had control.* | **Lack of negotiated participation boundaries** |
| *One filming session … two police officers had agreed to appear. We filmed all day .. but at the group's pace. We'd … say, ' what shall we do next?' .. the group would spend ages deciding … and then go, 'we haven't phoned so-and-so' and … start ringing round. I found it incredibly …annoying and I think the police did too* | **Lack of practitioner control over production process** |

Because the project was group driven, the role boundaries were not negotiated. Practitioners did not feel empowered to structure the process and drive the project forward. Indeed, in a financing climate that values participant control, without recognising the support requirements, there was no budget for them to do so. The consequence was the project took a year longer than necessary to complete, and practitioners thought it took far too much energy:

> *it was … very personally draining … If, to deliver a successful project with participants totally in charge… you burn out the practitioners, then I have to question the approach*
>
> **Cathy –practitioner**

Moreover, participants were also frustrated by the timescale, as well as by the consequent loss of momentum and participant drop-out.

*The only thing I didn't like was that people dropped out . There was… a bit of a low point .... waiting for funding and getting anywhere but that's got nothing to do with Real Time*

**Jamie - participant**

The five participants from *Knife Crime* who maintained commitment to the end deserve credit. However, the practitioner narratives suggested the project could have been completed more rapidly, with less drop out from the original twenty, had they been able to move activities forward effectively. This project thus illustrates that empowering practitioners to use their agency to influence relational dynamics is not equivalent to more time. Rather, I found that Real Time's role is in facilitating interaction to balance the extent of participant ownership with completed video outputs (the achievement), within timescales that maintained energy and motivation.

I conclude that there is a practice balance between the energy needed to motivate participation and the energy generated by process. Real Time collaborative input is like a social battery (High 2005) to generate group 'can-do' and possible further action. Moreover, balancing practitioner and participant control over project processes, to maximise participants' sense of ownership given production needs, makes it possible for inexperienced groups to produce videos without long-term training, as covered in full in Chapter 7. However, I found project partners did not usually recognise this aspect of Real Time's role. Therefore, practitioners' agency towards creative group relationships was not always supported. Furthermore, there can be multiple layers of external influence over the internal dynamics, which make the practical negotiations even more complex. I demonstrate this with a return to the *Tough Tales* project.

### 6.3.5 **Tough Tales:** coercive external influences affect internal dynamics

In *Tough Tales*, coercive external dynamics affected the internal relationships between project actors. Nancy explained that some participants did not want to be filmed because they felt exposed. This is not surprising given that participants were being encouraged to reveal too much too soon, as discussed in section 6.2.3. Less sympathetically, Nancy expressed her irritation at the disruption of the production process by one individual:

**Table 6-19 Tough Tales – participant disruption**

| Nancy - project co-collaborator/manager | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| *There's a video scene around a billiard table. One person in shot just stood there …Even though he was given a billiard cue, he didn't want to perform. I was cross with him, because I thought here is a fantastic opportunity and you are spoiling it. He was in shot – so he wanted to be seen - but he didn't want to co-operate with the group creation* | **Participant refusal** |

Nancy had wanted the project to be participant led, but projects do not exist in a vacuum. The incident shown in table 6.19 resulted from contextual dynamics that affected session interactions. As Nancy spoke further (table 6.20), it became apparent that participants were not there by choice:

**Table 6-20 Tough Tales – external dynamics affected internal relationships**

| Nancy - project co-collaborator/manager | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| *He was there because of the 'institutional' programme. I had to take a register and he had to come.* | **Participation coercion** |
| *His frustration, expressed through the project, was about centre dynamics … Somebody had done something wrong in the lodge … and so they were all banned from going editing, because nobody would admit to it* | **Video project used to discipline external behaviour** |

As Nancy explained, the video sessions were two hours a week, but all sorts happened in the intervening time that affected them. There was tension because numbers were down, and the centre was trying to stay afloat. Nancy also had to report on behaviour. This participant was the last to sign up, and his feedback was the most negative throughout, but he had to take part. If participation is coerced the only way for individuals to exert power is to refuse or disrupt project activities, as happened in this incident. The lack of opportunity to opt out was also frustrating for the other participants:

> *It should have been a personal choice if someone wanted to turn up, rather than putting a negative attitude on something I personally found enjoyable.*

**Terry - participants**

In actuality, half the group did stop coming, and Nancy didn't insist they return as those remaining had a better experience without them. However, sometimes the desire to participate or not is less clear-cut. In section 4.2, I summarised Real Time's ground rules, which require that all participants appear on camera if they want to take part, but in actuality, there is often a delicate balance between encouraging people and coercion, as shown in table 6.21 in relationship to the event of table 6.19.

**Table 6-21 Practitioner retreat to open participant choice**

| Tough Tales informants | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| ***Nancy*** *- You could direct him, 'Take the cue because otherwise it doesn't work'. We decided to let him be ... have space to think. Then, later … he did one of the most powerful interviews. So he did step forward … in the smaller production unit.* | **Practitioner back up to open participant control** |
| ***Sara*** *- the group decided that people would talk about how they got to where they were... one guy... was clearly not up for it... Well the rest did their pieces to camera and at the end he was… wait on … bring the camera back., I'm ready, no I want to do it … it had to come from him* | |

Table 6.21 shows that in reality, practitioners applied ground rules flexibly and backed away from overt compulsion to open up participants' choice in how to take part. This clearly epitomizes what I refer to as negotiation (section 4.4.2.) The middle phase of a group process is sometimes characterised as being concerned with control (Srivastva et al 1977) as focus switches from inclusion to exerting influence (Reason and Goodwin 1999). It is clear that storming and norming (Tuckman 1965), are not linear processes, but play out by spiralling back and forth in different ways amongst project actors. Nancy and Sara both attributed success in these *Tough Tales* incidents to not pressurising participants. Nevertheless this technique does not always work, as the pressure to take part can be even more strongly influenced as the following critical event showed.

### 6.3.6 **Youth Exchange:** participants' power to subvert

The *Youth Exchange* project took place in an economically deprived housing estate, with participants due to go on an exchange trip to Turkey. Most of the young people didn't have holidays and had rarely left the city, and certainly none had been abroad

before. Real Time ran a project to assist the group in producing video material to show Turkish young people what their lives were like, in order to mediate initial communication:

> *Without being as threatening as having to stand up and speak, they could record stuff, think about it, form an opinion, edit it down and then take it to show - ready formed and clearly articulated*

**Cathy - practitioner**

It seemed like a good use of participatory video to practitioners and the youth workers. The problem was that:

> *the young people didn't give a monkeys about it. It was … a nightmare, as they were pissed off about attending after school It was yet another thing … to do … to get their holiday in Turkey.*

**Cathy - practitioner**

The group went away for a weekend, as a practice before Turkey, and did some video work.

> *They were messing around the whole time, swearing and walking off…. We really struggled… to do anything creative… At one stage, my colleague said, 'why the hell are we doing this? We're not babysitters' …. If they don't want to do it, let's go'.*

**Cathy - practitioner**

The assumption in participatory video discourse (e.g. section 2.4.1) is that it is enjoyable and taking part is a valuable chance. The irony here is that the opportunity was created, but these young people were uninterested, and had to be coerced. As with the *Tough Tales* project, disruption and refusal were the only ways for these pressurised participants to assert their power. In addition, the dynamics were hindered because contracted Real Time practitioners could not leave. The group did record a drama, but it presented them getting drunk and behaving appallingly towards each other.

The notion of *carnivalesque* (e.g. Bakhtin 1965) encompasses action to undermine the oppressive norms and contradictions of the established order through playful irony and the humour of obscenely exaggerated images, as in celebratory street performances and protests (e.g. Kershaw 1992:68-80). Carnivalesque is usually applied

to refer to mezzo level social action. Young people are perceived to play with negative images to disrupt and transform their power (Grace and Tobin 1998 in Nolas 2007:196), but it was hard to imagine the *Youth Exchange* group would feel good about the video product once in Turkey. I propose that in this case, the young people used carnivalesque to resist at the very local or micro-level in reaction to the coercion. This is because their narrative was liable to cause maximum distress to youth workers, who wanted them to present themselves positively in Turkey. Furthermore, participants already had the power to subvert video processes to their ends. They did not have to be given control by benevolent practitioners, although clearly the relationship was such that they were not vetoed.

In this section, I have demonstrated that participatory video practice in context is always a negotiation between project actors, which is helped or hindered by external and internal relational dynamics. I have also shown how practitioners' potential contribution can only be maximised if they are free to apply their agency to structure conducive environments and processes, manage unhelpful external influences and facilitate group relationships towards collective agency. I now summarise the insights.

## 6.4 **Contextual insights:** group building stage

In this section, I consider the practical implications from exploring Real Time's group building stage.

### 6.4.1 **Implications for project structure:** separated group building stage before external video production

In section 5.4.3, I proposed that a project needs enough time/space for face-to-face interaction to engage participants as well as to build confidence, especially if there are particular communication or self-esteem issues. In section 6.2, I identified the need for a separate stage, in which participant expression and informed choices can develop before externally focused production (enabling factor E-vi in table 4.16). This is to build participants' understanding, through practical experience backstage, of both the possibilities and potential exposure issues before using video to communicate front stage in a wider social arena. This supported Real Time's principle (section 4.2) that recordings are confidential until the group decides they want to show video material

externally. At the very least, this gives participants the chance to drop out if they are not happy. Research data confirmed that the practical issues are less to do with a contradiction between process and product, which was my starting point (section 1.4.4), as video materials are recorded throughout. It is more related to making a clear distinction between backstage and front stage (Goffman 1990) processes, or in other words between participatory video's performative function in catalysing internal social dialogue and as an external communication medium.

### 6.4.2 **Implications for external partnerships:** partnerships that enable practitioners' relational practice

Throughout this thesis (e.g. section 1.5.2), I have asserted that Real Time's is a fundamentally relational practice. In section 6.3, I identified how the internal processes towards group agency and purpose, became compromised by external influences. To do this, I exemplified a range of ways that external relationships affected internal dynamics between participants and practitioners (as particular manifestations rather than a definitive list). Although this hindrance was most acute in the short-term production projects, it was not simply an issue of time. There are implications about the nature of project partnerships that enable negotiation of the balance of control towards the group's emergent agenda. For instance, whilst encouraging participants to try before committing can be appropriate, their participation should be voluntary rather than required.

Most significantly, practitioners' relational as well as functional role needs to be enabled for the potential of such collaborations to be maximised (enabling factor E-viii in table 4.17). In general, support workers struggled to facilitate participatory video processes even if experienced. This is firstly because, as I have illustrated, Real Time's is a complex practice, in which relational and functional aspects are connected. Without additional training, external supporters were not sufficiently aware of how video itself affects project dynamics, both helpfully and unhelpfully.

Secondly, management of parallel processes to fulfil multiple agendas is an important part of what Real Time practitioners do. In section 6.3, I demonstrated the impact of preventing their relational contribution. Reducing their input to technical matters limited or perverted their contribution to such an extent that it called into question the value of their collaboration. Practitioners need to be able to interact as they

think appropriate to context without interference by outside stakeholders. Yet, support workers, managers and funders were frequently unaware of this because they did not perceive practitioners' relational role. The practical implication is that role boundaries should be negotiated more thoroughly between practitioners and external partners during project set (and with participants where appropriate), which may be more a question of raising awareness than challenging deliberate obstruction.

## 6.5 **Synthesis:** tactics to maximise real world collaborative possibilities

In this chapter, I have highlighted the ethical risk of inappropriate exposure for vulnerable participants who may open up too readily, or because emotions are too fresh and raw, or they are unaware of the potential consequences of disclosure. I discussed the difficulties of participants making informed choices, in advance of any personal costs, or because of particular needs such as for those with learning difficulties. I have demonstrated the increased risk of inappropriate exposure when the process of building voice and choice was limited or absent due to production demands. I have also shown how product needs threaten group relationships that support collective control in time-pressured production projects.

I started this chapter with the acknowledgment that practice in real world context is a negotiation between influences, which explains why processes can follow a convoluted route as project actors manoeuvre. In terms of the overall group process, I have presented the tactics (de Certeau 1984) Real Time used to support participants in becoming expressive at a safe pace, which was partially acting as a brake against production pressures. I have also demonstrated that Real Time's approach involved ongoing attempts to fix or consolidate group dynamics (Maurer and Githens 2009) towards group mutuality despite external constraint. As during the opening stage (e.g. section 5.5), Tuckman's (1965) storming and norming processes manifested not as a single linear progression, but as ongoing and multiple processes between different projects actors. However, despite the considerable problems demonstrated in the four projects of this chapter, it was interesting to discover that participants found Real Time's tactics mainly helpful.

### 6.5.1 Practitioner frustration versus participant satisfaction

There was a mismatch evident between practitioner and participant experiences of taking part. Practitioner narratives consistently display frustration at wasted opportunities. From the practitioners' perspectives, the relational practice and consequent group experience could have been so much better. In contradiction, support worker and participants in each project, identified the relational balance between maximising participant control and providing relational guidance as particularly helpful:

> *My praise is that there was just the right amount of holding hands, and just the right amount of letting us go free, and that's a very difficult balance to make actually.*
>
> **Sally-We Care**

I do not think the difference in perspective is simply because practitioners were overly idealistic whereas participants expect less. Obviously, external factors prevented practitioners from exercising agency, and I have suggested improvements. However, participant narratives implied that practitioners did negotiate the path between video production and group ownership to their relative satisfaction. In chapter 5, I proposed that building informed choices is a process, which necessitates a staged transfer of responsibility. Inexperienced participants cannot make every decision from the start. Therefore, in reality, collaborative video production must involve a balance of control. In the next chapter, I explore how practitioners negotiated the video-making agenda, towards participants' sense of ownership.

# Chapter 7

# Chapter 7 Collaborative action towards group–authorship: staging video production to facilitate participant sense-making

> *There's no point trying to meet people where you'd like them to be – it has to be where they are, otherwise you miss them... Basically the strength of this approach is it does meet people… but it's not just about following …The strength is also to say can we find a bridge between [being] here and actually [going] there*
>
> **Bella – Communicate support worker**

In chapter two (section 2.3.3), I explained how my theorising about participatory video shifted the focus from representation towards performativity. Even at this video production stage, I question the perception that the value of collaboration lies in enabling *social representation* (Jovchelovitch 2007). Chapter 6 highlighted the considerable difficulties in carving enough space/time for participants to build genuine expression and group agency when the project agenda is contested. My standpoint however, is not that that people possess an authentic inner being that needs to be identified, but that group ownership of contextualised understanding arises through interactive doing, and it is an ongoing process of emergence. K*nowing lies not … in the mind of individual actors, but arises in relationship and through participation* (Heron and Reason 1997 in Reason and Goodwin 1999:289). In this chapter, I focus on the communicative function of Real Time's practice in using video production processes to generate the contextual and relational conditions for participants to evolve or author their own collaborative meanings, as a process of social sense-making in progress.

In chapter one (section 1.4.3), I identified the practitioner hope that collaborative video making could help counter social fragmentation, and the accompanying individual alienation, through collective action. Here I propose that Real Time's practice does address three out of four *underlying concerns* of human existence identified (Yalom 1980:8-9) as meaningless, isolation, freedom and death. The practitioners' intended illocutionary function at this stage was to engage participants in finding meaning in life experiences. However, authenticity is not an individual matter. I agree with Habermas that people's deepest sense of themselves often arises inter-subjectively through evolving connections together (Anderson 2011:91) and being heard by others. Creative output even provides some concrete life-affirming durability. I propose what makes such realisation seem meaningfully authentic is whether participants feel sufficient

ownership, or sense of determination, over the generative processes. This dual (inter-subjective–individual) perception of both genuine identification and autonomous agency is where the balance of freedom/responsibility or control arises. Habermas' (Anderson 2011:92-101) fundamental insight that the most significant freedoms are those where people are able to critically reflect on choices and then act through socially recognised expression. This is also reflected within group process models (e.g. Srinivastva et al 1997), where a focus on performing social influence emerges when the concern of inclusion (or forming) is satisfied. Furthermore, this is also the practice puzzle, at the other pole of the process/product continuum.

Video making (beyond pointing and shooting) is a complex process, involving a mix of organisational, technical, creative and narrative skills. It is not viable for inexperienced participants to develop enough capacity (understanding and skills) in advance of production action to take informed control of every aspect (at least for their first video). Nowhere is this more apparent than when video editing, which emerged during my analysis as a major sticking point of participant involvement. This made apparent the impossibility of practitioners' implicit intention to enable participant control of all aspects, alongside the explicit commitment to deliver a product on time. Yet, as I illustrated in section 6.5.1, Real Time managed project actors' expectations to negotiate this practical issue to relative satisfaction. Furthermore, this supports my assertion (section 4.4.2) that negotiating the passage through this and the other paradoxes identified is a major Real Time role:

> *It's … very responsive… a constant assessment … 'what do these people want to do, what can they do, what does the project need to do, and how is that balance going to be managed?' An organic developing relationship... in facilitation style*
>
> **Bella – Communicate**

In section 7.1, I first define the collaborative video production stage, as well as the possibilities, opposing tensions and global themes that I synthesised. After presenting participant production experiences in section 7.1.1, the remaining chapter explores the functional, relational and contextual factor that helped and hindered the path towards group ownership and meaning. In section 7.2, I consider how practitioners slow time, energise and structure processes and negotiate the balance of control towards collaborative-authored production. In section 7.3, I unpack the development of new

contextualised understanding on social issues. Finally, in section 7.4, I summarise the contextual insights and implications at this stage.

## 7.1 **Collaborative video production:** mediating group authorship of contextualised narratives and deeper social learning

Two predominant process intentions drove the project action at this stage:

- **To facilitate the emergence of group-authored narratives through video production action**
- **To deepen understanding (particular and contextual) of social issues through group exploration, reflection and re-framing**

As exemplified in section 6.2.1, during group building, participants took part (where time allowed) in video exercises, such as edited statements (appendix 5) and the shot-by-shot documentary (table 4.4). Structuring these iterative learning activities, in which participants recorded and discussed mini-videos, extended their active understanding of what producing a video clip, narrative sequence or documentary programme entails. Participants also learnt how to work as a production crew, and identified common interests. Practitioners directed these videoing activities, in order to catalyse the group process. As the projects progressed, a transition took place from internal to external communication focus. Following this videoing action was qualitatively different from that when making mini-videos during the preceding exercises, particularly in its group coherence. I also propose this phase shift emerged spontaneously from the unfolding tendencies (Deleuze and Parnet 2006:93) of Real Time's group participatory video process.

As group agency took off during this performing phase, group theory suggests that the practitioner focus shifts from directing and coaching to mentoring and delegating (Hersey and Blanchard 1977) to follow and support the group agenda, which this chapter investigates. The focus at this production stage is supporting participants in collaborative video construction (Humphreys and Jones 2006) as creative experiments towards contextualised sense-making. Indeed, I found Real Time now prioritised the development of participant ownership of the video output. This meant facing the significant challenge of assisting beginners through complex production processes in the limited time available. Practitioners approached this dilemma through aiming for

collaborative relationships, in which participants gained sufficient control of videoing to foster a sense of ownership, whilst practitioners maintained adequate control of the production process to ensure that a completed video emerged. Table 7.1 below summarises the process possibilities and linked practice tensions encompassed by the global practice balances of this stage.

**Table 7-1 Using participatory video to catalyse collaborative production**

| Possibilities | Progression tendency | Practice tensions | Global themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Collaborative-authored production action** | From group agency and purpose, through iterative cycles of collaborate video-making action to creative ownership | • Commonality/ similarity versus diversity/difference<br>• Participant content control versus practitioner direction<br>• Ownership/authorship in action versus static understanding | **Negotiating collaborative-authored production:** balance of group ownership versus external production commitment |
| **Deepening contextualised understanding** | From group exploration through critical reflection to the synthesis of participant-authored social knowledge | • Genuine indigenous message versus external stakeholder influences<br>• Superficiality versus deeper critical reflection or dialogic synthesis | **Contextualising social meaning:** synthesising new/deeper group understanding versus speed of/time for process |

A fundamental aspect of Real Time's approach to group-authored collaboration video production was to negotiate the process intentions against these unavoidable tensions to enable inexperienced groups to author their own video-mediated exploration. In this chapter, I continue to draw on the same projects as chapter 6 (*Women Reflect*, *Speak Out*, *We Care*, *Tough Tales*, *Youth Exchange* and *Knife Crime*). These 'un-ideal' projects clearly showed that there is always some compromise in participant ownership when balancing conflicting needs contextually.

### 7.1.1 **Creative collaboration:** video authoring and production experiences

*To be responsible is to be 'the uncontested author of an event or a thing'*

**Sartre in Yalom 1980:218**

*there's no way we would have been able to do it without them*

**Kim – Knife Crime**

Most participants in the projects studied identified a sense of achievement through making a video. The product was often better (in construction and content) than expected. This was notably so even in the problematic projects of chapter 6, despite the difficulties discussed, as illustrated in Table 7.2.

**Table 7-2 Participant pride in video achievement**

| | **Participant perspectives** | **DVD video output** |
|---|---|---|
| **Speak Out** | ***Jasper***- *I thought the DVD was….very good … people … will get a lot out of it*<br>***Janet*** - *it can help people…think about things* | To increase understanding of learning disabled health needs |
| **We Care** | ***Dena*** - *what we did was fantastic- a big achievement. It had a big impact*<br>***Susan*** - *everyone was very chuffed … it was very well put together... It made people aware of issues carers face.* | To raise service providers awareness of carers lives |
| **Tough Tales** | ***Manesh*** - *I was amazed at … what we made- realising it was reality not fiction* | Stories of addiction and rehabilitation |
| **Knife Crime** | ***Kim*** - *when I saw it edited … it was unbelievable… I thought there was no way it would look that good*<br>***Jamie*** - *It's cool we've done something that's turned out good* | To increase young people's awareness of knife crime issues |

Authoring on video was the means by which the group learning action was focused, synthesized and sustained (Humphreys and Brézillon, 2002). The quotes in table 7.2 also suggest that participants felt very positive about successful collaborative production. However, if authorship is viewed more widely as an awareness of ones' responsibility for creating a communicative imprint in the world, and owning the effect such action has (Yalom 1980:218), then the significance lies beyond the DVD made. In this sense, group agency was authored in these projects through its exercise in videoing action. Thus, I think the meaning participants experienced in becoming-authored lay additionally in their emerging ownership of, or responsibility for, the social action that transpired, and that is why control featured so frequently in the participant narratives (see table 7.3 below).

**Table 7-3 Being in control**

| Participant narratives |
|---|
| ***Kim (Knife Crime)*** *- We did everything - we wrote the scenes, we acted … we filmed ... edited. It was all us –that's what I'll remember*<br>***John (Speak Out)*** *- I really liked that we designed what we wanted to do, rather than being told what we were going to do*<br>***Jamie (Knife Crime)*** *- I still can't believe what …we've gained … being in control - that's what I love about it* |

The contradictory reality is that participants were generally unlikely to have the time, capacity or motivation to become skilled enough in video production before the shift to externally focused video making. These participants had a pragmatic perception of what they could achieve alone, demonstrated in table 7.4 in their appreciation of Real Time's assistance.

**Table 7-4 Balance between practitioner and participant production control**

| | Participant/support workers |
|---|---|
| **Speak Out** | ***Thomas*** *- the strengths were ... the hands-on approach - at the heart what Real Time are doing is that people achieve the tasks and make decisions as much as possible* |
| **We Care** | ***Sally*** *- Although participants are encouraged to be very proactive … to take charge, everyone always felt supported … that's crucial*<br>***Dena*** *- No one said what we had to do – the 2 workers … facilitated us. They knew the right thing to say… so that you're not frightened. No way could we have done it without them*<br>***Susan*** *- It was the right approach - I can't fault it* |

Humphreys and Jones (2006) propose that in enabling rapid progression by reducing organisational and capacity shortfalls, facilitation means *'to make easy'*. However, I contend that if too easy the sense of ownership is lost. Table 7.3 and 7.4 together reflect this facilitation balance, and the notion that Real Time's expertise lies in maximising the possibility of felt ownership, in parallel with particular video outputs. Given that Real Time was predominately successful at negotiating this aspect of practice, despite the relational difficulties, I now unfold the dynamic progression.

## 7.2 Global theme: negotiating collaborative- authored production

In this section, I open up the global practice balance between group ownership and the external production commitment. To do this, I address which aspects of equipment operation and content decision-making participants hands-on controlled or relationally influenced in context. I look at the tactics used by practitioners to structure production processes and ensure key decisions are relationally accessible. I also consider what maintained the feeling of group ownership.

**Table 7-5 Collaborative- authored production - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Balance of group ownership versus external production commitment** | • Structuring and staging participant responsibility<br>• Facilitating creativity between order and spontaneity<br>• Contextualised balance of control | • Contextualised complexity of video production processes<br>• Editing as sticking point of participant ownership |

Table 7.5 summarises the enabling and hindering factors that I identified in context during the production stage, which I now explore.

### 7.2.1 Structuring and staging group production processes: content development and staged video construction

During a group's first production cycle, the focus shifts towards group authorship. However, a group's production vision does not arrive fully formed. Videos on Real Time projects were generated through an active process, and part of the practitioners' role was to structure the creative task. So, in the projects studied, practitioners did not leave the group planning and recording alone. They continued to apply their power-with agency in structuring activities to make creative processes accessible according to particular needs. Thus, I found structuring and staging the group production processes was an enabling factor at this stage (E-ix in table 4.18). I first illustrate the kind of activities involved with a return to the concurrent data from the *Women Reflect* project.

At the end of Session 2, *Women Reflect* identified a common concern in the effect of technology on their lives – [a] *vital topic that … speaks to what is happening in society* (Angela*).* In Session 3, I (as practitioner) used structured video activities to draw out and include individual perspectives, to structure dramatic exploration and to construct video sections iteratively as summarised in table 7.6.

**Table-7-6 Women Reflect – Iterative video production**

| Session focus | Activities |
|---|---|
| **3 – Exploring the issue** | • Impact of technology on lives - each contributes statement<br>• Storyboard - Each draws shot to construct drama shot-by-shot<br>• Storyboard links<br>• Plan interviews |
| **4 - Developing content** | • Focus groups<br>• Record links and interviews<br>• Paper edit |

Table 7.7 narrates participants' experiences of this process.

**Table 7-7 Women Reflect – production experiences**

| | Participants |
|---|---|
| **Session 3** | ***Maya*** - *We are critically evaluating technological benefits as well as ways … it is changing interaction and community*<br>***Ruby*** - *We started by each making a statement about the effect on our lives.*<br>***Grace*** - *We each shared views. It's a really good way of pulling people together … very participative*<br>***Angela*** - *Comments on technology made me think about issues not considered before. We then storyboarded … filmed shots and planned another sequence* |
| **Session 4** | ***Ruby*** - *We recorded interviews on isolation, accessibility (affordability, disability) and control*<br>***Angela*** - *We planned and filmed interviews alone. It was a valuable experience, as JS obviously trusted the group without her input.*<br>***Callie*** - *In planning visuals, 'scenarios', and shot content we were all involved fully … jointly broadened 'script-thinking' to achieve balance …in spite of personal perspectives - not least mine.* |

Rather than expecting group-members to be able to map out a video in advance, when they had not made a programme before, production grew incrementally through practitioner-structured steps. The progression in session three was from common interest (we share) to nuanced differences (what do I want to say). The edited statement exercise opened up the theme, as everyone recorded a starting viewpoint. This in-camera edited sequence (order pre-determined by the group) then became the video's beginning. This process maintained diversity of opinion in the final video, within the commonality of the chosen topic.

Functional techniques such as in-camera editing and storyboarding in sections helped bound creativity. For instance, the practitioner introduced storyboarding using the shot-by-shot drama exercise. Each participant contributed in turn, to evolve the narrative spontaneously like a game of consequences, without knowing what would emerge. The result playfully reflected the intrusive nature of mobile phones and e-mails, and formed opening visuals for the video. The group then reflected on the different views expressed, which informed further content planning before session four.

The group identified main themes and two sub-groups alternated between recording interview sections by themselves, and taking part in research focus groups. The two sub-groups recorded their storyboarded sections to form links between the themed interviews. Some participants also recorded additional visuals at home, which increased confidence in videoing unsupported. Overall, video construction thus proceeded iteratively through staged recording of in-camera edited sections followed by reflection and further action, before a final editing session to finish the video. Participants perceived this staged production process as vital in realising a completed product in only three sessions. However, the balance between providing ordering boundaries and opening space for creativity was a consistent element of Real Time's production approach even on longer projects such as *Knife Crime*.

### 7.2.2 **Facilitating group authorship:** between order and spontaneity

A blank page (in this context the empty video) can block creative flow even for an experienced author. I found Real Time practitioners facilitated group authorship through a balance between structuring production processes and staging content decision-making and bounding space for creative spontaneity, which was an enabling factor (E-x

in table 4.18). I next illustrate the negotiation between order and spontaneity in reference to the *Knife Crime* project.

Table 7.8 shows how practitioners weaved back and forth between encouraging brainstorming, and assisting participants in focusing ideas.

**Table 7-8 Facilitating participants' creative content planning**

| Process narratives |
|---|
| ***Kim*** *- It was all a bundle of ideas at first. Cathy said 'how about you brainstorm and write it down'. We had like loads of scenes. Then she'd say 'this one's similar to that… shall we try whittling down'.* |
| ***Jamie*** *- She would… write down the questions as we thought of them randomly. We practised asking her to see how they worked - then we listed filming questions* |

Table 7.9 illustrates the use of storyboarding techniques to open spontaneous visualisation and narrative construction.

