

Transformation and worldview in public policy:
A case study of the British Columbia Farm Assessment Review

by

David Reid
B.A., Pomona College, 1997

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Dispute Resolution

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines conflict transformation in public policy in the case of the British Columbia Farm Assessment Review public process in the Capital Regional District from December 2007 to July 2009. The research addresses three questions: 1) Were transformative approaches applied to public policy in the Farm Assessment Review (FAR) case? If so, how were those transformative approaches applied? 2) How did worldview conflicts arise in the FAR case? and 3) What were the effects of the FAR public process in terms of transformative capacity? Data were collected from newspaper articles, press releases, public reports, semi-structured interviews, and personal observations. The data were analyzed through directed content analysis and interpreted through the lens of social constructionism. The study found that the process had few transformative qualities and did not accommodate the worldview differences that were detected and recognized by the parties. Few transformational changes could be found in the data.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research could not have been completed without the help of many people. Like all research, this study takes place in the world and depends on the contributions of the members of community in which it takes place. The interview participants in particular have made a contribution to knowledge and to their community through their willingness to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Each of the instructors at the University of Victoria with whom I was privileged to study left a lasting impression and will recognize their influence on this research. As members of my supervisory committee, Dr. Davis and Dr. Stoltz were gracious and generous enough to give me their time, share their knowledge, and lend me their expertise when I needed it. Certainly, this study could not have taken place without their enthusiasm and support.

One person stands out for her unwavering support through sleepless nights, irritable days, too many false starts, and too few hours together; the woman to whom I am blessed to be married, Sarah Simonet. Thank you for your patience, for your humour, and for kicking me in the pants when I needed it. Truly, our journey continues through many more adventures, extra miles, and moments of wonder.

Finally, I acknowledge the farmers and advocates whose work makes it possible to connect with our food and our place. Your passion, your love for the land and the work, and your vision of integration inspire me to continue to work for change.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is the report of a case study of the public participation process that took place in the Capital Regional District for the British Columbia Farm Assessment Review from December 2007 to July 2009. The purpose of the study is to explore the role of conflict transformation and worldview in public policy development. Conflict transformation is a lens for understanding conflict that emphasizes changes in structures and relations in order to promote capacity for ongoing dialogue. A worldview is the collection of unconscious beliefs and assumptions that shape our daily lives. The study revolves around three research questions: 1) Were transformative approaches applied to public policy in the Farm Assessment Review (FAR) case? If so, how were those transformative approaches applied? 2) How did worldview conflicts arise in the FAR case? and 3) What were the effects of the FAR public process in terms of transformative capacity? I collected data from observation, from select public records, from newspaper articles, and from in-depth interviews with three stakeholders¹. This chapter presents the background of the study, describes the relevance of the case, and describes how the research reflects my own experiences as a practitioner of public policy dispute resolution and as a researcher. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the study's methodology.

¹ For the purposes of this case study, I consider a stakeholder to be anyone who has a personal, theoretical, economic, or other interest in the outcome and conduct of the process. Henceforth, the term "stakeholder" will be used in this broadly defined way.

The assessed value is the basis for property tax assessments by jurisdictions, either local municipalities or the province in the case of rural areas. While each jurisdiction sets its own tax rate, BCAA sets the amount to which that rate is applied. Provincial law sets out different assessment methodologies for the highest and best use of each of nine classes of property. For the purposes of this study, the residential and agricultural classes are most pertinent.

Residential properties are assessed according to market value (BCAA 2009). The market value is determined by the value of the land plus the value of the buildings. Improvements to buildings or land are taken into account through permit applications. The municipality then applies the residential tax rate to the total property value.

Farm property, on the other hand, is assessed according to the potential value of the most valuable crops that could be grown there (BCAA 2004). The assessment is based on soil type and climatic considerations among other factors. The assessed value of farmland is generally significantly lower than comparable residential property. This is especially true in areas around cities where demand for residential property is high. Figure 2 gives a hypothetical example of the difference between residential and farm assessed values.



Figure 2: Example property

In this example of a 3.5-acre property, the assessed value under residential classification would be approximately \$2 million. This assumes that land value is \$500,000 per acre, and that the improvements are worth \$220,000. Under farm classification, the same property would have an assessed value as low as \$234,000. This assumes production capacity of \$4,000 per acre and the same improvement value.

The significant difference in assessed value between farm and residential, and hence property tax bills, has led some property owners to perceive unfairness in the taxation process (Dove 2008, Holmen 2009a). According to newspaper reports (Holmen 2009b), BCAA heard complaints that farm status was applied to properties without legitimate farm operations. BCAA launched an audit process in the summer of 2007 that examined 204 properties in the CRD. This audit consisted of assessors reviewing aerial photographs

and visiting properties to examine how much of the property was “essential to the farm operations.” BCAA focussed the audit on the municipality of Saanich, where many of the complaints originated. BCAA also audited other properties in the CRD as well. BCAA originally intended to audit the whole province, but in June 2008, the Farm Assessment Review panel asked for and received a moratorium on further reassessments until the review was complete (MSBR 2008c). As a result of the audit, BCAA changed the status of 23 properties to residential, and 97 more properties were assessed with farm status for part of the property and residential status for the remainder of the property (“split classifications”) (Holmen 2008).²

The *Standards for Classification as a Farm* (B.C. Reg. 446/77) provides guidelines for BCAA in determining farm status. The main criterion for determining farm status is gross revenue from farm products as reported on an annual basis. Properties of less than .8 hectare must demonstrate \$10,000 of gross revenue; properties from .8 to 4 hectares must show \$2,500 in revenue; and properties larger than 4 hectares must have \$2,500 plus 5% of assessed value in gross revenue. The *Standards for Classification as a Farm* also require BCAA to confer farm status only to that portion of a property that is in active use or is essential to farm operations. This means that during the Saanich audit, BCAA classified fallow areas, forests, wetlands, and other parts of a farm not in active use as residential (Holmen 2009b). Consequently, many of those who had been audited saw their tax bill increase, from a few hundred dollars more per year, to tens of thousands in one extreme case (Popham 2008). In addition, a property owner whose split classification brought her farm size to less than .8 hectare saw her income requirement quadruple from

² As of 2006, there were 991 farms in the CRD. Of these, 663 had gross revenue less than \$10,000, while 119 farms had revenue ranging from \$10,000 to \$24,999. Total area of all the farms was 13,562 hectares (33,514 acres) (StatCan 2006).

\$2,500 to \$10,000. BCAA then reclassified her entire property as residential because her farm income was not sufficient (Holmen 2009a). Figure 3 shows an example of the impact of split classification.



Figure 3: Split classification example

In this example, the same property as shown in Figure 2 is subject to split classification. The areas inside the black lines are classified as farm, The other areas are classified as residential. The total area of farm land is reduced to 1.9 acres. As a result, the minimum gross revenue for farm classification increases to \$10,000 from \$2,500. In addition, because 1.6 acres are now classified as residential, the assessed value increases from \$234,000 to \$1,027,600. Table 1 provides a summary of the effects of different assessment classifications.

Table 1: Sample Property Assessments Under Different Classifications

	Residential	All farm	Split classification
Area classified as farm (assessed value)	0	3.5 acres (\$14,000)	1.9 acres (\$7,600)
Area classified as residential (assessed value)	3.5 acres (\$1,750,000)	0	1.6 acres (\$800,000)
Minimum gross revenue to qualify for farm status	N/A	\$2,500	\$10,000
Total assessed value	\$1,970,000	\$234,000	\$1,027,600

According to newspaper reports and other evidence, there was a significant backlash from some parts of the farm community in the CRD (Holmen 2009b). This included a town hall meeting at Prospect Lake School, and calls for a review of the Standards. The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue (MSBR) formed the Farm Assessment Review Panel (FARP) to consult with the public and advise the Minister (MSBR 2008a). After some public pressure, the Ministry also announced a moratorium on audits of farm properties, although the changes resulting from the 2007 audit in Saanich were allowed to stand (MSBR 2008b).

The 12-member Farm Assessment Review Panel consisted of representatives of the agriculture community, two mayors, a former BCAA assessor, an elected director of a regional district, and a Member of Legislative Assembly. Later, an agronomist was added to the panel. MSBR provided FARP with terms of reference and a deadline to return a recommendation to the Minister by July 2009. The Terms of Reference gave the panel the following mandate: “To review the farm classification process and regulations with a focus on simplifying and streamlining the regulations, while at the same time ensuring the property assessment system is fair, equitable, enhances competitiveness and supports

innovation and the British Columbia Agriculture Plan and a healthy future for British Columbia families and communities” (MSBR 2007a).

With assistance from MSBR, the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, and later, the Ministry of Community Development, FARP staff researched the history of Farm Assessment and performed analyses of different policy options during the period from February 2008 through April 2009. This included a cross-jurisdictional analysis of other assessment methodologies (G., pers comm.). None of this research was made widely available to the public, for example by posting it on the FAR website. The FARP then conducted a series of consultations across the province, beginning in the CRD. A summary of each consultation was posted on the FAR website, along with some of the submissions received in writing. Finally, after more discussion, deliberation and research, the FARP delivered a consensus recommendation to the Minister in July 2009. The FARP report recommended:

- increasing income thresholds from \$2,500 to \$3,500 for all farms regardless of size starting in 2011;
- an exemption from split classification for farms with 25-50% of the land in production and with at least \$10,000 in gross sales from primary agriculture products (increasing to \$14,000 in 2011) ;
- an exemption from split classifications for farms with more than 50% of the land in farm use;
- harmonization with Canada Revenue Agency’s annual income reporting;
- review of the list of products considered to qualify as farm products; and

- new exemptions to support new farmers as well as retiring farmers (FARP 2009).

As of late 2009, there is no information available regarding who will be responsible for reviewing the recommendations, when that process will take place, or what the final policy outcome may be.

The Relevance of the Case

This case has both practical and academic relevance. First, it has significant practical ramifications in terms of farming, land use, and taxation. The application of the existing *Standards for the Classification of a Farm* legislation was interpreted by some property owners and activists as discouraging small-scale farmers and those employing holistic farming techniques (Holmen 2009a). For example, since the split classification process assessed forests and wetlands as residential property with much higher assessed value, some property owners described split classification as a disincentive for maintaining wildlife habitat on the property (Holmen 2009a). In addition, agricultural advocates see the many small properties in the CRD as a potential source for locally produced food in the future, even if the properties are not currently in production. Properties taxed at residential rates could also be more likely to be further developed, adding to the problems of urban sprawl. Finally, the assessment issue has obvious practical implications in terms of tax revenue for jurisdictions and property tax bills for farmers.

Second, the case has academic and theoretical relevance. Even a cursory review of documents and newspaper articles reveals that farm assessment presents an intractable policy conflict in which many of the actors have valid interests: residential property owners want a fair assessment process; farmers want to maintain their access to a

valuable tax incentive that supports their viability; government agents want to ensure a fair and efficient process to maximize the public good; and other stakeholders want to maintain their access to the benefits of local farms and open space. In addition some of the actors perceive the conflict as a threat to their identity and rights. In other words, the difficulty in crafting a public policy may be a reflection of an intractable conflict between different worldviews. There is need for more data on the topic of intractable worldview conflict in the public policy setting, as the Literature Review chapter will describe. In particular, while transformative mediation practices have been widely applied to peace building and interpersonal disputes, public policy disputes are more often subject to conflict management or suppression strategies (Dukes 1993). With such a great number and diversity of parties and the complexity of this issue, it is instructive to examine how transformative mediation practices could be applied in this setting. Such transformative techniques promise to alter relationships and structures, to address deep-seated conflicts, and to allow ongoing dialogue and improved cooperation. It is worth exploring whether a consultative process is able to achieve these types of outcomes.

Personal Reflections

Finally, on a personal note, this project is an outgrowth of my experience with public policy development. My ten years of professional experience have revolved around public policy and environmental conservation. I chose to study dispute resolution because I saw disturbing patterns in the relationships between concerned citizens and public agencies. Citizens participated in public processes and affected the outcomes, but the decision-makers ignored or stifled the citizens' concerns about the nature of the process and the basic assumptions of the government agencies. I came to the conclusion that new

thinking is needed in the fields of citizen engagement and community advocacy.

Positional bargaining often devolves into brinksmanship, and interest-based mediation seldom addresses the underlying values and relationships that are most important to the parties. As a result, even though parties may accomplish their short-term goals, even the winners know that the conflict has not been addressed and may arise again. Perhaps most importantly, the decision-making processes that agencies habitually apply in public policy are leading our society down an environmental, social, and economic dead-end. The need for conflict transformation is great, and the stakes are very high.

Worldview conflict is also important to me. I believe that there is a broad, unexamined, and erroneous assumption that local policy issues tend not to involve worldview conflicts unless the conflict involves superficially apparent racial and cultural differences. For conflicts around other differences, however, I believe that people tend to assume that local and provincial policy issues are not cultural, and not driven by deep differences in worldview. I believe that this oversight partially explains why some public policy disputes seem so difficult to resolve (or are intractable). There is a pressing need for new strategies for addressing intractable problems like climate change and chronic resource scarcity. Thus, my personal experience has led me to search for better ways for government and the public to define and address problems.

I have also had some direct connection to the Farm Assessment Review on a personal level. I was on the board of directors for a food advocacy group when I learned about the audit and review. The group was aware of the review, but did not take a position or take any other action because it was considered outside the mission statement. Nevertheless, a related group held a conference on November 17, 2008 entitled Focus on Farmlands. At

that meeting, I was asked to co-facilitate a discussion on the FAR since it was known that I was researching it. The submission “Focus on Farmlands” was the result of that session, and I wrote and submitted the session’s report and recommendations to the FARP. I allowed the group to decide the process and facilitated a consensus of the group; the views represented in the submission are not my own. I was also involved in an ad-hoc committee of the same group to develop recommendations to the FARP. The group’s recommendations are reprinted in the submission “Nanaimo-Cedar Farmers Institute,” which was not included in this study because it was sent from outside the geographic boundaries of the case. Again, the group’s views do not entirely represent my own.

Study Methodology

Case study is a research strategy that examines one instance of a phenomenon in detail in order to expand theoretical understanding. This study was instrumental, in that it explored the case of the FAR in order to better understand conflict transformation and worldview in public policy. I collected data from selected public documents, and newspaper articles. I applied directed content analysis to the data, evaluating it in reference to theoretical frameworks derived from the literature. Finally, I interpreted the data through a lens of critical social constructionism.

Conclusion

The dispute over the farm classification process in British Columbia involved a diverse range of parties in a complex public policy issue. This case study research explored the interplay of public policy, conflict transformation, and worldviews, providing insight that is both practically and theoretically relevant. Chapter 2: Literature

Review will enrich the academic context of the research, address what is already known about this topic, and provide a theoretical framework for the primary research. Chapter 3: Methodology describes my theoretical and methodological approach to the research, what data sources I used, and how I collected and analyzed the data. Chapter 4: Results describes the data sources, provides the results of the directed content analysis, and presents initial findings. Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions provides a discussion and interpretation of the results and findings and describes implications for practice and questions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This research presents a case of public policy conflict in terms of three research questions: 1) Were transformative approaches applied to public policy in the Farm Assessment Review (FAR) case? If so, how were those transformative approaches applied? 2) How do worldview conflicts arise in the case? and 3) What are the effects of the public policy process in terms of transformative capability? The literature review explores what is known about these subjects, and identifies areas where more research is needed. The theoretical exploration in the literature review also allows the development of research propositions. First, I will examine the relationship between public policy and conflict transformation. Second, I will describe how the literature addresses worldview conflict. Third, I will examine how the literature describes the effects of conflict transformation. Finally, I will briefly describe how these research topics relate to areas that scholars have described as needing more research.

Conflict Transformation in Public Policy Processes

Conflict transformation is focused on transforming relations, structures, or issues to address underlying causes of conflict, and on creating a platform for continued progress and relationship (Mitchell 2002, Cloke 2005, Folger and Bush 1994, Dukes 1996, Della Noce 1999, Broome 1993, Lederach 2003). It is implicit in this approach that conflict is seen as a catalyst for necessary change, whether on a personal or societal level (Miall 2003). Diamond (1996) describes conflict transformation as “work[ing] systematically to change the very assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions of the parties in conflict, as well as to open the doors to creative solutions and new behaviours” (47). Lederach describes

conflict transformation as “constructive change efforts that include, and go beyond, the resolution of specific problems” (2003, 4). The first research question asks how this concept of conflict transformation was applied in the FAR.