**Table 7-9 Providing visual frameworks**

| Process narratives |
|---|
| ***Cathy*** *- Shots were drawn rapidly by everyone on separate pieces of paper. Then, the group tried ordering them. We laid them out and looked to see if anything was missing in the story. I prompted if a shot sequence jarred* |
| ***Kim****- It's been … really useful to draw out the scenes ... it helped us imagine the look. You draw the story idea and then you film it. When you watch it's like 'wow – it's exactly how I wanted it '* |

These techniques helped the participants author video content, because they provided a framework to develop and order ideas. As with *Women Reflect* (section 7.2.1), practitioners also facilitated participant control by task-chunking so that videos grew organically through iterative recording cycles.

**Table 7-10 Staged video construction**

| Process narratives |
|---|
| ***Kim*** *- We interviewed and then we watched to decide who else we needed … we recorded a scene then we looked at the plan to see how it was working … we built the whole video in sections as we went along* |
| ***Jamie*** *- What I liked … was we did it, but in little bits that we could manage* |

Table 7.10 demonstrates that staging production in manageable chunks was identified as a major factor in fostering group ownership. It assisted in the paralysing dynamic of

compete freedom of agency (Yalom 1980:8). Authorising purposeful action takes choices, and Real Time practitioners believed that creative production developed participants' decision-making influence:

> *video's very good because people have to make decisions all the time. One decision after another in quick succession*
>
> **Alistair**

However, it was apparent that it is not the functional video techniques, but the way practitioners interacted with participants during production that assisted participant choices, as shown in table 7.11.

**Table 7-11 Opening participant choice**

| Participants – Knife crime | Synthesis |
|---|---|
| ***Kim*** *- They were like showing us how the camera works … how you storyboard a scene … but we were doing it. They always said …'what do you want to do'* | **Providing input followed by choices** |
| ***Jamie*** *- She would ask 'do you want to say this or that' – 'Do you want to see their face or the surroundings'* | **Giving options** |
| ***Kim*** *- They asked 'how do you want to do it' and 'what would look better?' … we were in charge* | **Asking questions to facilitate participant influence** |
| ***Jamie*** *- On camera she said 'now how would you like it to look?' and then she'd give you tips as you went along* | **Providing guidance to support decisions** |

Table 7.11 illustrates how deferring decision-making to the group was an ongoing interactive process. Practitioners used their expertise to identify the decisions moments. However, whenever possible they ensured participants chose. Practitioners supported participant decision-making by inputting information, guidance and sometimes options, dependent on particular needs. This informed choices not only in the abstract, but also alongside production as they occurred. In addition, they continued to be there alongside participants to help them achieve what they wanted. I concluded that this relational practice is what practitioners are referring to as a gradual and supported handing of decision-making to participants. Alistair acknowledged that:

> *they make a lot of decisions every session … because we ask them to make them … they take turns so everyone has to decide not just one or two*
>
> **Alistair**

However, rather than a sterile *democracy of turn taking* (Reason and Goodwin 1999:299) there is a sense of a *tumbling* exchange that unfolds, cascades, and rolls (Lincoln and Guba 1985:208) to generate novel spontaneous creation anew in each group setting. *Knife Crime* was a long project, which enabled participants to feel they controlled every aspect. It is now instructive to look at the *We Care* project to find out how practitioners negotiated group authorship in this context of restricted time.

### 7.2.3 **Video production complexity:** process contextualisation

In the introduction to this chapter, I alleged that video production is complex and involves various skills that are impossible to develop quickly or in absence of experience, which was a hindering factor (H-vii in table 4.18). In the *We Care* project, the support worker perceived that participants '*owned the project - were very protective of it'* (Sally), but did not link this to 'hands-on' video usage:

> *Their experience … was mostly the creative producing … the actual deciding of what was said, who to interview, what questions were asked, and where to record*
>
> **Sally – support worker**

As time was short, the priority was group influence over content, rather than technical operations. I therefore wondered whether participants needed to learn how to use the video equipment at all. A critical project incident indicated that equipment usage was important to participants' sense of ownership as shown in table 7.12 below.

**Table 7-12 Participant ownership – issues of timing and relationships**

| Sally | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| *There was … an issue early on …they went out on location… and were very excited about doing some filming. Carers expected to operate equipment, and they weren't given the opportunity* | **Timing is critical** |
| *Alistair wasn't there. They [participants] felt... the worker was very nervous that … they might not do it right.* | **Practitioner inexperience** |

As insider-researcher the event in table 7.12 surprised me, because it contravened one of Real Time's ground rules (section 4.2). Sally said it was an isolated incident, and every other time she attended participants operated the equipment. However,

unearthing this mismatch between abstracted ideal and practice reality, helped build understanding. I found, once more, this was an issue of process timing, and that the practitioners' relationship with the group was significant to the sense of control.

### 7.2.4 Contextualised negotiation of the balance of control

I deduced that establishing participants' feeling that '*we're actually in charge of this*' (Alistair) required a concerted attempt to disrupt the usual dynamic between professional video-makers and their subjects. Practitioners thought that opening operational opportunities, as well as content influence, was important in two ways: As discussed in section 6.2.1, practical experience is important in building participants' informed choices. Building participants' 'can-do' through technical roles was also a way of symbolically embodying ownership. Thus placing participants rather than practitioners at the physical controls from the start, helped establish the intention to overturn the usual dynamics of expert control, as reflected in the taster session experiences.

> *It was my first time behind the cameras. I was amazed.... I thought camera operation in the project would be great.*
>
> **Dena - We Care participant**

Operating the camera in the early session thus establishes that everyone can and will use the video equipment, as the foundation for group ownership of collaborative production. In the *We Care* project, the inexperienced practitioner undermined the initial promise at a critical point, which is why I think it was significant. However, by later on in the process participants' 'can-do' and 'will-do' was more established, and taking turns was not so crucial to maintaining participant ownership. Participant equipment usage is thus a question of timing, as exemplified as the *We Care* project progressed.

*We Care* participants' time was limited, and Alistair had to make some choices. He structured the production process around interviews in pairs. This meant he had to do some of the camera work, whilst carers interviewed each other. Carers' narratives suggested this was contextually appropriate at this stage, because there was an obvious rationale in freeing participants to take on roles more crucial to content ownership (interviewing and being interviewed). Dena felt empowered through

developing interviewing skills, that she was able to hand on to peers. Finally, all participants could identify material in the final tape that they had recorded themselves, so practitioner camera use was consistent with the collaboration. The path between group-authored production possibility and production control was thus revealed a contextualised negotiation in the control balance, rather than a linear development, which was an enabling factor (E- xi in table 4.18). It was also clear that this was a relational issue.

*We Care* participants perceived Alistair's control of activities as helpful rather than hindering, whereas they disliked the less structured approach of the inexperienced practitioner.

> *Alistair got it very organised. The other young man - he was a bit chaotic …Maybe we were supposed to be free, bless him … but we felt he didn't know what he was doing*
>
> **Susan**

Participants' responses to the evolving balance of '*holding our hand to a degree, but at the same time letting us do our own thing*' (Sally), are demonstrated in table 7.13 to be based in the trust in the particular practitioner, which was initiated in the first session, and maintained through each interaction.

**Table 7-13 Importance of trust in practitioner**

| We Care informants |
|---|
| ***Sally*** *- By the end of the taster session, they totally trusted Alistair. He was so natural with it and he made everybody feel very confident.* |
| ***Susan*** *- We always felt that Alistair was genuinely interested … was very sensitive … very knowledgeable about our cause… that's important...* |

Collaborative practice is thus more nuanced than encompassed by generalised notions of participant or practitioner control. Alistair established a relationship of mutual purpose and participants trusted him. Data suggested sensitivity to the issue, listening and being there for the group assisted this. I concluded that relational practice combines strong leadership with the ability to let go and follow the participant agenda. Nowhere was the importance of having established a relationship of mutual purpose more apparent than during the editing process.

### 7.2.5 Editing as a sticking point of participant ownership

Editing processes add another layer of creative and operational decision-making to the practical challenge of realising group-authored video. This was a hindering factor (H-viii in Table 4.18), in developing a sense of ownership. Participants in *Speak Out*, *We Care*, *Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime* liked hands-on editing. Yet this was also where any dissatisfaction with their level of involvement manifested as illustrated in table 7.14.

**Table 7-14 Editing experiences**

| Participant | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| ***John*** *(Speak Out) - I was disappointed that the bit I was most pleased with didn't get on the video*<br>***Susan*** *(We Care) - When it was cut, there were one or two things that people thought why isn't that there -that's the only criticism I heard.*<br>***Max*** *(Tough Tales) - We never got much say about how it would be finished … we got nowhere going editing.* | **Dissatisfaction with involvement** |

Real Time arranged for group-members on all these projects to visit the edit suite and do some of the hands-on editing. They also discussed the editing plan, and commented on the rough cut, which was adapted accordingly. However, after the editing sessions, practitioners completed the edit. This was because editing is generally too complex and time-consuming for participants to do much themselves, as Nancy narrates in the *Tough Tales* project in Table 7.15.

**Table 7-15 Impracticality of editing involvement**

| Nancy – Tough Tales | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *They want to be part of it but … it's too technical, and too time consuming … it needs too much patience to complete.* | **Participant capacity** |
| *Two guys came editing. They were trying to make decisions … but actually, … you're asking people decide when they don't understand the consequences. One was very absorbed and the other … bored* | **Uninformed decision-making** |
| *You want to get control right … but you also want a decent film - they don't like it if it t looks bad either* | **Risk to product** |
| *They've made two thirds of the choices … in the storyline … the locations … they've interviewed and filmed … then editing is handed over.* | **Editing compromise** |

The Real Time projects studied were not financed to allow participants to learn to edit beyond basics. Table 7.15 suggest participants lacked enough understanding of moving–image language and editing conventions to make informed choices, and were unable to commit the time needed to edit themselves, but it felt out of their control. However, a closer reading of the data revealed that issues only arose in projects where participants lacked trust in the collaboration. Conversely, there were no problems during editing when the balance of relational/production control was effectively realised. For instance, the *Knife Crime* group were very happy with the editing. By comparison, if there were problems in overall control dynamics, this was likely to manifest during editing, as it did with *Tough Tales*. Similarly, there were problems at the editing stage during *We Care*.

Dena gained a lot from having her views valued at every stage. However, disjunctions emerged in her narrative.

**Table 7-16 Narrative Disjunction – editing control**

| Dena - participant | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *There could have been more discussion as to what our message and view should be.* | **Individual/group contradiction** |
| *I would have liked to edit the main bulk - so I could have put my stamp on it* | |

Although Dena felt the editing timeframe prevented the group taking full ownership, it appears from table 7.16 that she (as emergent leader) wanted to control the edit. This raised tensions within the group as illustrated in table 7.17.

**Table 7-17 Editing – group tensions**

| Sally (support worker) | Alistair (practitioner) |
|---|---|
| *one or two carers … had very strong ideas of what they wanted … Alistair took that on board, and worked very hard to ensure that they were happy* | *The dominant members wanted to control all editing decisions, and did not like it when we included other views. It was tricky to negotiate because we had minimal input into developing a helpful dynamic.* |

Practitioners had to deliver a group-authored video as well as a coherent product. Difficulties arose because they challenged Dena's take-over by involving other carers in editing choices. Practitioners could have avoided these tensions if there had been time to foster co-operation during the group building stage. The possibilities that emerge from the process are thus dependent on formative dynamics (Chia 1999). This supports

practitioners' assertion of the importance of establishing inclusive dynamics early on. I next look at the other practice process involved in fostering group authorship, which was participant sense-making.

### 7.3 **Global theme:** contextualising social meaning

In order to ground the practice intention to catalyse participants' own development of understanding, I now consider the notion of meaning or sense-making. Making m*eaning* is finding sense, significance or coherence in life experiences, in contrast to *purpose* as a statement of intention, objective or function. The existential crisis is the basic human craving to find meaning in a meaningless world. The consequence is that we must all discover our own meanings, which need to be significant enough to provide life purpose (Yalom 1980:423-31). Achievement through productive effort as a source of adequate meaning in itself is of question, as reflected in my supposition that participants' production accomplishment was not the sole root of their satisfaction in the projects studied. Possibly more significant was that it provided a way to engage in the social life course through committed action (Hume in Nagel 1979:20) - meaningful because it enabled participants to raise awareness about something important to them. I also think that when participants identified shared understanding it gave coherent meaning to their experiences. Furthermore, Real Time's videoing process was in itself generative of novel meaning because it provided a framework for participants to develop *knowing of the third kind* (Shotter 1990) through collaborative action.

This section explores the global balance between synthesising new/deeper group understanding versus the speed of/time for the process. It focuses on how the practice intention to deepen social understanding through group exploration, reflection and re-framing manifested. The underlying assumption was that new insight can emerge from involving those experiencing particular social issues in authoring through video production. The question is whether Real Time's processes actually enabled deep reflection on a topic and authentic group meaning to emerge. Conversely, were they limited by project financing to superficial expression, or the re-iteration of social norms that mirrored outside influences? Table 7.18 summarises the enabling and hindering factors identified in this endeavour.

**Table 7-18 Contextualising social meaning - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Synthesising new/deeper group understanding versus speed of/time for the process** | • Group directed reflection and sense-making<br>• Extended time for deeper convergent dialogue and further production action | • Lack of support for double loop or divergent dialogue processes |

Despite the generally limited timeframe, analysis of the project data showed new insight was developed through the internal group exchange. However, the lack of follow-on support restricted the potential for wider social learning. I now look at the *Women Reflect* process to show that successfully developing deeper knowledge requires iterative double-loop processes (Maurer and Githens 2009).

### 7.3.1 **Social learning:** group reflection and sense-making

I found the process of group directed reflection and re-framing was an enabling factor at this stage (E-xiii in table 4.19). However, even with (or especially because of), the carefully structured *Women Reflect* process, finding a common concern in the timescale was restrictive. The group picked new technology as focus, following the '*I feel strongly'* exercise (section 5.3.1). However, group discussion aired a much wider range of issues. Ruby thought agreement was quick because the topic encompassed other issues, but Angela questioned the speed:

> *technology… was very easy to home in on because it was common to all. But … I felt 'I wish there was more time', because all the topics were interesting.*
>
> **Angela – Women Reflect**

Furthermore, Callie thought in the videoing context they were inevitably prompted to think about technology. Clearly, there are risks of contextual triggers overriding deeper consideration, majority views suppressing the minority, and good ideas being stifled for harmony when identifying group focus, particularly when time is short. Nevertheless, playing devil's advocate, I suggest at this stage the subject does not need to be the most significant for a group, as long as there is an agreement. The practice intention was to move relatively quickly through a first production round to inform practical

awareness. Counter-intuitively some dissatisfaction with the initial production is not a bad thing. If participants notice and care it indicates engagement, and wanting to improve can provide stimulus and self-drive for further production cycle. As *Women Reflect*, *Speak Out*, *We Care* and *Tough Tales* were all limited interventions with only one production round, I next look at whether new participant meaning was synthesised.

In section 2.4.2, I discussed Real Time's conviction that participatory video develops criticality by promoting questioning, reflection after playback and a means for exploration. In section 6.2.1, I showed how session exercises set up interactions between group-members' perspectives and shifted the focus towards a shared agenda. Table 7.19 narrates participants' enjoyment of the reflective process.

**Table 7-19 Women Reflect- Value of group reflection**

| | **Participant perspectives** |
|---|---|
| **Maya** | *It's been very good to engage in a reflective process with others … having the space to talk on a Saturday afternoon … it's been quite liberating … it's re-opened my mind … reinvigorated me* |
| **Grace** | *A lot of women don't get to talk about... how they feel. What I found interesting was listening to … ideas different from my own. My path generally does not cross with people with disabilities so my awareness was greatly expanded* |
| **Angela** | *the opportunity to express... my views in a non-working environment was important. Just to be able to let off steam to say 'I hate the way technology dominates my life'. The most valuable lesson - taking time to reflect* |
| **Callie** | *even though the focus was not women's issue... discussing the impact /pressure/stress and benefits of technology from a female perspective was great* |

Table 7.19 illustrates the value these women placed on expanding awareness through reflective interaction with other women. Despite limitations, the process succeeded in slowing time sufficiently for participants to connect on a deep level, which they appreciated. It was also clear that group sense-making was not only associated with recording content, but also in the dialogue that occurred as part of project processes. For *Women Reflect* participants, social learning went beyond the issue of technology, and resulted in changes that transcended the project boundary, at least in the short term as exemplified in table 7.20.

**Table 7-20 Women Reflect - Individual changes beyond project**

| | Individual changes beyond project |
|---|---|
| **Grace** | *it's only now I realise the importance of that time when school finishes before we leave, because that's when we talk to parents- now I am trying not to rush off* |
| **Angela** | *I've already started to apply … things to the way I work… I don't check my e-mails every day now – I just think it can wait –it'll be there tomorrow* |

Table 7.20 demonstrates that a wider perspective on social learning is necessary to recognise the consequences that may emerge. Moreover, if participatory video is seen as a way to *open up the basic issues of who speaks, who doesn't... and where the control lies (*Alistair – practitioner), then there were lessons even in the most problematic projects. For instance, although the *Youth Exchange* project (section 6.3.6) embarrassed youth workers, it successfully highlighted the unhelpful dynamics between the youth intervention and the participants. In facilitating the group's dramatic expression, it also disrupted comfortable notions of cross-cultural exchange. Despite the ensuing discomfort, it did function to expose participants' relationship to the opportunities provided for/imposed on them. If group-authored video making draws attention to what matters within a social environment (Humphreys and Jones 2006), and youth workers were alert to the insight and acted on it, this could lead to negotiation of more productive dynamics.

Similarly, it would be easy to paint Thomas as the villain in the *Speak Out* project. When he said participants had '*taken ownership of the project',* it was hard to imagine that it was not he. However, a more nuanced view of project collaborators disrupts the *good - bad* dichotomy. Thomas was clearly in a difficult position with trustees on his back and his motivation was a desire to assist group-members. Despite Alistair concluding that '*we should turn more projects down*', Thomas did learn from the experience as shown in table 7.21.

**Table 7-21 Speak Out – social learning**

| Thomas- support worker | Social learning |
|---|---|
| *Participants have been very comfortable with interviews, as opposed to a live presentation in front of an audience. It's been interesting to realise that... rather than a big review meeting with loads of people … a much smaller group … might be more successful* | **Recognition of value of small groups** |

If Thomas acted on the insight in table 7.21 it might lead to an end of the large meeting format at *Speak Out* (section 6.3.2), and replace it with an environment more conducive to self-advocacy. I thus construed a need to raise collaborators' awareness about the possibility of social learning arising through participatory video processes that are not part of the final video.

### 7.3.2 Towards deeper convergent reflection amongst peers or divergent interaction with external others

In this section, I firstly look at *We Care* and *Tough Tales* to consider whether it was possible to unearth new meaning beyond the superficial or partisan, during single-loop videoing processes. Participants on these projects did perceive awareness-raising potential in their videos, which they thought communicated new perspectives. As individual's time was limited, *We Care* production happened in sub-groups with carer pairs interviewing each other. This material then formed the basis of the final video, as narrated in table 7.22.

**Table 7-22 We Care - production in pairs**

| Susan –participant | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *I was with another mother …both with daughters with disabilities - we were on a par, so very much a team … We made some notes, but … we really knew our subject and what to ask* | **Shared experience aided interview flow** |
| *Individually we … each had our story to tell … Because we had all the same worries and problems … we felt comfortable sharing… and that's how it came out* | **Peer interviewers prompted each other** |

Table 7.22 shows this structure established an intimate environment to explore sensitive issues. Pairing also meant everyone contributed their particular perspectives towards final content inclusive of all stories, even though a coherent group vision was not established before interviewing began. Production activities in this project thus successfully stimulated c*onvergent* dialogue (Reason and Goodwin 1999), in which participants explored shared experiences with their peers as narrated in table 7.23.

**Table 7-23 We Care - deep internal discussion**

| Project informants | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Alistair*** *- The interviews were ... some of the longest we've ever done .... they discussed things in a way they hadn't done before. There was some extremely good insight because participants … felt really comfortable with each other... an outsider wouldn't have got that* | **Participant controlled sense-making** |
| ***Susan*** *- Caring is a very individual thing. It opened up what carers face. The bad things and the good things* | **Nuanced understanding** |

Table 7.23 suggests it was the depth of the exchange between co-producing peers that led to more nuanced understanding. In the *Tough Tales* project, peer interviews also took place, but there were also *divergent* production iterations (Reason and Goodwin 1999). These involved participants interviewing a range of external others including professionals and those affected by drug/alcohol abuse to open up alternative perspectives as shown in table 7.24.

**Table 7-24 Tough Tales – Divergent interview processes**

| Project informants | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Nancy*** *- What they produced was … very powerful … because these things had never been voiced before …* | **Previously unvoiced experience** |
| ***Nancy*** *- the guy whose wife died, interviewed an author of a book about the same issue. Both of them shared bereavement, so it was very intimate*<br>***Sara*** *- they interviewed people who'd lost children to drug abuse*<br>***Nancy*** *- [one] interviewed his mum … He found out that whenever she went to the lavatory, she took her handbag because … he would steal … she talked about the effect on siblings* | **Depth through interviewing external others** |
| ***Manesh*** *- I was surprised and pleased at the insight from interviews*<br>***Terry*** *- It was revealing getting to hear different perspectives on drug/alcohol abuse ... parents losing their son … the effect it can have on a family* | **New insight from divergent interaction** |

Tables 7.2.3 and 7.24 suggest that the groups synthesised a new perspective on the topic because they had real experience of the issue. As discussed in section 2.4.2, interaction with outside others may be needed if marginalised groups are to develop productive new understanding (Cornish 2006). Table 7.24 does suggest that In *Tough*

*Tales* divergent interviewing widened perspectives. However, this is the very beginning of developing mutual understanding of the issues.

Action research literature suggests that deeper collaborative learning is unlikely without double-loop processes (e.g. Maurer and Githens 2009), and I found the lack of support for this a hindering factor (H-ix in table 4.19). This supports my assertion (section 2.4.2) that at least another round of group-authored production action would increase sense-making potential, which projects informants agreed.

> *it would be quite nice to do it again … having had that experience and come out the other end*
>
> **Sally – We Care**

Indeed, participants in *Women Reflect*, *Speak Out*, *We Care*, *Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime* both wanted to do more and had ideas for further videos. However, there was a complete absence of finance for these groups to continue in double-loop production processes. Moreover, some of the best videos produced on Real Time's projects were those that raised questions rather than provided solutions, such as the *We Care* video.

> *The video goes out … beyond the project end… like a big question mark… saying how do we address these issues …. let's do something about this …engaging people in an ongoing dialogue*
>
> **Alistair**

The videos produced on these projects were used to varying degrees, as I discuss in chapter 8. However, apart from *Tough Tales*, there was no finance after production to support participant involvement in either video distribution, or further divergent dialogue on the issues they raised. There was thus a failure to maximise the possibilities of participatory video in these contexts.

## 7.4 **Contextual insight:** understanding collaborative production processes

In this section, I consider the practical lessons from studying Real Time's collaborative production stage. This highlights the need to move beyond *convergent* dialogue between group-members, to *divergent* dialogue between differently positioned actors if the wider social possibilities of participatory video are to be realised.

Real Time's practice at this stage was predominately successful in balancing the practice paradoxes to enable participants to gain sufficient sense of creative ownership given the restrictions. The practitioners' role in the collaboration was akin to the director's role in theatrical or traditional video production. In these more familiar contexts the director's job is to provide the overall framework and guidance to maximise the combined potential of the various 'talents' (actors, writers and creative technicians) in realising the production vision. In Real Time's less conventional approach, the difference is that the production vision to be realised is of the group. The main thrust of practitioners' directive role was thus to facilitate group ownership of the content, not to actualise an externally authorised narrative.

The other difference from traditional production is that participants are inexpert. Therefore, maximising collaborative authoring possibilities encompassed an iterative process of building competence, ideas and choices as production progressed. I concluded that facilitation was not just to make easy, but also, to do with generating productive *flow* between challenge and capacity (Humphreys and Jones 2006). Creative flow requires enough challenge to prevent tedium, and enough assistance to prevent strain. I suggested Real Time's practice enabled rapid video output despite restrictions by combining ordering with spontaneity, which practitioners accomplished through staging and structuring production processes to bound space for imaginative emergence. Practice thus combined a mixture of planned and controlled processes with impromptu and freeform experimentation. This supports the notion that maximising creativity involves functioning at the boundary between order and chaos (Reason and Goodwin 1999).

### 7.4.1 **Collaborative sense-making:** implications for partnerships and project structure

This stage of Real Time's process is concerned with facilitating collaborative sense-making through video recording, composing, reflecting, narrating and editing activities. The projects studied did lead to *convergent* exploration of participant issues and experiences through group dialogue, peer sharing and interviewing. The implicit assumption was that involving participants in video production action is a way to increase social awareness. However, I identified insufficient awareness of the social learning that can occur between participants and the other project actors from the

project processes, which is not part of the video record. I conclude that since part of the intended participatory video function was to mediate collaborative social inquiry, it is better conceived as a way of engaging participants in ongoing ethnographic learning rather than a way of communicating research output.

In addition, as meaning making is an ongoing process that is assisted by double loop processes and interchange with a range of perspectives (Maurer and Githens 2009), the potential would be increased by extended project structures. These could support at least a further cycle of video production, and preferably participant involvement in *divergent* dialogue after production.

### 7.5 **Synthesis:** Towards divergent social dialogue

In this chapter, I looked at thematic analysis pertaining to Real Time's practice in mediating group authorship of contextualised narratives towards deeper social learning. I highlighted the difficulty of facilitating participant ownership before group-members have practical awareness of the consequences of choices. This was particularly evident during the initial production round, when there were outside pressures to complete a video quickly. I concluded that Real Time's contribution at the production stage was to negotiate the inevitable contradictions to ensure that a group-authored video emerged. I also showed how this happened through a mixture of nascent order, creativity and relational practice. The practical balance was important not only to fulfil funding criteria, but also because the final video was significant to participants' sense of accomplishment.

At this stage, the group process shifts from internal to external communication focus, with practitioners prioritising the group content agenda. Authoring on video functioned to mediate collaborative action towards new social insight through iterative *convergent* exploration. This enabled group forays from the closed internal space to the external word to 'prick the real' (Humphreys and Jones 2006) through production action. It also enabled them to draw attention to their own social agendas through the videos made. However, I highlighted the challenges in reaching deep rather than superficial insight in the *single-loop* and *convergent* processes that were financed, and the limited opportunities for *divergent* interaction with external perspectives in the projects of this chapter.

In chapter eight, I explore projects in which the specific intention was to build wider social insight through *divergent* interactive action using video. This is to see if these contexts were any more successful in leading to participants' influence in social forums beyond the internal project context. I also explore longer-term projects to see whether and in what way they led to social re-positioning for participants. This introduces the potential conflict between dialogical and critically disrupting processes.

# Chapter 8

# Chapter 8 **Beyond possibility to becoming-performing:** using video to disrupt positional dynamics and mediate social influence

> *Being part of Our Voice has made me really want to push back boundaries, and not let people say you can't do something when you know you could … it's finding the medium … the way to prove it - and video in a way gives you that*
>
> **Lesley –participant**

In chapter one, I referred to the increasingly fragmented UK society, and the consequent separation between people (Haysom 2011:184), which has resulted from the colonisation of identities within the market ideology (Habermas 1975). In section 1.2.1, I suggested dialogical processes towards mutual understanding between affected interest groups are crucial to solving the consequent wicked and multi-stakeholder problems of this wider social context, where even deciding on the nature of the issue can be contested (Conklin 2005). In section 2.3.1, I explained that Real Time perceived a role for participatory video in catalysing in-between (type-2) spaces for dialogue between the group and the external world, as well as in opening internal spaces for group interaction as discussed in chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 7, I proposed video mediated the link to the external world because participants ventured into public space during video production, and because the video product has the potential to develop a life of its own and influence external interaction on an issue. This chapter explores the becoming-performing stage of Real Time's process during which video recording and playback were utilised specifically to mediate *divergent* interaction or exchange between group-members and other variously positioned social actors.

Inevitably, there were challenges in realising these aims. Firstly, the problem of how to instigate partnership relationships and project structures, when working to expand horizons towards *unknown* future possibilities. This is particularly in an outcome-focused climate (e.g. section 1.4.3), which breeds inadequate appreciation of the need to activate beyond single-loop processes, and the accompanying financial restraints. The difficulty is in how to create receptive spaces in which external others actually listen (Vaughn 2011) as well as how to catalyse top-down commitment to action as a result (Campbell 2004).

Secondly, I unearthed a practice tension between the parallel dialogical and critically disrupting intentions. In this thesis, I have deliberately focused on participatory

video as an empowerment-orientated practice rather than framing it explicitly as a type of participatory action research (PAR). This is partly to avoid confusion between Real Time's approach as PAR, and my action research process in studying it. However, some reference to the action research agenda is appropriate here because this is often the policy context. In chapter 3, I distinguished between conventional, critical and dialogical action research processes. In the same way that I argued for combining both inter-subjective knowledge construction and meaning disruption to understand empowerment practice afresh (section 3.1.1), I suggest that in reality a balance of both dialogical and critical approaches are needed to shift dynamics when acting between social interests.

I have already raised the potential of inciting discomfort, irresolvable discontent and actual danger through critical project processes (section 2.4.2). In section 1.3, I also highlighted the necessity of a practice realism that focuses on *small wins* (Fenwick 2004) in *small-scale* ways (Maurer and Githens 2009) to protect participants and practitioners. I exemplified this balance in the deeper insight that occurred through convergent exploration in the *We Care*, *Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime* projects, despite project problems (e.g. section 7.3.2). Nevertheless, I suggested participatory video practice could go further both critically and dialogically through double-loop project structures and support for facilitated project interaction after production. In the intentions of this becoming-performing stage, Real Time's practice occupies this territory between dialogue and criticality, whilst attempting to open up pathways forwards in mainly closed projects structures. This chapter focuses on the practice negotiations involved.

Firstly, in section 8.1, I define Real Time's becoming-performing stage and the main process possibilities and intrinsically linked tensions that emerged from thematic analysis. In section 8.1.1, I introduce the main projects discussed in this chapter. In section 8.2, I explore the global theme 'from convergent to bridge building dialogue', and in section 8.3, the use of video to re-position participants more influentially. Each of these sections covers factors that helped and hindered achievement of the emergent process possibilities in context. Finally, in section 8.4, I consider the contextual insights from this exploration.

## 8.1 **Becoming-performing:** video processes to mediate interaction between the group and the external world

At the becoming-performing stage, there were two Real Time aims:

- **Widening group influence through divergent dialogue in in-between social spaces**
- **Re-positioning participants through new social roles to generate extended social possibilities**

Video provided a rationale for bringing together diverse social actors in new 'in-between' or type-2 social spaces (e.g. section 2.3.1). In section 4.3.1, I presented data showing that participants liked expressing themselves in communication forums beyond the group, and thus influencing awareness of their contextualised reality. Video recording and presentation activities in the project studied also involved participants in new roles and responsibilities, and they appreciated extension of their opportunities and their changed relationship to the external social context (table 4.6). As intended, video thus performed two functions (Habermas 1998:56) at this stage. It mediated communication of group-authored perspectives to an external audience towards increased group influence and it generated new social possibilities through re-positioning participants in the external interactions that ensued. As at previous Real Time stages, the illocutionary purpose (Habermas 1998:223) was primarily inter-subjective rather than representational.

Moreover, I found that participatory video projects had the potential to expand to catalyse new collaborations between participants and outside agents. However, there were also practical tensions to negotiate when participants acted to create new pathways for themselves. In aiming for social understanding, projects often started with a dialogical focus, but there was a kernel of critical challenge nourished through the disrupting nature of participants' videoing involvement, and the subversive affect of video mediated dialogue altering both social awareness and usual dynamics. This sometimes provoked an opposing response, and so, as at the other Real Time stages, practice had to tread a line between influences as summarised in table 8.1 below.

**Table 8-1 Using participatory video to facilitate becoming-performing**

| Possibilities | Progression tendency | Practice tensions | Global themes |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Widening social dialogue and influence** | From videoing interactions, to presenting group videos, through wider dialogue towards awareness-raising, bridge-building and social influence | • Ongoing dialogue versus ossification<br>• Bridge-building versus risk of entrenching conflicting positions | **From convergent to bridge-building dialogue:** Expanding group influence through external video processes versus obstacles to ongoing dialogue |
| **Disrupting positional dynamics** | From new roles, to becoming social actors, through symbolic change to productive new collaborations | • Transcending boundaries to open new pathways versus opposing barriers/support | **Towards new social dynamics:** participatory video as social re-positioning influence versus external barriers/ support |

The main practice balances that emerged arose from operating at the boundary between dialogical and disruptive intent, and the limitation on ongoing processes from single loop project structures and a lack of further support.

To consider Real Time's becoming-performing stage, I explored projects that demonstrated possibilities and limitations after collaborative production. In this chapter, I thus focus on three new projects as well as returning in the narrative to *We Care*, *Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime* where they add insight or comparison. I also introduce *Ungrounded*, a critical example that arose ethnographically in two practitioner interviews.

### 8.1.1 Intro to main cases at the becoming-performing stage

*Street Expression* and *Listen Up* were action research projects initiated by council agents with the specific dialogical purpose of deepening understanding of particular social issues through participatory video processes:

**Street Expression**

A local authority faced problems with graffiti, which residents disliked and was costly to remove. An environment officer initiated this project to engage young people in researching why graffiti happened. The wider aim was to stimulate horizontal dialogue between young people, as well as cross-community interaction between local young

and elderly people towards mutual understanding. There were eight sessions and 2 days editing, with a total of 25 hours contact time. A core group of six young people interacted directly with approximately thirty other people during the production process.

**Listen Up**

A unitary authority perceived problems with access to education for looked-after (in care) young people, which had ongoing social consequences. They commissioned Real Time to work with 16 young people to explore their educational experiences and challenges. This long-term project took place over 9 months with approximately 100 hours contact time.

I compare practitioner and council officers' perspectives on these two projects, to examine helpful and hindering partnerships and project structures. The other two main projects considered are *Knife Crime* and *Our Voice*. I continue unpacking *Knife Crime* as a long-term project that contributed participant perspectives on video as mediator of external relationships. I introduce *Our Voice* as a unique project illustrating ongoing videoing action by a self-driven group of learning-disabled adults.

**Our Voice**

*Our Voice* is a very long-term project that had been running for more than 15 years. There is a core group of six people, but they involve many others, as increasingly they provide peer training using video for disabled people. The rationale was defined by a founder member:

> *Our Voice is an organisation with people with learning disabilities for people with disabilities … people who wouldn't necessarily have opportunity … to communicate with each other and other people … to show how they feel about things … to change things for themselves in whatever way is possible*
>
> **Lesley- Our Voice participant**

*Our Voice* is an unusual project because of its open-ended nature and the extent of participants' control over the organisation. The group have received ongoing running costs via a council grant, which covers a support worker for 30 sessions a year, and Real Time assists with video activities on a project-by-project basis. However, group-members run the organisation, decide on priorities and raise finance for projects.

## 8.2 **Global theme:** from convergent to bridge-building dialogue

This section explores the global theme that encompasses the practice balance between stimulating external video processes towards expanded group influence and the obstacles to ongoing dialogue. On the Real Time projects studied external interaction occurred in two main ways. As I described for *Tough Tales* in section 7.3.2, some divergent exchange took place with outside others during the production process. It also occurred after showing completed videos in wider arenas.

Many contemporary social problems are by nature ongoing, with understanding developing through interaction towards solution in different environments (see section 1.2.1). In essence, these kinds of problems are typical of those that Real Time projects consider, such as how to address knife crime or how to make education more accessible. In section, 7.3.3, I discussed the difficulties of deepening and widening contextualised understanding of social issues in the projects discussed so far, given the lack of support for double-loop processes, or for facilitated interaction between different perspectives following production. The first process possibility identified at Real Time's becoming-performing stage was the mediation of divergent dialogue through video processes. Indeed, council initiators in the *Street Expression* and *Listen Up* projects wanted this to happen, but I found the attitudes and actions of project stakeholders can help and hinder, and were less predictable or controllable than when facilitating interactions in type-1 spaces. Table 8.2 below summarises the enabling and hindering factors in the practical endeavour to generate the conditions for mutual dialogue.

**Table 8-2 Widening social dialogue and influence - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| Expanding group influence through external video processes versus obstacles to ongoing dialogue | • Relationally enabling partnerships<br>• Flexible responsive project structure | • Limiting project structure<br>• Lack of time/space to establish boundaries and relationships with external project actors |

I now look at the council initiated action research projects, *Street Expression* and *Listen Up*, to see whether they were any more successful than the projects discussed in

chapter 7, at catalysing divergent dialogue towards wider understanding, given this was the primary purpose.

### 8.2.1 **The council motivation:** researching lived experience to build nuanced understanding

*Street Expression* and *Listen Up* differed from projects discussed in chapters 5-7 because they were initiated top-down. Table 8.3 shows that officers were motivated to use participatory video for action research because the councils perceived a gap in understanding from the perspective of those with lived experience of the particular issues.

**Table 8-3 Council pre-project purpose – increased understanding and influence**

| Street Expression | Listen Up |
|---|---|
| ***Henry (council officer)*** - *it was to understand … what graffiti was, the problems caused … [to] prompt discussion in schools and maybe prevent it… …we felt involving young people would give us more insight and credibility* | **Alistair (practitioner*)*** *the desire was there … for young people in care or leaving care … to have a voice on that matter... to educate and influence service providers* |

Table 8.3 suggests that council officers also wanted to influence actual change, in the form of behaviour (*Street Expression*) and educational provision (*Listen Up*). With the dual intention in mind, table 8.4 firstly shows that informants perceived that new knowledge did emerge following the project interactions.

**Table 8-4 Perceived consequences - new knowledge**

| Street Expression | Listen Up |
|---|---|
| ***Henry*** - *we now understand the difference between tagging and graffiti. And the issue of bullying came out*<br><br>***Jess*** **(practitioner*)*** - *there were… nuances because we … talked to young people … things that adults wouldn't have seen* | ***Sara (practitioner)*** - *the young people … were very expressive, and had lots of views … a really valuable insight.* |

*Street Expression* participants made a clear distinction between tagging and street art. They identified tagging, where people paint their name or logo on street furniture or walls, as bullying, which was previously unknown to council officers:

> *Tagging is a declaration of territory and … gang related; with a negative impact on communities - young people that do graffiti saw it as distinct - a bad thing*

**Jess**

> *it's… a form of bullying. And also… names of somebody being bullied are put up … two areas to be very sensitive about beyond wider bullying… offensive to a race…sex or…religion*

**Henry**

They also contributed nuances about graffiti that incorporated real life contradictions.

> *Some young people just don't see a problem - they see street art promoted as a positive thing … yet they get arrested if they try … You're saying please be creative, but don't do it*

**Jess**

Similarly, *Listen Up* participants contributed contextualised awareness about the barriers to looked-after children accessing education, such as the difficulties sustaining peer and adult relationships and the lack of continuity and communication between agencies. The biggest issues were attitudinal, including low expectations of educators, harassment and abuse from peers, and the young people's poor self-esteem and mistrust of authority.

Council officers and practitioners thought both these projects successful in building deeper knowledge because exploration was grounded in participants' direct experience. This was despite multiple stakeholders, which caused problems in the projects discussed in chapter six and seven. I now discuss the enabling factors I identified in this respect.

### 8.2.2 **Negotiating multiple agendas:** relationally enabling partnerships and flexible responsive project structures

In *Street Expression* and *Listen Up*, the different and sometimes conflicting agendas were negotiated effectively as far as the council officers and practitioners were concerned. The difference compared to the projects of chapter 6 and 7 was that the partnership relationship empowered practitioners' agency, which was an enabling factor (E-vii continued in table 4.20). Yet this was for different reasons in each case.

In *Street Expression*, the intention was dialogical. Multiple stakeholders were involved and the aim was to keep them all happy. This involved treading a neutral path

*to get the balance right - not to glorify it [*graffiti*] … it's criminal damage and the police wanted to get that across as well* (Henry). Henry expressed satisfaction with the video produced, but he misunderstood Real Time's approach, and therefore the extent of young people's production input and content ownership. Nevertheless, because he trusted Real Time to deliver what he wanted, practitioners were able to evolve project relationships and processes as appropriate. By comparison, council officers on *Listen Up* commissioned Real Time specifically because they valued the approach. Consequently, my analysis revealed that council officers' understanding of relational practice was not the tipping factor, but that Real Time was enabled to run the project without interference. In both projects the practitioners could build dynamics free of external influence, structure activities flexibly (given the topic remit), and manage stakeholder expectations to realise the project vision.

Practitioner narratives from these projects highlighted the other enabling factor in building social dialogue on these issues, which was the consequent flexible and responsive project structure (E-xv in table 4.20). These two projects also varied from those in chapter six and seven because there was no ready-made group, so video was utilised as an engagement tool. In *Listen Up*, project partners recognised that involving participants needed time before project sessions began (section 5.4.3) and there was a group building stage before production in the project structure from the beginning (section 6.4.1). More pertinently, partners understood the cost implications and financed the project to maximise potential. The *Street Expression* project had less time for the engagement and building stages, yet the table 8.5 illustrates that it built in similar elements.

**Table 8-5 Practitioner perceptions – engagement**

| Street Expression | Listen Up | Researcher |
|---|---|---|
| *finding young people to be involved… we started off with literally one or two, and it grew by word of mouth. Support workers gave us contacts* | *We did 7 or 8 workshops at various youth clubs through direct contacts… some young people interested in graffiti – who then got mates along* | **Rolling (snowball) engagement using peer and community contacts** |
| *We worked with a lot of young people, but never … all at the same time. We worked in twos, threes, fours and fives in different places* | *In the town centre they said, 'let's ring so-and-so, to interview'. The group rang friends, mums and dads … the success of an organic, youth directed way* | **Organic development with flexibility about small group working** |

Table 8.5 shows that engagement grew organically. Involvement built through word of mouth helped by both peer and community gatekeepers. Practitioners were flexible in not requiring all participants to work together every session, as with *We Care* (section 7.2.4). This involved those who could not commit weekly over a protracted period. As described in sections 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 practitioners built participants' content ownership through combining iterative structured production and spaces for spontaneity as illustrated in table 8.6 below.

**Table 8-6 Street Expression – spontaneous processes**

| Jess- practitioner | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *We didn't write a script … the process developed the theme … planning was, 'we need graffiti shots - where is it ?'* | **Extemporized, impromptu planning** |
| *Then we all got on the bus and went to those places. Young people interviewed each other in front of graffiti… then they did some street … interviewing with the public… Rather than graffiti in abstract …asking directly by it … people related to what they could see - contextualised responses* | **Fluid spontaneous production process** |

These spontaneous processes were in sharp contrast to those in the *Ungrounded* project, which emerged as a significant critical incident in three separate practitioner interviews. This was a similar council initiated action research project that revealed inflexible linear single-loop project structures as a hindering factor (H-ix in table 4.20).

*Ungrounded* involved a housing department commissioning Real Time to work with young BME (black and minority ethnic) homeless people to find out about the challenges they faced. In this case, council officers insisted on a traditional course structure - a *nightmare* (Alistair) as narrated in table 8.7.

**Table 8-7 Ungrounded – limitations of traditional project structure**

| Practitioner narratives |
|---|
| *Alistair - the housing department - haven't got a clue. We are supposed to work with young BME homeless people - really hard to reach. They insist we have 10 in each setting - they'll be pushing it to work with 3 ... So they say ... have one super group. Well, they're all in different places; they meet at different times. How are we to do that?* |
| ***Sara*** *- [They] insisted on retaining complete control of every tiny aspect… if seven or eight turned up [they] wanted to cancel and send them away - even though.... it's often better to start small and build organically once people can see what's happening* |

The multiple stakeholder management group wanted participants to commit to regular attendance for 10 sessions (despite this being an uninformed commitment). Practitioners advised that this was unlikely to be successful with young homeless people living unstructured and difficult lives. This partnership did not enable Real Time's relational practice. Furthermore, it illustrates how wicked problems can become worse through the maintenance of established dynamics. It is not only that there is a lack of active engagement by top-down players (Campbell 2004), as these housing managers thought they were collaborating. Rather it was their tacit conviction that their perspective was right and others were to blame for failure, a common feature of powerfully positioned decision-makers' stance (Conklin 2005), which was in itself the problem of the dynamic There is always a tricky line to tread between collaborating and colluding when balancing dialogical and critical intention. In this case, Real Time took the unusual step of saying they could not deliver the project under these conditions. There is therefore not only a need for both top-down and bottom-up collaboration (Campbell 2004:336), but also the more powerfully-positioned in context also have some critical reflection to do to generate the conditions for productive dialogue. I take this discussion forward by considering the bridge-building dialogue that occurred through the *Street Expression* and *Listen Up* project processes as well as through the video screenings.

### 8.2.3 **Receptive in-between spaces:** the possibilities and dangers of being heard through video mediated processes

All sorts of divergent interactions happened, in addition to the group exchange in the video sessions as table 8.8 illustrates.

**Table 8-8 Generating external interaction**

| Street Expression | Listen Up | Researcher |
|---|---|---|
| ***Henry** - we involved everybody … community safety, the wardens, the police, the youth offending team, strategies and partnerships, the arts officer, and PR. In the interviews themselves …there was communication between young and old.* | ***Sara** - A lot of the young people didn't know each other before … the added benefit was meeting new people with similar experiences*<br><br>***Alistair** - Some of them never met during production, yet it … brought them all together at the screening* | **Divergent interaction from project process** |

Table 8.8, shows that the Real Time's processes built relationships between people, because the project was taking place, which informants considered a valuable consequence:

> *it generated debate and team building within my team… two people who report to me…they wanted to get involved and… that proved beneficial*
>
> **Henry**

However, in the *Street Expression* project, the counter possibility of generating increased cross-community conflict also emerged.

The project was located in an area with a significant graffiti problem and intended to initiate horizontal reflection amongst young people and cross-community interchange between local young and elderly people towards mutual understanding. There was already some common ground between the young video-makers and the graffiti producers, but they were also open to older resident's perspectives. However, generating understanding from older people was a greater challenge:

> *Younger people –they accepted that it was a mess, but they had empathy with the people doing it and were trying to understand why … they were also very understanding of the older views… I'm not convinced that there was much empathy from the older people … they don't want to know why they do it - they just don't … want it to happen.*
>
> **Henry**

Whilst Henry thought that video instigated interactions did give older residents a chance to express their frustration and be heard as a first step, he acknowledged that more input would be necessary to progress any real bridge building. This highlighted how easily differing positions can become entrenched or conflict increased.

As mentioned in section 5.5, it is much easier to generate understanding between different perspectives in a relatively homogenous social grouping, where opinions can undergo large transitions with small triggers (Hoys et al 2001). Indeed, the heterogeneity of agents is a major factor in the possibility of shifting social opinions (Levy 2005). This supports the insight from this project that generating mutuality between young people was more straightforward than between the group and older residents. Furthermore, in the *Street Expression* context, the youth group had less symbolic power, which is *less access to respect or recognition* (Campbell 2004:345),

than the other social groupings involved. Additionally, storming-norming processes (see section 2.3) are more dramatic in heterogeneous social environments (Hampton 2011), and thus interaction dynamics less controllable. Given these factors, the young people were positioned less rather than more powerfully in relationship to the older residents.

Moreover, the most effective videos are aimed at particular audiences. In *Street Expression*, the main purpose was to talk to other young people, which created an issue for other stakeholders in reading the message.

> *Environmental Services … had some criticisms of the …. structure of the video - they were expecting something a bit more corporate … The style was dictated by … ideas participants came up with - quite wacky … it hit the intended audience more effectively than council officers understood*
>
> **Jess**

Audience misunderstanding is another factor that makes the politics associated with the reception of participant-authored videos practically problematic (Kindon 2011), with the risk of negative responses and harm to vulnerable participants. In fact, I found the lack of opportunity to build engagement parameters, working relationships, and helpful attitudes to dialogical purpose with the diverse audiences that transpired a hindering factor of this stage (H-x in table 4.20). Bridge building is a two-way process (at least) and this research identified that creating receptive in-between spaces requires an improved capacity to *hear the message* amongst the more powerfully positioned. To achieve this I suggest some direct project intervention with potential audiences (both horizontal and vertical) may be helpful before divergent dialogue with the group video-makers takes place.

Having raised these contradictory issues, I now consider how the completed videos were utilised to initiate further dialogue.

#### 8.2.4 **From first word to last word:** ongoing communication processes or ossified communication products

> *I don't think this was about answers…it was about laying a base line - what graffiti was, the problems caused …. to generate debate*
>
> **Henry**

Dialogic action following collaborative production progressed in two ways. Either project supporters or managers distributed videos without group involvement, or the

participants showed videos to external audiences themselves. However, I found the lack of pre-arranged support for interactive processes after the production stage was a hindering factor in the becoming-performing stage (H-xi in table 4.20 continued).

The climax on most projects studied was a launch screening, which was a high point for many respondents. Ninety people came to the *Listen Up* screening including participants who had never met. *Street Expression* had good press coverage, and the *We Care* film premiered at a new arts centre during a Carers week. These celebratory events were obviously important in publicly acknowledging the achievements. However, it was strikingly clear from the data that for most projects group involvement stopped after this. For instance, as with projects in the last chapter, there was no opportunity for *Street Expression* and *Listen Up* participants to deepen criticality through reflection and further production action following external responses to their video:

> *we'd only got to the very start of dialogue with young people … that was frustrating for us and … for them… We wanted to go into more extensive … critical thinking on the … social implications of graffiti and … generate more active outside interaction … you just get going … and then you walk away*

**Jess –practitioner**

Although Henry from *Street Expression* had anticipated beginning a conversation with young people, in actuality their nascent views were fixed for posterity. Participants may have already changed perspectives following further interactions as the process evolved, but the video that was supposed to start an ongoing dialogue, became an ossified communication product. I found that it was not that project initiators did not intend to use the completed videos, but that they had not anticipated the need for further project interaction after production at project inception. For example, the *Street Expression* video was distributed via the network schools programme but:

> *then we failed and didn't follow up … it isn't just about the production– it's about what you do with it.*

**Henry**

The lack of continuing facilitated dialogue afterwards means that this project was unlikely to have led to specific changes as hoped. However, it struck me that Henry did have a vision of how he could use the video. He was showing it to neighbourhood

action groups across the parish and was interested in the possibilities of You Tube and My Space.

> *You could build follow up into project briefs –so that stakeholders realise … how we distribute the video afterwards to develop dialogue is part of it… We should have built in a series of road shows, and… gone out with …the people that made it*

**Henry**

Henry had realised after production that the project structure should have included follow on processes, as well as the advantages of involving participants in this. However, he did not appreciate the role Real Time could play at this stage, and even when there was planned distribution activity, continued group involvement was limited.

### 8.2.5 **Beyond telling and showing:** external interaction after production

I identified extended project structures to stimulate dialogue between group-members and external actors, whether face-to-face or mediated through the video product, an enabling factor (E-vxiii in table 4.21).

The *Listen Up* project did include a stage after production, as council officers had recognised distribution action was necessary from inception. The council financed Real Time to produce written background materials and facilitation notes. These were distributed with the participant-authored DVD in a work pack to aid its use as a discussion starter. Council officers put in considerable work to ensure that the video was used. They showed it themselves to stimulate dialogue between education stakeholders within the council, and organised awareness-raising training for external education providers. They also distributed the work pack nationally to influence education providers more widely. No data is available to evaluate how audiences received the video, the discussions that ensued or specific changes that resulted. Nevertheless, council officers perceived that it influenced provision for looked after young people.

In comparison, *We Care* was under-funded, but Sally, as carers support worker, devoted time to ensuring the video was seen as narrated in table 8.9.

**Table 8-9 We Care - distribution**

| Project informants | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Sally*** *- I've sent it round the council - all colleagues have seen it. It's being used for training by the Princess Royal Trust … one or two schools have used it. The use of the film has been great … people know about it … talk about it.*<br>***Dena*** *- I know it's used by social services – and in doctors' surgeries … to help people understand … the caring role.* | **Various social forums** |

However, on both *Listen Up* and *We Care*, participants were not involved in showing tapes, and some had no idea what had happened next:

*I hope it's used … I don't even know whether it is or not to be perfectly frank*

**Susan**

Whilst the lack of participants' physical presence in 'in-between' spaces set up to view and discuss their videos, does protect them from the potential backlash discussed in section 8.2.3, there are advantages in their involvement. To clarify, I unpick the closely related concepts of story, plot and narrative (Copley 2001:4-6). The term story refers to the combination of events or ideas communicated. Narrative designates the telling or showing of that story, which may highlight or play down some aspects, change timing or sequencing, or add perspective. The term plot adds the contextual details that explain why the elements of the story are included and connected. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider how audiences interpreted the group videos made in these projects. However, I think they are more likely to be mis-read (see section 8.2.2), or construed differently from the intention, when they are detached from context. When project partners showed participant videos as isolated products, the plot grounding the narrative was missing, which can lead to a tendency to judge them on technical merit alone. One way of avoiding this is for participants to show their own videos, as this provides the grounding or plot, as well as the context in which powerful social actors must interact with them directly.

*Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime* participants did take part in activity after production, which suggests that the bottom-up driven projects were more likely to facilitate their ongoing involvement. Nancy continues the *Tough Tales* story in table 8.10.

**Table 8-10 Tough Tales – action after production**

| Nancy – project manager | Researcher |
|---|---|
| *the guys wanted the film shown in schools and youth organisations. Most started smoking cannabis, followed by harder and harder drugs. If their mistakes could stop even one or two children going down that road … they wanted to be part of that.* | **Participants wanted involvement** |
| *from making the film we got more funding … we've put the DVD on a website now. Then we made a workbook which they take into schools* | **Enabled by further support** |

Table 8.10 shows that enabling participants to take the active role they wanted, needed further external support, but this developed following the project.

This section has considered the success of the Real Time projects considered so far in catalysing dialogue beyond the group following video production. Whilst I have demonstrated that relationally enabling partnerships and flexible responsive project structures led to increased understanding on issues, I conclude that the becoming-performing stage could be improved through extended project structures that allow for the facilitation of wider dialoguing involving participants. I found that it wasn't that project partners did not intend to distribute video but:

> *They did not consider follow on processes from the beginning. They only realised the value of participants' ongoing involvement late, and they did not anticipate the need to facilitate further interaction.*
>
> **Alistair – personal communication**

I realised there was a need to improve the receptivity of 'in-between' spaces through direct interaction with potential audiences beforehand to establish the purpose of dialogue and their capacity to listen. Moreover, I found partners were not aware of the role that Real Time could play in this.

Nevertheless, further mining of the data corpus implied that the value of such processes does not rest in the viewing of video products alone.

> *Is one more video about knife crime that useful to society? Getting to that end was important to participants … without a qualification or finished film … you are not a success … young people have taken that on board. But, I think the more significant was that they acted to address something they cared about.*
>
> **Cathy – practitioner**

In the next section, I consider participatory video's application to re-position participants socially.

## 8.3 **Global theme:** towards new social dynamics

This section explores the global balance identified between participatory video's potential to re-position participants influentially and the external barriers or support. The practice intention was to use video to address the inequality of power relations (see section 1.2.3), which remains a major barrier to realising Habermas' (1989) ideal of bridge-building communicative action as discussed in section 2.4.1. Shifting social dynamics favourably is more likely to be effective through a double-pronged approach to both strengthen marginalised communities from within, and build bridges between disadvantaged participants and more powerfully positioned social actors and public agencies (Campbell 2004:336). The early practice challenge was in tackling participants' confidence and capacity to act, the group's awareness and the means for them to collaborate in action meaningful to them. In the previous chapters 5-7, I explored how Real Time's participatory video addressed these factors. In section 8.2, I discussed the challenges of instigating receptive 'in-between' spaces for external dialogue, and in section 2.4.3, I presented practitioners' view that video conventions can, in themselves, invest participants with greater social power in such external interactions. Moreover, this is an important disrupting aspect in the dialogical/critical practice balance. I now consider how Real Time's processes attempted to change the relational status quo by positioning participants more influentially.

I found that participants took on a range of new roles and responsibilities during the Real Time projects studied. Initially participants took on roles such as equipment operator, interviewer, presenter or creative director, as part of the production team. Indeed, participants identified going out to record publicly on location as a highlight of the project experience (section 4.3.1). This was on the longer projects with greater scope for external engagement, and was especially liked even on shorter projects such as *Communicate*, *Women Reflect* and *Speak Out*, where external videoing forays occurred from the 2nd or 3rd session onwards. However, as project interactions evolved responsibilities were extended to generate diverse new possibilities for productive engagement with external others.

However, there were also external barriers that emerged, often in direct response to the real world challenge of participants' video-making activity, which tempered the possibilities of their influence. The final global theme synthesised in this research encompasses the practice balance between video's disruptive influence and the external supportive and limiting factors as summarised in table 8.11 below.

**Table 8-11 Toward new social dynamics - enabling and hindering factors**

| Global theme | Enabling factors | Hindering factors |
|---|---|---|
| **Participatory video as social re-positioning influence versus external barriers/ support** | • Using video power to socially re-position participants<br>• Ongoing relational support from external partners<br>• Extended project structures | • External responses to video processes<br>• Misunderstanding of support needs / independence balance |

I now discuss how these factors manifested in the *Knife Crime*, *Tough Tales* and *Our Voice* project contexts.

### 8.3.1 Using video power to socially re-position participants

I found video's re-positioning influence an enabling factor (E-xvi in table 4.21). Digging deeper into the data it became apparent that what was most significant for participants was not going out to video record in itself, but *being seen* by external others as exemplified in table 8.12:

**Table 8-12 Being seen as social actors – participants' views**

| Knife Crime | Our Voice |
|---|---|
| ***Jamie*** *- it just boosts your confidence … when you're in town with the camera filming and people are looking at you … it's really cool*<br>***Kim*** *- we were filming…. police officers arresting a mate…it was exciting! I was behind [camera] telling people what to do … everyone watching … me going 'do this, do that'* | ***Peter –*** *I like when we get out …. when we do video in the street. [I] like to be seen using video. Other people see you - they don't just walk by. They look. [I] feel proud … let people see [what] we can do.* |

Table 8.13 suggests that participants liked *being seen* by people when they are videoing because they feel more positively positioned than usual:

**Table 8-13 Participants' perception of changed positioning**

| Knife Crime | Tough Tales |
|---|---|
| ***Jamie*** *- You feel pretty important … amazingly different… I love that feeling*<br>***Kim*** *- you get people … asking what you're doing … older people would come over … and we'd interview them… it's cool knowing [they] … think what you're doing is a really great idea* | ***Dave*** *– I [liked] filming in the police station. It was good being on the other side and not locked in*<br>***Terry****- I liked speaking to the people interviewed… and thanking them for their contribution* |

Table 8.13 shows Kim and Jamie enjoyed challenging stereotypes about young people by being seen taking positive action, and *Tough Tales* participants enjoyed overturning their previous relationship to context. This data did substantiate Real Time's view that the typical conventions between a production crew and their subject, or between video-makers and the audience, increased participants' status as discussed in section 2.4.3.