Conflict transformation is defined in many ways, with different conclusions about analysis and prescription. The lack of a singular definition of conflict transformation reflects the assumption that any given practitioner designs processes that reflect the situation at hand, including the practitioner’s own biases and preferences (Goldberg 2009). “Conflict transformation” as a concept is seen here as a social structure that has arisen as a result of a number of factors, including growing awareness of the complexity of conflict, emergence of more complex and interrelated issues within conflicts, and response within the field of conflict resolution study and practice to the interest-based, problem-solving orientation (Mitchell 2002). The next subsection describes conflict transformation as a worldview in itself, as a means of explicating its qualities and characteristics. These qualities will then be compared to qualities discussed in the public engagement literature in order to explore the relationship between public engagement and conflict transformation. Finally, the last subsection examines obstacles to conflict transformation.

Conflict Transformation as a Worldview

A worldview is a platform of assumptions and unexamined beliefs that form the basis for everyday meaning-making and action (Clark 2002). The concept of worldview can be considered a worldview in itself and its underlying assumptions, beliefs and prescriptions can be examined in the same way. Worldview can be broken down into five conceptual components: ontology (what is true), epistemology (how truth is known), axiology (what

is valuable or important), ethics (how we should act), and logic (how reality is organized) (Docherty 2001). Since conflict transformation is essentially a worldview in itself, examining conflict transformation in terms of worldview components can reveal its assumptions, beliefs, and prescriptions.

Through the lens of conflict transformation, social reality is seen as a construction of ideologies created through participation in groups and relationships (Broome 1993, Folger and Bush 1994, Della Noce 1999). “Through their talk and text, ordinary individuals as social actors enact, sustain and reproduce a particular social order” (Della Noce 1999, 273). The ontological implication is that truth exists only as a social construction, subject to revision and competition from other constructions. Social reality, in other words, is nothing more permanent than a mutual agreement to interpret phenomena and perceptions in a certain way (Patton 2002).

It follows from the mutuality of social construction that truth is found in relationships (Folger and Bush 1994, Diamond 1996) and context (Lederach 2003). Epistemologically, one must learn about relationships in order to find truth, and dialogue is a key instrument in this process (Lederach 2003, Stewart 1994, Della Noce 1999). As Della Noce writes, “When interaction is privileged, meaning is formulated as a situated, interactive construction that emerges through dialogue” (1999, 285). Relationship is highly privileged as a source of knowledge and as an end in itself (Folger and Bush 1994, Della Noce 1999).

Conflict transformation is associated with other axiological values as well, such as transformational change, open-endedness, and dialogue. Scholars and practitioners value transformational change, although they disagree on how to define it (Della Noce 1999;

Diamond 1996; Dukes 1993, 1996; Folger and Bush 1994; Lederach 2003). Folger and Bush (1994) define transformation as “individual moral development” (22) which allows individuals to “define problems in their own terms” (20). Folger and Bush (1994) hold out the possibility that this personal transformation could have broad social impacts. Dukes, on the other hand, expresses transformation in terms of restructuring social institutions and achieving social justice (1993). Lederach defines transformation in terms of creating “constructive change processes” (2003, 12). This implies that what is transformed is not necessarily actors or issues, but the process by which parties interact. Transformation occurs when the process allows parties to address the “content, context, and structure of the relationship” (Lederach 2003, 12). Although these definitions are significantly different, fundamental change (in actors, institutions, or conflict structures) is part of the transformation axiology.

Practitioners of the transformational approach also value open-endedness, with an emphasis on initiating ongoing change processes as well as achieving outcomes (Diamond 1996, Lederach 2005). Outcomes such as transformed relationships are achieved through dialogue and trust building, so two-way information exchange is a critical component (Della Noce 1999). Likewise, the mutuality of social reality depends upon broad participation and procedural justice (Foley 2007; Dukes 1996). Issues are defined broadly to address the relational context (Riskin 2003).

The emphasis that transformative practitioners place on change has implications for how practitioners should act. Ethically, conflict transformation requires the practitioner to act as a mediator and as a facilitator, and in some views (Della Noce 1999), as a counsellor. Practitioners are expected to elicit empathy from the parties and facilitate

dialogue (Broome 1993, Della Noce 1999, Folger and Bush 1994) as part of an elicitive practice (Riskin 2003) rooted in a recognition that practitioners inherently co-construct meaning within the transformation process (Della Noce 1999). Reflective facilitation includes a willingness to relinquish expectations about outcome (Lederach 2005) and ability to empower the parties to represent themselves (Bush and Folger 1994). Conflict transformation also requires practitioners to “admit the interests of stakeholders not at the table, including the general public, groups or individuals without the power to force inclusion into public conflict resolution forums, and future generations” (Dukes 1993, 50). The practitioner is expected to address power imbalances by encouraging personal growth without directing the dialogue toward a particular solution (Folger and Bush 1994, Della Noce 1999). Lederach emphasizes a “transformational platform” that allows the disputing parties to continue working toward a long-term solution even after the practitioner has left the room (2003).

Conflict transformation’s ontological and epistemological assumptions have implications for decision-making and understanding relationships between concepts. Logically, the social construction of meaning leaves room for ambiguity. Lederach (2003) describes his effort to frame questions as “both/and” dilemmas rather than “either/or” problems. Social construction also means that the truth is more a matter of consensus than of deduction; the logic of any argument is the subject of social construction, and is therefore subject to deconstruction and revision.

Conflict transformation is a socially constructed point of view about conflict. Although different practitioners apply conflict transformation in different ways with different goals and outcomes, there is a consistent set of beliefs that can be described in

terms of analysis and practice. Analytically, context and relationship are paramount to understanding underlying meaning-making structures at work. In practice, processes should be inclusive (Dukes 1996), open-ended (Lederach 2003, 2005), dialogic (Della Noce 1999, Broome 1993), and democratic (Dukes 1993). Goals should be described in terms of changes in structures (Lederach 2003) and relationships (Bush and Folger 1994) that facilitate ongoing dialogue (Della Noce 1999) and future change processes (Lederach 2003).

Transformational Qualities in the Public Policy Setting

Public policy conflicts are somewhat inherently difficult to resolve. The intractability of public policy conflicts can be traced to interrelatedness of problems, complexity, scientific uncertainty, jurisdictional overlap, and depth and breadth of potential impact (Crowfoot and Wondolleck 1990, Dukes 1996). In addition, the involvement of intractable issues around rights, identity and values also add to the difficulty in resolving public policy dispute (Campbell 2003, Crowfoot and Wondolleck 1990, Head 2007, Susskind and Cruikshank 1987). Collaborative governance has emerged as a response to these challenges (Bingham, Nabatchi and O’Leary 2005; Campbell 2003; Head 2007). Conflict transformation promises similar benefits as collaborative governance. The following section explores the parallels between collaborative governance and conflict transformation.

Public Participation and Conflict Transformation

The formation of public policy is a complex process that involves many parties with sometimes diametrically opposed positions (Dukes 1996). Environmental public policy,

for example, involves large numbers of stakeholders, potentially irreversible consequences, and costs that are difficult to measure (Campbell 2003). Dispute resolution techniques and public participation mechanisms are common ways of dealing with these complexities. The degree to which the public policy process is able to manage conflict, resolve disputes, or transform relations and structure depends a great deal on the design of the process.

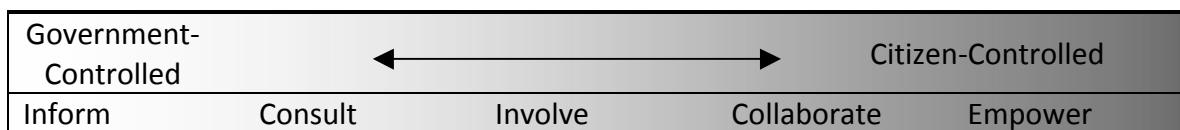


Figure 4: Two spectra of public participation strategies (Head 2007, IAP2 2007)

Public participation in policy formation occurs along a continuum that ranges from total government control on one end to total citizen control on the other (Head 2007), as depicted in Figure 4. On one end of the spectrum lies *inform*, which implies a one-way information exchange intended to provide the public with information only, such as fact sheets and web sites. The next level is *consultation*, by which government agencies seek public feedback on the analysis, alternatives, or decisions through public comment, focus groups, surveys and meetings. When agencies *involve* the public, they work directly with the public through workshops and other elements of the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood. Next is *collaboration*, in which the public is a full partner in each aspect of the decision, and citizens are active on advisory committees and through consensus-building activities. This appears to be an attempt to reach a settlement where all parties are satisfied, although the state maintains some level of control. Finally, the public may be *empowered* to take final decisions in processes such as citizens' juries, referenda, and delegations. Although there is debate over the relative merits of the

extremes, most policy formation processes fall somewhere in the middle (Head 2007, Wondolleck and Yaffee 2003). Where the process falls in this continuum depends upon the attitudes of the process designers, the capacity of the public to participate, the willingness and ability of the government agency to relinquish control over policy development and implementation, the skill of the process designers and facilitators, and other factors (Head 2007).

There is growing movement toward collaboration and public empowerment as public participation practices (Ansell and Gash 2007; Bingham, Nabatchi and O’Leary 2005; Campbell 2003; Head 2007). This movement is attributed to a shift toward governance based on a horizontal network model, recognition of the potential for re-emergence of unresolved conflicts (Bingham, Nabatchi and O’Leary 2005), and the desire to “shift legitimacy from protest movements to political institutions” (Head 2007, 447). Recognition of the increasing interrelatedness of social problems also contributes to the increase in collaborative public policy approaches (Crowfoot and Wondolleck 1990, Head 2007, Wondolleck and Yaffee 2003).

Successful collaboration and empowerment in public policy share many attributes with conflict transformation. Some or all decision-making authority must be in the hands of the stakeholders, often in the form of consensus processes (Ansell and Gash 2007). Participation must be broad, and parties must have the technical and material capacity to participate fully (Head 2007; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). The process must allow relationships and trust to develop over time through face-to-face dialogue (Ansell and Gash 2007, Head 2007). Participants and process managers must be open to unfamiliar ways of knowing and communicating (Dakin 2003), and willing to explore unexpected

outcomes (Dukes 1996). Finally, there must be flexibility in terms of timing and process (Dukes 1996; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998).

Theoretical Framework

For the purposes of this research, I propose a theoretical framework for evaluating the transformative potential of a public policy process. The framework combines the determinants of successful collaboration with the prescriptions of conflict transformation in five thematic areas. First, and perhaps most important, is the locus of decision making authority. In conflict resolution processes as well as in public engagement, it is not always the parties to the dispute who make the decision. Practitioners may direct the process toward a preferred outcome based on their worldview (Goldberg 2009), or practitioners may be explicitly empowered to arbitrate. Government-centred processes reserve decision-making power for elected or appointed officials (Head 2007). Transformative processes must vest decision-making authority in the stakeholders.

The second theme is participation. A public process can look very different when only one side is invited to the facilitation, or when the process is structured in a way that gives a significant advantage to one party or group of parties. Transformative processes invite broad participation (Head 2007), address power imbalances and resource inequalities (Dukes 1996, Foley 2007), and make room for alternate ways of knowing and communicating (Lederach 2005).

The third theme of transformation potential is the quality of the interaction. Solicitation of public comments and hearing-style consultations do not allow dialogue to take place; with no dialogue, there is little opportunity to change relationships or to discuss structural changes that might have significant consequences (King, Feltey, and

Susel 1998). Face-to-face interaction and the development of trust and shared understanding are critical elements of conflict transformation (Della Noce 1999, Folger and Bush 1994) and collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2007).

Problem or issue definition is the fourth theme. When government defines what issues are on the table, government helps determine the potential for challenge to the status quo (Dukes 1996). In addition, whoever sets the agenda has the power to determine whether the problem will be defined narrowly, in terms of distributional issues, or broadly, in terms of values, identity, or rights (Riskin 2003). Transformative processes must address these foundational issues.

The final theme of the transformative framework I propose is goal setting. This is closely related to the definition of the problem, but if the goal (implicit or otherwise) is to resolve the immediate dispute as quickly as possible, or to maintain the status quo, the process is not likely to produce transformation. Issues may be defined broadly or narrowly, but transformational processes must reflect the value that conflict transformation places on changing structures or relations (Dukes 1996), and establishing a platform for future engagement (Foley 2007, Lederach 2005).

Obstacles to Conflict Transformation in Public Policy

In addition to the elements of transformational processes I propose, it is important to recognize the many obstacles to transformation in the public policy setting.

Transformative processes require a great deal of capacity and willingness on the part of government agencies (Dukes 1996). Transformation also requires that parties be prepared to address the underlying conflict and be open to personal or institutional development (Alexander 2008). The bureaucratic and technocratic cultures of many government

agencies make some elements of the transformational process difficult to adopt (Head 2007). First, building an inclusive process around dialogue and relationships is time-consuming, while agencies are often mandated to deliver short-term results (Head 2007). Second, broad definitions of problems create difficulty for agencies with inherently limited jurisdictions (Dakin 2003, Head 2007). Third, transformational processes require skills and abilities that are not usually part of agency job descriptions (Head 2007; King, Feltey and Susel 1998). Fourth, transformed structures of government may be undesirable outcomes for government planners, who may not trust the transformative processes (Head 2007; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). Finally, outcomes are unpredictable, which makes contingency planning difficult (Dukes 1996).

It may be that government design and implementation of transformative processes is inherently problematic, due to the conflicting roles of government as both facilitator/mediator and as party to the conflict. As King, Feltey, and Susel note, “Authentic participation, that is participation that works for all parties and stimulates interest and investment in both administrators and citizens, requires rethinking the underlying roles of, and relationships between, administrators and citizens” (1998, 317). In other words, while government processes may be effective at reaching settlement, they may not be well-suited to resolution or transformation of underlying relations, issues, or structures.

In conclusion, the literature indicates that there is a place for transformational processes in the realm of public engagement (Ansell and Gash 2007; Bingham and Bush 2005; Burgess and Burgess 2005; Dukes 1993, 1996). However, it is clear that public engagement and conflict resolution are not necessarily corollaries. Public engagement is

often one component of the public policy process, but just as often, there are other powerful processes, such as political agendas, resource limitations, and cultural norms that may affect the public policy outcome. In addition, transformational public processes face numerous obstacles, including short time spans, lack of capacity to be inclusive in engaging the public, and lack of willingness to devolve authority (Dukes 1996, Head 2007; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). A synthesis of the requirements of conflict transformation and collaborative governance suggests a theoretical framework which includes five themes: who decides, who participates, how participation happens, how the problem is defined, and what the goal of the process is. This case study will assess the transformational potential of the Farm Assessment Review process in terms of these five themes, and identify the obstacles that may prevent conflict transformation.

Recognizing and Accommodating Worldview Conflicts in Public Policy

This research also addresses how worldview conflicts arise in public policy conflicts. The goal of this section of the literature review is to examine how worldview conflicts contribute to intractability of disputes, how they can be identified, and how they can be addressed.

Worldview conflict is a broad concept based on the idea that different people construct meaning from their experiences and perceptions in different ways (Docherty 1999). A “worldview” is not an object, but rather it is a process of constructing meaning. When people with different ways of making meaning find themselves in a conflict, the conflict will be difficult to resolve. Imagine mediating a conflict between two people who don’t agree on the meaning of money, or on what makes something true. In addition, worldview encompasses other potential factors of intractability. For example, issues

around rights and identity (Campbell 2003; Crowfoot and Wondolleck 1990; Head 2007; Susskind and Cruikshank 1987) are reflections of ethics and ontology. Cultural differences such as time concepts, the relative importance of context, variations on communication style, and attitudes toward individualism (LeBaron and Pillay 2006) are reflections of ontology, axiology, and ethics. In general, worldview conflicts present particular challenges to resolution because the parties are not negotiating from the same understanding of reality (Docherty 2001).

In a conflict situation, it may be necessary to address underlying worldview conflicts prior to addressing disagreements on issues or interests (Docherty 2001). Often it is not until worldview conflicts arise that we are even conscious of our worldviewing processes. Only when there is a challenge to our version of reality do we realize that there might be another reality out there (Docherty 2001). These differences in perceived reality (worldview) can be recognized by the presence of differences in any of the components: ontology, epistemology, logic, axiology, and ethics (Docherty 2001). Because worldviews are largely unconscious, the differences are “best studied by looking at people’s unreflective actions and unconsciously chosen language, rather than at their deliberately crafted statements of values, opinions, and ideologies (Docherty 2001, 51). To recognize worldview differences, it is necessary to identify differences in worldview components through analysis of action and speech, particularly in use of metaphors and stories (Docherty 2001, Goldberg 2009)

The prescription for worldview conflicts is to negotiate a common reality, and the prescription has common traits with conflict transformation. First, as in conflict transformation, there is no step-by-step formula—each case requires an adaptive

approach (Docherty 2001, Lederach 2003). Second, identifying the components of worldview that are not aligned is necessary in order to explicitly address them (Docherty 2001). Explicit attention to worldview components “overstep[s] established boundaries for consultation” (Docherty 2001, 283) and is analogous to defining issues broadly in conflict transformation (Alexander 2008, Goldberg 2009, Riskin 2003). Third, developing the ability of parties to recognize differences through dialogue and by working slowly (Docherty 2001) are also process qualities of transformation (Lederach 2005, Della Noce 1999). Fourth, “worldview translation” could be considered a type of transformative goal (Docherty 2001). Finally, adaptive management means adapting the process and its goals as new understanding is developed (Docherty 2001), which is analogous to the resilient basis for ongoing effort needed for transformation (Lederach 2003). Accommodation of worldview conflicts, then, requires recognition that the worldview level of conflict exists, and application of transformative processes to facilitate changes in structures and relations such as establishing a shared reality as a basis for continued dialogue.