> *the camera sets up an interaction between you and the world … you have a group … and they just ask and people talk. Suddenly … there's a dialogue with other people*
>
> **Alistair - practitioner**

The performative agency of usual production conventions, or video's power, enabled participants to interact with others in a socially authoritative way:

**Table 8-14 Participants' perception of video's re-positioning influence**

| Knife Crime | Our Voice |
|---|---|
| ***Jamie*** *- the video played a big part … say you had to speak to a policeman or talk with the council ... you've got video behind you… you can go in there and ask about things ... it gives you strength to speak to those people* | ***Peter*** *- We interviewed TVS [Television South]. Bet they got a shock – we interviewed them not them interviewing us.* |

Table 8.14 shows *Knife Crime* and *Our Voice* participants liked the video-making dynamic, because it enabled them to interact with socially powerful actors - the police and a well-known television presenter respectively. These incidents were transitory, but from the responses, I surmised that they had ongoing meaning for participants. For instance, even though *Our Voice* members interviewed the TV presenter many years ago, they still regularly take pleasure from the memory. They identified it as a highlight

of their experiences when interviewed and joked about how boring it would be in the TV crew, as they didn't take turns on the camera. I think it was so significant for them because it profoundly transformed what they believed possible.

Lasting gains for participants can thus lie beyond the video product, yet I must acknowledge that it too plays a part in re-positioning participants. One *Tough Tales* participant told Nancy that:

> *'the last time I was on a film was Panorama and it was a police raid'*
>
> **Nancy – manager**

Now he had a DVD showing him positively talking as an expert and asking questions. Nancy perceived that, having never completed anything, this concrete marker of moving onwards to show to family and friends was important. She also mentioned another participant who

> *talked about [being] in a revolving door of crime, prison and drug addiction… He said sending his son a video … that he made ... let him step beyond the door*
>
> **Nancy**

Even though the project had finished, and whatever happens next, he valued the video as a record of achievement. However, using video to disrupt the status quo can also provoke a negative response.

### 8.3.2 External responses to video processes

External social actors did not always respond as expected or co-operate with participants' plans, which was a hindering factor (H-xii in table 4.21) exemplified in table 8.15.

**Table 8-15 Negative external responses**

| Street Expression | Speak Out |
|---|---|
| ***Jess (practitioner)*** *- Six young people … interviewed fifteen others. They got … a wide range of responses - some very articulate … some really negative* | ***Thomas (supporter worker)*** *we wanted to film in a doctor's surgery - just somebody walking in … pretending they had a prescription …. every single local surgery refused …. which is ironic as that's the health environment members were most critical of* |

Table 8.15 demonstrates barriers to re-positioning participants, and that external players did not always trust the video-makers' role. In section 2.4,4, I discussed the impossibility of knowing in advance, what might result from extended video projects, and the lack of control over dynamics and responses. The aim of emergent practice is that unanticipated possibilities are catalysed, but Goffman (1990) identified the *crushing blow* that can occur when a front stage performance falls flat. I now unpack the *Our Voice* project to explore what helped and hindered productive long-term collaboration.

### 8.3.3 Supporting extended project structures: *Our Voice's* ongoing cycles of participatory video activity

In section 8.3.1, I demonstrated how Real Time's processes can re-position participants influentially, but this needs ongoing financial, relational and structural support from more powerfully positioned partners to be sustainable (e.g. section 5.4.2). I now consider the *Our Voice* framework to see how it enabled the extension of participatory video possibilities over a longer period on an iterative basis.

> *we are trying to promote independence and… we need to have funding in place to be able to do that*
>
> **Lesley- Our Voice participant**

Lesley thought developing communication skills over a sustained period is particularly important for people with learning disabilities if gains are to be context transcending and maintained, as identified in section 5.4.2. *Our Voice* has opened a niche to sustain participant activity over many production cycles, because the idea of learning-disabled people making videos on disability issues has inspired supporters. The group has therefore been commissioned on a project-by-project basis by a range of organisations to make videos, to train others and to peer guide other people with learning disabilities in participatory action research.

Initially, partnerships did not enable much group control over the subject matter, with *Our Voice* documenting other projects, or exploring externally introduced themes such as bullying. However, there was a turning point after a learning disabilities video festival when enabling group control over the video content became imperative.

> *There is an understandable pressure to have a fantastic product - but the group can lose control … After watching other people's pieces that really spoke to people even if technically weak…. we talked about … keeping true to people's stories … being confident … without editing for funders*

**Cathy – support worker**

Although the topic was defined, a two-year action research project focused on the issue of employment for people with learning disabilities, provided an enabling context to build participant content control through double-loop video-making (enabling factor E-xvii in table 4.2.1.).

During the first year, *Our Voice* used video to gather employers and service providers' perspectives. The second year focused on learning disabled people's experiences, so group- members made their own video diaries as they tried to get or maintain work roles. The support worker perceived this as a critical transition to greater integrity in participant control. Corroborating the significance of the shift, both Lesley and Amy identified the video diaries as their proudest achievements.

> *I planned it completely … and with help succeeded in getting across exactly …the message I wanted, which at various points … would have been difficult because people … try to sway you*

**Lesley - participant**

Lesley talked intimately in her video diary about school, and the effect of limiting expectations. Sixty people attended the screening, with the *electric atmosphere* (Helen – Real Time) implying that the audience was genuinely effected.

> *They were really strong pieces … the everyday views of people with learning disabilities are just not what you'd normally get to hear … it really got to the heart of people.*

**Alistair - practitioner**

Authentic expression seemed to have meaning in this context, but the value of *Our Voice* for participants went beyond video production.

### 8.3.4 Carving space to extend roles and responsibilities

From early on, *Our Voice* participants wanted to run their own video organisation, and support workers and practitioners have assisted them in developing a high level of independence.

> *they are not run through any third party… they scope projects, they write funding applications, and pay their facilitators. … it's their responsibility. For … people with learning disabilities that level of control is quite unusual.*
>
> **Alistair – practitioner**

Project informants thought the core group-members have benefited in many ways over the years, as narrated in table 8.16.

**Table 8-16 Gains from extended becoming-performing**

| Informant perspectives | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Ruth (council officer)*** *- it has had an impact on … how they view themselves - as people who speak up publicly about issues* | **Extended communication capacity** |
| ***Cathy*** *- The authority Peter has is clear … I've watched him become really very good at making people feel at ease… more and more confident as a teacher* | **Competence in extended social roles** |
| ***Lesley -*** *when we started I would only look a month ahead ….as it progressed I looked... perhaps six months … now I'm trying to look at two or three years down the line* | **Increasing self-determination** |

However, the support worker thought that creating self-defined space rather than a top-down service was the most valuable aspect.

> *space... outside social work provision where they can be themselves … do what's important to them… directed by them at their pace*
>
> **Cathy- support worker**

*Our Voice* narratives confirmed that it was participants' control over their own becoming-performing context, which resulted in its significance to them, their commitment to it and thus the project longevity:

*I knew when I took it on that it was going to be a responsibility for a large chunk of my life. I'm prepared to put commitment into it … to reap the benefits and help others benefit as well.*

**Lesley -participant**

*Our Voice* provides a model for how learning-disabled adults can be assisted in extending personal horizons, which has survived changes in government policy, unlike projects situated within established structures. The long-term gains of individual becoming are a consequence of the way that *Our Voice* has re-positioned group-members in the wider public sphere.

*there's a mechanism for positioning them more constructively than usual … rather than let's do video with these poor people … we're able to promote … their experience … they come into project contexts on a more equal footing …with other partners*

**Alistair - practitioner**

Indeed, through repeated becoming-performing action, *Our Voice* is part of the cultural landscape in the area, which has led to many other opportunities. The project has provided the context in which participants have transcended previous expectations through many productive opportunities to take on new roles and responsibilities, as summarised in table 8.17.

**Table 8-17 New social roles**

| Participants | Researcher synthesis |
|---|---|
| **Lesley, Peter, Amy, Glen** | Regularly act as video producers at social events |
| | Expressed views publicly at many video screenings |
| | Taught video skills to young people in a special education school |
| | Provided regular training for social work students |
| | Frequently taken on peer training roles with other disabled people |
| **Lesley, Amy** | Key members of self-advocacy group |
| **Lesley, Peter** | Presented at public conferences and video festivals |
| **Lesley** | Head-hunted member of council disability forum |
| | Member of British Film Institute disabilities advisory group |
| | Paid staff member at museum |
| | Written a book and had art work exhibited publicly |

Table 8.17 illustrates that as a group, *Our Voice* is regularly asked to represent others at conferences and social events and run peer training. For example, a primary care trust employed them to run video action research (rather than using questionnaires) to access the views of day service users and housing association residents about provision. Participants led participatory video sessions with learning disabled users and particularly enjoyed becoming facilitators and teachers.

> *I like going out and doing lots of teaching. We show how to do interviews. We ask who wants to use the camera and teach people how to… turn on, how to focus and make sure it's right. … I feel good teacher.*
>
> **Peter – Our Voice participant**

Deleuze and Guattari (1987:268-77) identified that exceptional individuals are always part of social multiplicities, and the importance of their anomalous *borderline* positioning. Building alliances or relations with people situated between other participants and collaborating outsiders is an effective way to transcend usual territorial barriers towards new social emergence. Lesley, in particular, is an extraordinary woman who exemplifies this kind of in-between positioning. She has used *Our Voice* productively as a launch pad to underpin and resource extension of her own opportunities. She has represented people with disabilities (she is also partially sighted) in social forums, such as council and national working groups. She is now a paid staff member at the town museum and has written a book. Whilst it is obvious that not every participant has her capacity, she has '*pushed boundaries'* not only for herself but to challenge expectations about adults with learning disabilities.

It does not detract from the *Our Voice* members' personal achievements to acknowledge the ongoing support that has facilitated these possibilities. Moreover, I propose it is a vital condition for success.

#### 8.3.5 **Collaborative dynamics:** ongoing support from external partners

I found relational support from external partners an enabling factor in creating the conditions for ongoing possibilities (E-xvii in table 4.2.1.) *Our Voice* had many influential supporters (e.g. council decision-makers and statutory provision managers), who

clearly valued the group's potential to challenge and overturn social norms. For example, for five years *Our Voice* contributed to training for social work students on a university course.

> *We ran workshops to show how the people they worked with would feel … to make them … a little more understanding … about guiding not pushing them … to maximise what they can say and do in the long run*

**Lesley - participant**

The benefit from the university organisers' perspective was to challenge students' expectations about future clients. *Our Voice*'s success was dependent on external social actors collaborating with them in productive ways such as this. In the *Knife Crime* project, the extended community possibilities that evolved were also reliant on new horizontal and vertical partnerships.

During video production, *Knife Crime* participants drew on their own experience, and they also gained new insight that they wanted to share, such as '*if you're caught with a knife you get a criminal record regardless*' (Kim- participant). However, the possibility of wider social influence resulting from their production action was dependent on the relationships they developed with the police and the national Crime Stoppers agency. As with *Our Voice*, external partners perceived mutual benefit in collaboration:

> *I went to a police open day, and I said ' I'm doing a video' … she was like 'wow! … In the end, I had a meeting with a guy at headquarters and a woman from Crime Stoppers… They really, really needed something… they said, 'you do it and we'll distribute'*

**Kim- participant**

Becoming video-makers positioned *Knife Crime* participants strongly in relationship to these influential players, because it provided a way of reaching other young people. The police and Crime Stoppers promised to distribute DVDs to all schools and youth groups in the wider area, but police also wanted participants involved in video screenings.

> *they're having officers going in and talking … we're going … as well, because we've got personal experience of knife crime, and we'll be saying how it affects people*

**Kim- participant**

Relationships generated between peers were also important to the project achievements. Jamie and Kim felt the process had brought the group together and built new and more productive friendships, as they learned and grew over the two years. Moreover, cementing the memory of the positive feelings generated by completion and the power of acting together increased the likelihood of these young people's continued engagement.

**Table 8-18 Knife Crime- increased sense of group agency**

| Participants | Researcher |
|---|---|
| ***Kim*** *- people say 'I wish I could do something about this' or… 'the community needs this' ... I know now that stuff can be done … you can go out there and you can make a difference* | **Sense of agency** |
| ***Jamie*** *- I think we'll probably go on to another project. You can do more as a group …. than as an individual.* | **Intention to continue group action** |

Kim and Jamie also appreciated the use of video to develop inclusive group dynamics, and the rolling involvement of participants, as covered in chapters 5 and 7.

The drive to finish the video came from the *Knife Crime* group, but participants recognised both police and Real Time support. In section 6.3.4, I proposed that enabling further practitioner input might have energised progress and prevented drop out. However, this able group were assisted adequately in converting their enthusiasm into concrete output. By comparison, groups like *Our Voice*, who face particular challenges, are unlikely to progress to becoming capable of video making without collaborators. They are thus more reliant on ongoing support, which is often misunderstood.

### 8.3.6 The support / independence balance: misunderstanding of actual needs

I found that misunderstanding actual support needs when negotiating the support/independence balance was a hindering factor in realising ongoing potential (H-xiii in table 4.21), which I illustrate in reference to *Our Voice*. It was apparent that their successes were dependent on ongoing assistance from the council grant officer, their support worker and Real Time practitioners, in addition to the external partners who had financed project activities.

The gradual transfer of responsibility that I referred to in section 5.3.3 was in evidence, but in the *Our Voice* project progression in responsibilities developed over a long period.

> *I used to talk with the support worker on their behalf … now they articulate aspiration… This year they wrote … their grant application completely independently … a real milestone that wouldn't have happened 5 years ago*

**Ruth – council officer**

There has therefore been a continuing but evolving balance of control negotiated by *Our Voice*'s supporters.

> *It is gut-feeling and being honest … not copping-out - 'they're not ready for those decisions yet' but also not disempowering people by asking them to take responsibility when they don't yet or may never have skills.*

**Cathy – support worker**

However, because *Our Voice* had established themselves as capable actors, it was easy for external agents to underestimate the extent of their independence, which sometimes led to an inappropriate support /independence balance. The support worker thought things worked best when practical projects rolled into each rather than skills being lost during gaps, but the potential for people to fly with basic skills picked up relatively quickly was limited by project-to-project finance. Backing up this view, Lesley most disliked the minimal help at these times.

> *I am prepared to do anything and everything… but I need somebody around … to cover problems. At times I've felt 'on my own in this' … I wasn't getting the back up I needed.*

**Lesley**

Other participants also disliked the administrative aspects of project participation:

> *Don't like when. …. no more video for a time - just doing money forms*

**Peter – Our Voice**

The necessity of continuing facilitation is important to appreciate, but the pressure '*to exaggerate … how fast we're progressing … to get the money to carry on*' when '*skills plateau …. and need time to maintain*' (Cathy) can get in the way of clarity. Currently,

there is a financing preference for projects controlled and run by participants themselves. Yet it is unrealistic to expect groups such as *Our Voice* to jump through grant-application hoops unaided. Without the involvement of intermediary organisations such as Real Time, social groupings that most need assistance can miss potential opportunities, such as UK lottery funding. Although it reflects this voluntary sector reality, I question whether it was appropriate for this group to meet just to fill in forms, when they wanted to be videoing. As with the *Speak Out* example discussed in section 6.3.3, this reflects a misunderstanding about how to create conducive contexts, which can lead to failure. For instance, Amy talked about a council initiated self-advocacy group that closed when learning-disabled participants were expected to take more responsibility than was realistic.

Of course, the reverse problem can occur when partners are over-controlling or use participants to achieve their own goals. The *Our Voice* data thus substantiated the ongoing practical tension in the balance of relational control that I discussed in section 6.3.

## 8.4 **Contextual insights:** unforeseen pathways forward – realistic relational possibilities

In this section, I consider the contextual insights from exploration of Real Time's becoming-performing stage. Through exploring some longer- term Real Time projects, I have shown how unforeseen social possibilities can open up if supported. For instance, support workers think normalising *Our Voice*'s ongoing activity as community experts has made them trail blazers for their peers. This is how such projects can increase the *symbolic power* (Campbell 2004) of a marginalised social grouping, which has social influence beyond those involved. The more powerfully positioned actors in the area are now unable to maintain limiting assumptions about learning disabled adults.

Lesley repeatedly stated that the participatory video collaboration had *pushed back boundaries,* with the caveat of necessary support:

> *To see things snowball … with the work they've done and the time you put … things that people thought impossible become possible*
>
> **Lesley**

However, unforeseen routes forward also opened up because of the participatory video context in other projects studied as exemplified in table 8.19.

**Table 8-19 Participants' unforeseen consequences**

| Group | Researcher |
|---|---|
| **Knife crime** | Kim volunteered for Real Time then worked as support worker for learning disabled adults. She intends to become a community worker or join the police |
| | Jamie is studying media at college |
| | Shelley now volunteers at community radio station |
| **Tough Tales** | Fin is going out to talk to young people at schools |
| | Manesh volunteered at Real Time |
| | Des and Terry collaborated on other community projects |

However, Lesley herself cautions against thinking social barriers were completely overturned:

> *it was pushing back the barriers…if you knock them down they're gone for good, you just push them back a bit further*
>
> **Lesley**

This backs up the importance of acknowledging the small wins that are meaningful to participants and a realistic possibility from participatory video processes. However, this chapter has also once more reflected the need to extend project structures to maximise potential.

### 8.4.1 **Open journeys:** extended project structures

In chapter 5, I emphasised that increased time for engagement might involve more reticent participants. In chapter 6, I raised the importance of a separated period of group building before production to avoid inappropriate exposure. In chapter 7, I proposed that further cycles of video making (at least double-loop) increase the possibility of generating deeper participant insight. In this chapter, I found there was a lack of financial and relational support for participant involvement in ongoing action. This leads to some further implications about how to extend project structures to support external *divergent* interaction.

I propose that projects should include a stage following production from the outset, so that partners are aware of the need. Firstly, this should address the process and mechanism of distribution to widen participant influence through showing videos. Financial constraint has prevented Real Time exploiting the potential of internet- based dialogue. Their approach, in structuring relatively speedy in-camera edited processes, could productively serve a shift to shorter units of more frequently exchanged communication between divergent actors. Secondly, the practical link between the group and the wider public sphere often did not manifest. Support for facilitated action after production to open face-to-face dialogical spaces between participants and external others would assist this.

The *Our Voice* project has illustrated the kinds of ways that possibilities can be extended through ongoing collaboration between participants and practitioners. I propose a more fundamental shift in partnership understanding from the representational to the relational is necessary for the social potential of an opening journey through participatory video to be realised.

### 8.5 **Synthesis:** towards ongoing possibilities

In this chapter, I have explored Real Time's practice to both extend divergent dialogue and to re-position participants more influentially. I conclude that in the projects studied new insight emerged to assist bridge building between different social positions. I also found that, on the long-term projects, participants were placed effectively and opportunities extended through new roles and responsibilities. Positive unforeseen consequences emerged that meaningfully shifted social dynamics for participants beyond the boundaries of the project. However, I also unearthed practical tensions between the dialogical and critical processes that manifested.

#### 8.5.1 **Partnership commitment and action:** between bridge-building and social disruption

Participatory projects such as Real Time's tread a fine line between positioning participants so they merely collude with top-down interests, and critical action that leaves them more vulnerable or exposed. My analysis found that Real Time's participatory video process negotiated this path between dialogical intention towards social bridge building and critical challenge through positioning participants more

favourably when supported. However, I identified hindrances in the lack of ongoing project support and external actors' defensive responses.

Bridge building involves two-way relationships (section 8.2.3), yet there was an implicit expectation that it is participants who must change. Multi-stakeholders programmes addressing contemporary social issues are more likely to succeed when stakeholders have equivalent commitment to improvement, when bottom-up perspectives have the same status as expert views, when there are mediation processes facilitated between positions, and when less powerful actors are assisted by top-down input. (Campbell 2004). In addition to the necessity for relationally enabling partnerships that promote inclusive dynamics between participants, I therefore suggest a need to establish engagement parameters and working relationships with external project actors, so that wider forums are also conducive to participants' input. Once participants move beyond the controlled project space, there is greater project actor' heterogeneity and so storming -norming (see section 2.3) interactions can be more extreme. In addition, such Tuckman processes (section 2.3) can repeat in each new arena, with the possibility of multiple storming-norming progressions happening in parallel. This in part explains the practical balance necessary between critical and dialogical exchange.

The challenge is in whether more powerfully positioned actors are open to hearing the message, and whether they understand that this might involve them in attitudinal shifts or actual action themselves. This does not mean that all stakeholders must agree, but they need sufficient appreciation of each other' perspectives if collective efforts are to be driven forwards (Conklin 2005). Participatory video can mediate relations to re-position participants, but this is in vain if partners do not respect their contribution or remain determinedly attached to their own viewpoints. This led me to propose (section 8.2.5) that heterogeneous dialoguing would be more effective if some relational practice took place with potential audiences before bringing participants and outside others together. Moreover, multi-site projects during which participatory video processes are run in parallel in a number of contexts; before the various groups involved are brought together in a wider forum might be more strategically effective.

### 8.5.2 Implications for the understanding of unfolding group processes

In chapter seven, I considered how social insight occurred through mainly *convergent* interaction as participants explored their lived experiences through video production processes. However, I clarified in sections 8.2 and 8.3 that bottom-up action is unlikely to lead to sustainable improvements, unless supported by top-down commitment and input. Participatory strategies and approaches generally walk a line between building group agency and the barriers faced due to iniquitous power dynamics or resistive responses (Campbell 2004:347). Data from the projects studied at the becoming-performing stage substantiated this insight because structural and relational obstacles prevented projects actors maximising the bridge-building and re-positioning possibilities in most cases. Thus, I propose greater partner support is necessary to increase wider dialogical potential.

As this thesis narrative has progressed, I have built an image of Real Time's participatory video unfolding through iterative staged processes from internal to external focus. In chapter 9, I dig deeper into how the transitions from stage to stage were catalysed.

# Chapter 9

# Chapter 9 **Catalysing *becoming*:** negotiating interactive dynamics from micro to mezzo social level

> *Empowerment creates situations, which people use for ends meaningful to them… that drives involvement... they feel they're gaining and going somewhere … It's an upward outward movement towards something new that was not predicted*
>
> **Luke – Real Time**

In this research, I faced the epistemological challenge of how to study Real Time's complex non-linear processes, which manifested differently in each application (e.g. section 3.1.1). The issue is not only that the map can be mistaken for the territory, but the territory is constantly shifting and evolving. In chapter 4, I used the concepts of *repetition* and *difference* (Deleuze 2004), to theorise how such group processes evolve. As illustrated in empirical chapters 5-8, I found that Real Time's participatory video consisted of *repeated* inter-subjective action that itself generated new *becoming*. Contextualised practice is thus particular, in that it evolves differently in relationship to the variable context. I also show that what was constant and repeated, and thus universal, was the way of relating, backed up by video usage.

Moreover, as I discussed in sections 1.5 and 8.4, the practice intention was to open up routes to something that is not predetermined or foreseen. The concept of '*becoming'* (section 2.5) productively captured the *eureka* moments often observed at the micro-level of group interaction. A *threshold is crossed* (Deleuze and Parnet 2006:93), which can be chronologically irreversible (e.g. sections 5.3.2, 6.2.2, and 7.1). For example, when participants reported feeling *can-do* about video recording, when previously they felt *can't-do* (section 5.2.2) there was a shift in self-perception, which participant narratives suggested did not reverse after the session. I interpreted this not as a definitive confidence, existent in all circumstances, but a movement towards *becoming-confident*.

In searching for narrative ruptures that indicated thresholds to new *becoming* (Steinberg 2007a), I identified how social emergence manifested in the projects studied. In summary, chapters 5 to 8 illustrated participants becoming-engaged, becoming-confident, and becoming-expressive at an individual level. I demonstrated becoming-mutual, becoming-collaborative, becoming-sense-makers, becoming-in-control and

becoming-authors at the group level, and also becoming-social actors, becoming bridge-builders, becoming-influential, and becoming-socially-connected in various mezzo level social spaces. The rhizomic practice synthesis (tables 4.14 to 4.21 in section 4.5) provides a map to help practitioners negotiate the interactive dynamics involved. However, it does not elucidate how practice unfolds from stage to stage, which is the key insight needed to understand the links from individual, to group and outwards. Subsequent to the insight that participatory video was a repeated process that generated difference in itself, I was also interested in how Real Time's processes emerged progressively.

Following exploration of the four main stages of Real Time's practice in chapter 5-8, the main purpose of this chapter is to discover how they operated together to catalyse *becoming*. In section 9.1, I further apply social complexity theory in order to shed light on how the eight process possibilities defined in section 4.4.1 unfolded through phased progression from micro-level interactions outwards towards a diversity of consequences at the mezzo level. In section 9.2, I synthesise overall social psychological insight on the performance of social action in the new spaces created by participatory video context as a progressive process. In section 9.3, I collect what I learnt about the nuanced tactics of practice in negotiating the complex non-linear dynamics involved.

## 9.1 **Generating novel social possibilities:** participatory video progression through natural unfolding

> *Singularities, which define a multiplicity, come in sets … defining tendencies in a process; these sets [or distributions] … are structured in such a way that …. by a series of critical transitions …. distributions embedded within one another …. unfold following recurrent sequences … progressively specifying the nature of a multiplicity*
>
> **DeLanda 2002:16-26**

A further attribute of singularities (or process possibilities) is that they occur in groups. This means multiplicities emerge or unfold progressively in recurrent sequences following phase transitions at critical thresholds. Many natural processes emerge spontaneously from intensity differences in this way (e.g. hydrodynamic flow (DeLanda 2002:16-9) and egg morphogenesis (Goodwin 1994:41)). This happens through a complex series of symmetry–breaking phase transitions, called *bifurcations,* towards

increasingly differentiated structure. Furthermore, these pattern-generating transitions emerge spontaneously simply through the dynamics of the process *(*Goodwin 1990*).* I applied the idea of *bifurcations* productively to Real Time's non-linear processes. I had already synthesised the process possibilities as four staged sets (section 4.4.1). I decided to see whether this broad sequence progressed through critical junctures where the nature of inter-subjective activity qualitatively changed by following Deleuze's injunction to value *sensed* experience (DeLanda 2006:47, Steinberg 2007b), and by *paying attention* to the intensity of projects actors' feelings as *reliable* and *direct indicators of the nature of mutual processes* (Reason and Goodwin 1999).

Thematic synthesis (sections 4.4 and 4.5) confirmed that Real Time's approach was multi-layered with different iterative processes spiralling forwards alongside each other and intertwined. However, what was most unanticipated, as I reflected on the overall corpus, was that there were evidently critical junctures or phase transitions in project dynamics where a threshold was crossed to a qualitatively different focus and dynamic.

### 9.1.1 Real Time's phased progression

I covered the tendency towards participant becoming-'can-do' in the early sessions in section 5.2. Once that threshold was crossed, participants were no longer overly concerned about using equipment or seeing themselves, which spontaneously led them to the next stage - what to say or show on video. I also identified a critical transition point in participants' becoming-group (e.g. section 5.5). Moreover, I discovered *specific* activities mediated and catalysed these shifts, as illustrated for the opening/forming stage in table 9.1.

**Table 9-1 Phase transitions at the opening stage**

| Progression | Becoming can-do | Becoming-group |
|---|---|---|
| **Initial state** | Participants felt can't do - using video or performing on camera | Individual participants attracted by video - come together in project space |
| **Video catalysing activity** | All taking turns in using camera, and speaking on microphone in early recording and playback cycles | Shot-by-shot documentary – going out as a group and taking turns choosing shots and in all production roles |
| **Helped by relational practice** | • Space to express discomfort<br>• Structuring what to say/do<br>• Group experience | • Direction to ensure roles swapping<br>• Structured choices<br>• Working together |
| **Phase transition – critical junction** | **Relatively rapid shift from can't do to can do** for most - participants who miss first session don't fully transcend | **Abrupt transition to feeling part of team** - highlight for participants and other informants identify as significant success marker |
| **Initial state transcended** | No longer focused on challenge of equipment | Participants co-operating as<br>formed group - inclusive dynamic and less need for facilitator direction |
| **Qualitatively different phase of activity** | Focus now on building expressive capacity, ideas and common interests | Focus on building mutuality, collaborative dynamic and group agency |

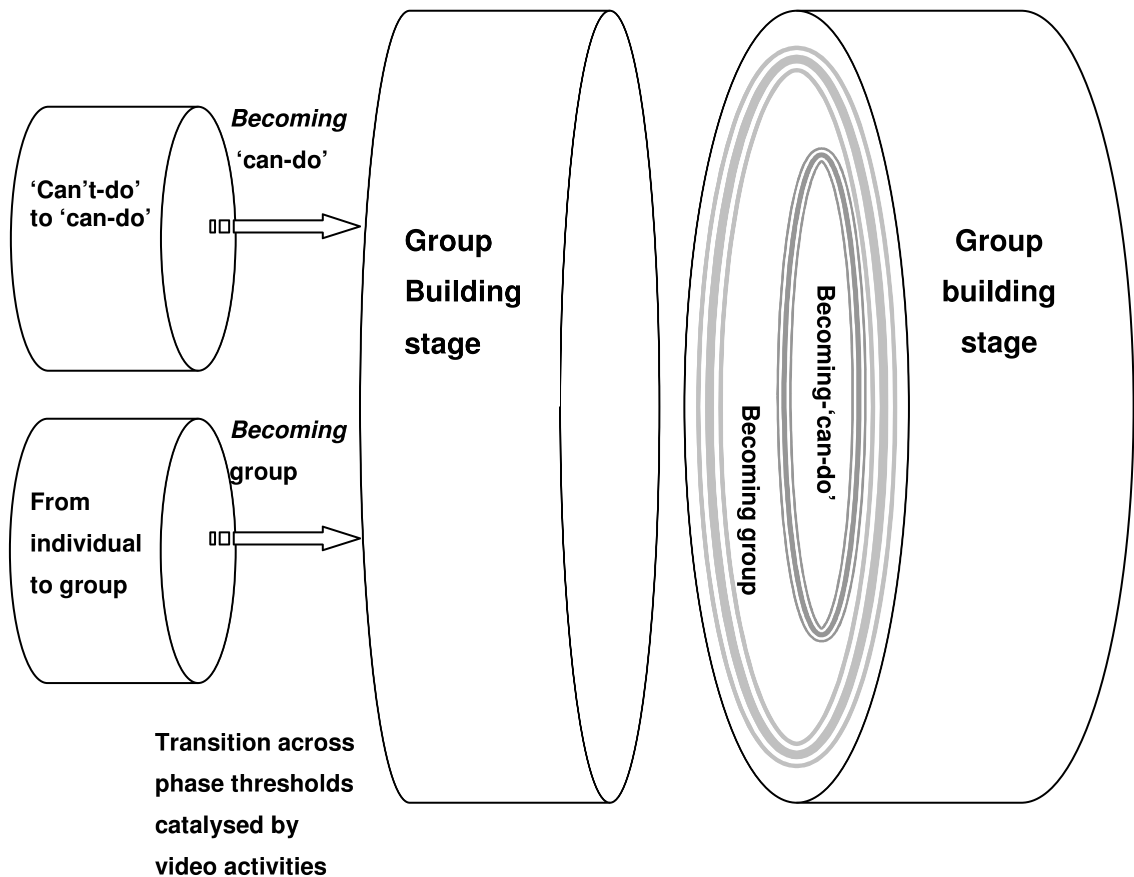
Table 9.1 illustrates two activities as critical junctions, which were firstly everyone appearing on camera in the first exercises, so they all watch themselves played back together, and secondly, the shot-by-shot documentary. I identified this because participants repeatedly mentioned them as highpoints, meaningful surprises, or personally transforming challenges. Participants talked about these activities more often and with more intensity of feeling than other project experiences. Other project informants also raised them as significant markers of practice achievement. When they were not significant thresholds, it was because individual participants (section 5.3.3) had already experienced a similar video challenge (Ruby), or because there were other particular factors that meant transition needed longer (Callie). In addition, practitioners thought that if participants missed these specific activities they never really became comfortable with the video project context. Nor did the group bond so well. This meant that practitioners made every effort to use these particular activities even when time was short. Lastly, the practitioner action to de-stabilise the usual dynamic, which I compared to Lewin's (1947a) unfreezing in section 5.3.3, was most apparent in these exercises. I propose these key transitions were concrete universals in Real Time's

practice, which gave the common processual development that was repeated in early sessions across settings.

> *It is the universality of multiplicities, which is highly significant... Concrete sets of attractors (… tendencies in physical processes) linked together by bifurcations (…abrupt transitions…)*
>
> **DeLanda 2002:21**

Once these thresholds were crossed and the new dynamics were normalised within the project space, they no longer needed as much practitioner energy. This is how the focus seems to change effortlessly and spontaneously to the wider intention of building group expression and agency at Real Time's stage B as illustrated below in figure 9.1.

**Figure 9-1 Transition to 'group building' stage**




Although 'confidence and capacity building' and 'sustaining inclusive group dynamics' do not stop, these processes become incorporated in the wider 'group-building' territory. The focus at the Group Building stage then shifts to the more contextualised process of exploration, reflection and voice building for that particular group.

I was able to explore Real Time's Stage A in depth through concurrent study of *Communicate* and *Women Reflect*. Despite limitations on concurrent study of longer-term projects, critical junctions, where the activity focus, facilitation priority and group dynamic qualitatively changed, were also identifiable at the transitions between the other main stages of Real Time's overall process, as presented in tables 9.2 and 9.3.

**Table 9-2 Transition from 'group building' to 'video production'**

| Unfolding process | Emergent progression |
|---|---|
| **Group Building stage** | Process of building structured to open voice slowly as trust and informed understanding grows. |
| **Possible *becoming*** | **Becoming – expressive**<br>**Becoming – mutual** |
| **Relatively rapid shift from** | Internal communication action to external focus |
| **Catalysed by** | Video activities in which participants express strong opinions and are acknowledged or heard |
| **Relational practice** | Maintain collaborative dynamic to enable common group focus, rather than minority take over |
| **Transition to Collaborative Video Production stage** | New focus on external production action. |

During the transition illustrated in table 9.3 it was '*being heard'* articulating authentically, which addresses the fundamental *desire to be recognised for who one is* (Anderson 2011:106), that was the catalyst. At the phase shift illustrated in table 9.3, video's repositioning power was the catalyst.

**Table 9-3 Transition from 'collaborative video production' to 'becoming-performing'**

| Unfolding process | Emergent progression |
|---|---|
| **Collaborative Video Production stage** | Iterative construction process - practitioners focus on following and mentoring group agenda |
| **Possible becoming** | **Becoming- critically aware**<br>**Becoming-authors** |
| **Relatively rapid shift to** | Influential positioning |
| **Catalysed by** | Video re-positioning power - Interacting with (more-powerfully positioned) outside others through videoing or showing videos |
| **Relational practice** | • Identifying bridging contacts<br>• Following rolling development<br>• Brokering external support |
| **Transition to Becoming-performing stage** | **Becoming-social actors**<br>**Becoming-influential** |

I concluded that Real Time's four sets of process possibilities (singularities), introduced in section 4.4.1, were indeed nested one within the other. They unfolded in relatively predictable ways from stage to stage, as long as the balance of influences was tipped helpfully (Figure 4.2). It is this naturally generating phased emergence, which was behind practitioners' perception that the participatory video dynamic evolved spontaneously.

> *the process and equipment …. the methods and the ethos applied reasonably competently is what enables change …*
>
> **Magda - practitioner**

### 9.1.2 Practice bifurcations: symmetry-breaking transitions towards differentiated emergence

I concluded that the greater particularity apparent in the later project stages (e.g. chapter 8) was not due to the limitations on longer-term data. Nor were the greater differences between projects as they evolved solely due to the reduced practitioner control over externally focused activities, which I raised in section 8.2.3. I interpreted the increasing differentiations between projects that manifested as they progressed

from stage to stage as being due to Real Time's practice bifurcations, or *symmetry-breaking transition*s (DeLanda 2002).

As projects progressed sequentially, they become progressively less predictable and more differentiated from each other because contextual factors, such as participants' increased control, or the greater opportunity for external influence, had gradually more impact. To clarify, in all projects the early session activities were very similar, but later, as participants developed their own ideas, they were more diverse. At the Group Building stage, exercises were similar, but in context, the specific group interests progressively influenced the process and video content (e.g. section 6.2.1). At the Collaborative Video Production stage, topics were very variable and external interactions meant activities snowballed in spontaneous ways (e.g. section 8.2.2). Finally, in the Becoming-performing stage (depending on ongoing support) what happened was highly differentiated as new connections and unexpected pathways opened up (e.g. section 8.3.4), which after all was the intention. This is demonstrated (section 8.3.5) by learning-disabled adults becoming peer teachers and training professionals, and young people becoming police advisors and partners with a national crime reduction agency. Therefore, repeated participatory video processes generated progressive differences in the project consequences in different contexts (Deleuze 2004).

Lastly, complexity theory suggests that emergent dynamics are generated through iterative cycles of activity following *simple* rules repeated, as in the complex coherent order exemplified by the Mandelbrot set (Reason and Goodwin 1999). Similarly, I have shown how Real Time's simple ground rules (section 4.2), and the repeated videoing and playback activities evolved diversifying social possibilities as the focus shifted from internal to external. Moreover, this insight has implications for social psychological understanding of emergent group processes.

## 9.2 **Performing communicative action in new social spaces:** emergent connections from the micro to mezzo level through participatory video

In chapter 2, I presented a theoretical framework for Real Time's participatory video practice that incorporated the praxis aspects of social space (section 2.3.1), relational practice (section 2.3.2), communicative action catalysed by video (section 2.3.1) and social performance through emergent group processes (sections 2.2.1 and 2.3.3). This

thesis aimed to address the lack of understanding about how empowerment practice evolves to make a link between social levels (e.g. introduction and section 1.6.1.) In section 9.1, I illustrated how Real Time's participatory video evolved from stage to stage. In this section, I draw together insights on the development of communicative action processes and the relational contexts necessary to create conducive social spaces of different type as projects progress.

### 9.2.1 Group process complexity

In sections 5.5, 6.5 and 8.5, I demonstrated that Real Time's processes did not involve one *Tuckman* (see section 2.3) progression, or one *Lewinian* (see section 2.2) iterative learning cycle. Rather such group processes manifested repeatedly within the participatory video practice stages. To clarify, there were iterative *unfreezing*, *moving* and *fixing* cycles (Lewin 1947a), which involved de-stabilisations and dynamic shifting, in the recording and playback of progressive video exercises (chapter 5) and in the iterative production action that occurred (chapter 7), as well as implicit in the potential for double-loop video making. Similarly *Tuckman* processes (e.g. forming – storming – norming – performing) occurred not only between participants in the 'safe' type 1 internal project spaces. They were also faced anew in each 'in-between' type 2 space that emerged, as the group focus shifted from *convergent* peer exploration to external *divergent* dialogue front stage. Although Real Time's approach was based on simple principles, it displayed an emergent complexity through the iterative cycles of project activity. I thus showed that Real Time's practice reflected characteristics of complex non-linear processes, in that it demonstrated patterns of self-similarity at different levels (Goodwin 2007:114-5) by reflecting these classical group processes in various ways at different stages. Moreover, I found these processes were progressively harder to negotiate in the development from the relatively homogeneous convergent interactions (chapter 5) to the divergent external exchange that followed (chapter 8).

### 9.2.2 Communicative action catalysed by participatory video processes

In sections 2.2, I framed Real Time's participatory video as a progressive process of communicative action from back stage to front stage. However, empirical investigation elucidated particular differences in the contextual pre-conditions for successful internal dialogue and reflection back stage (chapter 5) and communication front stage (chapter

8). It also clarified the dangers when they are mixed (chapter 6), and the role videoing action has in the transition from back to front stage (chapter 7 and 8).

I have explained how contemporary social problems are unlikely to be solved without bringing people together to find common solutions (sections 1.2 and 8.2). Empowerment practice needs to strengthen the position of marginalised peoples from within, and build alliances with more powerful social actors (sections 8.3 and 8.51) if inclusive and more equitable social dynamics are to be achieved. I have shown that participatory video is a useful way of building the relational context for dialogue with and between groups, but that it is an evolving process.

Real Time's approach was predominately successful at catalysing convergent group interaction in 'safe' type 1 spaces, which is important in engaging disadvantaged groups (section 2.2.2). I have demonstrated how this addressed the empowerment agenda through increasing confidence and capacity, promoting convergent group dialogue, building group agency and mediating group action through video production and playback (chapters 5-7). I thus found participatory video created the necessary relational context to build participants' symbolic and relational power from within. However, increasing relational influence at the mezzo level, and the possibility of increased material power following, is dependent on changing the external relational context as well.

In chapter 8, I illustrated how longer-term projects can re-position participants more influentially in divergent bridge-building interaction as a route to mutual social understanding (e.g. sections 8.2 and 8.3). However, it is the contested external context, rather than the participants' backstage interaction, that has a tendency to be practically problematic. I found Real Time's participatory video very quickly exposed any issues in relational dynamics (sections 2.4.4 and 6.3.1). I argued that there is social learning in these project dynamics if strategically placed stakeholders are open to listening (section 7.3.1). In particular, it is important to realise that participants may value internal project gains, but refuse public video showing (section 2.4.4). For instance, Milne (2011) interpreted the refusal of external video screening opportunities on a council estate as an assertive action to protect family and community (rather than being feckless and apathetic, which is the usual interpretation of non-participation).

Although I demonstrated the development of divergent dialogue that positioned participants more influentially in some projects, in chapter 8 I identified that ongoing dialogue and bridge-building alliances often did not occur because of the lack of

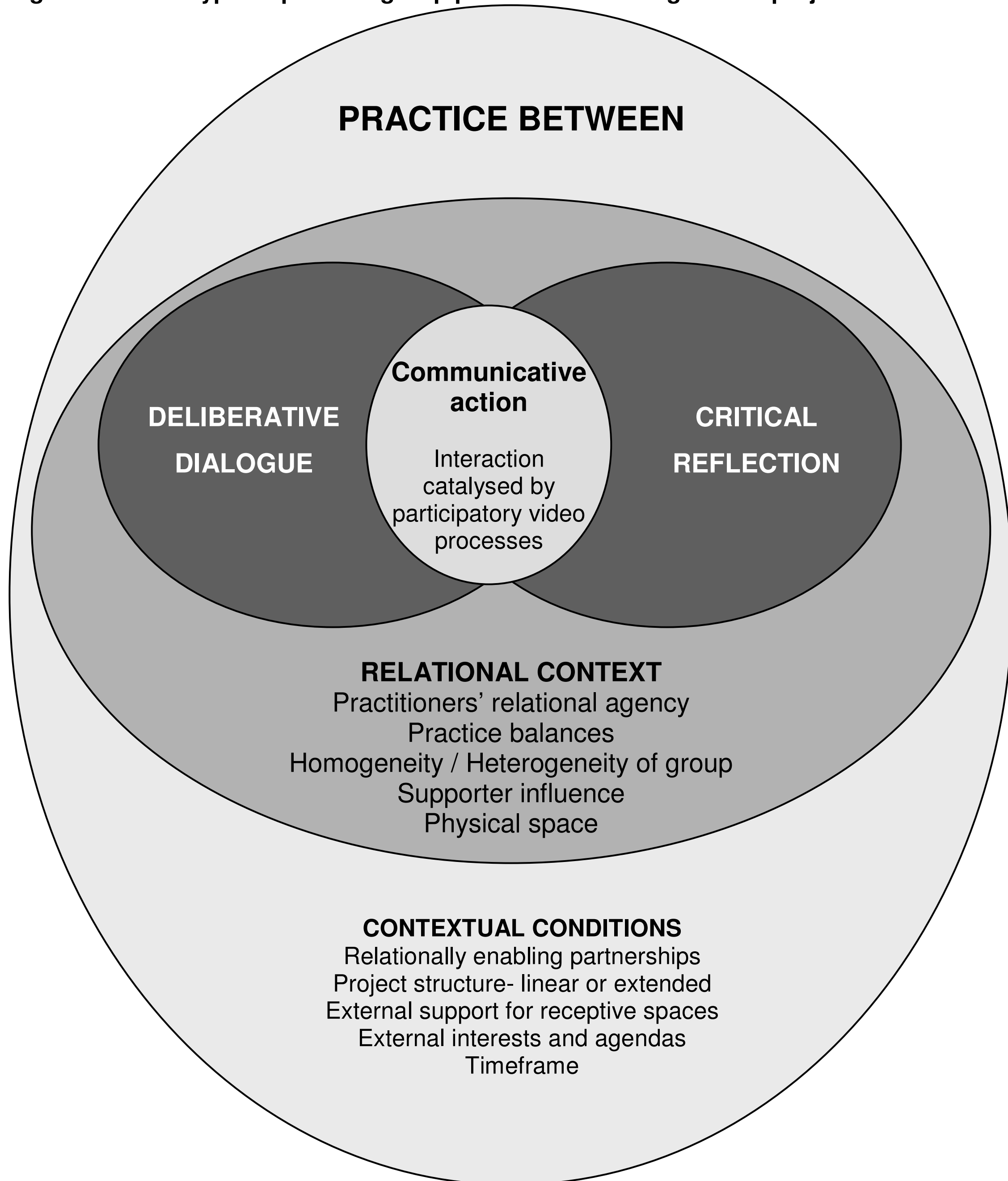
partnership support. This was because of the limited active commitment from statutory and voluntary sector decision-makers and financing agencies to creating enabling and receptive arenas (in-between spaces) for wider dialogue, which leads to policy and practice implications (see section 10.5). The problems were in part due to a lack of awareness about the differences between the variety of social spaces that can emerge, and the consequent lack of knowledge of the particular relational factors that make them conducive to participants' involvement.

### 9.2.3 **Conducive social spaces:** appreciating the progressive differentiations

The term c*onducive social space* encompasses both the 'safe' (type 1) semi-publics and the various 'in-between' (type 2) social spaces (defined in section 2.3.1), which can emerge between participants and external others (chapter 8). What makes social spaces conducive is whether they provide an enabling relational context towards participant influence. Contextualised exploration has resulted in a clearer appreciation of the elements, as presented diagrammatically figure 9.2.

I found the elements that contributed to how well a new social forum created the conditions for participants' influence was the same for type 1 *back stage* and type 2 *front stage* spaces (see figure 9.2). The main difference was that the communicative action facilitated backstage is between group-members and front stage between the group and external others. Additionally, the increased heterogeneity of social actors, the reduced practitioner control over both relational dynamics and the physical space, and the variety of external influences and agendas increase the potential difficulties in shifting from back to front stage. I also found the partner lack of commitment to the 'hearing' or 'receiving' aspect of dialogue and the potential conflict between dialogue and critical intent were hindering aspects.

**Figure 9-2 Safe type 1 space for group performance through video project context**




Real Time's process incorporates a staged development from type 1 to type 2 space when supported (section 2.3 and chapter 8). However, I concluded that there was insufficient consideration of the differentiations between various type 2 mezzo-level spaces. A staged progression from the more homogenous to the heterogeneous or from horizontal interaction between similar groups to vertical dialogue with more powerfully positioned decision-makers was indicated for this reason. However, as I demonstrated (section 8.2) new forums for dialogue can open spontaneously during a

participatory video project. In these cases, I established the need for increased preparatory interaction with audiences to establish both dialogical parameters (section 8.2.3) and active commitment to change from powerfully positioned external actors if they are to be productive (section 8.3.5 and 8.3.6).

### 9.3 **Complex relational practices:** building nuanced and contextualised appreciation of Real Time's tactics

In section 1.5, I re-cast participatory video as an emergent inter-subjective process to lift it clear from the participatory representation agenda. Analysis confirmed that Real Time's practice was fundamentally relational, with video applied primarily to mediate interactive processes and dynamics (section 1.5.2). Moreover, this happened within a field of contextual influences (section 4.2), which involved multiple practical balances (section 4.4.2). Through in-depth study of contextualised practice, I show *how* Real Time practitioners managed and drove the negotiation of these balances, which was also a relational process. This is not only because it worked to shift relational dynamics, but also because, as demonstrated through chapters 5-8, the practitioner challenge was in facilitating the multiple processes to manage project actors' competing expectations. This involved different types of facilitator input as listed in the box below:

- Facilitating external relationships to establish project boundaries and broker necessary support
- Facilitating internal relations between individual and group needs towards inclusive dynamics and group agency
- Proving strong leadership, yet facilitating a gradual transfer of responsibility
- Providing structure for video exercises and iterative production action to enable space for participants' creative achievement and group authorship
- Facilitating relationships between participants and external others to sustain group mutuality against external influences
- Managing time pressure to deliver completed videos
- Balancing dialogical and critical intent
- Creating trusting and supportive collaborations
- Combining structure with responsiveness

I have thus built nuanced appreciation of practitioners' relational role, which supported Real Time's belief that it takes two people (section 5.2.3). I also identified a lack of partnership awareness of what practitioners do, leading to policy recommendations (discussed in section 10.5). Moreover, I synthesised helpful and hindering factors at each sequential stage (tables 4.14 to 4.21). In summary, I now emphasise three aspects.

### 9.3.1 **Facilitating the emergence of participant control:** between order and creative freedom

Previous participatory video literature (e.g. Shaw and Robertson 1997, White 2003) discusses aspects of facilitation, but not what practitioners do. In section 2.2.1, I presented a group process model (Heresy and Blanchard 1977), which suggests facilitators progressively step back as participants' agency increases. In chapter 5, I demonstrated the need to structure activities, establish dynamics and provide unfreezing challenges at the beginning, but also showed how practitioners shifted focus to follow the group agenda as it emerged (chapter 7). However, this was not a linear progression but flexibly responsive, both to provide varying levels of support to individual participants, and also in moving between directing leadership and mentoring/delegating to sustain dynamics when threatened or limited by external interference (see chapter 6). Overall, the practitioner role manifested as an ongoing balance as appropriate to context.

I found (see section 7.4) that facilitating collaborative production was a matter of engendering conditions that balanced the levels of participant challenge and skill to generate creative flow (Humphreys and Jones 2006). This backed up the complexity theorists' viewpoint that emergent systems are best placed to adapt and respond creatively and appropriately to the continually changing world at the *edge of chaos* (Lewin 1993). Coherence is a well-defined phenomenon (e.g. Goodwin 2007:115), where global order and local freedom is maximised. Applying it metaphorically, I suggest that Real Time's facilitatory approach not only avoids the *tyranny* (Freeman 1984) that results from individual actors or particular interest groups taking advantage of a lack of structure (section 1.4.1 and 2.4.1). It also maximises the chances of group members achieving and feeling creative coherence, through providing an overall framework in which each individual can contribute freely.

### 9.3.2 **Video performativity:** facilitating functional practice

Although Real Time's was a relational practice, it was mediated through the functions and capabilities of video equipment, as well as the systemisation provided by video recording and playback exercises, and production and video screening conventions. However, in contribution to nuanced practice understanding, I found video performed different communicative functions towards the process possibilities at each stage as summarised in table 9.9.

**Table 9-4 Video's socially mediating functions**

| | **Participatory video's performative function between boundaries** | |
|---|---|---|
| **External individual** | As attractor in opening social space | **Participant engagement** |
| **Can't do** | Videoing and playback provide significant challenges | **Becoming-can-do** |
| **Sub-personal** | Video activities focus on participants' life worlds –develop ideas through inter-subjective action | **Contextualising subjective** |
| **Keeping quiet** | Video exercises mediate individual expression and listening space | **Self-expression and becoming-heard** |
| **Participants** | Video activities mediate inclusive dynamic and co-operative working | **Becoming-group** |
| **Individual interests** | Video exercises stimulate group interaction and bonding/binding relationships | **Internal group dialogue** |
| **Internal and external influences** | Communicative action through video builds shared purpose against other agendas | **Group purpose and agency** |
| **Superficial or hegemonic understanding** | Convergent video exploration catalyses reflection and questioning | **Deeper awareness – re-framing** |
| **Group** | Video-making conventions re-position participants more influentially | **Becoming-social actors** |
| **Limited public voice** | Video provides the medium for collaborative-authored production | **Becoming-authored** |
| **Group** | Video showing opens a communication link | **External forums** |
| **Ongoing group action** | Video activities can mediate mezzo-level bridge-building if external commitment | **Becoming-influentially connected** |

In section 1.5, I suggested participatory video mediated communicative action between social boundaries. This table provides a more complete perspective on *how,* and thus its illocutionary force.

Moreover, I suggest that video functions as an intensifier of inter-subjective project processes. To clarify, I have shown how practitioners intervened to de-stabilise habitual subjective identity in order to open opportunities. Drawing on Hume, the difference between believing and disbelieving is related to the intensity of associated feeling, with higher intensity ideas driving action (DeLanda 2006:51-2). As subjective thoughts based on sensed impressions are more intense, they have greater impact. We believe what we see more than what we hear, and remember what we do because it is embodied experience. I propose that video functions to intensify group processes because it turns up the intensity of participants' sensed experiences. For example, I suggest seeing themselves on video initially was discomforting, but the intense feelings generated, combined with the sense of 'togetherness' generated by the socially reparative (Goffman 1967) discovery of shared responses, meant newfound can-do and mutuality *seemed* more real. Similarly, I suggest participants were more likely to feel social actors because of the intensity of *doing* video making in public. I suggest the intensifying effect of video was also behind Maya's sense that the *Women Reflect* group gelled (section 5.3.5) faster than usual, and is the root of the reported powerful effects of video on group processes (e.g. Humphreys et al 2001).

However, I also think that video intensifies the perlocutionary effect as well. This makes the counter-possibility of leaving participants feeling exposed or worse than before, or actually at risk, more acute. This is why it is important that practitioners and project supporters are aware of the dangers and difficulties and how to negotiate them ethically.

## 9.4 **Synthesis:** understanding practice complexity

I approached the task of studying Real Time's complex processes by considering each stage as a separate territory. In this summarising chapter, I have considered insights from the overall staged process. My synthesis elucidates how wider social possibilities can open up through such projects interactions. I have shown that these are not planned, or necessarily predictable from the practice components or plan, but emerge through *operating the iterative cycle* (Reason and Goodwin 1999). This illustrates how

such unfolding practice multiplicities create links between the micro and the various mezzo levels of social complexity. Through the detailed empirical exploration of chapters 4-9, I have significantly increased understanding of the specifics of Real Time's particular empowerment practice in actuality. In chapter 10, I consider the overall contribution of this thesis and its implications.

# Chapter 10

# Chapter 10 Achievements, insights and implications: how *becoming* evolves through participatory video processes and how to understand and improve empowerment practice

*the thought is one thing, the deed is another, and another yet is the image of the deed.*

**Nietzsche 2005 in Patten 2010:84**

The overall purpose of this research was to build a more grounded and realistic understanding of empowerment practice through exploration in the participatory video context. I considered empowerment practice a dynamic relational process that intends to build participants' influence in contexts of social imbalance. I aimed to interrogate what such emergent practice does in actuality rather than abstraction, particularly for participants, through the perspectives of those involved. As I assumed empowerment was contextual, I focused on the specific approach of Real Time Video, a UK organisation specialising in the use of video to catalyse group processes. I addressed a different question - not whether Real Time's participatory video *can* work, but *how* and in *what* circumstances.

In chapter one, I situated participatory video in the context of UK project intervention. Drawing on my own experience of the mismatch between practice ideal and reality when working between different social interests, I unpacked the problems of representational and participatory framing. I also explored recent social psychological literature to highlight the gap in understanding of what empowerment practice does for participants, of the practice specifics, and of the actions and conditions that help and hinder. In chapter two, I grounded Real Time's emergent practice in relationship to group process theory. To provide a conceptual framework for *how* participatory video happens inter-subjectively, I used the social psychological theories of communicative action, conscientisation and performativity. I then introduced the notion of '*becoming'* as a way of conceptualising what participatory video leads to in reality. A summary of my methodological orientation, and the methods used to capture a range of projects actors' lived experiences during 11 projects, is contained in chapter 3. Chapter 4 covers the overall analytical approach and thematic synthesis.

In chapters 5 – 8, I unpacked the detailed empirical findings to provide a *thick* (section 4.3.2) illustration of how Real Time's staged processes manifested. In chapter 9, I demonstrated how activities progressively unfolded from stage to stage, as well as drawing together my insights on practically how the connections emerged between micro and mezzo-social levels. Through the evolving narrative, I show that Real Time's emergent process, as exemplar of empowerment practice, is a negotiated journey towards *becoming*. I transform participatory video understanding by unpacking its multiple iterative processes, which balance relational, functional and contextual factors between interests towards novel social emergence. I thus contribute more nuanced and productive knowledge of both the possibilities and limitations of empowerment practice and its consequences in context.

In this final chapter 10, I clarify the thesis achievements and insights in relationship to the literature and theory discussed previously. In section 10.1, I discuss the theoretical insights about participatory video and in section 10.2, the contribution to the social psychology of empowerment practice. Section 10.3 covers the construction of nuanced and contextualised praxis, and section 10.4 the contribution to practice study methodology. In section 10.5, I discuss the implications for policy and practice and in section 10.6, I suggest possible areas for future research. In section 10.7, I reflect on the overall input to the understanding of socially complex practices.

In reviewing the findings from empirical study of the particulars of one specific empowerment practice in context, I thus assess the implications for the theory, policy and practice of participatory project intervention more widely. This clarifies the research contribution, which I summarise in seven meta-level insights in the following table 10.1

**Table 10-1 Meta-level insights**

| **Theory** |
|---|
| • Participatory video is an emergent relational process (the means) towards social *becoming* (the consequence)<br>• A social psychological framework for participatory video incorporates video as mediator of conducive social spaces, communicative action (dialogue and critical thinking), relational practice and social performance through evolving group processes<br>• Contextualised empowerment practice is productively re-framed as a way of negotiating the (rhizomic) pathway between social possibility and limitation<br>• Applying the concepts of *repetition* and *difference* (Deleuze 2004), emergent group processes such as participatory video can be perceived as involving repeated interaction, which in itself generates novel emergence outwards from the micro to the mezzo level |
| **Praxis** |
| • Complex social processes can be studied as multiplicities in different territorial dimensions to apprehend non-linear tendencies – I found 2 process possibilities and parallel tensions at each of four Real Time practice stages<br>• Participatory video is a boundary practice that involves a tactical balance between multiple processes and positioned social interests - I identified 8 key practice balances negotiated during Real Time projects and enabling and limiting factors for each<br>• Participatory video processes naturally unfolded outwards in recurrent sequences of critical phase transitions across qualitative thresholds to evolve diversity of manifestation according to context |

## 10.1 **Theorising participatory video:** catalysing emergent relational processes towards *becoming*

There is increasing interest in the potential of participatory video as a methodology for both community engagement and participatory social research. In section 1.2.2, I described how UK community arts practitioners and activists evolved it *bottom-up* as a form of cultural resistance. However, there are significant practical problems in realising the potential in the UK project context of limited finance, short-term intervention and anti-collective individualism (sections 1.3 to 1.4). The historical development and lack of critical academic literature means that participatory video is substantially un-theorised as a social psychological phenomenon (see introduction - A). This has contributed to its appropriation and dilution in the participatory representation policy context (section 1.3).

I contribute firstly by theoretically framing participatory video as an emergent relational process towards *becoming*. I achieved this by addressing the question of what participatory video empowerment practice meant in particular context to those taking part. In particular, I bring the participant perspective to the fore, which I found largely absent in previous literature (section 1.6), and I avoid the grand policy purposes and practitioner idealism encompassed by the empowerment narrative to focus on the small wins that were valued by participants (section 1.3).

### 10.1.1 **Valuing the possibilities:** the means and the end of Real Time's processes

In section 1.5, I cast empowerment practice as an emergent process of inter-subjective action that intends to build participant influence. I show, through detailed exploration of project actors' experiences in chapters 4-8, that Real Time's processes were the *how* of social emergence. This clarifies that videoing activities are the *means* of contextualised empowerment practice in service of another *end*. I found through this research that the consequence or end for participants was *becoming;* that is, the gain for them did not lie in representation of their existing *being* or pre-formed *identity*, but through *doing*, in new social '*becomings'* (section 2.5). These '*becomings'* were spontaneous transformations, which shifted social equilibrium for participants in particular ways depending on circumstances. Through analysing participant likes and valued gains in section 4.3.1, I synthesised different aspects of *becoming-empowered* at the individual, group or wider

social level, which I summarise in the introduction to chapter 9. I also illustrate how particular individual and group *becomings*, which were new *feelings* or the *sense* of possibilities, or actual *opportunities* or *actions*, manifested in the four practice stages of chapters 4-8.