This research examines the Farm Assessment Review case in terms of the presence of worldview conflicts as evidenced by differences in ontology, epistemology, axiology, ethics, and logic. The analysis includes an assessment of whether worldview conflict was recognized and accommodated in the public policy process.

Transformative Effects of Public Processes

The third research question asks how the public policy process affected the outcome in terms of transformation. In order to address this question, it is necessary to explore how conflict resolution processes are evaluated, and what transformation would look like.

This section explores the literature on conflict outcomes and characteristics of transformation in order to develop a theoretical framework for the research.

The conflict resolution field has struggled at times to demonstrate its benefits in practical terms (c.f. Golten and Smith 2009; Mayer 2004). Part of the difficulty is that there are so many possible ways to measure the success of conflict resolution, none of which can be called authoritative. As with the design of conflict resolution procedures, the definition of success depends on who is doing the defining (Alexander 2008). Despite the absence of a singular definition of success, the self-proclaimed goals of the process provide a worthwhile starting point. So transformative processes can be called successful if they have transformed what they set out to transform. Unfortunately, all too often, practitioners fail to articulate a specific goal (Alexander 2008). Nevertheless, there are several ways in which conflict resolution processes (and public engagement processes, by extension) have been measured. Satisfaction ratings by parties have been collected and analyzed; the number of settlements accomplished by various mediators has been tallied; stability has been measured in longitudinal studies (Bush and Bingham 2005).

Some conflict resolution processes, however, may set out to achieve fairness or justice, which are difficult to define. Young distinguishes between distributive justice and social justice, where distributive justice is focused on allocation of resources and social justice is concerned with the ability of people to exercise their capacity (1990). This mirrors the distinction between distributive and constitutional conflict types identified by Susskind and Cruikshank (1987), where distributional conflicts revolve around tangible resources, while constitutional conflicts relate to basic rights and values. Thus, a focus on material level of conflict around distributional issues may be easier to “resolve,” but it

may overlook underlying constitutional issues that contribute to a lack of social justice. From this discussion, one could conclude that the success of a conflict management process could be measured on two levels: on the material level of addressing distributive concerns, or on the level of constitutional conflict over social justice. Indicators for the material level could include outcome satisfaction or equitable distribution of resources. Indicators of social justice could be focused on procedural issues and recognition of rights.

Another potential indicator of success for a state-designed and -implemented conflict management process is whether it maintains the state interest in stability (Young 1990). Young (1990) describes public policy as the outcome of a dialectic between advocates seeking social justice and the state's efforts to maintain social order for the purpose of economic expansion. The insurgent efforts of the community are met with cooptation and other forms of containment based on distributive ideas of justice. A conflict management process could be deemed successful if it recontained insurgency to maintain the status quo and prevented escalation of the conflict.

For transformative processes, one approach to measuring success is to examine procedural issues: accessibility of the process to all interested parties, affordability, protection of participant's rights, and representation of the parties interests in a collaborative rather than adversarial style (Dukes 1993). Another approach is to consider outcomes such as transformation of structures and relations (Clark 2002, Lederach 2003), although few criteria can be enunciated for evaluating whether this has happened (Foley 2007). Relational indicators, on the other hand, provide straightforward concepts for evaluation: reduction in conflict, improved relations, cognitive and affective shifts, ability

to resolve subsequent disputes, empowerment and recognition, and major shifts in perception (Foley 2007). This approach looks at relationship characteristics as indicators of transformation, rather than for transformation itself. The relational indicator approach does not include indicators which address the fundamental structural changes that Dukes (1993, 1996, 2004), and Lederach (2003, 2005) advocate.

Another approach to assessing transformational effects is to look for phenomena that have the potential to transform a conflict. Changes to actors (cognitive and affective shifts), issues (shifts in perception), context, structures (social and relational), and personalities (empowerment) have the potential to transform structures and relations to establish a platform for future change processes (Miall 2003). Changes in these locations do not necessarily mean that transformation has taken place, but transformation is unlikely without some of the changes illustrated in Table 1 (Miall 2003).

Table 2: Locations of Change That Support Conflict Transformation

Location	Examples
1. Context transformation	Change in the international or regional environment Change from asymmetric to symmetric relations
2. Structure transformations	Change in power structures Changes of markets of conflict Changes of leadership Changes of goals
3. Actor transformations	Intra-party change Change in party's constituencies Changing actors Transcendence of contested issues
4. Issue transformations	Constructive compromise Changing issues De-linking or re-linking issues Changes of perspective
5. Personal/elite transformations	Changes of heart Changes of will Gestures of conciliation

From Miall 2003, 10

As Table 2 shows, five locations of change can support conflict transformation. Miall refers to these locations as “types” of “transformers,” but in the context of this study, I will approach the conceptual categories as locations; that is, they refer to areas where change might occur, rather than to change processes themselves. Context transformations “refer to changes in the context of conflict that may radically alter each party’s perception on the conflict situation, as well as their motives” (Miall 2003, 9). Contextual transformations occur at the broadest levels at the global or regional setting. The emergence of new agencies or institutions is an example of a context transformation. In the FAR case, a contextual change might occur if a new majority party were elected. Structural changes are changes in the basic structure of the conflict, such as the power dynamic among the parties. Structural changes tend to occur at the state/society level. An example in the FAR case would be if a lawsuit forced a referendum. Actor transformations (not to be confused with personal transformations) include “decisions on

the part of actors to change their goals or alter their general approach to conflict” (Miall 2003, 10). This transformation type also includes changes in the constituencies of the actors. A relevant example would be the resignation of a FARP member. Issue transformations occur when parties reformulate, redefine, or reframe their positions on issues on the table. An example would be if the FARP were to expand the terms of reference to include examining the definition of a farm.

Finally, personal/elite transformations are “personal changes of heart or mind within individual leaders or small groups with decision making power” (Miall 2003, 10). These personal transformations could include the “recognition and empowerment” that Bush and Folger promote (1994), or the development of relational empathy (Della Noce, 1999). For example, if a BCAA assessor were to state that the split assessment was deeply hurtful to some farmers because it challenged their identities, relations between BCAA and farmers might be transformed.

The five locations of changes provide a useful conceptual framework for understanding conflict transformation possibilities, and they describe a range of changes that could result in transformation. It is nevertheless possible for these changes to occur without a “transformation” taking place. For transformation to be present, that conflict transformation must offer a “platform for change” (Lederach 2003), promote the ability to resolve future disputes (Foley 2007), and establish a new relationship dynamic (Folger and Bush 1994). Although these locations of changes might be considered a relational or structural change within Miall’s model, the platform for change is distinct as a necessary change for transformation to occur (or begin) (Lederach 2003). Transformation processes include setbacks, false starts, and adaptations; therefore, a resilient basis for ongoing

effort is paramount (Lederach 2003, 2005). In other words, a transformation must include changes in actors, issues, context, structure, or personalities (Miall), and it must develop future change processes to address ongoing differences within the relationship (Lederach 2003, Foley 2007). One way to assess the extent to which a process has been transformative, therefore, is to examine what has changed as a result of the process, and whether these changes have opened the door for ongoing dialogue. Conversely, if a process has not been transformative, it can be telling to examine what has changed, what has remained, and what the prospects for ongoing dialogue and resolution may be. Change is the fundamental goal of conflict transformation (Mitchell 2002), so evaluating change locations is an effective way of measuring success. This research examines the Farm Assessment Review to determine what kinds of changes have taken place, and whether a platform for future changes has been established.

Known Research Needs

In addition to reviewing the literature to identify what is known about the research questions, it is also helpful to review what the literature says is unknown or in need of further research. Several themes emerge: the dissemination of dispute resolution concepts to public agency practitioners (Dukes 1993; Bush and Bingham 2005); a better understanding of the conditions necessary for collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2007) and worldview shift (which is distinct from worldview accommodation discussed earlier in this chapter) (Goldberg 2009); documentation of the effects of worldview on dispute resolution processes (Goldberg 2009); and qualitative research providing stories and cases (Bush and Bingham 2005).

Research can help to describe how conflict resolution experts can effectively reach the public policy makers who could be users of conflict resolution processes (Bush and Bingham 2005, 112), but who are sometimes unaware that conflict resolution pertains to them (Dukes 1993, 52). Public engagement is often conducted by people with little formal training in public engagement, and with even less training in conflict resolution (Dukes 1996). Research can help bring conflict resolution to the attention of public policy practitioners, who may seek training to incorporate conflict resolution into public participation processes. Studies that provide information specifically relevant to managers and policy makers can facilitate the adoption and dissemination of conflict resolution (Bush and Bingham 2005). Relevance to managers and policy makers could mean describing specific ways that conflict resolution can be incorporated, describing the public benefits of doing so, or other practical matters (Bush and Bingham 2005).

In terms of worldview, there is a need for research that describes the skills, approaches, or conditions that can encourage or support worldview shift (Goldberg 2009). Docherty (2001) offers a number of prescriptions as discussed above, but they are centred on barricade situations. Although Docherty discusses her “Lessons” in broad terms, more work is needed to apply worldview concepts to other types of conflict. In a similar vein, from the collaborative governance perspective, more research is needed exploring “the contextual conditions likely to facilitate or discourage the desired outcomes of collaborative governance” (Ansell and Gash 2007, 562). Gunton and Day (2000) used a survey tool to identify 25 important process qualities, but they did not address structural and contextual components. Finally, Bingham and Bush (2005) call for

qualitative research that describes personal stories and cases in order to explore conflict processes in ways that quantitative methods cannot.

In summary, there is a need for research on 1) disseminating conflict resolution concepts within the public policy framework; 2) identifying conditions which support or impede resolution of intractable conflicts; and 3) understanding the role that worldviews play in affecting the design and outcome of conflict resolution processes. Finally, authors describe the need for qualitative research examining case studies and personal stories. This study will shed light on each of these areas.

Conclusion

The literature review suggests theoretical frameworks for each of the research questions. The first research question asks how conflict transformation was applied to public policy in the FAR case. The literature indicates that transformation has a corollary in collaborative public participation, and suggests a theoretical framework based on who decides, who participates, how participation happens, how the problem is defined, and what the goal of the process is. The second research question asks how worldview conflicts arise in the case. The literature review suggests that worldview differences are a known contributor to intractability in public policy disputes, and that awareness of these differences is a fundamental cornerstone of transformative processes. The worldview framework consists of ontology, epistemology, axiology, logic and ethics. The third research question addresses the effects of the public process in terms of transformation. The literature indicates that transformative effects can be evaluated according to changes in issues, actors, context, personalities, and structures, particularly if the changes result in

a program for future change processes. These three theoretical frames will form the basis of the research, as will be explained in Chapter 3: Methodology.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the Methodology chapter is to explain the how the research was conducted, and why it was conducted that way. Just as conflict resolution practitioners and public policy process designers have their own worldviews which influence their approaches, so too does a researcher have inherent beliefs about the nature of truth and where to find it. This chapter acknowledges the research paradigm within which I conducted the research. Second, I describe how my beliefs correspond to methodological traditions in the social sciences. Third, I discuss the case study as a research strategy. Finally, I will describe the research process and data analysis methods I used in this study.

Research Paradigm

Any study that purports to study worldviews inherently recognizes that there are many ways to define truth, for this is part of what a worldview is. The subjectivity of truth is an important foundation of the worldview concept, and of the qualitative research paradigm. According to Creswell, a qualitative researcher “builds a complex holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (Creswell 1998, 15). As a researcher, I believe that reality is interpreted differently by different people in different situations; and I am engaged in interpretation of the data. Far from denying my own subjectivity, I embrace it as an unavoidable condition of knowledge. In the words of Stake (1995),

Interpretation is a major part of all research. The function of the qualitative researcher is clearly to maintain vigorous interpretation. On the

basis of observations and other data, researchers draw their own conclusions. (Stake 1995, 9)

Truth, then, is found in the ways that individuals and groups interpret their perceptions—the meaning-making process in itself is a source of knowledge.

The Influence of Critical Social Science on the Research

This research was also informed by critical social science. Critical social science “goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves” (Neumann 1997, 74). How the “reality” of the structures is defined in such a statement could be debated, but the overall purpose is to acknowledge that social constructions are not neutral in whom or what they privilege. It is possible to “critique and transform social relations” by revealing these privileges through research (Neumann 1997, 74). Indeed, some scholars argue that conflict transformation is an inherently critical concept in that it seeks to change social structures. Mitchell (2002) concludes that “the transformational approach, however, begins by assuming that there is nothing sacred about the status quo—indeed, it is probably the source of the conflict—so that the process starts with an analysis and critique of the existing system and an assumption that it will be necessary to create new systems, structures and relationships” (23). In other words, a study that looks for evidence of transformative processes and the conditions that support transformation is inherently “revealing hidden structures.”

My research was also informed by post-colonial theory, which is a form of critical social science focused on addressing the implications of imperialism and colonialism. How do social constructions around space, place, research, and identity perpetuate these legacies, and who benefits from them? Can public policy processes operate in a way that

allows us to “decolonize our minds, to recover ourselves, to claim a space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity”? (Smith 1999, 23).

I do not subscribe to the possibility of objectivity; this research forms a part of discursive process that forms and reforms social reality. It should also be clear that my interpretation will be coloured not only by my experiences as described in Chapter 1: Introduction, but by my bias toward transforming the status quo in order to move toward a more just society. This research will examine the structures of the case with an eye toward revealing the hidden structures that impede transformation. It will also examine the effects that those structures have upon those who may not conform to the dominant view of land ownership and economic progress.

Social Constructionism as Methodology

The formal name for the process of social meaning-making is social construction, and it implies that truth is a matter of consensus among social actors; although I may interpret my perceptions differently than you do, this interpretation takes place in a social context (Patton 2002; Stark and Torrance 2005). Within that context, certain interpretations are more common, if not hegemonic (or socially enforced). Therefore, to understand a phenomenon, we must look carefully at its context and ask “how have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, ‘truths,’ explanations, beliefs and worldview? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviours and for those with whom they interact?” (Patton 2002, 132). The hypothetical questions that Patton poses are exactly the types of question that this research sets out to ask. The first research question asks: Were transformative approaches applied to public policy in the Farm Assessment Review (FAR) case? If so, how were those transformative

approaches applied? This question examines how the actors construct the dispute resolution processes according to their contexts. The second research question is: How do worldview conflicts arise in public policy disputes? These are the “‘truths’, explanations, beliefs and worldview” that Patton refers to (2002, 132). The third research question asks what effects public policy processes have on issues, actors, structures, personalities, and contexts. This question explores the consequences of the actors’ constructions on relationships and structures.

Research Strategy

The research process followed the case study strategy of the type that Stake (1995) calls instrumental, and which Yin (2009) calls exploratory. Case study is an appropriate research strategy for two reasons. First, it is consistent with the social constructionist methodology, in that case study “seeks to engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to the settings and manufacture in them” (Stark and Torrance 2005, 33). Second, case study allows a rich exploration of the phenomenon from multiple data sources, and “preserves the multiple realities of the different and even contradictory views of what is happening” (Stake 1995, 12). The Farm Assessment Review is an instrumental and exploratory case because it will answer questions about “how” and “why,” and it recognizes that my ability to control the events is very limited (Yin 2009). Like any case study, there must be boundaries: temporally, the case begins when the Assessment Review was announced (December 17, 2007), and concludes with the issuance of the final report (July 31, 2009). Although the Review was province-wide, I also bound the case geographically to the Capital Regional District (See Figure 1 in Chapter 1: Introduction). These temporal and

geographical boundaries allowed me to narrow the data pool to the most relevant sources, since the conflict was most acute in the CRD area where audits had taken place, and data about the process was most prevalent after the review process had been announced.

There are many benefits to conducting a case study, especially that it “allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin 2009, 2). Putting the case in its context in this way allows the researcher to “catch the complexities of a single case” (Stake 1995, xi). Although meanings are constructed in context, worldviews are formed and held by individuals; therefore, I will take individual participants as the unit of analysis and embed them in an in-depth description of the context.