Theorising contextualised empowerment practice as a *relational* process towards *social becoming*, rather than a *participatory* process towards *representational empowerment* is theoretically productive. It avoids the means-ends ambiguity (section 1.4.4) surrounding the use of digital media as social tools. It disrupts representational framing, which failed to address what social knowledge leads to (section 1.3.2). It avoids the impossibility of empowerment as a definite end state (section 2.2), and grounds the opening purpose of project engagement, as alternative to the closing function of participation (section 1.4.5). This framing values the small wins participatory video can achieve in context, which informs policy knowledge on when it is appropriate or best utilised. It also has relevance for understanding the function and place of other participatory processes using digital media. Moreover, I have drawn on social psychological theory (section 2.2 and 9.2) to build a conceptual framework that reflects the significant elements.

### 10.1.2 A social psychological framework for participatory video practice: conducive social spaces, communicative action, relational practice, social performance through evolving group processes and video as mediator

Participatory video processes have not previously been adequately theorised. Drawing on social psychological literature on digital media (section 1.6.1) and anecdotal theorising in chapter 2 (section 2.4) I developed a conceptual framework to guide empirical fieldwork. I conclude by theorising participatory video using five key elements, which are conducive social spaces, communicative action (deliberative dialogue and critical thinking), relational practice, social performance through evolving group processes, and finally video as mediator of these aspects.

In sections 1.2.1 and 1.3.2, I emphasised the importance of transformative social spaces (Campbell and Cornish 2010) in creating the conditions for dynamic shifting processes, as *becoming* only emerges through group interaction (Vaughn 2011:282). *Conducive social space* encompasses both the Type 1 '*safe'* forums (section 1.6), and Type 2 '*in-between'* spaces (section 9.2.3). *Communicative action*

takes in what is done, which can be convergent or divergent dialogue back or front stage (section 9.2.2). It also encompasses both dialogical and critical thinking processes, which can function in opposition (section 8.5). *Relational practice* covers the essentially active role of practitioners (e.g. section 6.4.2). Participatory video practitioners are value driven, but facilitation of the parallel processes involved was a multi-levelled and complex role (section 9.3), with socially bonding and disruptive aspects (e.g. chapter 8). Through deep exploration of Real Time *tactics*, I addressed the gaps in understanding of practitioners' specific attitudes and actions (sections 1.5.1, 2.3.2 and 2.5.4). As I found relational practice little recognised by project partners (e.g. section 6.4.2), this has implications for policy and practitioner training (discussed in section 10.5.4). *Social performance through group processes* covers the performative function of participatory video projects (section 2.2.2) through its iteratively emergent progression (section 9.1). Finally, *video* is the mediator of the different practice elements (section 9.3.3) which I showed had benefits and disadvantages. I covered the social psychological insights on how these aspects relate to each other as the focus of interaction develops from convergent back stage to divergent front stage communication in section 9.2. In summary, this social psychological framework for participatory video contributes to the growing literature (section 1.6) on the purpose and consequences of a social application of digital media.

Furthermore, I demonstrated how practically making the links between the micro and various mezzo levels was a progressive process (sections 9.1 and 9.2), which leads to social psychological understanding of how empowerment processes emerge.

## 10.2 **Building the social psychology of empowerment practice:** how contextualised non-linear processes emerge in stages

This second main contribution of my thesis is to the social psychology of empowerment practice. In the introductory chapter (section D), I stated the centrality of empowerment in theorising participatory practice, and the social psychological assertion of the need for both top-down and bottom-up action to transform social dynamics (e.g. sections 8.5.1, 8.5.2 and 9.2.2). As discussed in sections 1.5 and 1.6, previous research on the use of digital media has identified theoretical elements of empowerment practice such as the relational contexts (Humphreys and Jones 2006), the wider contextual conditions

(Vaughn 2011) and the medium (Humphreys and Lorac 2002). Empowerment has been perceived as an emergent process (sections 1.4.5 and 1.5.1), but I identified limited previous understanding of what the stages are and what helps progression (sections 1.5.2, 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). I addressed the question of the contextualised stages of Real Time's processes through project actors' experiences. I therefore captured *how* inter-subjective group processes unfold from micro to mezzo level to catalyse different aspects of becoming-empowered as well as the practical contradictions (chapters 4-9). Through in-depth study of Real Time's particular practice, I build more nuanced, specific and contextualised appreciation that contributes to understanding how *becoming* might emerge in comparable contexts.

### 10.2.1 **Praxis insight:** contextualising the progressive stages of participatory video processes

In section 2.2.1, I began by defining Real Time's approach as a staged process, which I related to classical group process theory. As expected (section 1.5.2), I found Real Time's practice a fundamentally inter-subjective process, which happened through communicative action catalysed by video activities (section 9.2.2). I identified four main Real Time stages as presented in section 4.4, and I have built a social psychological theoretical framework to ground the elements (section 10.1.2). Through in-depth thematic analysis, (see chapter 4) I mapped the concrete particulars of Real Time's processes (sections 4.4 and 4.5). This combined with the *thick* description (Geertz 1973) of how practice played out across 11 projects (chapters 5-8), builds appreciation of how the processes actually emerge.

### 10.2.2 **Praxis insight:** catalysing iterative unfolding from micro to mezzo social spaces

In section 1.3.2, I raised the key practical challenge for empowerment practice in creating links between the individual, group and mezzo levels of engagement. Through chapters 5-9, I showed how staging enabled Real Time's processes to open a route to wider social influence. In section 9.1, I demonstrated how Real Time's participatory video processes naturally unfolded in recurrent sequences of critical phase transitions across qualitative thresholds to evolve diversity of manifestation according to context. Moreover, I summarise in section 9.2 how video can be a mediating link between social

levels. I thus contribute practical insight that is applicable to understanding how other group processes can develop from micro to mezzo-level interaction.

### 10.2.3 **Praxis insight:** deeper insight on real-life group processes

I found Real Time's sequential process fitted group process theory in general terms (section 2.3), but was more complex in the particulars (e.g. sections 5.5, 6.5, 8.5.2 and 9.2.1). Firstly, the assumption that group processes develop internally in a closed project structure does not adequately anticipate the complexity of external contextual influences (e.g. sections 6.3 and 8.2). Secondly, the assumption that group processes are single-looped does not enable the possibilities of iterative development from micro to macro level interaction (sections 7.3.2 and 9.2.1). Thirdly, as social phase transitions are larger in magnitude and triggered more easily if project actors are homogenous (section 8.2.3), it was easier to trigger relational shifting in the earlier stages of Real Time's process where the dynamics were more manageable (chapter 5) than the later stages (chapter 8 and section 9.2.3). Finally, partnership understanding of the relational purpose, and the need to create enabling and receptive forums, led to significant restrictions in journey time and a lack of on-going support (e.g. sections 7.3.2, 8.2.5, 8.3.5, 9.2.2 and 9.2.3 ), which has implications for future policy (discussed in section 10.5.1).

In this section, I have summarised what this thesis achieved in building understanding of empowerment practice as a staged process. However, based in reality, this was not an idealised synthesis, but incorporated both the potential and constraint of Real Time's participatory video in context as I now discuss.

## 10.3 **Constructing nuanced praxis:** participatory video practice as a (rhizomic) pathway between social possibility and limitation

*Becoming* empowered is a non-linear, multifaceted process between agendas (sections 1.3 to 1.5). Although its complexity is acknowledged in empowerment literature (e.g. Cornwall and Edwards 2010:8), there is limited understanding of the specifics of how practice is negotiated (section 2.3.2). In the introduction and section 1.3, I identified the

problems of participatory video's normative representation of perceived potential and generalised methodologies, framed by empowerment universals. I also explained the necessity of understanding practice reality from a both/and perspective, which acknowledges the continuum between success/failure (sections 1.3 and 1.4).

I contribute by constructing a nuanced praxis framework for participatory video. I achieved this by exploring in detail the contributory factors that enabled and hindered group emergence in over 11 diverse UK project settings. Acknowledging that Real Time projects often materialise following an e*xternal agenda,* I focused on the tactics (section 2.5 and chapter 6) used to turn the situation to group advantage. Consequently, I have re-framed participatory video, as the (rhizomic) pathway between social possibilities and limitation.

This praxis contribution is productive. A framework that incorporates the practical challenges informs both project supporter and practitioner appreciation of how to operate in the practice territory, and the needed policy understanding (e.g. sections 1.6.1 and 1.6.2) of the contextual contributors.

### 10.3.1 **The rhizomic practice map:** Tactics to negotiate multiple processes at the boundaries between competing influences

In relationship to the eight key practice balances identified (section 4.4.2), I evolved a rhizomic framework for the participatory video territory. This incorporates eight process possibilities and linked practice tensions synthesised during thematic analysis (tables 4.10 to 4.13 in section 4.4.1). It also details enabling and hindering factors in achieving the process possibilities at each stage (see tables 4.14 to 4.2.1 in section 4.5). This clarifies the territorial risks, difficulties and constraints, as well as how to assist project actors through them in context. Populating the map with actual activities, events and responses in chapters 5-9, helps visualisation of what is possible and what to avoid in real-world application.

Empowerment is not only about the capacity to take specific action. It is also about extending the boundaries of what can be conceived (section 1.5.3). The process possibilities I have synthesised are also tactical, as performative discourse actions, which provide metaphorical flags to head for in practice. The parallel insight that practice tensions are intrinsically connected with the possibilities, guides practitioners along the (sometimes-convoluted) route through the maze with eyes wide open to

potential difficulties. It is the combination of both virtual possibilities and real territorial constraints, which illuminates how this particular empowerment practice might be utilised in other similar contexts. Moreover, this thesis suggests how other complex emergent practices can be studied.

## 10.4 **Advancing the methodology for practice study:** How to understand emergent group processes through Deleuzian thinking

Study of emergent practice often fails to capture the socially evolved, continually changing and messy reality (e.g. chapter 2, section 2.5). In section 3.3.1, I discussed the limitations in perceiving the elements of practice, but not how these connect and progress. Through unpacking Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in steps through contextualised example (e.g. sections 4.4.1, 9.1. and 9.1.2), I demonstrate its productive use.

I contribute by showing how to study emergent group processes using the concepts of *repetition* and *difference* (see introduction-E, chapter 4, chapter 9) and multiplicity (see introduction, sections 3.6, and 4.4.1). Difference-producing repetition encompasses the reality that practice repeated never evolves in the same way twice. The universals of Real Time's practice were relational, supported by video. Particular projects then manifested differently because of contextual influences and participant input. As well as framing participatory video productively, this thesis therefore contributes by becoming a transparent guide to a fundamentally practical way of applying Deleuze and Guattari's theory.

### 10.4.1 Applying the concept of multiplicity

I studied various contexts, group types and differently positioned perspectives to open up Real Time's practice multiplicity (Chapter 3). I divided Real Time's process into four stages or territories (section 4.4). Rhizomic thinking encouraged me to search for ruptures rather than universals (section 4.3), and the idea of multiplicity as a space of possibilities enabled me to identify the continua between dyads of orientation in which Real Time's practice played out (section 4.4.1). In perceiving practice as functioning between eight poles in eight dimensions, I faced the same dilemma as Deleuze and Guattarri (1987:22-4) and de Certeau (Highmore 2002b:154) in using binary oppositions

to escape dualism. However, in combining the rhizome map of balances, tendencies, and influences (section 4.6), with empirical examples of how practice emerged afresh between the poles (chapters 5-8), I show how each group made the process their own. I valued sensed experience (section 9.1.1 and 9.1.2) in finding out how Real Time's participatory processes unfolded naturally in phased progression towards diversity. I thus contribute novel praxis insight, and conclude that rhizomic thinking is a generative macro-theoretical orientation applicable to other studies.

### 10.4.2 Insight on data collection and analysis

My approach was contextualist, which is between realist and constructivist (Braun and Clarke 2006). I used collaborative data collection methods, but realised the limitations of simply incorporating new perspectives within praxis *norms* (section 3.1.1). I drew on my own sense of what was most relevant and significant, which was the singular rather than the ordinary. I remain unconvinced that outsider researchers necessarily have a monopoly on access. The relational trust generated more sincere, candid and deep narratives than colleagues would have provided externally. Following rhizome thinking (section 3.1.1), I utilised concurrent methods such as diaries, ongoing ethnography and matrices, and purposively searched for critical incidents and narrative disjunction (including my own) to disrupt continuity (chapter 4).This was successful with two caveats.

Firstly, diary writing was not suitable for all. Many typical Real Time participants with communication difficulties would struggle with writing. The mixed responses from *Women Reflect* participants, even as community professionals who agreed to reflect as collaboration, suggested many find it easier to reflect through direct interaction. Moreover, Bella (*Communicate*) pointed out that participants often do not relate to the reflection need, and simply stop coming if they are not gaining.

Secondly, this study lacks the voices of those who declined, or dropped out from, participation. Apart from *Tough Tales* and *Knife Crime*, where it was attributed to external and internal control dynamics, there was little drop out. This is encouraging in reference to Bella's insight above. Nevertheless, this means more knowledge is necessary about why participants refuse participatory video.

The concurrent projects generated a sense of collaboration, and discussion was frank and open. On retrospective projects, it was harder to access negative experiences

from predominantly satisfied participants. This was even though (or maybe because) I was not a practitioner on these projects. Insider/outsider status is fluid and relative as predicted (section 3.2.2). Whilst I aimed to narrate through the plurality of experiences, the output is inevitably my synthesis. I have supplemented that fact by providing extensive detail on my research conduct and choices. *Becoming-minoritarian* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:117) means being open to non-majority experiences and positions, even if they challenge assumptions, and that has been my commitment.

## 10.5 Implications for practice and policy: addressing the mismatch between partner expectation and practitioner intention

> *Stakeholders think Real Time will tick all the boxes … "Can you make sure they make a video about this?" … "Can you also deliver accreditation … make sure you hit all our key targets … as well?" … "By the way we don't have as much money as we said …"*
>
> **Alistair – Real Time**

Although, I had not anticipated the extent to which the participatory video practice tensions were due to the balance of internal processes as much as external influences (e.g. section 5.3.4), there was also a clear mismatch between the policy agenda and the practitioner intention (section 1.3). This was reflected in practitioner frustration (e.g. section 6.5), and the inadequate partnership awareness of Real Time's relational practice (e.g. section 6.4.2 and 7.4.2). This is partially the reality of operating between agendas (sections 1.4 and 10.3), and the likelihood of video projects engendering product expectations (sections 1.4.1). I do not underestimate the difficulties finding contextual partnerships to support ongoing dialogical processes using video, or enabling receptive relational dynamics towards un-predetermined possibilities, in the current political climate (section 1.3.1). However, I have shown how Real Time processes can contribute to mediating social spaces more equitably and opening alternative routes forwards. My findings imply partnerships could more productively maximise the possibilities of group emergence following the policy and practice insights summarised in table 10.2 below.

**Table 10-2 Policy and practice insights**

| **Practice** |
|---|
| • There was a lack of external partners' awareness of participatory video's potential in catalysing emergence, and thus inadequate time for the journey<br><br>• Video mediates communicative action in various ways, and is an intensifier of inter-subjective processes, but this also generated risks for participants<br><br>• Participatory video can open conducive social spaces, but there was a lack of practical distinction between convergent dialogue back stage and divergent dialogue front stage<br><br>• Powerfully positioned social actors (e.g. statutory decision-makers and fund holders) demonstrated a lack of understanding of the need for them to take an active part themselves in generating the conditions for sustainable change processes<br><br>• There was a practical tension between dialogic and critical intent, and greater risks from this in the later process stages when social actors were more heterogeneous and dynamics less controllable<br><br>• Real Time's participatory video has a particular contribution and relevance as an approach on projects with women and the least communication confident social groups, in contrast to its assumed suitability for young people . |

### 10.5.1 Time and space for the emergent journey: extending the scope

The biggest factor evidenced in this study in preventing achievement of the process possibilities in context was under-funded projects with unrealistic time scales (e.g. sections 5.4, 6.2.2, 6.3, 7.2.4, 7.2.5, 8.2.4 and 8.5.2). This has implications for the appropriateness of video in short-term UK interventions and rapid and across-community participatory evaluations such as PRA and RRA (see section 1.4.1). There were two specific recommendations: increased time for group-forming to engage and inform opportunities (section 5.4.3), and a separated Group Building stage before

external production to avoid exposure (section 6.4.1). Moreover, I see greater project scope through extending project structures to include double-loop (at least) processes and to facilitate type 2 ‘in-between’ forums for divergent dialogue. However, there was an obvious need to raise awareness of the relational possibilities at a policy level, if that were to happen.

#### 10.5.2 **Communicative action:** valuing video mediation of convergent dialogue back stage

Perceiving participatory video as a relational practice values the intention to promote dialogue, but I found an ethical risk from video itself (section 6.2.3) due to inadequate partnership understanding of the difference between back and front stage communication. This was compounded by the policy enthusiasm for voice for the voiceless (section 1.3.2), and I suggested separating ‘Group Building’ from ‘Collaborative-authored production’ (section 6.4.1) to allow participants to *arrange* their performances and *prepare* their image (Goffman 1990).

Moreover, if subjectivity is in ongoing discursive *becoming* through social interaction (section 2.3.3), Real Time’s inter-subjective processes are not a way of representing fixed group identities or perspectives, but of evolving them. In section 7.3 and 8.2, I showed how group interaction led to new contextualised understanding, but I emphasised that the most valuable learning can be in the process (section 7.3.1). This has implications for participatory video application in social research (see chapter 8). I think participatory video’s use as a way of conducting action research is more productively seen as group ethnography, instead of a way of making research outputs (section 7.4.1). Sensitive issues can be explored through back stage video processes, and still contribute to wider understanding. New insight developed in back stage spaces does not need communicating in a final video to be of value.

Nevertheless, the potential for building wider social understanding through *divergent* dialogue was limited by inadequate support for ongoing processes (section 7.4.1), and receptive in-between spaces (sections 8.2.3 and 9.2.3).

### 10.5.3 Social performance mediated by group video processes: between dialogical and critical intent

In chapter 8, I showed how participatory video instigated external divergent dialogue front stage. Real Time also used videoing conventions to disrupt relational dynamics and re-position participants more influentially (section 8.3), and this was appreciated by participants (section 8.3.1). However, I found a practical tension between this two-pronged intention (section 8.4) and greater risks in more heterogeneous in-between spaces when dynamics were less controllable (section 9.2.3). As well as the need to develop policy clarity on the difference between dialogical and critical purpose, I found that creating conducive Type 2 'in-between spaces' (section 9.2.3) was a relational matter, which needs increased partnership appreciation and commitment.

### 10.5.4 Relational contexts: catalysing conducive social spaces is a relational practice

In this thesis, I have demonstrated convincingly the multi-faceted nature of Real Time's relational practice (e.g. section 9.3) and the essentially active and responsive role of practitioners in negotiating the practice balances identified (section 4.4.2). I have also shown the lack of partnership awareness of their relational input (e.g. section 6.4.2 and 7.4.2), which indicates a need for recognition at a policy level. I found relational practice most effective when practitioners were free to facilitate the internal dynamic as appropriate without outside interference (section 8.2.2) and the necessity of negotiating roles boundaries during project set up (section 6.3.4). There is also a need for appropriately relational training for practitioners, particularly in the context of the ethical risks identified.

Furthermore, I demonstrated a continuum of possible levels between the micro and macro (chapter 8), but I found the differentiations were not recognised (e.g. section 8.2.3). This was particularly in terms of the partner action needed to make them relationally conducive. I discovered that catalysing the relational context for productive 'in-between' dialogue also required direct relational input from more powerfully positioned partners in enabling open dialogue, hearing the message, and encompassing the need to change themselves (section 8.5.1) if it is to be sustainable.

### 10.5.5 **The question of who for:** insight on group types

I built some preliminary insight on which groups Real Time's participatory video was most appropriate for. In section 5.4, I concluded that the early processes had particular relevance for unconfident people or those with specific communication challenges. The paradox was that they are either least likely to come forward, or most likely to be at risk of exposure due to issues of informed consent, hence the need for a longer engagement period (section 10.5.1).

Practitioners questioned the automatic '*technology for youth'* policy assumptions, and the youth projects in this research evidenced greater control issues than the others studied, which backed up their doubts. Resisting adult control is part of adolescence, yet this research suggests that practitioners need to intervene assertively to control dynamics in the early stages if projects are to be inclusive. Digital stills cameras, which can be operated more easily without practitioner input, might avoid this practical contradiction on youth projects. Nevertheless, individually operated medium such as photographic cameras do not offer the same possibilities for shifting dynamics towards group co-operation and mutuality.

Strikingly, on both single sex and mixed projects, women tended to value most the relational aspects of the experience, and men the use of equipment. There was some evidence that this led to unrealistic expectations about future possibilities for some men. For instance, Des from *Tough Tales* asked Real Time for a job. Men in the *Communicate*, *Knife Crime*, *Our Voice* and *Tough Tales* projects clearly felt they gained from taking part. Nevertheless, as women are often marginalised by participatory processes (e.g. section 1.4.1 and 2.4.1), and were disadvantaged at times in other participatory video projects (e.g. section 2.4.1), the insight from this research is productive. Given that the intention is relational, and the women participants valued this, Real Time's approach might have a particular contribution for women's groups.

## 10.6 **Towards future possibilities:** limitations, further research questions and new projects

This study has shifted knowledge on empowerment processes productively, but it only went as far as pragmatic research boundaries allowed. I now discuss the possibilities for further research.

### 10.6.1 Concurrent study of long-term projects

I was not able to explore the possibilities and limitations of longer-term projects fully. This was partly a pragmatic decision to focus on Real Time's distinctive early project stages, but also due to the limited long-term projects in the UK political context (section 1.3.1). I consider that Real Time's approach has strategic potential, either horizontally across a geographical community, community of interest, or community of meaning (Carpentier, Lie and Servaes 2003), or vertically to statutory and social agency decision-makers. Project interaction could take place in multiple venues, and then groups could exchange video material either through face-to-face video screenings, or by posting video clips on-line. Further dialogue, either divergent or convergent, could be followed by second-loop production, and bridge-building connections could emerge. Research on such extended projects could experiment with this proposal in context.

### 10.6.2 **Receptive contexts:** spaces for divergent dialogue and 'hearing' process and product

I have explored participatory video's function in re-positioning participants more influentially through production and playback (section 8.3). I have illustrated the misreading of video output and processes by external players (e.g. section 8.2.3). However, I did not explore in depth either the videos produced or how audiences received them. *Reception* is practically a problematic matter, partly because of the tension between dialogic and critical intent identified in chapter 8, which needs further unpacking.

### 10.6.3 How can relational practice be transferred and sustained?

This research has illustrated (e.g. section 9.3) that Real Time's practice involves a complex mix of skills, personal attributes and values. My experience of training other professionals suggests short-term courses are not adequate for transferring relational practice effectively. There was some data in the corpus, pertaining to the question of facilitator approaches and attributes, but it was beyond the scope of this study to analyse it. This data could become a pilot to focus study on how participatory video practice can be passed on and supported.

### 10.6.4 Interrogating refusal

In section 10.4.2, I highlighted the gap in knowledge of practice refusal, which could be positive self-protection (section 9.2.2). This thesis has also exemplified some of the ethical and personal issues involved in trying to walk the tightrope of practice whilst maintaining ethical integrity (e.g. section 6.2.3). This raises the possibility that those who participate are the most easily persuaded and therefore more likely to be at risk of inappropriate exposure. This issue needs further empirical study.

### 10.6.5 Is video necessary for Real Time processes?

I have shown what Real Time's participatory video offers to the empowerment agenda (e.g. section 10.1). However, I think video is much more prone to take-over by dominant individuals in context than other digital media such as photography. This is because video production takes more time, and greater knowledge beyond pointing and shooting, and so the balance of practitioner-participant control is trickier to manage. I have suggested that some practical insights from this thesis are applicable to other emergent group processes (e.g. section 10.1 and 10.2). Comparison is needed between different digital media (such as mobile phone cameras) as social tools, as well as whether aspects of Real Time's approach (such as storyboarding) can be used to generate similar dynamic shifts without the need for video.

### 10.6.6 Completing the action research cycle

As this action research study happened over a sustained period, it has already influenced new project structures and methods. In particular, Real Time has incorporated:

- **Increased iterative production cycles of smaller units of communication facilitated by in-camera editing techniques**
- **New distribution media such as web casting**
- **Project structures that include cycles of external dialogue after video production**

This is exemplified by a project with Afro-Caribbean men, defined by the social construction *baby-daddies,* and their children.

> **The group formed to increase understanding of fathering, to develop relationship skills, and so the men could build support networks for themselves and others. Rather than producing one longer video, they quickly made in-camera edited clips asking pertinent questions, which they posted on their website. This attracted more members and generated discussion. They then made additional video clips after reflection.**
>
> **JS – Researcher**

In this project, video thus mediated iteratively developing dialogue rather than communicating a fixed and unchanging view.

As new project structures develop, I envisage modifying the rhizome map synthesised in this thesis to include new insights, to serve the development of Real Time's approach responsively and reflexively.

## 10.7 **Synthesis:** an adventure between ideas and experience

I was motivated to research by an interest in interrogating empowerment practice more critically. Treading the path between cultural insider and outsider as, at least partial, auto-ethnographer, has been productive. My journey has been an adventure of ideas (Whitehead 1948) – one girl down the rabbit hole (Carroll 2008) becoming embroiled in the eternal battle between reason and feeling, but grounded in actuality. The role of social research is not only to grapple with real-world issues, but also to visualise a practical way out (Finlayson 2005). This is a story of reality underpinned by Deleuze

and Guattari's (1987) contribution to understanding that life does not exist in conceptual categories and social constructs but *in-between*. I have thus travelled between inspiration and frustration, to look at whether technology can service relational needs between bottom-up and top-down. I have argued that Real Time's participatory video has potential as way of operating between social levels either horizontally or vertically. I have shown how it involved iterative action and reflection, structure and creativity, and showing, telling and doing in back and front stage social spaces. I avoided over-optimism by opening the all too real tensions between process and product, and dialogic and critical intent, and acknowledged the continuum between success and failure. I have researched Real Time's practice through deep reflection and experimentation, analytical thinking and sensed intuition, and by combining collaborative meaning making with a disruptive gaze.

Unpacking the idea of *multiplicities*, through close reading of the roots, and by applying it systematically to my analytical task has been productive. The consequence is a fresh framing for participatory video as a practice balance involving universal processes repeated to evolve particular manifestation afresh in each new context. Moreover, because it has involved clarifying the detailed characteristics of multiplicities through the unfolding example of my analysis, I have demonstrated the application to researching social complexity. Some may think that there has been a sleight of hand in applying mathematical concepts, such as multiplicity, bifurcation, and coherence as metaphors to study the social world, but in the spirit of Deleuze's toolkit, I have found them generative in illuminating rather than missing actuality.

In particular, the *becoming* ontology has enabled me to disrupt the representational framing, or *state philosophy* (section 1.4.5), of participatory video and focus on the importance of process and relational dynamics. *Becoming* replaces the sterility of a fixed identity waiting for expression through mediated signifiers. Moreover, in section 1.4.5, I explained how it replaced the participation dead-end with an open world. However, whilst such projects *can* succeed, as my thesis demonstrated, this depends on *how* project actors manoeuvre in reality. As described in chapter 4, I addressed the question of *how* practice manifests by following the injunction to identify the *rigid segments* (dualisms of orientation in section 4.4.1), *the supple lines, fluxes and thresholds* and *black holes (*risks and dangers*)* and *the lines of flight* (Deleuze and Parnet 2006:108). The resultant rhizome map combines virtual potential with the opposing influences.

The virtual is not so much an ideal potential, but a real tendency, in a qualitative multiplicity (Deleuze 1988) that defines a continuum between virtual and actual (both part of the real). Participatory video practice actuality emerges between the driving force of the virtual possibilities, and the contextual limitations. Furthermore, digital video assisted participants in sense-making between visualised ideas and actual possibilities, by a further doubling between the plane of the virtual and real (Humphreys and Jones 2006). Participants experimented through collaborative video authorship, with viewpoints, and directions, to construct their own issues afresh. This too is part of video's intensifying function.

My first task was to divide the virtual and the actual, or the thought and the deed, which the rhizomic framework (the image) accomplished. Applied to practice in reality, the virtual possibilities function as intentional orientation that shapes practitioner choices. If lost amongst the contradictions, practitioners can return to the contextual knowledge map, which informs future action by elucidating what is important at that stage. The opposing tension builds awareness of the tightrope balance to negotiate, and the enabling and hindering factors guide the journey in context.

For Debord (1983), if everyday life is the boundary between the subjugated and the liberated parts of living, its poverty is the lack of time for communicative creativity.

> *'What is private life deprived of?' Quite simply of life itself, which is cruelly absent … in everyday life … it (is) necessary …. to work ceaselessly toward the organisation of new chances*
>
> **Debord 1961 see Highmore 2002b:242**

There is no point in joining the *revolution of everyday life* (Vaneigm 1983) if we can't dance. The participatory video process is a creative experimental journey with virtual potentials as they generate new emergence in particular circumstances. The *end* of this thesis is thus a new *beginning* as I release the ideas formulated within to generate something else.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Literature search structure

I used four sets of key words to structure the search using the search tools described in section 1.1.3. Initially, I input terms from set one in the fields of application listed in set four. If this produced too few hits from a particular search engine (as was often the case), I used set two in combination with set three. If the search produced too many hits (less commonly) then I used key words from set three to refine the search. I applied Boolean operators and character wild cards as appropriate to structure the actual search term within the particular search engine. The table below lists alternative terms used for the main terms to ensure that I encompassed the topic as completely as possible.

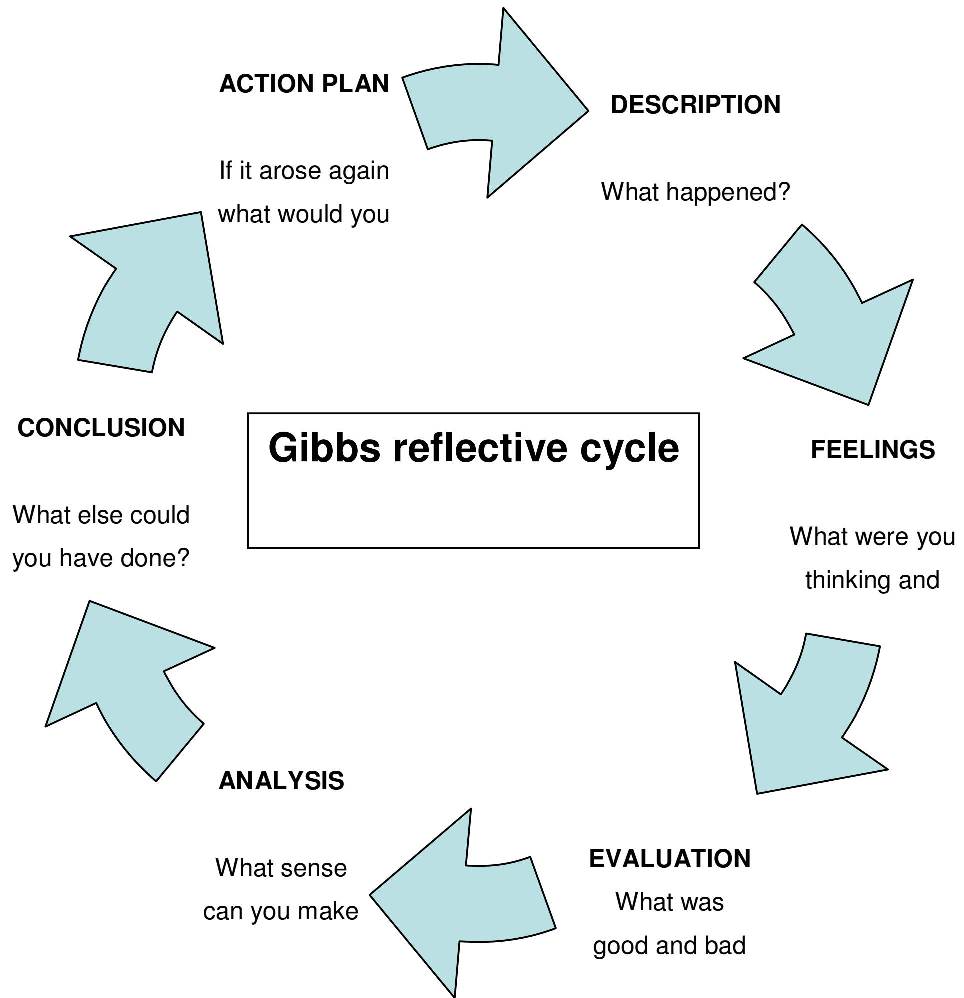
| Set 1 - Topic | Set 2 - Tool | Set 3 - Purpose | Set 4 – Fields |
|---|---|---|---|
| • **Participatory Video**<br>• **Community video** | • **Video** | • **Empowerment**<br>• **Participation** | • **Community /participatory arts** |
| • Participatory media<br>• Community media<br>• Video for social-learning<br>• Participatory communication<br>• Development communication<br>• Grassroots video<br>• Process-video<br>• Video for development | • Photography<br>• Media/Multi-media<br>• Digital media<br>• Communication technology<br>• New technology | • Self-confidence<br>• Self-efficacy<br>• Capacity-building<br>• Dialogue<br>• Identity<br>• Community-building<br>• Critical thinking<br>• Communication<br>• Literacy<br>• Self-advocacy<br>• Decision-making<br>• Social capital<br>• Social inclusion/exclusion<br>• Social change | • Community work<br>• Youth work<br>• Community/ adult education<br>• Social work<br>• Development work<br>• Rural extension<br>• Participatory action research<br>• Group work<br>• Alternative media |

**Table - Alternatives to key words**

## Appendix 2: Data collection methods in relation to data needs

| Empirical research questions | Theoretical perspective -Patton 2002 | Key factors and empirical focus | Data needs to answer question | Suitable data collection methods |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **What is the purpose of Real Times participatory video?** | **Subjective viewpoints – phenomenology** What is the meaning for these people? | **Purpose in relation to contextual positioning** | • Professional and academic discourse<br>• Policy and project reports<br>• Practitioners' perspectives<br>• Participants and other project informants | • Literature review<br>• Real Time project documentation<br>• Semi-structured interviews with a range of project actors |
| **What are the possible valued gains, particularly for participants?** | **Description of social processes - constructivism** What are people's perceptions of reality? | **Evaluation of experience from different perspectives** | • Perspectives of participants, practitioners, and other project informants | • Semi-structured interviews and dialogues<br>• Focus groups |
| **What happens in a participatory video project and how and why is it done?** | **Description of social processes - constructivism** What are peoples reported perceptions of reality? | **1 - Relational practice** – e.g. approach, group dynamics and interactions<br>**2 - Functional practice** – e.g. Structural frameworks, techniques and exercises procedures | • Perspectives of practitioners, participants, and other project informants<br>• Participant observation<br>• Project activity records and video recordings | • Semi-structured interviews<br>• Focus groups<br>• Diaries( researcher, practitioner, and participant)<br>• Session plans and video records – accessed through researcher diaries |
| **What meanings are ascribed to the project experience?** | **Subjective viewpoints – phenomenology** What is the meaning for these people? | **Different meanings ascribed** – e.g. participants, practitioners, other project informants | • Perspectives of practitioners, participants, and stakeholders<br>• Participant observation | • Semi-structured interviews and dialogues<br>• Focus groups<br>• Diaries |
| **What helps and what hinders the processes involved?** | **Subjective viewpoints - Description of social processes** (as above ) | • Tensions, contradictions, ambiguities<br>• External contexts, partnerships and project structure<br>• Stages of process and use of video | • Perspectives of practitioners, participants, and stakeholders<br>• Participant observation<br>• Reference to theory | • Semi-structured interviews and dialogues<br>• Focus groups<br>• Diaries<br>• Literature synthesis |

**Appendix 3: Gibbs (1988) reflective cycle**



## Appendix 4: Example topic guides

**Interview guide participants**

**Purpose** - To help us understand what works and how to improve

- Can you start by introducing yourself?
- How did you get involved in the project/what appealed?

### PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Can you tell me about the video project?
- What did you do?
- Can you describe a typical session – so I can imagine what like to be part?
- What do you think the project achieved overall?
- Was it as you imagined?

### PERSONAL LIKES/DISLIKES

- What, if anything, did you particularly like about your experiences in the project?
- What, if anything, did you dislike?
- High points/low points

### PERSONAL/GROUP

- What, if anything, have you gained from the project?
- What, if anything, hindered you/was unhelpful?
- Were any experiences were different from other groups you have been part of? In what way?
- How do you think the group as a whole has been effected?
- What, if anything could have been improved?

### FACILITATION

- What was your opinion of the Real Time people?
- What helped/hindered you in the way they ran the sessions?
- What could they have done better?

### ANY OTHER FEELINGS AND THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE THAT LIKE TO ADD?

**Focus group topic guide – Women Reflect**

Explain purpose and ask for consent to being video recorded

**BEGINNINGS**

- When you first heard about the project what did you think (for you? what involved?)
- Has the project been as you expected? What was same/different?

**PROCESS**

- If you were explaining what we have done to friends, how would you describe it?
- How the process developed from week to week

**LIKES/DISLIKES/GAINS/BENEFITS**

- What have you most liked/disliked?
- What if anything have you gained? What has hindered you?
- How do you think things have developed from week to week? Have you experienced changes through the project?
- What has it been like using equipment? Did the way you felt about it change?
- What was it like watching yourself – listening to others? Did that change?
- What do you think you will remember about this project? /What experiences were significant fro you/ a surprise or challenge for you?

**REAL TIME APPROACH**

- What helped/hindered in the way sessions were facilitated?
- Was there anything in the approach you did not like?
- What would you suggest could be done differently?
- Skills, attitudes, beliefs
- Specific factors (confidence, transfer of control, ground rules, teamwork, reflection)

## Appendix 5: Research information sheet and example consent forms

**PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH**

The purpose of this research is to improve understanding of the use of participatory video as a tool for group work. I am evaluating Real Times' approach. I would like to ask your views as someone involved in a project.

The aim of this interview is to gather your thoughts on your experiences of taking part. I am interested in your individual perspective on what Real Time does. Your interview will be recorded on video, so that what you say can be accurately transcribed, but the video material will not be used.

The experiences of everyone interviewed will be analysed and combined in a research report, which I will also submit as an academic thesis. If I use your words in the final report, I will use a pseudonym, so that your actual name will not be used.

As we go through the interview if you have any questions, please feel free to ask. If there is anything you do not want to answer, just say so. If you decide later to withdraw your interview, then you can contact me to do so.

**Real Time Video**

**Research Consent Form**

I have been informed about the purpose of this research. I understand, confirm and agree that:

- I will be interviewed about Real Time and/or video project work
- The interview will be video recorded to allow accurate transcription
- Comments from the interview will be analysed and may be used (anonymously) in the research reports
- The researchers do not have to use my contribution

Signed: ……………………………………… ........Date: ………………………

Full Name: ……………………………………………………………….………

Address (optional): …………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………….…………….

**Real Time Video**

**Women Reflect Research Consent Form**

The purpose of this action research project has been explained to me. I understand, confirm and agree that:

- I will take part in a video project, as well as a variety of reflective and evaluative exercises about my experiences
- I will take part in focus groups and interviews about the project, as well as keeping a learning diary about my perspectives, which will be used as research data
- Focus groups, interviews, video exercises and discussions will be video recorded to allow accurate transcription and aid analysis
- Comments from the recordings will be analysed and may be used (anonymously) in the research reports
- The researchers do not have to use my contribution

Signed: ………………………………………… ........Date: ………………………

Full Name: ……………………………………………………………………..………

Address (optional): ……………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………….…………….

**Real Time Video**

## Appendix 6: Details of four basic Real Time exercise structures

<table>
<tr><th>Exercise structure</th><th>Procedure</th><th>Purpose</th></tr>
<tr><td>Statements<br>(or questions)<br>in a round</td><td>Set up One participant is camera operator. Others participants sit in a semi-circle facing camera. The camera operator lines up a mid-shot of the first person, at one end of the row, who holds the hand-mike. The tripod is kept loose so that the camera can move freely.<br>Recording starts The person with the mike makes a statement on a pre-arranged topic, and hands the mike on. The camera operator pans to the next person, who in turn makes their statement.<br>Recording stops when all have contributed.<br>Play back. Recording is watched and discussion<br>(Can be adapted with each participant asking the next a question)</td><td>• Used to develop self-expression<br>• Content can be experiences, perceptions, opinions, or evaluations<br>• All speak and all are heard on playback<br>• Creates space for diversity of opinion within group<br>• Question version practices inquiring skills, and is utilised to initiated topic exploration</td></tr>
<tr><td>Chat show</td><td>Preparation Participants work in small groups of 2 or 3 to prepare statements, interviews or presentations on a topic<br>Recording Each group is recorded by another groups who swap round camera, sound, and floor management roles<br>Playback All recordings are played back and discussed at the end</td><td>• Time working on own without practitioner<br>• Develop thinking on topic<br>• Planning and preparation<br>• Practice production roles</td></tr>
<tr><td>Shot-by-shot documentary<br>(or drama)</td><td>Preparation First participant is director and chooses a first shot (on pre-arranged topic or not)<br>Recording Other participants take on camera, sound, presentational, and floor management roles to record that shot.<br>Swap next participant becomes director and all change round roles to record next shot. Exercise finishes when all chosen shot<br>Playback Finished documentary or drama consequence is played back and discussed at the end</td><td>• Work as a team to move around and record safely outside<br>• Active understanding of what shot sequence means with programme built up shot-by-shot<br>• Each participant takes on decision-making role<br>• Team work developed</td></tr>
<tr><td>Edited statements<br>(or questions)</td><td>Preparation Each participant prepares a statement (or question) on pre-arranged topic<br>Recording Each shot of participant presenting statement is recorded separately. Participants swap round camera, sound, and floor management roles between each shot.<br>Playback Finished series of statements is played back and discussed at the end</td><td>• Practices forming, and articulating opinions<br>• Group thinking on topic developed by all hearing each others diverse views<br>• Ordering ideas develops organisational skills<br>• All practise technical skills in quick succession.</td></tr>
</table>

## Appendix 7: Details of participant likes and gains analysis

To evaluate what participants valued in the participatory video experience, I drew on the codes identified when applying the *experiences* coding unit of analysis to the data, as summarised in section 4.3.1. Seventeen basic themes emerged, which I brought together within three organising themes as individual, group and wider social level likes and gains. I then counted the occurrence of the basic themes as expressed by participants within the data corpus for the seven projects containing participant data. The table on the following page summarises this theme count. For each project, I present the number of participants who expressed the theme as a proportion of the total participants interviewed for that project (P/T). I also present the total theme count within the participant data from that project (C). Of course, counting themes does not fully represent how strongly themes were expressed. I therefore supplemented the thematic counts with my own subjective evaluation of its emphasis by individuals, and for the group as a whole, to identify the predominant themes for a project. Predominant themes are shown within the table as dark cells with white writing. As this detailed quantified table is not immediately accessible to read, I translated the findings into the more visually friendly qualitative table 4.5 in section 4.3.1 of the main text.

**Table - Participant likes and gains:** evaluating the strength of thematic presence

| Participant likes and gains | Commun-icate | | Women Reflect | | Speak Out | | We Care | | Tough Tales | | Knife Crime | | Our Voice | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C** = Total theme count<br>**P/T** = No. participants expressing theme out of total | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** |
| **Individual level themes** **KEY -Dark cells/ white text =** Theme strongly expressed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Time for self | | | 4/6 | 8 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Increased confidence | 4/4 | 23 | 2/6 | 6 | | | 1/2 | 2 | | | 2/2 | 2 | 1/3 | 4 |
| Skill development through active/iterative learning | 3/4 | 10 | 4/6 | 8 | 5/11 | 5 | 2/2 | 3 | | | 2/2 | 3 | | |
| Expressing self on video and being heard / views valued | 4/4 | 8 | 2/6 | 3 | 4/11 | 5 | 2/2 | 5 | | | | | 1/3 | 1 |
| Personal achievement | 2/4 | 2 | 3/6 | 4 | | | 2/2 | 4 | | | 2/2 | 6 | 3/3 | 3 |
| Increased sense of 'can do' (self-drive / determination) | 2/4 | 9 | 2/6 | 3 | | | 1/2 | 1 | | | 1/2 | 2 | 1/3 | 2 |
| **Group level themes** **KEY -Dark cells/ white text =** Theme strongly expressed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Group exchange -ideas, experiences, and issues | 2/4 | 4 | 5/6 | 8 | | | 1/2 | 1 | 1/5 | 1 | | | | |
| Listening and learning about diverse others | | | 5/6 | 12 | 1/11 | 1 | | | 3/5 | 4 | | | | |
| Interviewing and asking questions | | | | | | | 2/1 | 2 | 4/5 | 4 | | | 1/3 | 1 |
| Reflecting on issue as a group – re-framing views | | | 5/6 | 13 | | | | | 1/5 | 1 | | | | |
| Working together as a team – value of group collaboration | | | 5/6 | 10 | | | | | | | 2/2 | 4 | 1/3 | 1 |
| Control of video medium (technical, content, editing) | | | 2/6 | 2 | 2/11 | 2 | 1/2 | 4 | 1/5 | 1 | 2/2 | 7 | 1/3 | 3 |

**Participant likes and gains table** – continued

| Participant likes and gains | Commun-icate | | Women Reflect | | Speak Out | | We Care | | Tough Tales | | Knife Crime | | Our Voice | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C** = Total theme count<br>**P/T =** No. participants expressing theme out of total | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** | **P/T** | **C** |
| **Wider social level themes** | | | | | | | | | | | | **KEY -Dark cells/ white text =** Theme strongly expressed | | |
| New roles and responsibilities in the outside world | | | 1/6 | 1 | | | 1/2 | 1 | 4/5 | 4 | 2/2 | 3 | 2/3 | 7 |
| Being seen as social actors– changed contextual positioning | | | | | 3/11 | 3 | 1/2 | 1 | 2/5 | 4 | 2/2 | 8 | 2/3 | 8 |
| New community connections – peer | | | | | | | | | | | 2/2 | 2 | 1/3 | 1 |
| New community connections - vertical | | | | | | | | | | | 1/2 | 2 | | |
| Getting voice across in wider communication forums | | | | | | | 2/2 | 2 | 2/2 | 2 | 2/2 | 3 | 1/3 | 2 |
| Influencing social learning and development | | | 1/6 | 1 | | | | | | | 2/2 | 3 | 2/3 | 5 |

**KEY**

**P/T =** No. Participants expressing theme out of Total no. responding on likes and gains

**C =** Total theme count

**Dark cells/white text =** Theme strongly expressed

## Appendix 8: Description of thematic data analysis

In this appendix, I provide a detailed explanation of how I moved from the transcribed data to the thematic tables presented in section 4.5 (tables 4.14 to 4.21) of the main text. After data familiarisation, I generated initial codes for each of the transcribed interview/focus groups as summarised in sections 3.5.1 and 4.4.1. Appendix 9 presents one complete example of such coded data (a focus group from the *Communicate* project).

The longhand code in the data table is my researcher synthesis of the particular viewpoint expressed by the project informant. I also included a more general shorthand code for each long code, as a first step towards generating basic themes. Next, I identified a sub-set of most relevant projects for each main stage of Real Time's process. For each of these data sub-sets, I drew together the codes identified in the transcribed data under basic thematic categories. Appendix 10 provides an example table that shows the relationship between basic theme, code (particular viewpoint) and short hand code for stage A of Real Time's process (opening/familiarisation).

To illustrate this relationship, in the example coded transcription in appendix 9 Nalini said '*if we speak on camera we can learn to speak with confidence*' (page 358 – highlighted light grey). The long code synthesised for this particular viewpoint is **speaking on video builds communication confidence** and the shorthand code is **communication confidence**. Similarly, on page 359 she said '*before we used the camera - we're not confident to speak English in front of camera … but now we're confident we can speak'*. This is coded in the same way. In another example on page 359 (coded in dark grey), she said '*after making video we see this is no good, this is good. After play back we see we should say like this, not like that'*, and on page 364 she said ' *they watch back, they know mistakes, they learn next time how to say it, so this approach is very important'*. (These quotes are highlighted in dark grey in the transcription). Both of these comments were coded as **participants valued or attributed success to cycles of action and reflection** and the shorthand code was **iterative learning cycles.**

The example analysis table in appendix 10 (page 365) exemplifies how these codes were translated into basic themes. This shows that the code **speaking on video builds communication confidence** (**communication confidence)** is encompassed within the basic theme **participants feeling of can do,** and the code **participants valued or attributed success to cycles of action and reflection** (**iterative learning cycles)** is contained in the theme **basic functional practice.**

Following generation of basic themes, I built thematic networks by gathering the basic themes within wider organising themes, and then these organising themes within global themes. As discussed in section 4.4.1, I identified four types of organising theme for each global theme (a process possibility, a linked practice tension, an enabling factor and a hindering factor). These are displayed following section 4.5 of the main text within 8 thematic frameworks, two for each stage of Real Time's process. To continue tracking the examples above (see table 4.14 in the main text), the basic theme of **participants' feeling of can do** is encompassed within the organising theme of **increasing self-efficacy** and relates to the tension between the **discomfort of the challenge and the feeling of success**. The theme of **basic functional practice** is related to the organising theme of **iterative structured process supported by video**. Both of these basic themes are encompassed in the thematic framework for the global theme *from 'can't-do' to 'can-do': video as an individual enabler/barrier versus time/space for particular needs* (see section 4.4.2 and table 4.14). In addition, I include preliminary thematic frameworks in Appendix 11. These demonstrate how the themes synthesised from longhand codes of particular viewpoints were organised to inform the synthesis of the thematic frameworks (tables 4.14 to 4.21) as discussed in sections 4.4.1 to 4.4.3 of the main text.

## Appendix 9: Example of coded transcription

| **Communicate – Focus group 1: Women** | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| ***JS*** *Do you understand why I want to do this interview?*<br>**VEENA** It's for your research<br><br>***JS*** *And you're happy talking to me?*<br>**Both** Yes<br><br>***JS*** *And when I write my research, I might use some of your words, but I won't use your name, so nobody knows that its you…is that OK?*<br>**NALINI** Fine, if nobody looked at me<br>***JS*** *Nobody will see – it will just be words on paper*<br>**NALINI** Just paper words?<br>***JS*** *Writing, and a pretend name, not your real name*<br>**VEENA** We don't mind the names, but pictures – our family doesn't like that…<br>***JS*** *I understand that …I change the name for everyone... so nobody will know that it's you*<br>**NALINI** It's no problem with name | **Participants consent to research**<br><br>**Participants consent to anonymous narrative usage** | **Consent** |
| ***JS*** *When you first heard about the video project, what did you think?*<br>**NALINI** Bella said to us – innit – a new course started, we thought oh no, it's not very important<br>**VEENA** We thought no, it's not right for us, we can't. We didn't put our name in list | **Participants thought video was not for them** | **Barrier to engagement** |
| ***JS*** *Was it different from what you thought?*<br>**VEENA** Yes, it is<br>**NALINI** Very, very different | **Experience was different from expectation** | **Expectation** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| **NALINI** At first, we thought it's not very important, because we don't know about speaking to audience. Then we start we know it's very important, because if we speak on camera we can learn to speak with confidence | **Speaking on camera develops communication confidence** | **Expectation**<br><br>**Communication Confidence** |
| **VEENA** We thought the camera is a very hard thing for us, but it becomes something nice. You told us what to do – and we can do this– it's very good for us | **Increased sense of 'can do'** | **Can-do** |
| ***JS*** *To begin you thought 'I can't do that'?*<br>**NALINI** Very nervous the first time.<br>**VEENA** even we can't talk in front of camera first of all<br>***JS*** *what did you feel?*<br><br>**VEENA** I can't face the camera, I can't face you and I can't face the person interviewing<br>**NALINI** Very nervous the first time<br>**VEENA** Very, very nervous<br>**NALINI** But at the next time… when we come again, a little bit confident, you know | **Participants find appearing on camera uncomfortable at start**<br><br>**Being videoed is a significant challenge**<br><br>**Time based process builds confidence through iterations** | **Discomfort of challenge**<br><br>**Process** |
| ***JS*** *And how do you feel now speaking on camera?*<br>**NALINI** I think we're not feeling shy<br>**VEENA** Now!<br>**NALINI** in front of the camera<br><br>both laugh [**JS** -because obviously now greatly enjoying being in front of camera] | **Discomfort dissipates in first few sessions**<br><br>**Video becomes enjoyable** | **Discomfort dissipation**<br><br>**Positive experiences** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| ***JS*** *What did you actually do in the project?*<br>**NALINI** We learning English in class but, first of all…before we used the camera - we're not confident to speak English in front of camera or something, but now we're confident we can speak. After making video we see this is no good, this is good. After play back we see we should say like this, not like that | **Speaking on video builds communication confidence**<br>Value of cycles of action and reflection | **Communication Confidence**<br>Iterative learning cycles |
| **NALINI** Speaking on topic, we should say one line, the main thing only. The first time we are talking too much, no thinking first. Now we think before record, then we say one sentence, or two sentences what is most important | **Presentational skills developed** | **New skills and capacities** |
| ***JS*** *you learned to plan what to say?*<br>**NALINI** Yes<br>***JS*** *… has that been useful?*<br>**Both** Yes<br>**NALINI** You know the programme we make last time- where we start and finish<br>**VEENA** Before you start the camera you can make a plan<br>**NALINI** You think in your mind what you want first, and how you're going to make it<br>**VEENA** Do some paperwork first, then…do the camera…start<br>***JS*** *you've learned some planning skills?*<br>**VEENA** Planning how to…<br>**NALINI** Think first on what we're making and then we make video | **Planning skills developed**<br>**Participants develop a range of new skills and capacities** | **New skills and capacities** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| **NALINI** Also now we know about the camera<br>**VEENA** How we can record things - we're using the camera, like buttons or zoom, we know how to focus on the person, we can do close up and focus, and make picture we want now – these things we know,<br>**NALINI** the sound and everything<br>**VEENA** especially how can we use the mic and the sound system<br>**NALINI** We know now how to make video. It's my daughter's birthday next weekend – I think I'm a little bit confident now. | **Technical skills developed**<br><br>**Gained some technical confidence** | **New skills and capacities**<br><br>**Technical confidence** |
| ***JS*** *And before this class, did you use equipment?*<br>**Both** No<br>**NALINI** I've got a camera at home, but I thought if I use the camera, I do something wrong, maybe I push some wrong button, but now I know everything, so I can use it now<br>***JS*** *Would you try another new thing?*<br>**NALINI** Yes<br>**VEENA** Yes, we can do it, we can make videos so we can do anything else<br>**NALINI** Yes, if we can use the camera we can do anything<br>***JS*** *You really feel like that?*<br>**Both** Yes | **Previous feeling of can't do**<br><br>**Participants increased self-efficacy /changed self concept is felt context transcending** | **Can't do**<br><br>**Can do** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| **VEENA** It's really nice and we want to do now - we want to use the camera, we want to do the planning<br>**NALINI** Now we're independent. Before we use this camera I thought, oh, get somebody to come and make my daughter's video - but now I can make it. That's good. Very good. Very proud of myself! I can make videos – very good.<br>**NALINI** My husband, now he wants to go to his friend's marriage in Scotland, I said *don't worry, you go. I'll make the video and when you come you'll see how I can make the video*. He said *OK*. Because now I'm confident, I can make it.<br>**VEENA** I told my husband when I started video and he said '*You? Video*?' And I can do it now, and he was '*OK, you can do now, it's nice'*. That's his comments | **Achievement led to increased self-drive**<br><br>**Increased sense of independence**<br><br>**Video project provides opportunity to succeed/ gain sense of achievement** | **Self-motivation /self-drive**<br><br>**Can-do** |
| **NALINI** My husband, we go to hospital for my scan, for my first scan, and I speak with lady receptionist, and he says, '*oh, ok, I thought you can't speak'*. Before we use camera we can't speak with people – we know the word but we were not confident. But now we are confident. I speak to lady and I know I do all right and my husband says '*oh, you are confident now'*.<br>***JS*** *Your husband has noticed changes?*<br>**NALINI** Yes – all family, my mother-in-law, father-in-law, all said you're very changed<br>***JS*** *Since the video, not just the English lessons?*<br>**NALINI** Yes, not just the class, since the video. This project makes a very big difference, because when we come to camera, we are confident now. Before we used this camera, we're not very confident. | **Participants feel confidence gains are context transcending**<br><br>**Others have noticed confidence changes**<br><br>**Confidence gains attributed to video project** | **Communication confidence**<br><br>**Can-do** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| ***JS*** *What have you most liked?*<br>**VEENA** Recording interviews<br>**NALINI** Yes, I like recording interviews! In front of camera!<br>***JS*** *What do you like about those?*<br>**NALINI** Speaking in front of camera<br>**VEENA** I like recording interviews!<br>**NALINI** And after making video we watch all we have recorded, we listen to what we said on camera, we feel very good | **Liked process of recording and watching play back** | **Most liked experience** |
| ***JS*** *What do you think of Real Time's approach – the way we worked with you?*<br>**NALINI** It was really important to learn by practically doing<br>**VEENA** I think that…. if you stand there and write on the board – it's not helpful. But practical like we did gives you confidence. And you helped because you say '*yes you can do this, you've got the skills to do this'*. You trust us, that's a big thing, you trust us to using your camera, it's expensive camera, you could say maybe she's not a good person to use camera, but you trust us, so that's a big thing for us<br>**NALINI** A very big thing, yes, because you said *you can*, you give us camera and said use like that, that's why we are confident. If you not give us camera, we just look at pictures, we can't…<br>**VEENA** …and you teach us we can – this is very nice, we just appreciate that<br>***JS*** *What about taking turns – what did you think of that approach?* | **Importance of learning by doing**<br><br>**Encouragement that participants can-do**<br><br>**Relationship of trust helped self-belief** | **Active/ experiential learning**<br><br>**Relational practice- encouragement**<br><br>**Relational practice - trust** |

| **Focus group 1 –** continued | **Codes –** particular viewpoints | **Shortened Code** |
|---|---|---|
| **VEENA** I liked because when Nalini does it, then I can just stand back and not try. To start I thought I can't do, so I thought I'll just sit down here and say no, no, no, but when you call my name '*Veena, do you want to do this*?' , I thought 'OK fine, let's try!'<br><br>***NALINI*** *I* was nervous and said '*No, I can't do it'* but you said '*come with me, I'll help you'*. You encouraged us, and stood by us. Without your co-operation, without you helping, we can't do anything<br><br>**VEENA** And you encouraged us, that's why we like doing things, otherwise [shakes head] we can't do it | **Practitioners encouragement helps reticent participants**<br><br>**Importance of facilitator input to create sense being there alongside participants** | **Relational practice-encouragement**<br><br>**Relational practice-collaboration** |
| ***JS*** *How did that feel working together as a group?*<br>**VEENA** I think…working with other people… not just with family members and friends … it's nice to…chat and make friendships.. and feel good achieving something together<br>**NALINI** Now we work well as a team. Its very good<br>**VEENA** Yes, together we are stronger! | **Group context is important – feeling that can achieve more by working together** | **Group context** |
| ***JS*** *How is the relationship between classmates since doing the video?*<br>**NALINI** Before we don't know each other - we know each other now, we know our life stories and our different interests, innit?<br>**VEENA** When each person speaks of themselves, it's nice to hear them, listen to them<br>**NALINI** We can share our feelings now, innit, as a group, as friends we have made. Without coming together as a group we can't learn, we're not confident…<br>**VEENA** We can rely on some other people to help us, | **Participants get to know each other through video activities**<br><br>**Participants liked listening to each other**<br><br>**Video promoted group building** | **Group building - stimulates group interaction**<br><br>**Group building – co-operation** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| or to work with us, so it's helped to start communication between us | | **/teamwork** |
| ***JS*** *was it different when there were two of us working with you, compared to one?*<br>**VEENA** I think that two people is better<br>**NALINI** Yes, two is good innit<br>**VEENA** Yes, two is better because we're using camera so you can help us, and at the same time other person can help people in front of camera. It's good to have two people<br>**NALINI** I think this is good, both of you, but...um…when he was not there, when just you, that was OK innit? [said to Veena] It felt comfortable with you. Yes, very comfortable… I think is very good experience with you. | **Better with two practitioners as multiple roles**<br><br>**Participants appreciated relationship with practitioner** | **Two versus one practitioner**<br><br>**Relational practice – trust in collaboration** |
| ***JS*** *So what about the timescale. Five sessions is a short project?*<br>**NALINI** Very short time, yes. In just five weeks, innit , we learn more things in just five weeks, we're more confident. If five weeks more get so much more<br>**VEENA** Now we just have to wait for you to continue… | **Time limits scope of project**<br><br>**Participants would like to continue** | **Time restrictions** |
| ***JS*** *That's all my questions. Is there anything else you want to add*<br>**NALINI** Yes. Biggest reason this video project is good, is people like us –most not confident, they can't speak with people, they came different countries and they came here, they very feel shy. When they attend a video class, and everything they do, they I think feel very confident. And they should – they watch back, they know mistakes, they learn next time how to say it, so this approach is very important, for like us people. Yes. Very important<br>JS *Thank you both. That's been very helpful to my research.!* | **Approach thought appropriate for those who lack communication confidence**<br><br>Success attributed to cycles of action and reflection | **Contextual relevance**<br><br>Iterative learning cycles |