Research Methods

The Research Methods section describes how the research was carried out. The description of the research methods includes the theoretical concepts and their components; the data collection methods; and the data analysis methods.

Operationalizing concepts and components

In order to conduct research on the case, it is necessary to define and operationalize concepts. Therefore, I have developed a theoretical framework and a research proposition based on the literature review for each research question. For the first research question, I have theoretically defined transformative processes as those which are broadly inclusive, that devolve decision making to participants, that are dialogic and open-ended in nature, that define issues broadly, and that set transformative goals. The second research question is: How do worldview conflicts arise in public policy processes, and how are they accommodated? The literature review suggests that worldview does arise in public

policy, and requires recognition of worldview differences and negotiations to reach a shared reality. My research proposition is that worldview conflicts are often unrecognized or ignored in public policy, and are not accommodated at all. In order to research this proposition, the literature suggests five theoretical components: ontology, epistemology, axiology, ethics, and logic.

Finally, the third research question deals with the effects of the public policy process in terms of changes that could promote conflict transformation. The literature suggests that conflict transformation generates a platform for ongoing dialogue through changes in context, structures, issues, personalities, and/or actors. Based on this theoretical framework, the research proposition is that transformational changes did not occur through the FAR process, but rather the process marginalized or co-opted participants and stakeholders whose worldviews are not accommodated in the process.

The three research propositions allowed me to plan my data collection and analysis around clear theoretical statements. At the same time, I was careful to maintain an open mind to avoid biasing the data management process. The acknowledgement of my research expectations and biases helped me to maintain awareness and look for evidence that refutes my propositions as well as that which supports my propositions. Rigorous data collection methods were also an important factor in ensuring the validity of the research.

Data Collection Methods

In order to build a rich description of the case, it is necessary to collect a large body of data (Yin 2009). Triangulation from multiple sources is needed to validate inferences (Druckman 2005; Stake 1995; Yin 2009). I also needed to access data sources that would

reveal the qualities of the public process, access the worldviewing components of the participants, and examine the process's transformative effects (or lack thereof).

Therefore, data sources included in-depth semi-structured interviews, documents from MSBR and FARP, submissions to FARP from stakeholders, and news reports, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Overview of Data Sources

Data Source Type	Number of Sources
FARP Press Releases	11
FARP Reports	2
Newspaper Articles	11
FARP Submissions	9
Interviews	3

Interviews. The interviews were designed to understand the meaning-making processes of the individuals, and followed a phenomenological, open-ended structure. The questions focused on the personal experiences of the individuals, with an effort to elicit information about worldviews, relationship changes, personal shifts, and potential for future engagement. The interview process allowed a free-flowing conversation, but also included persistent follow-up questioning and personal reflection. The interview questions are provided in Appendix 1.

I selected three participants whose intimacy with the review process would provide useful insights. I wanted to interview stakeholders with different perspectives in order to assess worldview differences. I contacted several farmers who had expressed strong feelings in newspaper articles or in public comments, but only one agreed to participate. The farmer's assessment increased as a result of newly-applied split classification. I also

contacted three panellists from the CRD, a staff member from Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, a staff member from Ministry of Community Development, and a staff member from BCAA. Two people from this group agreed to participate. In order to protect the anonymity of these interview participants, I have agreed not to describe their specific roles. They are referred to as “panel insiders” because they had a degree of insight and influence on the process that was not available to the public.

Document Review. The documents that were released by the FARP and MSBR provided another rich source of data. Data were collected from all the available sources. There may have been additional potential data sources, such as meeting minutes, internal memos, and interim reports, but these sources were not made available to me or to the public. I requested information through the FAR telephone number but my call was not returned. Similarly, my calls to BCAA were not returned. Table 4 shows the document titles and dates for the documents reviewed.

Table 4: MSBR and FARP Documents Reviewed

Document Title	Document Type	Date of Document
Minister calls for farm assessment review	Press release	December 17, 2007
Panel co-chairs announced for farm assessment review	Press release	January 31, 2008
Farm status review panel members appointed	Press release	February 29, 2008
Terms of Reference For Farm Assessment Review	Policy Document	February 29, 2008
Panel offers first steps to streamline farm assessment	Press release	June 16, 2008
Farm Assessment Review Interim Report	Report	June 16, 2008
Thorpe appointed as co-chair of farm assessment review	Press release	July 8, 2008
Farm assessment review consultations start in Saanich	Press release	September 9, 2008
New panel co-chair appointed to farm assessment review	Press release	September 30, 2008
Panel submits farm assessment review report	Press release	July 31, 2009
Farm Assessment Review Panel Recommendations	Report	July 31, 2009

These “official” documents present explicit directions for the conduct of the FAR, and they include statements from various public officials as to the need and importance of agriculture and the FAR. The documents also provided insight into the qualities of the public policy process, and the actions of FARP members within that process. Content analysis of the explicit meanings, subtexts, and hidden assumptions of the government and FARP documents provided a rich source of data for each of the three research propositions.

Submissions. Similarly, the written participant submissions form a rich source of data for analysis. The FARP report indicates that over 200 submissions were received, although only 36 submissions were posted to the FAR website (FARP 2009). No reason was given for the omission of some submissions from the website. Of the publicly

available submissions, I included only the submissions that originated in the CRD, reflecting the boundaries of the case study. Most of the submissions included return addresses that indicated whether I should include them in the sample. Others contained explicit references to geographic areas. Three of the 36 submissions included no clues as to geographic origin, so I looked up the address of the submitter to determine whether to include it in the case. Table 5 lists the submissions that were included in the review.

Table 5: Submissions to FARP Reviewed

Author of Submission	Date*
District A Farmers Institutes	September 16, 2008
Focus on Farmlands Conference	December 1, 2008
Barbara Johnstone Grimmer	No date
Islands Organic Producers Association	November 27, 2008
Local farms alliance	2008
Moss Street Market	November 28, 2008
Peninsula Agricultural Commission	2007
Salt Spring Island Agricultural Alliance	2008
The Land Conservancy	2008

* Dates provided to the extent available

The submissions provided explicit information about the worldviews and attitudes of the participants in the submitters' own words. The submissions also provided insight into the qualities of the public policy process, and the reactions of the submitters to that process. Content analysis of the explicit meanings, subtexts, and hidden assumptions, of the submissions provided a rich source of data for each of the three research propositions. The submissions also provided insight into different ways that stakeholders constructed meaning from the public policy process.

Newspaper articles. Another data source was the archival record of newspaper articles on the subject of the farm assessment review. The print media plays an important role in shaping meaning-making processes, and the articles provided another source of

quotations from key stakeholders. Table 6 lists the newspaper articles reviewed for this research.

Table 6: Newspaper Articles Reviewed

Title	Publication	Publication Date
Farm status review cheered; BC to revisit policy after outcry over taxes.	<i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i>	December 18, 2007
Farm assessments threaten forestland in Metchosin.	<i>Goldstream News Gazette</i>	January 25, 2008
Stop nickling and diming our farmers.	<i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i>	March 6, 2008
Saanich Farmers fight for their land	<i>Saanich News</i>	March 19, 2008
Farm reclassifications await panel's report.	<i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i>	June 17, 2008
Advocate warns of rising pressure on farms	<i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i>	July 28, 2008
Sliding scale offers better farm protection.	<i>Victoria Times-Colonist</i>	August 1, 2008
Farmers call for end to tax disincentives as assessment appeals fail	<i>Saanich News</i>	October 23, 2008
Farmers denounce clear-cuts.	<i>Saanich News</i>	March 20, 2009
Fate of farming part III: Politicians advocate reform	<i>Saanich News</i>	March 20, 2009
Review could shut small-scale farms – or help them thrive	<i>Saanich News</i>	March 20, 2009

Although newspaper articles often contain direct quotations from parties, reporters and editors select and reproduce the quotations according to their own methodologies and worldviews. I considered newspaper articles to be less reliable data sources because they included an extra layer of interpretation. For this reason, texts were analyzed for contextual meaning only, and only direct quotations were analyzed.

Although there were other sources of data, the data I selected provided a rich understanding of the case and ample opportunities to triangulate data. The combination of interviews, official documents, submissions, newspaper articles, and observation provided a rich archive of information. These different sources were compared, contrasted, and analyzed for explicit and hidden meanings through rigorous data analysis.

Data analysis

The data generated through this case study was analyzed using a directed (also called deductive) content analysis approach. This section defines directed content analysis, explains the framework of the analysis method, and describes how it was applied to the data in this case study.

Content analysis is a “method for inquiring into social reality that consists of inferring features of a non-manifest context from features of a manifest text” (Mayring 2000, 25). It allows a large amount of data to be collected into categories that represent either explicit or inferred meanings (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Text forms the basis of the method, but text can come in the form of interview transcripts, printed media, or observations (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). Content analysis recognizes the many steps of interpretation, from speaker to listener to researcher, allows meaning to be inferred, and acknowledges the bias of the researcher in the hermeneutic process (Krippendorff 2004). At the same time, content analysis also recognizes the importance of the original meaning in its context (Mayring 2000). The inferred meaning was particularly important in examining worldview differences, where stories, metaphors, and unscripted speech and action are clues to unconscious ways of understanding (Docherty 2001, Goldberg 2009).

Category development is a critical component of content analysis, because it forms the basis for all further analysis. The content analysis in this case followed a directed approach rather than an inductive method for category development (Hsieh and Shannon 2005). That is, I used the literature review to develop proposed theoretical frameworks and corresponding categories prior to the data analysis. Figure 4 shows the relationships of the categories to the theoretical frameworks and the research questions. The goal of the

directed approach is to “validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory” (Hsieh and Shannon 2005, 1281). The directed approach allowed me to focus on data that either support or contradict the research propositions.

I coded the text according to the codes shown in Figure 4. Units of analysis ranged from conversation snippets to single words. In addition, I had the option to assign more than one code to any given utterance. As an example, I coded the single word “input” as TDM (decision making), since it implied that the person providing the “input” was not making the decision. I also coded the word as TPQ (participation qualities), because it implied that the information was moving in only one direction. Not every piece of text was coded, although the uncoded text was examined in its own right. As I coded data, I realized that subcategories were needed to accurately categorize the data. I returned to the literature review and identified subcategories within the first two theoretical frameworks, then went through the data again to apply the subcategory codes.

After I had coded all of the data by category, and coded again according to subcategory, I was able to sort the data according to date, source, and codes. Sorting helped to compare how ideas or perceptions changed over time and across parties.

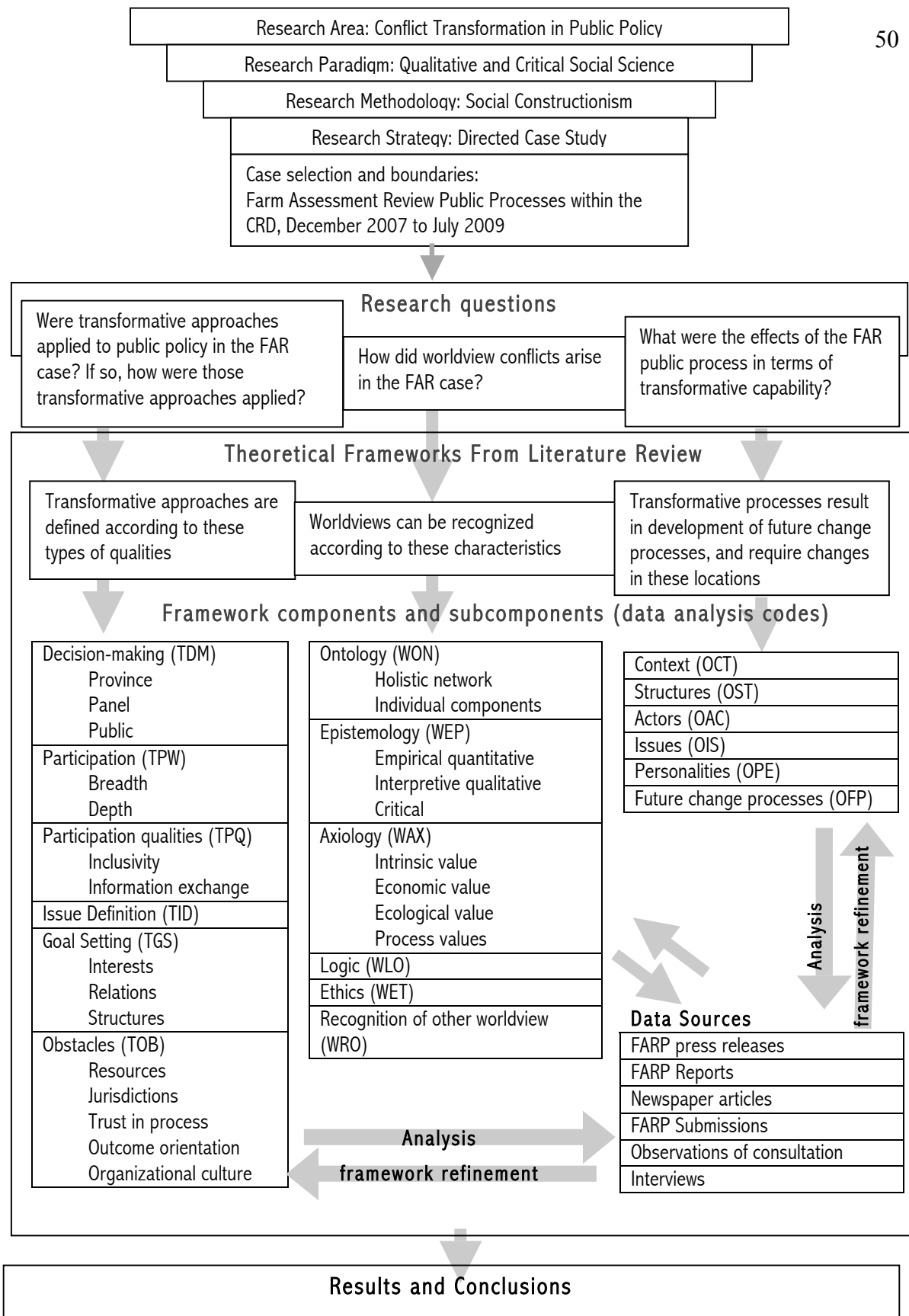


Figure 4: Research Flowchart

Finally, I compared the results to my research propositions to arrive at findings, which are presented in Chapter 4: Results.

The directed approach to content analysis provided a rigorous exploration of the research questions. It allowed me to interpret and analyze both the explicit and inferred meanings according to an existing theoretical framework. I built the data categories around the theoretical frameworks developed in the literature review, and I coded the texts accordingly.

Validity Through Rigour

Qualitative research focuses on interpreting qualities of phenomena rather than measuring them (Creswell 1998). As such, the ability of qualitative research to actually explain what it is supposed to explain (its validity) is often defined in terms of rigour rather than correlation (Yin 2009, Moore et al. 2002). For the purposes of this case study, triangulation, reflexivity, rich description, and member checking form the basis for rigour.

Triangulation of different data sources provided corroborating evidence for conclusions drawn from the data. It should be noted, however, that data are interpreted by the speaker as well as by the researcher—it is possible to interpret different data sources in multiple ways. The lack of corroboration can also be a useful data point. For example, it could indicate that the source of the data provides a unique perspective. Reflexivity acknowledges the effect of the researcher on the case and the analysis, thereby making the researcher's position explicit. Rich description provides a form of transferability in that a highly detailed and well-written account of the case allows the reader to “adopt the same viewpoint as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw,

whether or not he agrees with it. This is the key criterion for qualitative research” (Giorgi 1975, 6). Lincoln and Guba (1985) make a similar case for member checking, saying that “the process of vetting conclusions with study participants is the most critical technique for establishing credibility.” As such, the interview transcripts were made available to the participants for review, and the conclusions were also sent to the interviewees for their input. One interview participant requested some changes to the transcript, but agreed with the conclusions; another requested a meeting to discuss the conclusions. The third participant did not respond.

Finally, it is important to address concerns about generalizing from case studies. Case studies have been criticized as being so specific to the context of the case that the knowledge cannot be generalized to other cases. The contribution of the case study, however, is to illuminate general issues (Stark and Torrance 2005) or theory (Yin 2009). Flyvberg (2006) also notes that even without any generalization, case studies provide rich sources of empirical data for further study. The interviews, observations, and analysis performed for this research could be applied to further research about broader topics. I believe this case provides important insight into public policy processes, and may serve as a tool to highlight the need and opportunity for transformative processes in the public sector.

Ethical Considerations

I applied for and received approval from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (Appendix 2). There were two areas of potential risk: there was a risk that the interviewee’s anonymity would be compromised, and there was a risk that the outcome of the policy discussion could be affected. I minimized the risk to the interview

participants by hiding their names, by generalizing their backgrounds and genders, and by providing an opportunity to the participants to review the data and a summary of conclusions (Appendix 3) to remove any identifying details. I have reduced the risk to society of a changed outcome by focussing the research on the process rather than the substantive issues.

Conclusion

In summary, the case study strategy was an appropriate method for the research agenda of this project because it allowed a rich description of the case based on a theoretical framework. The case study strategy allowed me to explore constructed meanings and the interactions of those meanings. The strategy was rooted in the qualitative traditions of interpreting multiple perspectives from multiple data sources, and it was a useful approach to critical analysis of hegemonic social structures. Data analysis proceeded through content analysis of various types and sources of data according to research propositions and theoretical frameworks drawn from the literature. Findings, presented in the next chapter, were verified through member checking, rich description, triangulation, and with the filter of reflexivity. The research methods will allow the case to contribute to understanding of conflict transformation and worldviewing in the public policy process.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In Chapter 2: Literature Review and Chapter 3: Methodology, I developed theoretical frameworks and research propositions for each of the three research questions. This chapter provides an overview of the results of the data analysis and presents the findings. It is important to note that this study examines the FAR process in the CRD; results and findings are specific to the CRD area. Discussion and interpretation of the results and findings will be reserved for Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions. This chapter begins with an overview of the data and the data analysis process. Next, I present the data in terms of three research questions. For each question, I relate the data to the theoretical framework and make a finding comparing the data to the research proposition. I conclude with an overview of the findings and an assessment of the study design.

About the Data and Data Analysis

Data were collected from the news media, from the public archive at the FAR website, and from in-depth semi-structured interviews. I analyzed nine press releases, two reports, the Terms of Reference, nine submissions to the panel, eleven news articles, and five hours of interview recordings³. From the sources, I used directed content analysis to identify and code 580 phrases, words or exchanges according to the categories derived from the theoretical frameworks and explained in Chapter 3: Methodology. During coding and analysis, I developed subcategories for some of the categories (see Figure 4 in Chapter 3). I based the subcategories on the theoretical frameworks as well. In presenting

³ Interviews took place as follows: G.(a panel insider): 17 April 2009; R. (a farmer): 21 April 2009; H.(a panel insider): 21 April 2009. All references to these participants are from these interviews.

the data, I made minor changes to some data points to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Research Question One: Transformative Process

The first research question asks how transformative approaches were applied to public policy in the FAR case. The theoretical framework postulates that the transformative qualities of the process can be expressed in terms of decision making authority, who participated, the qualities of that participation, how issues were defined, and the goals of the process. Obstacles to transformative process in this case were also identified. Results are presented for each of these elements. The research proposition is that although opportunities for transformation exist in public policy, the case of the Farm Assessment Review does not exhibit transformative qualities due to a number of obstacles. In this section, I present data on each of the five components of transformative processes and data on obstacles to transformation.

Decision-Making Authority

The decision-making authority element reflects all the data that identified or referred to the party that would be making the decision. Conflict transformation seeks to “empower” the parties to recognize the other parties’ claims and make decisions about their futures (Folger and Bush 1994). This section looks at what persons or institutions were vested with decision-making authority, and it assumes that the authority can be identified through examining the decision-making process.

Data from FAR press releases and reports refer to “the Province” or “government” when addressing the decision making process. For example, the press release regarding

the FARP's interim recommendations notes that "the Province will accept three interim recommendations." The final press release says "The Province will fully review the panel's recommendations for implementation." The FARP report notes that the FARP is "confident that the Province will review the recommendations."

Interview participants indicated that the Province would make the policy decision, and provided insight as to how they thought the Province would deal with the FARP's recommendations. When asked if s/he was optimistic about the outcome, R., the farmer, said that although s/he had heard that recommendations would be good news for farmers, s/he remained sceptical: "Just because they [the FARP] recommend it doesn't mean it's going to fly. I don't think so, no." G., an insider to the process, indicated that the government would either reject the recommendations or require changes: "Because the way it works is the panel makes its report, the government sits there and says, 'Well, thank you very much, we have basically two options, one we tell you to piss off, we don't like any of your stuff that you recommended or two, thank you very much we will release your report but of course you're going to make the following adjustments because this is what we think you think.'" G. also described the process that would occur after the recommendations were made: "it gets bounced off of one little group, then it gets bounced off the ADMs (Assistant Deputy Ministers) group, and the government says okay, here's the report and here's the government's response to that report."

G. and H. (the other panel insider) both asserted that Panel members, rather than staff, were making policy recommendations. Both insiders described the determination of what recommendations to make as a decision. G. stated that one of the reasons for ensuring that panel members were forming recommendations was because "if you want to sell this

at the end, you don't want panel members saying... it was government that determined what the policy was.”

I conclude from these data that the decision-making authority in this case did not lie with the stakeholders, the FARP, or the public process, and in this respect the FAR process does not demonstrate transformative characteristics. The province retained all decision-making authority with regard to the Terms of Reference and the membership of the FARP. The FARP made decisions about recommendations, but one insider implied that the province had authority to review the recommendations before they were released to the public. Panel insiders were not consistent in the interviews, sometimes referring to the Panel's product as a decision and sometimes as a recommendation. The recognition of decision-making power at the FARP level indicates a two-tiered process: the public was giving input to the Panel in what I will call the consultation tier, while the FARP was deciding on recommendations to the province in what I will call the FARP tier. Despite the FARP's ability to make decisions on recommendations, the policy-making decisions will lie with the province; the FARP, a panel insider, and a farmer concurred in noting that the province may ignore the recommendations completely. Thus, data indicate that the FAR process was not transformative in terms of decision-making.

Participants

The policy decision will take place after this case study has finished. Therefore, the analysis of the participant category refers to participants in the development of recommendations. First, I present results regarding the FARP tier and its participants, and then I present results about the consultation tier and its participants.

The FARP consisted of representatives of the agriculture community, two mayors, a former BCAA assessor, a member of the BCAA board of directors, an elected director of a regional district, and a Member of Legislative Assembly. Later, an agronomist was added to the panel. The representatives of the agricultural community were: a commercial turkey farmer and president of the BC Turkey Producers Association; a cattle rancher who is on the board of directors of the BC Cattlemen's Association; a retired dairy farmer; the operator of an agri-tourism farm; and a large-scale Saanich dairy farmer (MSBR 2008b). By the time the FARP released its report, cattle ranchers had replaced both dairy farmers (FARP 2009). No data were available that indicated when or how these changes occurred.

Broader participation took place in the consultation tier. The press releases offered data regarding the intended participants. The press release that announced the launch of the review process on December 17, 2007, described the hypothetical panel as "local government, a cross section of British Columbia's agriculture community, and the ministries of Agriculture and Lands, Small Business and Revenue, Finance, Community Services and the board of BC Assessment" (MSBR 2007). When MSBR announced the composition of the panel on February 29, 2008, the panel was said to "bring experience from all regions of British Columbia and represent a diverse cross-section of agricultural communities in British Columbia" (MSBR 2008b). The FARP report, released on July 31, 2009, describes the panel as "comprised of elected representatives from both local and Provincial Governments, a cross-section of British Columbia's agriculture community, the Board of BCA and other British Columbians" (FARP 2009). Ministry

staff members were no longer on the list, although the FARP report notes that staff from the ministries, the Union of BC Municipalities, and BCAA supported the panel.

The comments of the stakeholders regarding the Panel also provided data. One submission urged that a council independent of BCAA should be established to approve and administer assessment classification requirements (TLC 2008).

The FARP composition demonstrated a bias toward representation of particular industry groups (the Cattlemen's Association), levels of government (e.g. mayors, a regional district representatives, MLAs), and geographical areas. There was no specific representation for food security advocates or the public at large. H. noted that although the panel members were older and mostly male, s/he felt that "the way the panel ended up was more representative than it could be." The stakeholder's comment indicates that they recognized the distinction between the FARP and the government but felt that government had too much influence.

Press releases also provided data regarding the intended participants in the consultation process. The terms of reference state that panel was formed to "undertake comprehensive consultation with local government and a cross-section of British Columbia's agriculture community" (MSBR 2008c). This phrase appears repeatedly throughout the process, from the first press release to the final recommendations and report. The FARP also reports undertaking a total of 12 public consultation sessions aimed at "engaging farmers, agriculture industry associations and representatives and other stakeholders throughout British Columbia," and meeting "approximately 1,000 farmers, industry representatives, stakeholders and members of the public" (FARP 2009) G. noted that the character of feedback was different in the CRD than in other parts of the

province. G. acknowledged after a probing question that the feedback could have been affected by the audit, which only reviewed the CRD.

Another element of participation was inclusiveness. “Formal consultations” were held with agriculture industry associations and select other stakeholders (FARP 2009). The FAR website and reports do not provide a list of the private meetings the FARP members held, explain how it chose which groups to confer with, or what the structure of these meetings was. G. stated that “everybody ought to have the same access, the same ability to benefit from, or not, from public policy.” When I asked G. whether the process had given everyone the same access to affect the policy, G. responded by noting that the status quo was sometimes the best solution to competing recommendations and interests.

The FARP tier was intended to represent “a cross-section of British Columbia’s agriculture community and other stakeholders” (FARP 2009), but only the appointed panel members could participate in discussion, and FARP meetings were closed to the public. Food security advocacy groups were not explicitly represented on the panel in the way that commodity groups were. The FARP members engaged in dialogue with each other and developed a consensus recommendation.

The consultation tier of the process allowed the FARP to take “input” through a consultation process, which allowed a broader audience to provide information to the FARP, but did not allow a dialogue. The participation in the public process was broad, but not deep. The selective use of small group meetings and selective posting of submissions indicate the possibility that some stakeholders had more access than others. Anyone who wanted to could come to the meeting (if they found out about it in time), and anyone could submit comments to the panel. The breadth of participation meets

transformative criteria, but discrepancies in access indicate a lack of procedural justice.

The next section presents more findings on the character and inclusiveness of the process.

Process Qualities

The data explaining the qualities of the process in transformative terms is subcategorized in terms of inclusiveness and the character of the information exchange. The timing of the consultation is also considered.

A submission to the FARP from the CRD mentioned the short notice given for the meeting (Local Farms Alliance 2008; anon., pers. obs.). The meeting was announced on September 9, 2008 and took place on September 16, 2008. One submitter wrote, “We checked the Panel website frequently for months for notice of any public meetings and twice tried to get on a list to be notified, unsuccessfully” (Local Farms Alliance 2008). The February press release announcing the formation of the panel said that the FARP intended to begin consultations in early summer (MSBR 2008b).

The Terms of Reference refer to “cross-sections” and “comprehensive” consultation, implying broad inclusion (MSBR 2008c). Press releases indicate that the panel expected a high volume of interest, and H. mentioned “panel members and staff travelling all over the province to meet with people.” H. acknowledged that “it’s probably not possible to not have people who feel like they’ve lost out in the process.” One submitter claimed to have presented 600 signatures to MLA David Cumberley in support of overturning the audit results (Moss St. Market 2008).

These data (along with data presented in the preceding section) suggest that the consultation tier of the process lacked inclusivity. The short notice for the Saanich meeting may have affected the ability of interested parties to attend the meeting, and may

have affected the quality of their comments to the Panel members by impeding their ability to prepare for the meeting. R. noted “I remember thinking, well, I wish I had prepared myself better with all the facts and figures and had done some research and all that.” This implies that R. felt that extensive preparation would have been beneficial; R. does not blame the timing of the meeting for the lack of preparation, however.

The sources also provided data about the flow of information in the process. The FARP report noted that it “engaged in dialogue with the public” (FARP 2009). G. said that having a broad-based discussion was a good thing, referring to dialogue at the panel level. H. described how one of the co-chairs would solicit comments by waiting patiently and telling stories at some of the consultations, and said “I just felt really fortunate to be in a process of dialogue that was happening that way.” H. also described a hypothetical good process as including “a lot of communication and discourse, discussion from a wide variety of stakeholders.”

Several submitters requested an opportunity to review and comment on a draft (District A Farmers Institute 2008, Focus on Farmlands Conference 2008, Grimmer n.d., Local Farms Alliance 2008). This opportunity was not provided. When asked about the Saanich consultation, R. said, “Well, they didn’t say much.” The press releases from MSBR include references to one-way information exchange, such as “hearing from,” “taking/receiving input,” “information has been submitted,” “received submissions,” and “listening to their ideas.” The flow of information at the consultation in Saanich was one-way, from the stakeholders to the panel members.

Other data address the flow of information in other aspects of the consultation process. Submitters refer to hopes that their submissions are received in time. No

information about deadlines for submissions was published on the website or referred to in press releases. G. refers to reports, technical papers, and other background material that s/he claimed were available on the FAR website. During the time I monitored the FAR website (from February 2008 to July 2009), the available background materials included only the Terms of Reference and information about the panel members.

The FARP report and the panel insiders' comments demonstrate a preference for dialogue, and even a belief that dialogue occurred. The data from submissions, interviews and press releases, however, indicate that dialogue was lacking in the process in the CRD. The consultation tier was organized around a one-way flow of information from the public and the stakeholders to the panel. The data indicate that there was a more dialogic process at the FARP tier; panellists engaged in discussion with one another, and with Ministry staff (G., pers. comm.; H., pers. comm.). There was also an expectation from G. that there would be dialogue with "the Province" over the final recommendations.

The qualities of the public participation in the case of the FAR process do not conform to recommendations for transformative or empowering practices. In transformative processes, relationships and trust are established through a dialogical process of information exchange (Della Noce 1999). There were no direct responses from FARP to comments in the consultation or written submissions. The short notice of the consultation in Saanich may have excluded some stakeholders and may have affected the character of the response for others (due to lack of preparation). There was no back and forth discussion between stakeholders and panel members at the Saanich, nor did the FARP allow the public to review and comment on draft recommendations. The FARP tier

of public policy process, conversely, included discussion and dialogue and played out over a long period of time (18 months). The data indicate that for the panellists, there was opportunity to build relationships, while for the public and others not appointed to the FARP, the character of the process was not conducive to transformation.

Issue Definition

The next quality of transformational processes that I present is issue identification. Transformative processes define issues broadly to address structures and relations, while interest-based processes define issues narrowly to facilitate agreement. The Terms of Reference defined the issues from the panel's perspective. The Terms allow the panel to consider income thresholds, split classification, and the classification process. The terms of reference explicitly excluded "broader agriculture policy issues" (MSBR 2008c). The FARP report stated, "there are several issues outside the scope of the review that were raised repeatedly across the Province" (FARP 2009). G. noted that the terms are "fairly narrow," and that "we haven't looked at the realities of farming today and the way people do business." G. also noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands has not provided a definition of "who the hell is a farmer." H. noted the lack of clarity about what the province recognizes as a farm. Some submitters echoed the need for clear definition of farms and farmers, and some requested that the terms be expanded or that future processes be developed.

Some submitters and each of the interview participants acknowledged that the root of the conflict goes beyond the narrow Terms of Reference. R. and other stakeholders identified issues around identity (what is a "bonafide" farmer?) and values (ecological management versus maximizing gross sales) as fundamental to the conflict, and asked

that these areas be addressed (pers. obs., Focus on Farmlands 2008). The FARP noted these comments in the report and recommended a separate process to address these issues (FARP 2009). The FARP followed the Terms of Reference in narrowly defining the issues around interests rather than structures or relationships, by which I conclude that in this respect, the FAR case did not include transformative qualities.

Goal Setting

Transformational processes set transformational goals. The explicit goals of the FAR as stated by the Terms of Reference were to simplify and streamline, ensure a fair and equitable process, enhance competitiveness, support innovation, support the BC Agriculture Plan, and support a healthy future for British Columbia. The terms also mentioned recognising the contributions of farming operations and the farming industry and “keeping our agriculture sector viable and strong” (MSBR 2008c). The press release that accompanied the Terms of Reference included a goal of “demonstrating our government’s commitment to sustainable farming communities” (MSBR 2008b). Finally, the FARP report included “preserving agricultural land for future generations,” and “support and encourage agricultural production” (FARP 2009).

Submitters’ goals were evident in the submissions. One submitter listed goals such as “addressing local food security issues, climate change realities and to put fresh, nutritious, tasty food on the local family table” (IOPA 2008). Another submitter mentioned “accommodating the regional diversity of our agricultural community” (SSIAA 2008). Finally, another submitter spoke of his/her “desire to see ecologically sustainable farming practices supported in BC” (TLC 2008).

G. described the mandate of the Panel as three-fold, and said that the third goal of enhancing and supporting agriculture “and god knows what the heck else,” was “kind of one of those nebulous things.” G. also noted that s/he felt that defining a farmer is a social policy issue. When I asked whether s/he thought the goal of public policy is to address the conflict between ideas of what a farmer is, G. sighed, paused, and said, “That may be an interesting question... And maybe we need more of a social aspect to it. And that was one of the things that was discussed at length and we did hear it many times.” This exchange indicates that the “social policy” goal of defining a farmer was not included.