## Appendix 10: Example analysis table- from codes to basic themes

| Real Time stage A - opening (familiarisation) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Code – Particular viewpoint** | **Shorthand codes** | **Basic themes** |
| • Participatory video increases confidence because it provides opportunity to succeed at something new /gain sense of achievement<br>• Participants report developing a range of skills and capacities(technical, presentational, organisational, creative)<br>• Specific skills and confidence gains depend on starting point and context | • Opportunity to succeed<br>• New Skills and capacities<br>• Specific skills are context/ individual dependent | **1. Video provides opportunity to succeed at new challenge** |
| • Participatory video experience was different from expectation<br>• Many participants gained technical confidence from hands-on use of video and a resultant sense of achievement<br>• Speaking on camera develops communication confidence for some<br>• Building confidence is a time based process through iterative development<br>• Some participants gained an increased sense of 'can do'/ self efficacy attributed to video – some felt context transcending<br>• Many participants were motivated to continue following achievement | • Expectation/ Experience<br>• Technical confidence<br>• Communication Confidence<br>• Increased can-do /self-efficacy – context transcending<br>• Self-motivation/ self-drive | **2. Participants feeling of can do** |
| • Some participants thought video was not for them<br>• Videoing provides a significant challenge for many<br>• Many participants find appearing on camera uncomfortable at start<br>• Discomfort dissipates in first few sessions for most | • Barrier to engagement<br>• Discomfort of challenge<br>• Playback discomfort<br>• Discomfort dissipation | **3. Participants feeling of can't-do** |
| • Participants valued learning through doing<br>• Structured video activities and ground rules provides participation rationale and space for all participants<br>• Exercises involve videoed action followed by group reflection on playback<br>• Participants valued or attributed success to cycles of action and reflection<br>• Video playback capability assists reflection | • Active learning<br>• Structured activities<br>• Ground rules<br>• Iterative learning cycles | 4. Basic functional practice |
| • Contextual factors mean some participants are most challenged by using technical equipment and some appearing on video - focus depends on group<br>• Background and past experiences (negative /positive) can impact on project experience<br>• Some participants continue to find video overly challenging in relationship to self-image and limiting social constructions | • Individual background<br>• Particular vulnerability | **5. Individual contextual factors** |

## From codes to basic themes – appendix 10 continued

| Code – Particular viewpoint | Shorthand codes | Basic themes |
|---|---|---|
| • Relational practice (trust, encouragement, support, knowledge sharing) helps participants with challenge<br>• Backed up by functional and environmental practice<br>• Importance of time to discuss feelings<br>• Collaborative relationship with practitioner being there alongside helps confidence, particularly for more reticent<br>• Individual challenge is helped by group context – can achieve more by doing it together | • Support/ encouragement<br>• Knowledge input<br>• Feelings acknowledged<br>• Group context and trust in collaboration | **6. Basic relational practice** |
| • Most participants disliked short project timescale which limits scope and sustainability but time available is limited for many<br>• Need for pre-project process to engage most excluded/marginalised | • Time limits scope of project<br>• Particular needs | **7. Macro-structure of project – individual** |
| • Individuals brought together through common activity<br>• Participants like discussion and learning about others<br>• Participants value getting to know each other and being part of a group collaboration<br>• Process uses video to promote co-operation and team working | • Common activity/group focus<br>• Co-operation/ team-working | **8. Video builds group dynamics** |
| • Participants value both individual and group level outcomes<br>• Group context aids individual development, and participants value time to interact with others<br>• There is a practice balance between individual needs and group focus | • Parallel development<br>• Competing individual./group needs | **9. Balance of individual /group needs** |
| • Balance between persuading participants to step outside comfort zone and participants choice<br>• Strong practitioner intervention necessary initially to establish inclusive dynamic – pushing reticent and prevent take over | • Encouragement/ persuasion/ coercion<br>• Strong initial intervention<br>• Participation choice/control | **10. Balance of practitioner management/ participation choice** |
| • All participants take turns (swap technical/production roles and appear on video) - giving roles provides access to al<br>• Contextualised application of ground roles aids individual /group balance<br>• Activities are adapted to context in terms of content, scope and organisation | • Contextualising exercise structures<br>• Contextualisation - individual/group balance | **11. Contextual functional practice** |
| • Participants value role structuring, individually tailored encouragement and practitioner input, and choice in how they participate<br>• Group members perpetuate cooperative working once established because shared responsibility is supportive | • Taking turns<br>• Practitioner experience of direction<br>• Group perpetuation of established dynamic | **12. Way of applying relational practice** |

**From codes to basic themes – appendix 10 continued**

| Code – Particular viewpoint | Shorthand codes | Basic themes |
|---|---|---|
| • Participatory Video practice balances the needs of multiple processes ( e.g. individual development, group building and transfer of control)<br>• Multiple process needs too much for one practitioner- threatens individual needs<br>• Two practitioners allows one-to-one support combined with overall group facilitation | • Multiple practitioner roles<br>• Two practitioners versus one | **13. Multiple practitioner roles** |
| • Least confident groups have most to gain but also most vulnerable to discomfort and exposure<br>• Issues of informed consent for some groups<br>• Single experience project process more appropriate initially for some target groups, and needs more time | • Particular needs (Consent, vulnerability)<br>• Group type<br>• Single experience projects | **14. Macro-structure of project – individual needs /group needs** |

## Appendix 11: Preliminary thematic structure for Real Time stages A-D

| **Real Time's familiarisation stage A – opening and developing inclusive, supportive, collaborative spaces** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CODES** | **BASIC THEMES** | **ORGANISING THEMES** | **GLOBAL THEMES** |
| • Participatory video increases confidence because it provides opportunity to succeed at something new<br>• Specific skills and confidence gains depend on starting point and context | **INCREASING CONFIDENCE, CAPACITY AND SELF-EFFICACY** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR -** project framework provides participants with the opportunity to succeed at new challenges | **FROM 'CAN'T-DO' TO 'CAN-DO':** Video as individual enabler/ barrier versus time/space for particular needs (individual /contextual) |
| • Videoing provides a significant challenge for many<br>• Many participants find appearing on camera uncomfortable<br>• Discomfort dissipates in first few sessions for most | **Feeling of can't-do - videoing as significant challenge**<br>• Negative feelings (e.g. technophobia, exposure) | **PRACTICE TENSION**- discomfort of facing a challenge versus positive feelings of successful accomplishment | |
| • Many participants gained technical confidence from hands-on use of video, and a resultant sense of achievement<br>• Some participants gained communication confidence through appearing on video<br>• Some participants gained an increased sense of 'can do' | **Feeling of can do**<br>• Skill development<br>• Confidence( technical /<br>• communication)<br>• Changed view of self- capacity | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY** – From individual challenge through increased confidence to individual self-efficacy | |
| • Structured video activities provides participation rationale and space for all participants<br>• Exercises involve videoed action followed by group reflection on playback<br>• Video playback capability assists reflection | **Basic functional practice**<br>• Framework of activities<br>• Cycles of videoed action<br>• Reflection on playback | **ENABLING FACTOR -** Iterative process of structured learning and development supported by video capabilities | |
| • Contextual factors mean some participants are most challenged by using technical equipment and some appearing on video - focus depends on group<br>• Background and past experiences (negative /positive) can impact on project experience<br>• Some participants continue to find video overly challenging in relationship to self-image and limiting social constructions | **Individual contextual factors**<br>• Individual differences in response<br>• Impacting past experiences<br>• Limiting social stereotypes<br>• Particular vulnerability | **LIMITING FACTOR –** The challenge of video in relationship to individual contextual factors | |
| • Relational practice (trust, encouragement, support, knowledge sharing) helps participants with challenge<br>• Backed up by functional and environmental practice<br>• Importance of time to discuss discomfort<br>• Individual challenge is helped by doing it together | **Basic relational practice**<br>• Encouragement (you can do)<br>• Support and knowledge input<br>• Group context | **ENABLING FACTOR -** Developing an encouraging, supportive and collaborative environment | |

**Real Time familiarisation stage A - continued**

| CODES | BASIC THEMES | ORGANISING THEMES | GLOBAL THEMES |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Participants value both individual and group level outcomes<br>• Group context aids individual development, and participants value time to interact with others<br>• Individuals brought together through common activity - participants like expressing selves and learning about others | **GROUP BONDING AND BUILDING** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR –** Provides a catalyst for building cooperation and group focus | **TOWARDS INCLUSIVE GROUP DYNAMICS:** Practitioner management of the balance of individual/ group process needs versus participant choice |
| • Activities develop individual and group in parallel, with specific activities adapted to context<br>• There is a practice balance between individual needs and group focus<br>• process uses video to promote team working | **Structured, contextualised framework for interaction**<br>• Contextualised balance of individual/group needs<br>• Video and team working | **PRACTICE TENSION** - Practice balance of competing individual needs versus collective working<br>**PROCESS POSSIBILITY** – From individual needs/outcomes to inclusive, collaborative group dynamics | |
| • All participants take turns (swap technical/production roles and appear on video) - giving roles provides access<br>• Strong practitioner intervention necessary initially to establish inclusive dynamic – pushing reticent and prevent take over<br>• Balance between persuading participants to step outside comfort zone and participants choice<br>• participants value role structuring, individually tailored encouragement and practitioner input, and choice in how they participate<br>• Group members perpetuate cooperative working once established because shared responsibility is supportive | **Practitioners management to establish group dynamic**<br>• Action to create access for all<br>• Practitioner control of dynamic<br>• Participant experience of practitioner intervention<br>• Processual pulling back of practitioner direction | **ENABLING FACTOR –** the way practitioner intervene to manage inclusive group dynamic<br><br>**PRACTICE TENSION** - Practice management of dynamic versus participant choice | |
| • practice balances the needs of multiple processes ( e.g. individual development, group building and transfer of control)<br>• Multiple process needs too much for one practitioner- threatens individual needs<br>• Two practitioners allows one-to-one support combined with overall group facilitation | **Management of multiple processes**<br>• One versus two practitioners<br>• Parallel process of individual and group development | **LIMITING FACTOR** – number of facilitators | |
| • Most participants disliked short project timescale which limits scope and sustainability but time available is limited for many<br>• Least confident groups have most to gain but also most vulnerable to discomfort and exposure<br>• Issues of informed consent for some groups<br>• Need for pre-project process to engage most excluded/marginalised<br>• Single experience project process more appropriate initially for some target groups, and needs more time | **Time**<br>• Balance of time needs versus availability<br>• Need for pre-project process<br>• Familiarisation time needs dependent on group<br>• Time for single experience processes | **LIMITING FACTOR –** Time for familiarisation process in relationship to contextualised needs | |

| **Real Time's 'group building' stage B** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CODES** | **BASIC THEMES** | **ORGANISING THEMES** | **GLOBAL** |
| • Video can facilitate participant expression and catalyse group interaction<br>• Exercises stimulate internal dialogue because they provide a rationale for interaction and structure sharing, listening and discussion | **DEVELOPING VOICE THROUGH GROUP INTERACTION** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR** Video is used to stimulate group expression and exchange | **FROM KEEPING QUIET TO SPEAKING UP:** Appropriate building of participant expression versus speed of/time for process |
| • Many participants liked talking about their experiences and expressing what they think and feel on video<br>• Many participants value listening to and learning from diverse others<br>• Participant like exploring topics of interest and reflecting as a group<br>• Being heard is valuing for some participants - most significant for those who experience communication barriers | **Building group dialogue**<br>Individual articulation through speaking on video<br>Group discussion<br>Listening to others<br>Being heard/views valued | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY** – From individual expression, through internal group exchange to group communication purpose | |
| • Assumption that speaking up and being heard is necessarily good – actually dependent on context<br>• Danger of feeling exposed if asked to open up too quickly, too deeply or if feelings are raw<br>• Some participants do not like discussing personal issues, and watching back can be upsetting if it reflects uncomfortable events or emotions<br>• Some participants may be unable to control how much they open up or make informed choices about what to reveal | **Risk of exposure**<br>Contextual feelings of exposure – related to process speed, depth and emotional intensity<br>Individual difference<br>Particular vulnerability | **PRACTICE TENSION** - Balance of encouraging sharing of genuine perspectives in order that participants are heard and risk of inappropriate exposure | |
| • Need for period of project internal communication to build trust, and develop informed communication choices before production<br>• Participatory video can systemise a group exchange of perspectives<br>• Video activities are structured to encourage slow opening and staged voice building as awareness grows<br>• The specific topics/issue discussed depend on the project context but focus is on participants concerns which builds their control | **Process of Voice Building**<br>Video systemises development of interaction<br>Encourages slow opening<br>Developing informed choices about disclosure | **ENABLING FACTOR –** Structured Process of developing expression and staged opening | |
| • Potential conflict between the internal development and making a video for external viewing<br>• The pressure to produce a video in a limited time often compromises the appropriate building of participant expression and informed control<br>• Individual lack of awareness of consequences of speaking up<br>• Danger of therapeutic interactions being disclosed in the public domain presents ethical issue<br>• Group decision-making masks particular needs | **Production Pressure**<br>Process/product balance<br>Too little time to build voice, awareness and control<br>Ethical disclosure issues<br>Group decision-making masks individual needs | **HINDERING FACTOR** Risk of inappropriate exposure due to production pressure | |

| Real Time ‘group building’ stage B - continued | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CODES** | **BASIC THEMES** | **ORGANISING THEMES** | **GLOBAL** |
| • Video process can identify and support the group’s agenda<br>• Functional and relational practice can promote co-operative and collective working | **SUSTAINING CREATIVE GROUP RELATIONSHIPS** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR –** Video used to sustain co-operative relational dynamics towards collective creation | |
| • Participants liked hand-on involvement in all production tasks and roles (technical and creative content)<br>• Participants enjoyed taking control of content planning and decision-making<br>• Participants like working as a team – shared collaboration | **Developing group agency** | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY -** From established inclusive dynamics, through external control influences towards collectivity | **TOWARDS MUTUALITY:** Appropriate control of internal relational processes versus external production needs/ agendas |
| • Need to support group dynamic against external pressures<br>• Practitioners facilitated process to develop shared identity and the sustain group agenda through staging, direction and support<br>• The balance of practitioner control of relational dynamics versus participant choice<br>• The balance of majority versus minority participant control | **Facilitated group development process** ( relational practice backed up by the use of video)<br>• Practitioner versus participant<br>• Majority versus minority | **ENABLING FACTOR –** practitioner facilitation of group development process stage before production process | |
| • External contextual agendas and influences threaten collaborative relational dynamics and group control<br>• Multiple stakeholders with unrealistic/conflicting expectations<br>• Time limitations create reliance on support workers who lack awareness of relational roles and needs<br>• Resulting external coercive /negative influence or under/over control by support workers<br>• Inappropriate relational balance leads to participant competition, disruption and individual burden rather than shared responsibility/ownership<br>• Lack of partners awareness of relational process – consequent practitioners frustration at wasted opportunities<br>• Appropriate balance of control over project decision-making processes | **External influences threaten the building of internal dynamics**<br>• Under/over external supporter influence<br>• Coercion and multiple/conflicting agendas<br>• Practitioner agency versus balance of internal/external control | **PRACTICE TENSION** Balance of internal relational dynamics threatened by external influence/control | |
| • Consequent importance of enabling practitioners agency in applying relational knowledge<br>• Project partnerships need to recognise and resource relational role to maximise possibilities - not only issue of time but also negotiating boundaries of practitioners role within project set up | **Productive Project partnerships** need to recognise and resource relational practice role – time and project macro-structure and boundaries of role | **ENABLING FACTOR** Need for separate voice-building stage<br>**ENABLING FACTOR** Relationally enabling project partnerships | |

**Real Time's 'collaborative video production' stage C**

| CODES | BASIC THEMES | ORGANISING THEMES | GLOBAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Video can provide the medium for group-authored representation<br>• Collaborative relationship between practitioners and participants can foster group ownership alongside successful production output | **COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION ACTION** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR** Video is used to provide the means for video production | **NEGOTIATING COLLABORATIVE - AUTHORED PRODUCTION:** Balance of group ownership versus external production commitment |
| • Successfully video production is a source of considerable pride for many participants indicating sense of ownership<br>• Videos often exceeds participant and support workers expectations<br>• Major part of what Real Time offers is management of production process to satisfaction of differently positioned actors<br>• Participants and project supporters attribute their production success to the partnership | **Facilitating production** - from group vision to creative output | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY** – From group agency and purpose, through iterative cycles of collaborate video-making to creative ownership of video outputs<br>**PRACTICE TENSION** Ownership/authorship of production vision | |
| • Video production is complex - needs a range of organisational, technical, creative and narrative skills<br>• Inexperienced participants are generally unable (capacity/time) to take informed control of every aspect of production during first iteration<br>• Need practitioner input as participants can't make informed choice about something new<br>• Practitioners must balance production direction with facilitating the group's agenda (communication/creation) and participants content influence | **Contextualised complexity of video production process -** in relationship to time restriction | | |
| • Group ownership of content is developed through structured exercises<br>• Development encompasses nuanced difference within common interest/shared group issue<br>• Staged production – video is constructed in incremental recording and reflection steps<br>• Participant content authorisation is helped by structured planning techniques | **Structuring and staged video production process** | **ENABLING FACTOR** Structuring and staging the production process | |
| • Practitioners facilitate decision-making by asking questions, identifying decision points and giving options<br>• Practitioners support participant choices through information and guidance | **Facilitated decision-making** | **ENABLING FACTOR** Facilitating participant decision-making | |
| • If time is tight there is flexible management towards participant control of the most crucial aspects of content - Timing is critical for participant's sense of ownership Production in small peer groups aids trust and diversifies content control<br>• Particular practitioners relational approach is a key factor in developing participants trust in collaborative intention -practitioners both take control and let go as appropriate | **Process management** | **ENABLING FACTOR** Practitioner management of contextualised balance of control | |
| • Editing adds another layer of complexity (creative decision-making and operational control) to group-authored video-making<br>• Total editing involvement is impractical due to difficulty of engagement and time needed - editing control is usually a pragmatic compromise - Ok if collaborative relational dynamic established<br>• Any relational tensions will manifest during editing – then some participants dissatisfied with control | **Challenge of editing control** | **HINDERING FACTOR** Editing as sticking point of participant production control | |

| **Real Time 'collaborative video production' stage C - continued** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CODES** | **BASIC THEMES** | **ORGANISING THEMES** | **GLOBAL THEME** |
| • Video can provide means to deepen understanding (particular and contextual) of social issues during the process of group exploration, reflection and re-framing<br>• Assumption is that new insight can be developed from involving those affected by particular social issues in authoring their own knowledge | **DEEPENING CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR** Video is used to catalyse group exploration and re-framing of social issues | **CONTEXTUAL SOCIAL MEANING:** Synthesising new/deeper group understanding versus speed of/time for process |
| • Video provides a means to step back from everyday experience to consider the social world<br>• Some participants expressed enjoyment of exploring social concerns as a group<br>• Participants reported increased awareness as a result and new understanding of the value of reflection<br>• Wider social learning can result from process of project not just the video produced | **Deeper reflection and synthesis of new knowledge** | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY** From group expression through critical reflection to the synthesis of participant-authored social knowledge | |
| • Risk of contextual influence overriding depth and authenticity, majority views suppressing the minority, and good ideas being stifled for group harmony when finding collective interest<br>• Developing new synthesis can require input and exchange with outside perspectives | **Risk of superficial or influenced synthesis** | **PRACTICE TENSION** Deeper reflection and authenticity versus superficial/ externally influenced synthesis | |
| • Video-making structures the asking and answering of questions and stimulates reflection on views expressed<br>• Video provides means to synthesise and communicate opinion statement, questions and illustrative narratives of previously unvoiced experiences for outside audiences<br>• Depth helped by having enough time, participant control of agenda and structuring closed intimate reflection between peers<br>• Insight helped by interaction between group and alternative perspectives from range of external actors | **Group reflection and re- framing** | **ENABLING FACTOR** Process of group directed reflection and representation | |
| • Group videos ask questions to generate wider debate rather than provide definitive solutions<br>• Developing a broader synthesis needs interaction with wider perspectives<br>• Some individual learning was applied beyond the group, but there was a lack of post-production support to support wider social exchange<br>• Restricts the scope of exploration and means outputs are likely to be contextually influenced<br>• There is a need to raise awareness of possibilities of social learning from process of project | **Limited time for wider social processes** | **HINDERING FACTOR -** Lack of funding to support wider external exchange | |
| • Generating possibilities for wider social influence is dependent on post-production processes of wider exchange and integration<br>• Macro-structure of project needs to resource post-production distribution and discussion possibilities and further cycles of video production to maximise potential | **Post-production processes** | **ENABLING FACTOR** Post-production processes of wider dialogue followed by further production action | |

| Real Time 'becoming –performing' stage D | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **CODES** | **BASIC THEMES** | **ORGANISING THEMES** | **GLOBAL** |
| • Organising video projects in contexts of communication need can initiate discussion between different social positions and agendas<br>• Statutory decision-makers are motivated as gap in understanding of social phenomena from perspective of those involved<br>• Raising awareness can lead to new social learning and influence provision | **WIDENING SOCIAL INFLUENCE** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR**<br>Video showing is used to mediate relations between the group and the wider world | **FROM CONVERGENT TO BRIDGE-BUILDING DIALOGUE:**<br>Expanding group influence through external video processes versus obstacles to ongoing dialogue |
| • Debate was generated between social positions during project processes. (e.g. amongst stakeholders, government decision-makers/ participants, cross-community)<br>• Screenings are a highpoint for participants - value and celebrate achievements<br>• Videos produced were shown in various social forums, such as councils and schools and used as discussion starters on training courses<br>• Project partners who watched videos thought they communicated new nuanced knowledge attributed to participant involvement<br>• Audiences appreciated authentic expression that generated awareness and discussion | **Generating wider social dialogue and understanding** | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY**<br>From interactive video dialogue, to showing group videos, through wider debate to bridge-building, raising awareness and social influence | |
| • On many projects video can be final word rather than start of dialogue<br>• There is a risk of emergent views being recorded for posterity<br>• Value of projects does not lie in video product alone | **Risk of ossification** | **PRACTICE TENSION**<br>Ongoing conversation versus ossification | |
| • Audience can misread video message or intentional purpose<br>• Lack of facilitation of wider dialogue can increase risk of cross-community conflict / misunderstanding | **Bridge-building versus increased misunderstanding** | **PRACTICE TENSION**<br>Bridge-building versus risk of entrenched positions | |
| • Needs partnerships where practitioners free to run project flexibly as appropriate<br>• Helps if there is there is support for practitioners negotiation between multiple stakeholders needs and expectations<br>• Project support workers can be gatekeepers to participant involvement<br>• Video distribution is dependent on financing and stakeholder input | **Relationally enabling partnerships (continued)** | **ENABLING FACTOR**<br>Relationally enabling partnerships (continued) | |
| • Helps if relationships and processes develop organically<br>• May need time for rolling involvement to engage participants<br>• Engagement may begin through small groups in different venues<br>• Contextualised staging of production process aids participant control<br>• Production assisted by impromptu planning and spontaneous production processes | **Flexible project structure**<br>Rolling and responsive development<br>Impromptu planning and spontaneous production | **ENABLING FACTOR**<br>Flexible responsive project structure | |
| • External control issues can hinder appropriate structure/relationships/control<br>• Lack of understanding of relational practice or need for flexibility - need to be more assertive about practice boundaries during project set up<br>• Launch screening is often end of participant involvement - no support for post-production dialogue processes<br>• Participants want to continue but rarely financing for further involvement | **Limiting project structure**<br>No support for post production stage – dialogue or production | **HINDERING FACTOR**<br>Limiting project structure | |

**Real Time 'becoming –performing' stage D - Continued**

| CODES | BASIC THEMES | ORGANISING THEMES | GLOBAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Video making and showing can provide participants with the opportunity to take on new roles and responsibilities (experts in own lives, interviewing external others, expressing opinions publicly )<br>• Video conventions can aid social re-positioning | **DISRUPTING POSITIONAL DYNAMICS** | **CONTEXTUAL FACTOR**<br>Video processes are applied to position participants more influentially | **TOWARDS NEW SOCIAL DYNAMICS:**<br>Participatory video as social re-positioning influence versus external barriers/ support |
| • Participants liked being seen publicly beyond the internal project bases in responsible roles.<br>• They liked challenging perceptions of capabilities and showing what they can do<br>• Participant liked extending horizons through finding could do more (e.g. peer teaching roles )<br>• Many participants liked interviewing external others, and being heard externally<br>• In doing actively in the outside world participants are social actors.<br>• There is potential for building new productive relationships and collaborations | **Social re-positioning** | **PROCESS POSSIBILITY**<br>From new roles, to becoming social actors, through symbolic change to productive new social relationships/dynamics /collaborations. | |
| • Participants need varying levels of support in transcending comfort zone<br>• Challenging status quo can leave participants unsupported or vulnerable if back lash<br>• Videoing or speaking up publicly may result in refused access, or negative response<br>• Rarely finance to support participants ongoing activity<br>• Participants may feel despondent if nothing changes following action | **Opposing barriers**<br>Discomfort of new dynamic<br>Negative responses<br>Lack of ongoing support<br>Despondency - no change | **PRACTICE TENSION**<br>Opposing barriers to challenging the status quo | |
| • The videoing context can invest participants with power in itself by changing positioning<br>• The process of making a video gets people taking to external others and makes connections with other groups and agencies.<br>• Performing video activities in context can changes participants relationship to environment<br>• Participants think video recording conventions provide them with the strength to ask questions and expect answers from socially authoritative others<br>• Screening conventions mean audiences tend to watch/listen | **Video conventions**<br>Video production and screening conventions invest participants with increased performative agency | **ENABLING FACTOR**<br>Application of video power to disrupt usual social positioning | |
| • Supporting external individuals and agencies assist opening of wider possibilities<br>• Further opportunities can develop independence, control over own pathways and leadership<br>• Participants sense of control is key to them but many groups still need ongoing facilitation by external collaborators (supported control)<br>• Practitioners need to be able to balance control by transferring responsibility as appropriate<br>• Project processes can build new horizontal and vertical partnerships | **Ongoing relational support**<br>Ongoing Facilitation<br>Collaborative dynamics<br>Enabling partnerships<br>Productive further social opportunities | **ENABLING FACTOR**<br>Ongoing relational support from external social actors to extend possibilities | |

| Real Time 'becoming –performing' stage D - **Continued** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Participants often have a commitment to continuing but financing is unavailable<br>• Lack of understanding that this can be start of a building relational process leads to lack of further support structures<br>• There is misunderstanding of how independent participants can be, and therefore the need for ongoing facilitation<br>• Participant can be coerced and manipulated by collaborators and partners | **Lack of ongoing support**<br>Financial<br>Relational<br>Structural | **HINDERING FACTOR 8a**<br>Misunderstanding the support/independence balance needs | |
| • Participation control can develop through ongoing iterations of video-making<br>• Participant involvement in distribution aids audience understanding<br>• Follow on distribution and dialogue processes need to be context specific<br>• The possibility and limitation of new social media as communication forums has not been exploited<br>• Extended project structures can mediate ongoing dialogue through post-production processes and further cycles of production action after audience response<br>• There is potential in multi-site projects (horizontal groups sharing issue, across community, vertically ) brought together through loops of action and reflection | **Extended project structures**<br>Iterative cycles of video-production and wider dialogue<br>Distribution processes and mechanisms<br>Post production support<br>Multi-site projects | **ENABLING FACTOR 8c**<br>Extended project structures | |