Stakeholders, on the other hand, tended to demonstrate a more transformative agenda. Their lack of direct influence on process and outcome, however, meant that submitters’ efforts to achieve explicit acknowledgement of disenfranchised practices and philosophies was not successful.

The stated goals of the process tended to focus on satisfying interests rather than transforming structures or relationships. However, the terms also mention recognising the contributions of farming operations and the farming industry, and the press release that accompanied the Terms of Reference includes a goal of “demonstrating our government’s commitment to sustainable farming communities” (MSBR 2008c). These are forms of recognition that could help to transform the conflict. Nevertheless, I conclude from the data that the province’s goal was oriented towards simplifying and streamlining a complex and time-consuming assessment process rather than towards creating fundamental change. In this respect, the data indicate that the goals of the process were interest-based rather than transformational, and did not meet the criteria for

transformative processes. The next section discusses the obstacles to transformative processes that may have contributed to setting interest-based goals.

Obstacles to Transformative Processes

Obstacles to public policy transformation can be broken down into subcategories described in the literature review. Chapter 2: Literature Review revealed that lack of time and resources, jurisdictional problems, lack of appropriate skills and abilities, lack of trust in transformation processes, and organizational culture issues can impede the use of transformative processes in public policy formation. The fact that not all the panellists were expected to attend every consultation also indicates the possibility that limitations in time and/or resources were an obstacle to a more transformative process.

G. referred repeatedly to jurisdictional obstacles. S/He noted that the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands hadn't done enough to define a farmer. S/He also commented on potential difficulties in coordinating with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Community Development. G. also mentioned "getting rid of those silos" which prevent the sharing of techniques that deal with social aspects of policy. S/He said:

The perspective and the approach and the decision process, the consultation process, the service levels, the expectation levels, are at quite a different level. And in terms of public policy you're looking at a whole different set of results and a whole different way of doing things.

R. described the BCAA staff as "not very deep thinkers." In addition, G. noted that the "political will was never there" to address the problems proactively.

Special skills are required to manage conflicts over intractable issues, develop empowerment and recognition, and build dialogue among parties (Dukes 1996). The lack of these skills and abilities may have limited the ability of the province to employ a more transformative process for the FAR. G. noted the difference in approach between "social

ministries” and “dirt ministries,” and expressed a desire for more access to social policy approaches. These data do not speak directly to the skills and abilities of provincial staff or FARP members. However, G. implies that more learning on the part of “dirt” ministries might help remove some obstacles to transformative public process.

The organizational culture of the provincial government may have also limited the ability of the FAR to employ a more transformative process. G. noted that s/he is uncertain how changes in the public attitude toward food and farming will “translate into policy that’s kind of based in the old rules.” G. indicated that the organizational culture is not tolerant of complexity: “we... try not to do more than three [recommendations], because it gets too complicated.” G. described an organizational culture that prefers the status quo to solutions with unintended consequences, saying “the only way [they] will do this is to not do it at all,” referring to an attitude that prefers “the devil you know.” The process for finalizing the recommendations revealed the bureaucratic nature of the review: recommendations get bounced off of one group, then the ADMs group, “then the government says okay here’s the report and here’s the government’s response to the report.” G.’s comment about social policy discussed above also suggests that the organizational culture of the “resource ministries” might be opposed to “artsy” approaches that rely on qualitative analysis. G.’s reported interest in finding ways to quantify social policy questions may also indicate that G. is uncomfortable with the open-ended questions that are a hallmark of the transformative approach.

In summary, the data indicate that some aspects of the Provincial government may have been obstacles to conflict transformation. Time and resource

constraints, jurisdictional issues, lack of relevant skills and abilities, effects of organizational culture, and distrust of transformative processes might partly explain the absence of transformational qualities in the FAR process. These data neither proves nor disproves the existence of a causal relationship between the government's characteristics and the qualities of the FAR public policy process. Other factors likely influenced the FAR public policy process, and there is no evidence that the potential obstacles in question affected the process design. The lack of triangulating data also brings into question the validity of any findings. With only one source of data, it is impossible to know whether this person's observations and interpretations were shared by others. Nevertheless, the data indicate that obstacles to transformation existed at the government level.

Findings

The FAR process was essentially two distinct public participation sub-processes. The FARP tier exhibited some characteristics of transformational processes: the panel took many months to reach a consensus through a dialogical process. However, the FARP was exclusionary in its membership and its process, defined issues narrowly, and worked toward satisfying interests rather than transforming structures or relations. The broader process (the consultation tier) exhibited fewer transformative qualities. The participation was broad and open to anyone, although public notice was lacking in Saanich. There were few if any opportunities for dialogue, and the Terms of Reference excluded some issues around rights (like fairness, transparency, or self-determination) and identity (such as how a farmer is defined). Although stakeholders may have harboured

transformative goals, there was little they could do to achieve them within the framework of the public consultation. Finally, there was evidence that issues around jurisdiction, organizational culture, and resources impeded the inclusion of transformative qualities in the FAR process. Overall, the data support the research proposition that the FAR process exhibited few transformative qualities, and faced significant obstacles to the implementation of transformative practices. Table 7 presents a summary of the findings on transformative approaches.

Table 7: Summary of Findings on Transformative Approaches

Transformative Approaches	Consultation Tier	Panel Tier
Decision Making	No authority	Decision on recommendations
Participation	Broad participation with some limits	Exclusive participation
Participation Qualities	One-way information	Dialogue
Issue Definition	Narrow	Narrow
Goal Setting	Not possible	Satisfying interests
Obstacles	Time	Jurisdictional siloing, Organizational culture, resource limitations

Research Question Two: Worldview Components

In this section, I present data on the second research question. The second research question asks how worldview conflicts arise in the case, and how they were accommodated. The theoretical framework postulates that worldview conflicts can be explored in terms of ontology, epistemology, axiology, ethics and logic. Accommodation occurs as a function of recognition of worldview conflict and transformative process. Results are presented for each the elements of worldview and for recognition of

worldview conflict. Transformative process is analyzed as part of the first research question. The research proposition is that worldview conflicts exist in this case, but are not accommodated in the process because process designers do not recognize them. I took data for this research question from FARP documents, submissions to the panel, and interviews. I did not include data from news articles because it is impossible to distinguish the perspectives of the reporters, editors, and interviewees.

Ontology

Ontology deals with the nature of being and the nature of reality. Like other components of worldview, ontological differences are best detected through unscripted speech and actions. Data regarding ontology was especially scarce and available only inferentially.

Four out of the nine submitters and two interview participants (H. and R.) indicated support for ecological and holistic approaches to farming, which may indicate that those individuals subscribe to an ontology rooted in relationships. R. also said, “I’m very intimate with this land.” This comment suggests an ontology that allows intimate relationships between people and things.

FARP documents, perhaps because they are carefully scripted and reviewed, provided little insight into ontological issues. The axiological data provide minor insight into ontology, in that concern with competitiveness in the Terms of Reference may indicate that the authors believe in winners and losers, implying a single version of reality (MSBR 2008c).

Overall, the analysis found few ontological data. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that a deeper analysis would have found more hidden metaphors, particularly in the

interview data, but it was not possible to include such an analysis in this research due to time constraints. The data neither support nor contradict the conclusion that there were differences in ontology among the parties.

Epistemology

Epistemology deals with the nature of truth and where it can be found. Data on epistemology reveal and reflect the speakers' beliefs about what constitutes useful information. This section presents the epistemological data.

The FARP documents consistently refer to "input" from the public. The process qualities discussed earlier, such as "listen," "hear," and "receive input," imply that truth can be identified and passed along as if it were an object. The list of panel members (MSBR 2008b) and FARP report (2009) highlight that the panel members are "experienced," implying that empirical experience is an important way of gathering information, and that truth can be observed.

There were few directly epistemological data in the submissions; one submission referred to the lack of knowledge on the part of assessors (TLC 2008); another suggested that studies be undertaken (PAC 2007). These data suggest that the submitters believe that truth can be studied and known. The axiological data, which will be discussed in the next section, offer inferential clues to epistemology. Four of the nine submissions mentioned ecology in defining a farm. This preference for ecological systems may indicate a relational approach to truth and knowledge, although it is equally possible that they share the same epistemology but place high value on environmental protection.

The interviews provided a richer source of epistemological data. G. stated that s/he "know[s] too much about the science and background" to believe in climate change. G.

also demonstrated faith in deductive reasoning and quantifiable data. As discussed earlier, G. drew a parallel between “the social end of things or the artsy end of things, whatever you want to call it.” S/He said that the “social end of things... becomes very subjective” and went on to discuss how public opinion can be measured quantitatively. At the same time, G. expressed scepticism about statistical data, saying “it means nothing, it’s silly, right?” and quoting Mark Twain on “lies, damn lies, and statistics.” G. seems to prefer empirical quantitative data and does not trust interpretation or analysis.

R. expressed a few epistemological ideas as well. S/He described having emotional and intellectual beliefs, and s/he eventually decided that she needed to provide “reasons,” with “information to back up what I’m doing.” R. described the experience at the Saanich consultation by saying “I remember thinking, well, I wish I had prepared myself better with all the facts and figures and had done some research and all that, so I just stood up, though, and told them what my experience was and got really emotional.” R. said s/he felt good when a panel member gave a smile. This anecdote indicates that R. was uncertain whether his/her testimony would be valid without “facts and figures and research,” and was pleased when a panel member indicated his support. R.’s descriptions indicated a concern about conflicting epistemologies, but little if any evidence of an experience of difference.

H. also provided some indications of his/her epistemology. H. described being highly critical at the beginning of the FAR process and gradually deciding to accept compromises that might exclude someone. H. said that his/her thinking at the beginning of the process was characterized by the question, “Who is this going to exclude if this is implemented in this way?, and, “What well-intentioned farmer or developing farmer

would not get their benefit?” H. also said that s/he “realized after a certain amount of time of being involved in this that I know how to criticize literally every kind of suggestion... but wasn’t coming up with anything better myself.” This story may indicate a shift from a critical epistemology to a more qualitative approach. A critical epistemology is one in which truth (and justice) are found by revealing hidden structures and agendas. H. also noted that “there was a real richness of information” derived from meeting with people, further indicating his/her interest in qualitative data subject to interpretation.

The data indicate a range of epistemological beliefs among the parties. Data from some of the submitters can be interpreted to indicate relational perspectives, though other interpretations are possible. R.’s experience at the Saanich consultation demonstrates some awareness of epistemological differences, but does not provide a rich description of the participant’s beliefs. The same is true for H.. G.’s assumptions about truth are more clearly oriented toward empirical observation with no interpretation or analysis. Overall, the epistemological data are far from conclusive, but suggests some divergence in beliefs that parties hold in regard to the nature of truth and knowledge production.

Axiology

The case presents a wealth of data on axiology, which deals with beliefs about what people should value. Three subcategories emerged from the axiological data around what should be valued about farming: economic values, intrinsic values, and environmental or ecological values.

Economic values were evident in the data from the Terms of Reference, press releases and the FARP report, comments at the consultation, submissions to the panel, newspaper

articles and in interviews. The Terms of Reference set “enhancing competitiveness” as a goal, and refers to agriculture as an industry (MSBR 2008c). The importance of farm income to the farm classification process also indicates an axiological preference related to economic value. The press release accompanying the report claimed “it’s more important than ever for farmers to have a competitive edge” (MCD 2009). G. referred to “the business of farming,” and suggested that farmers who can’t succeed financially should “get the heck out,” because “farming is a business.” One submission referred to farms as small businesses (District A Farmers Institutes 2008), while another noted that “the farmer-operator must make the business run on a profit,” despite the other benefits of farming, such as “the pleasure of selling our beautiful vegetables,” and other “lifestyle” elements (IOPA 2008). Other submissions, and newspaper quotes also addressed this tension, noting that they were not breaking even financially but continued to farm (Holmen 2008a), or were providing services that don’t make money (SSIAA 2008; anon., pers. obs.). These data indicate that some parties value farms and farming in primarily economic terms.

R. identified non-economic reasons for farming, explaining how much s/he enjoyed experiential aspects of the farming process. R. also explained that farming was important for the community. H. explained his/her interest in farming in terms of functions such as bridging an urban rural lifestyle and landscape and engaging people in the process of growing food. A person who commented on a newspaper article wrote, “they [the farmers] do it for the lifestyle, and they believe in a local food supply. We do too” (anon. 2008). Another person was quoted in a news article saying, “we need to have people out there producing the food” (Westad 2008). Productivity was a related value that came up

in the data in a few areas. These data indicate that for some people the primary value of farming is intrinsic: the benefit of farming is farming and food production, not the economic value it might bring.

The data also reflected axiological data about the ecological values of farming. Submissions to the FARP spoke of the farm as an ecological unit, or spoke of the environmental benefits of some farm practices. R. also spoke to ecological values, saying that the woods on the property had been classified as residential because the “highest and best use” was housing, according to BCAA. R. called that designation a “slap in the face” and said that the highest and best use was the use the land had at the time as a wildlife habitat and farm buffer. One submission noted the lack of consideration of “the factors of environmental protection, wildlife refuge and/or habitat, watershed protection, or aquifer recharge areas” (District A Farmers Institutes 2008). These data suggest that another way of valuing farming (or other phenomena) is in terms of its environmental benefits.

These data indicate that there were axiological differences in the parties’ worldviews. The relative importance of economic, intrinsic, and environmental factors was an important topic in the submissions, the comments, and in the interviews. These data support the conclusion that there were worldview differences among the parties.

Axiological data about the public process are described in the next section as ethical data.

Worldview Ethics

Ethics-related data indicated differing perspectives on how people should act. Parties expressed most of their ethical concerns around the FAR process and the property assessment process.

The data about ethics in the FAR process concerned transparency and inclusivity. H. said that transparency was an important consideration for future processes, explaining that “people who have given input and information into the review can have some sense of why certain decisions were made and why certain decision weren’t made.” Data from submissions indicated that some parties felt that the FAR process should include additional public input and review, including adequate notice for public meetings. Data from the Terms of Reference and the press releases did not include reference to ethical qualities of the review, saying only that the process should be “comprehensive” (MSBR 2008c).

The data about the property assessment process concerned fairness, transparency, and judgment. G. noted that “there was a lot of complaint about being treated fairly by bureaucracy.” R. said that it “didn’t quite seem fair” for a nearby property owner to get farm status for planting trees that he never sold. The BCAA board chair was quoted in a MSBR press release as saying, “BC Assessment is committed to providing our customers with fair and equitable service” (MSBR 2007). A submission to the panel titled, “Farm Classification Process Must Be Fair” claimed that excluding forests or other natural areas was unfair (IOPA 2008). Similarly, another submitter said, “a fair process for defining a farm would avoid many appeals” (SSIAA 2008). The Terms of Reference asserted that it is “important for government to ensure the property assessment process is fair and equitable to all property owners,” and described “fairness and transparency” as one of the goals of the FAR.

R. also commented on the use of judgment, saying, “I don’t like people who follow the letter of the law... I’ve come to believe that a lot of our regulations don’t make sense

and that to some extent we should break those laws.” G. indicated a similar attitude, saying that s/he prefers a “common sense” approach to a strict application of the regulations: “I don’t give a rat’s ass what the legislation says, alright? Should we be doing it this way?” G. had a particular complaint with BCAA, “who immediately open the act, and quote chapter and verse.” G. told stories that highlighted BCAA’s emphasis on the strict interpretation of regulations and laws, and said s/he favours a “common sense approach” because “one size does not fit all.” Both these research participants expressed strong feelings about BCAA’s reliance on strict application of the law instead of exercising discretion.

H. made comments about accountability as an ethical belief, saying “I want to be aware of and accountable for the results—the direct results and the indirect results—of my actions, and I want to empower other people to take that up, that same accountability, if they want to.” H.’s statement also suggests that s/he thinks people should have the right to self-determination.

In conclusion, multiple ethical positions are apparent in the data. The main conflict in ethical beliefs seems to be around the degree of discretion that BCAA should apply in assessing properties. The parties represented in the sample for this case seem to agree that strict interpretation is not necessarily “fair.”

Worldview Logic

Explicit data were not present on how parties construct arguments and assess information. News articles, submissions, and interviews offered only inferential data regarding the logic of the speakers. Most of the references to logic implied a lack of logic on the part of the audit or assessment process. R. commented, “They don’t care what

makes sense. There's something else going on." Similarly, a news article quoted a farmer as saying "it's dumb, but that's what their [sic] pushing" (Holmen 2008a). Another article called the regulation "counterintuitive" (Holmen 2009b). A submission pointed out that "declassification of farm property for revenue purposes runs contrary to the expressed public interest" (SSIAA 2008). These data do not support the conclusion that there were worldview differences in terms of logic among the parties.

Recognition of Other Worldviews

The indications of recognition of contrary beliefs and assumptions are another important data set. G. described "fringe groups that you'll never be able to satisfy." About defining farming, G. also said "that's a broader social issue that maybe the government should address that. And in part if it was addressed, maybe that would take care of some of the farm problems." In addition, G. also noted that "some people have strong feelings when it comes to the whole concept of how farms or the farming business or being a farmer is dealt with as society as a whole." G. also referred to "very passionate people who had some real personal grievances."

R.'s interview also provided data that pointed toward recognition of another worldview. "I think they weren't allowed like the judge and whoever was listening was not allowed to take that into account because of the law. I mean because of something. I don't know why they weren't allowed to take that into account." In addition, R. explained, "we don't think those people [from BCAA] really understand what's going on." One submission also noted that the farm status designation does not recognise the "philosophy that governs certified organic farming."

H. noted that what people were sharing was very personal. H. also acknowledged internal worldviewing, saying, “Well my easy answer aligns with my own values and what I would like to see done based on what my interests are.”

The data indicate that some parties recognized some fundamental differences and closely held values in other parties. G.’s comments about social policy indicate that s/he considered these differences to be beyond the scope of the FAR. Table 8 provides a summary of the findings on worldviewing.

Table 8: Summary of Findings on Worldviews

Worldview Component	Finding
Ontology	Not enough data
Epistemology	Deduction, emotional knowledge, empirical evidence, critical, interpretive
Axiology	Economic, intrinsic, environmental, procedural
Logic	Not enough data
Ethics	Fairness, procedural fairness, personal judgment, rule of law
Recognition	Present

Research Question Three: Transformative Outcomes and Changes

The third research question asks what the effects were of the FAR public process in terms of transformative capability. The theoretical framework postulates that changes in context, actors, issues, structures, and personalities can lead to transformation, particularly to the establishment of a platform for ongoing change through dialogue. I considered changes that occurred independent from the FAR process in addition to those changes that the public process generated. Results are presented for each location of transforming change, and for the prospect for future change processes. The research proposition is that few transforming changes occurred, with the result that no ongoing

platform for change was established. I analyzed data in terms of changes that would support transformation and the development of future change processes. I also present data that showed the development of future change processes.

Context

There were few data that indicated the presence of changes in the context of conflict that could “radically alter” the perspectives of the parties. Although there was a provincial election on May 12, 2009, there was no change in ruling party. A new MLA was elected from the Saanich riding, but there is no evidence in the data that her election affected the FAR public process. Another potential change in context was the moratorium on additional audits, which occurred on June 18, 2008. The audits had already taken place in Saanich, however, and were not overturned. This contextual change may have affected the FAR process overall, in that G. acknowledges that the moratorium contributed to “less virulent” response to the FAR outside the CRD. However, the boundaries of this study include only the effects within the CRD, where the conflict was most intense (perhaps because of the audit). In summary, I find that although there were contextual changes independent of the FAR process, there were none that radically altered perspectives on the issues.

Actors

Changes in actors could have included changes to the composition of the FARP, or changes to the actors’ goals or general approach to conflict (Miall 2003). The data indicate the presence of some changes in actors from the FARP perspective. Rick Thorpe replaced Blair Lekstrom as co-chair in July 2008 when Lekstrom became the Minister of

Community Development (MSBR 2008e). On September 30, 2008, Thorpe resigned due to health reasons and was replaced by John Rustad (MSBR 2008g). Thorpe was a former minister of Small Business and Revenue, who had previously been in the grape and wine and brewing industries in the Okanagan region in the interior of BC (Thorpe 2009). Rustad was a Geographic Information Systems analyst for the forestry sector and a woodlot owner before becoming an MLA (Rustad 2009).

The composition of the panel changed in other ways during the process, as shown by a comparison of the initial list of panellists (MSBR 2008b) and the final list that appears in the FARP report (FARP 2009). The list of panellists in the FARP report did not include two people who were on the original list: Gary van der Meulen, a dairy farmer from Smithers, and Sarah Pendray, a dairy farmer from Saanich. The final list included three people who were not on the original list: Don Lancaster, identified as a cattle rancher from Cranbrook; Brent Warner, identified as a consulting agrologist from Vancouver Island; and Gary Blattner, identified as a cattle rancher from Vanderhoof. The addition of Warner to the panel may have had an impact on the FAR process: R. specifically mentioned Warner as someone who would be qualified to determine whether a given property should be considered a farm. Warner was also profiled in a newspaper article, in which he is reported to describe himself as an advocate for farms with a long history of promoting local food production (Westad 2008).

From the public side, there were no data that indicated a change in actors; there were no longitudinal data for most submitters and commenters. Changes in actors may have taken place, but the data collection methods used in this study did not capture the changes.

In general, data indicate some changes in actors with transformative potential. In particular, the addition of an agrologist with experience and interest in small farms could have contributed to transformation of the conflict. R.'s trust for the agrologist, Warner, raises the possibility that stakeholders had private conversations with individual panellists. If private dialogues did occur, the role of the panellists and changes in actors is more important.

Issues

Changes in issues could have included transcendence of contested issues, constructive compromise, changing issues, and de-linking or re-linking issues. The moratorium on further audits was a change in issues. The audits had generated significant escalation in Saanich, and continued audits in the remainder of the CRD might have had a further polarizing effect. The moratorium on further audits was generated by the FARP's interim report. Access to more data sources about the Panel's deliberation process could have provided more data on this topic.

Structures

Structural changes that support transformation include change in power structures or changes of the places where conflict is enacted. The Provincial election on May 12 could have changed the power structure, but there was no evidence in the data that it did. There were changes in the Ministerial leadership: Minister of Small Business and Revenue changed from Rick Thorpe to Kevin Krueger, who served from June 23, 2008 to June 10, 2009 (Krueger 2009). The FAR was also moved from MSBR to the Ministry of Community Development, which was also in Minister Kreuger's portfolio until June 10,

2009. The FARP report was submitted to Bill Bennett, who became Minister of Community Development on June 10, 2009 (Bennett 2009). No data indicate that the changes in Ministerial authority affected the process. These changes took place independent of the Panel. Similarly, the changes in FARP leadership could have caused structural changes, but there was no evidence in the data that it did. I found no data to support the incidence of structural changes. Changes in issues may have taken place, but the data collection methods used in this study did not capture them. Access to more data sources about the Panel's deliberation process could have provided more data on this topic.

Personalities

Changes in personalities that support transformation include empowerment and recognition, changes of perspective, changes of heart, changes of will, and gestures of conciliation. Data from press releases, newspaper reports, and submissions did not indicate changes in perspective. Interviews contained more data on personality changes in the FAR process.

Each of the interview participants demonstrated some changes of perspective or will. G. demonstrated change of perspective during the interview when I asked him/her whether it was policy's role to address social conflict. G. responded by saying, "Well, that may be an interesting question... and it tends to be that way [that social policy issues are separate from resource issues]. G. later commented, "I'll have to think a little bit about how to work that into the report." G. also said, "I found that there's a lot of people out there that are a lot more sophisticated than we think or we realize." G. was speaking of the consultations in the northern part of the province at that point, but this realization

may have affected his/her overall perspective and approach. At the same time, G. also said that s/he did not have an experience in the process where “a light bulb came on,” because s/he had so much experience. H. described moving from a critical perspective to a constructive perspective through participation with the FARP: “for me to be a person that can work well with others in this process, it’s necessary for me to not always be critical and say this won’t work.” H. also described realizing that his/her initial perceptions of the issue had changed to recognize more complexity.

R. described deciding to “play the game” in two different ways. First, R. said that his/her perspective changed when s/he realized that the assessment increase wouldn’t go away on its own: “I’ve gotta fight this. This is some kind of game I’ve gotta play, I’ve gotta figure out the rules” in order to “win” farm status for all of R.’s property. R. also referred to realizing that s/he “didn’t have a hope in hell,” and might have to “play their foolish game” of planting crops s/he didn’t intend to harvest in order to maintain farm status.

The interviews provide data that indicate personality changes on the part of these participants that could contribute to transforming the conflict. The personality changes were a direct result of the FAR public process. Other changes in personalities may have taken place, but the data collection methods used in this study did not capture them.

Future Change Processes

The final aspect of the transformational effects framework is future change processes. Establishing the basis for ongoing dialogue is an important goal of conflict transformation. In this section, I present data that indicate potential (or lack of potential) for future change processes.

The submissions and the consultation summary include requests for additional processes to address the definition of a farm and the list of primary agricultural produces. The FARP report recommends a review of those topics within three years, and a re-evaluation of the income threshold every five years. One submission noted the need for ongoing adaptation, saying “There have been many changes to agriculture and the rules need to be constantly adapted to the changes” (Grimmer 2008). As the facilitator/recorder for the Focus on Farmlands discussion, I submitted comments on behalf of Focus on Farmlands that said, “The main recommendation is for the Panel to inform the Minister that the Terms of Reference are too narrow, and that a broad review of agricultural policies and practices is needed in British Columbia... The review should seek broad public support and participation in the process.”

The interviews provided more insight into perspectives of the participants regarding future processes. R. indicated that in order for him/her to participate, s/he would need an admission that the audit and appeal process had been “adversarial and they had made a mistake and would like to hear what farmers, really listen to us—that would help us get over, I think.” R. also commented on the need for a “change of government and a complete reversal, [with government] saying, ‘this is a bad idea, we’re going to do something different,’” although I’m not sure I’d believe them.” H. was more enthusiastic about future processes and said s/he would like to participate as a decision-maker. S/he was sceptical about the prospects for a comprehensive review, however: “If they’re going to be really broad, be willing to pull up the whole root structure—I don’t know how much you can do that because the farm tax system is connected with so many other things in our administration and our government.” Nevertheless, H. indicated that if such a process were undertaken, s/he would be a willing participant. G. noted the need for an

examination of the definition of a farm, saying, “That’s a broader social issue, maybe the government should address that. And in part if it was addressed, maybe that would take care of some of the farm problems.” G. also noted that “the seeds have been sown” for a broader review of agricultural regulations and policies in the province.

The data indicate a desire on the part of some parties for a broader future process. The FARP report recommends a future review of specific elements of the farm assessment process, while some submitters and commenters suggested a broader review of farming in public policy. Interview participants indicated interest and varying degrees of willingness to participate. Although the FARP report recommends future reviews, the nature of the review is undetermined. The data do not indicate the creation of a platform for ongoing dialogue: some parties indicate distrust of other parties; future review processes are hypothetical; and there is no on-going venue for dialogue.

Changes that could contribute to transformation occurred in terms of personalities, issues, and actors during the FAR public process. Changes in issues, however, did not “radically alter” perspectives on the conflict. Changes in personalities may have been deleterious in terms of trust and willingness to participate. Changes in actors were difficult to evaluate, but seemed to have transformative potential. The data do not indicate the creation of a platform for change or that the parties established a process for ongoing dialogue. As shown in Table 9, the data support the research proposition that few transforming changes occurred, with the result that no ongoing platform for change was established.

Table 9: Summary of Findings on Transformative Effects

Locations of change	Caused by process	External
Context	No Data (ND)	Provincial elections
Structures	ND	Ministerial changes
Actors	Changes in composition of the panel	ND
Issues	Moratorium on additional audits	ND
Personalities	Personal Changes	ND
Future Change Process	Recommendation for future review process	ND

Conclusion

This chapter presents the results from the data analysis. There were many data on the review process and its characteristics, fewer data on worldview components, and very few data that provided insight into changes that support transformation. The next chapter, Discussion and Conclusions, will discuss the data and the findings in detail.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapter, I presented the results of the content analysis and my findings based on those results. Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the research, discussion of the findings, recommendations, questions for further research, and conclusions. The summary of the research provides a very brief overview of the research in order to orient the reader and prepare for the interpretation of the results. The discussion of findings section interprets and discusses the findings in terms of social constructionism and critical social science, and examines the relevance of the data to the literature. It is important to note that this study examines the FAR process in the CRD; interpretations and conclusions are specific to the CRD area, and may not apply to the FAR process in the rest of the province. The recommendations and questions for further research extend the research findings into future research and application. Finally, the research will conclude with a few statements synthesizing the substance of this research.

Summary of the Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the applicability of conflict transformation in public policy by studying a case of hotly contested and deeply felt issues of societal importance. I hoped that a qualitative, directed case study could shed light on the ways that constructed meanings interacted to support or impede transformation. In order to explore the case, I developed theoretical frameworks around each of three research questions:

- 1) Were transformative approaches applied to public policy in the FAR? If so, how were they applied?

- 2) How did worldview conflicts arise in the FAR, and were they recognized and accommodated?
- 3) What were the effects of the FAR public process in terms of transformative capability?

I collected data from media sources, the public archive, and three in-depth interviews. I coded the data according to categories derived directly from the theoretical frameworks I proposed. Additional subcategories emerged from the data as well. The next section describes and discusses the findings.

Discussion of the Findings

The presentation and discussion of the findings describes my inferences and interpretations of the data. The discussion is divided into three parts corresponding to the three research questions. For each research question, I present findings and a discussion of the component in terms of its social construction. At the conclusion of the section, I relate the findings to the literature.

Social constructionism is the belief that social reality is “‘made up’ and shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs” (Patton 2002, 96). As such, there is no objective meaning of “‘fairness,’” for example, but only subjective consensus within a given set of social actors. When social actors disagree, there may be conflict or oppression. In this section, I apply the lens of social constructionism to the qualities of the FAR process by asking how different actors or groups of actors perceived the qualities of the FAR process differently. Critical social theory aims to reveal the patterns and structures that oppress or marginalize individuals or groups, and that maintain the dominance or hegemony of particular perspectives. Looking beyond the surface of what people say and do allows analysis of unspoken power relations. The discussion that follows examines the social constructions within the framework of the research to reveal the power relations at work.

Transformative Process

It is not surprising that the data revealed that the FAR public process included few qualities of conflict transformation, since the province did not set out to transform the conflict over farm classification and assessment. The data reveal how different parties participated in different constructions around each of the six elements of the transformative process framework (decision making, participation, qualities of participation, issue definition, goal setting, and obstacles to transformation). The data and the constructions of the parties help to explain why transformation was not on the agenda.

The data reveal several constructions around decision-making authority. In some situations, “the Province” and “the government” emerge as a unitary actor vested with absolute decision making authority. G. offers another way to construct the province, which is as a complex set of social arrangements that can be classified according to ministerial affiliation (Ministries), orientation toward policy (social vs. dirt), functional area (human resources, policy, communication), or status (ADMs, staff, etc.). The different constructions overlap and compete, and each construction privileges different sets of actors. Any given person may subscribe to more than one construction, as G. appeared to do. G. referred repeatedly to “government” as a unitary actor, but in discussion, G. acknowledged the multiplicity of actors within government. The unitary actor construction means that once the recommendations are submitted, the decision-making process essentially ends, and the impenetrable authority of “the province” takes over. Stakeholders can either comply or resist, but the opportunity for influence has passed. The view of the province as an ever-changing product of a complex interaction of constructs implies that the process doesn’t end with the recommendations, but rather

begins. Anyone who wanted to influence the policy outcome would need sufficient resources and understanding to influence the internal process.

The same decision-making analysis applies at the level of the FARP: is the FARP a unitary actor or a set of actors and ideas? There were few references to “the panel” in the submissions, perhaps because those submissions and comments were communications with the FARP. Press releases and reports referred to both the panel and its specific members and staff. Similarly, the interviewees all implicitly or explicitly constructed the panel as a body made up of members rather than as a unitary entity. In contrast to the decision-making at the province, the construction of the FARP as a comprehensible set of actors indicates that stakeholders had some level of confidence in their ability to co-construct the outcome of the panel’s deliberations by understanding its composition and interacting with its members. The more detailed construction of the FARP may also be a reflection of its relative simplicity, especially when compared to the province.

Participation in the FAR is also differently defined among different parties. Some submissions described a construction of “consultation” that included dialogue and public review of the draft recommendations. Their comments were reflections of their values and worldviews, and the comments were also attempts to shape social reality. The FAR panellists, on the other hand, jointly constructed a meaning of “consultation” based on a unidirectional flow of information from stakeholders to the panellists. The constructions (or discourses) of “consultation” competed in the public policy process. Why was the panellists’ construction privileged? Why didn’t the panel offer a draft recommendation for public comment? One hypothetical answer is that people participated in an ongoing construction of “the province” as a legitimate institution, and this legitimacy was

conferred to the panel through the Terms of Reference and the announcement of the panellists. In other words, the panellists' construction of "consultation" dominated the process because, by and large, people participated in that construction, or did not participate actively enough in an alternate construction of "consultation."

The timing of the Saanich consultation provides a useful illustration of competing constructions. Despite the panellists' apparent awareness of the high level of interest in the consultation in Saanich, the panel gave only a week's notice of the meeting. The stakeholders who attended the meeting constructed the lack of notice as an impediment to their participation and therefore a flaw in the review. Another way to analyze the short notice is that the panellists' construction of consultation did not consider the quality of the participation as an important consideration. It was more important for the panellists to complete the consultation process and "receive input" than it was to accommodate the stakeholders' desire to participate. The reaction of the stakeholders to the marginalization of their construction was to complain to the panel, which confirms the FARP's legitimacy and authority. Another possible response would be to boycott the meeting, or to complain to the media or to the province that they wanted a more inclusive construction of consultation. Shifting the dialogue to another venue would undermine the legitimacy of the FARP and the non-inclusive construction of consultation that the meeting represented. Instead, the stakeholders participated in the panellists' construction of consultation by attending the meeting and providing input.

Stakeholders also participated in the province's constructions of what the review's goals should be and how issues should be defined. Various stakeholders described a desire to define issues broadly and for the province to undertake a comprehensive review

of agricultural policies across all ministries. These alternative constructions of “review” were not privileged because the state’s “review” was spelled out in the Terms of Reference and was better able to maintain a consensus of supporters. I can imagine a dramatic change in the dynamic of the process if an advocacy group had demonstrated a public consensus for its version of how a “review” should be defined. For example, the efforts of the Moss Street Market to collect and submit a petition for overturning the audit represents an attempt to create a competing discourse around the idea of “fairness.” The 600 signatures in a province of several million people simply weren’t enough to counter the technocratic definition of fairness offered by the province and BCAA (applying the letter of the law).

The legitimacy of the state rests on our mutual willingness to submit to its authority. The hegemonic nature of the province’s constructions is both maintained and reflected in its ability to prevent other constructs from taking hold. The short timing of the FAR consultation in Saanich is a good example of this ability. The province may offer many explanations as to why stakeholders were not better notified, but one effect of the short notice was that it made it much more difficult for anyone who disagreed with the hegemonic definitions of farm, consultation, review, or fairness to convince others of the need for alternate definitions. The short notice had the effect of stifling opposing viewpoints by preventing dissenters from organizing around a competing construction. Likewise, there was a lack of information about when recommendations would be issued, how (and whether) comments would be integrated, and whether the public would be able to review the recommendations before they were submitted to the province. Whatever the reason behind the lack of information may have been, one effect of the lack of

information may have been to make it more difficult to build consensus around opposing views. As long as people felt there was a chance that they had been heard and that the recommendations would benefit them, they didn't want to stand in the way of potential improvements to the policy. This reflects a common dilemma for critics of public policy: if you believe the process will oppress or silence dissent, you may choose not to participate, but you risk losing what little influence you may have. On the other hand, if you choose to participate, you have the opportunity to affect the process and outcome, but you tie up your resources and contribute to the process's legitimacy.

Conflict transformation is intended to avoid this dilemma by offering a process that accommodates different constructions and seeks to build common ground through dialogue and mutual understanding. The province's construction of the review process privileged the status quo by defining issues and setting goals that did not include the potential for transformational change. The competing construction of the review process as an opportunity for change was not well-supported enough to unseat the province's hegemonic definition, and the public policy process did not offer an opportunity to transform the conflict.

Thus, the data indicate that parties didn't seek transformation as a goal of the FAR process. It wasn't sought by the province, as evidenced by its construction of the panel as an advisory body with a limited scope and the review process as a one-directional public consultation. And it wasn't sought *enough* by those stakeholders who called for a broader process. Because the process was designed and controlled by the province, the findings from the data reflect obstacles at the provincial level. G. provided most of the data regarding obstacles, and s/he demonstrates how individuals contribute to the construction

of ideas such as jurisdictional siloing, distrust in transformational processes, and organizational culture. G. identifies a need for working across jurisdictional boundaries, and yet reinforces them when s/he discusses the differences between social ministries and resource ministries. “We need to break those down” reinforces the differences by constructing a metaphorical wall between them; “We integrated aspects of social policy formation into a question about resources” would be an expression that constructs a different perspective on jurisdictional issues. Similarly, “it’s too hard to measure the effects of social policy,” reinforces the need to measure objectively, or measure at all. G. spoke at length about the power of the status quo within the organization. His/her rationalization that “it’s too hard to account for unintended consequences” reveals his/her construction of the idea that consequences must be predictable and accounted for. All these constructions and many more are at the heart of why the province did not seek transformation: actors within the province co-construct an idea of the province that precludes transformative processes.

From a critical and social constructionist perspective, the panellists, ministry staff, and stakeholders co-constructed the review process to be as it was. The lack of transformational qualities was a reflection of the constructions of the participants. The result of these constructions was to privilege the panel members and the province in the decision-making process. The stakeholders who conceived of the province as a complex interaction will be more capable of influencing the final outcome. As a result of the province’s approach to the conflict, the stakeholders with the most resources to understand and influence the complex decision-making process at the provincial level will have the most opportunity to benefit from the review.

The literature on conflict transformation and on public engagement strategies spells out some clear and observable obstacles to transformation, such as lack of time and resources on the part of agencies and participants (Head 2007; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998); bureaucratic rationality and technocracy (Dakin 2003; Dukes 1993, 1996; Head 2007; Young 1990); and distrust of transformational processes and outcomes (Head 2007; King, Feltey, and Susel 1998). The elements of transformational analysis and process (decision-making authority, participation and participation qualities, issue definition, and goal setting) that are described in my proposed framework address many of the procedural qualities that the literature identifies. This study extends the literature by examining the social constructions around these five elements and the obstacles to transformation, and by examining transformation as a worldview. As Lederach notes, transformation is a lens for perceiving the world (2005). This study examines the lenses through which the parties construct the conflict, thus demonstrating how constructions of conflict impede the transformation process.

Discussion of Worldviews

In this section, I discuss the results and findings about worldviews in the FAR case. I discuss the data according to the six components of the worldview framework I defined in Chapter 2: Literature Review: ontology, epistemology, axiology, ethics, logic, and recognition of others' worldviews. The data on worldview components in the conflict indicate that the conflict included elements of worldview conflict. The data also indicate that some participants recognized the presence of worldview differences. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the data in addressing worldview.

The concept of worldview is related to social constructionism in that both ideas rely on the possibility of multiple ways of constructing reality. Worldviews are specific constructions around the nature of reality and truth, and how people can and should value certain actions, ideas, and objects over others. Individuals with worldviews that are very similar could participate in very different constructions about other things. For example, it is possible to imagine two people who share the same worldview engaging in very different ways of thinking about “the province.” Someone with a certain worldview who has worked at a provincial ministry might have a more complex understanding of the province than someone with the same worldview who has not worked at a ministry. Nevertheless, conflicts that stem from differing worldview constructions are difficult to address without first recognizing and dealing with the differences in worldview. Worldview conflicts arise when one party’s reality is challenged by another’s; that is, when one set of constructions about how the world works interacts with another set of constructions.

In the case of the FAR public process, relatively few data indicated a conflict in ontologies. Ontologies are particularly evident in the metaphors that people use to describe the situation (Docherty 2001, Goldberg 2008). There were few metaphors used in the submissions and comments. Perhaps the submitters constructed the panel as epistemologically disinterested in metaphorical explanations. The ontological differences that were inferred from the data related to different constructions about how and whether individuals are related to one another and to the broader “environment” (itself a highly constructed concept). R. said s/he was intimate with the land. Most other stakeholders, however, indicated possibly relational ontologies only through axiological statements

about environmental qualities. For example, one submission stressed “the factors of environmental protection, wildlife refuge and/or habitat, watershed protection, or aquifer recharge areas” (District A Farmers Institutes 2008). Constructing value around environmental benefits does not require a relational ontology, however. The panel insiders and FAR documents revealed little about the constructed ontology. The scripted nature of the FAR documents contributed to the lack of ontological data in the study.

Epistemology is another worldview construction that was difficult to detect. G. provided the most insight in discussing the relative merits of quantitative and qualitative research methods, indicating a belief that truth is revealed through objective quantitative study. Epistemological differences in the review process could have a significant influence: the privileging of one kind of information (or one source of “truth”) means that those whose constructions of truth are different might have had a hard time being heard or believed.

R.’s concern about “getting facts and figures together,” for example, indicates that s/he felt it would be necessary to participate in a certain construction in order to be heard. R. indicated that despite becoming emotional while commenting at the consultation, s/he “felt good” when a panellist indicated encouragement. R. described having a similar experience at the appeals process, and being surprised when the appeals panel denied her appeal in spite of the friendliness and support s/he detected. This story emphasizes the difference between sympathy and shared epistemology. R. thought that the display of sympathy indicated an acceptance of his/her information as valid, and was surprised when the panel did not accept his/her construction.

The short notice for the Saanich consultation also played into the privileging of information; participants in the consultation complained that they had not had enough time to prepare their comments, and wondered whether comments would be accepted later. If, as some parties seemed to believe, the FARP privileged quantitative data, the short notice had the effect of excluding the voices of the CRD farmers, because they would have needed more time to prepare “facts and figures” that the FARP would be likely to accept as relevant and valid information. The privileging of technical data is a function of bureaucratic rationality that excludes the experiential knowledge of the directly affected public in favour of the learned research of staff and “experts.” The FAR case likely included differences in epistemology; although some stakeholders constructed a different basis of truth, the rational and quantitative constructs of the province were dominant.

Axiological data provided the clearest indication of differences in worldview. At the same time, axiological constructions are relative and adaptive, so that a person could construct an economic value, an intrinsic value, and an ecological value of the same thing at the same time. For the purposes of the research, the relevant data indicate how people construct each of these values in relation to the others. Values would seem to be the basis of this conflict, in that for many of the parties, the question of how to properly classify a farm is a function of how farms are defined and what value society puts on them.

The economic construction of farms’ value is basically that farms contribute to the provincial economy and constitute an “industry.” This construction values the farms that produce the most revenue, and privileges those who place a high value on material gain. The “intrinsic” construction, as I am referring to it, values the culture of food production

and land stewardship, and considers non-economic farm activities (such as genetic conservation) as important as production. The intrinsic valuation privileges farmers. Finally, the environmental value is constructed around non-economic benefits that accrue to the public at large, from open space to clean air to access to food. The environmental value construct privileges “the public good,” and especially the non-farmer who benefits from the work of the farmers. Of these constructions, the economic construction is most evident in the FARP documents, but also appears in the interview with G. and some of the submissions and newspaper articles. The intrinsic and environmental constructions are also mentioned in FARP documents, but are not dominant. Again, the alternative constructions compete with the hegemony of the province, but are unable to supplant it. The basis of farm classification remains the income threshold, which is an inherently economic metric.

There were very few data that indicated differences in ways that parties construct decisions and determine validity, though there were a number of comments that indicated that people disagreed with the way that BCAA had conducted the audit or applied the legislation. Commenters at the Saanich consultation and people quoted in newspapers used terms like “dumb” and “illogical” to describe the actions of BCAA, but they also used the word “fair”. I will treat concerns about fairness and intelligibility together, since they cumulatively describe concerns about the way people should act (i.e. it is not “fair” to be subjected to “dumb” decisions). The constructions at work here suggest a divide between the personal and the institutional: FARP documents emphasize a definition of “fairness” that revolves around universality. How can the assessment policies be applied the same to everyone? Data from individuals, however, indicates a personal construction

of fairness: the policy should allow and even require the assessor to take personal situations into account and apply the regulations at their discretion. The implications of these constructions are that the first construction offers predictability and reduces the possibility of corruption. In theory, anyone would come to the same assessment regardless of bias or affinity for the subject property's owner. On the other hand, the regulations cannot foresee some situations, and the adherence to the "letter of the law" prevents adaptability. The personal construction favors experiential knowledge and trust, but allows more corruption and bias. The first construction privileges those whose properties conform with norms about size and function, i.e. those who follow the rules. The second construction favors those who innovate or whose approach might be non-traditional.

The data indicated that parties recognized that people see things differently, have different values, and feel strongly about those values. Procedurally, however, FAR did not acknowledge worldview difference, and did not accommodate it in the process through negotiations over reality. The public consultation tier of the FAR process does not appear to have included any negotiations at all. In summary, although people close to the FAR process with the power to influence it recognized differences in the ways that people constructed their social realities, the institution of the FARP did not.

There were few data on several components of worldview. The lack of data reveals some flaws in the design of this case study. The study relied on government and panel documents, news reports, submissions and comments, and in-depth interviews. The government documents are carefully reviewed, and provide little or no unscripted speech. The submissions are similarly formal documents, with little use of metaphor and

storytelling that might reveal fundamental constructions. Newspaper articles are heavily edited sources of text, and are second and third-hand data sources. Interviews provided a rich source of data, but the questions were designed to elicit the personal experience of the individuals in hopes of uncovering worldview constructions. Directive questions on worldview components would have revealed more about the constructions of the participants, even if the answers were filtered through the participant's awareness of the questions' intent.

The difference between personal and institutional constructions was a theme running through the worldviewing data. In terms of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and ethics/logic, there was evidence of an institutionalized construction that recognized only one worldview (rational, economic, universal and impersonal). The data show that individuals close to the panel and the stakeholders disagreed with the hegemonic worldview but were either unable or unwilling to challenge it.

The literature deals with worldview conflict primarily in terms of crisis and barricade situations (Docherty 2001), intercultural situations (Lebaron and Pillay 2005), and the importance of matching practitioners' worldviews to the conflict at hand (Goldberg 2009). This study reinforces the literature's emphasis on worldview as a contributor to intractability, and extends the literature by addressing public policy through the worldview lens. This study applies the concept of worldview as an analytical tool to a public policy setting, and the previous section examines how constructions of conflicts can interfere or block the application of transformative processes that are necessary to address worldview conflict. Finally, this section extends the literature by examining how hegemonic constructions interfere with worldview recognition; even though people

within the process seemed to recognize the worldview conflict, institutional structures kept the process focussed on narrowly defined issues.

Discussion of Transformational Changes

There were very few data that indicated transformational change, and the data are largely inconclusive as to whether changes took place in locations that could promote transformation. This section, therefore, is primarily dedicated to discussion of reasons that the data may have been so scarce.

The data sources for this study were specific to the case and did not provide data on its broader context; therefore contextual changes were difficult to detect. Personal observation provided insight into provincial elections and other contextual changes, but was not originally intended to be included as a data source. The design of the study, in this instance, was not appropriate for collecting information on contextual changes.

In contrast, there was not an inherent limitation to the data sources in terms of other changes. News articles and press releases provided multiple data points in time, and interviews provided retrospective data. However, these sources provided little data on transformational changes. Many of the news articles were focussed around the FARP press releases and covered the activities of the FARP. Those that did not directly address the topics of press releases (particularly the series in March 2009 in *Saanich News*) were focussed on the content of the dispute rather than its structure. The press releases were highly edited, formal communications from the government that were intended to maintain the legitimacy of the FARP through communicating its successes and relevancy. I was not surprised that changes that could potentially transform the structure of the conflict or of society were not broadcast through a press release from the government.

The press releases about changes in the co-chair position contrasted with the lack of information about other changes in panel membership. Similarly, data on the interim recommendations from the press release presented data on changes in issues, but did not address how those changes might transform the conflict. In summary, the paucity of data on changes that could transform the conflict could indicate the lack of such changes, and it could also reflect the ability of the province to dictate how people construct knowledge of changes.

In contrast to the lack of data on potentially transformational changes, there were several data on future changes. The future change processes described by the FARP report were limited in scope and intent, much as the FAR process was. In addition, without structural changes within “the province,” the review seems likely to be constructed in a similar way. The conflict about how farming should be defined and valued in British Columbia seems unlikely to be transformed in the future. Instead, the province is likely to continue to apply managerial approaches that reduce or ameliorate the effects of the conflict on society. In essence, the province will maintain the dominant construction of farming as a component of industry, and will maintain the construction of review as a mechanism to establish legitimacy. Stakeholders and others may offer alternative constructions, but without building sufficient consensus to seriously challenge the hegemony of the state. The dialectic between the stakeholders and the state will continue until a transformation occurs which can establish a dialogue among the disputants.

This study indicates that the framework I adapted from Miall (2003) may leave too many concepts undefined. I had no way of knowing whether a change in a location was

transformational. I hoped that detecting changes in prescribed locations would lend itself to empirical observation, while Foley's relational indicators (reduction in conflict, improved relations, cognitive and affective shifts, and ability to resolve future disputes) (2007) would require more interpretation and inference. I did detect some changes in structures, context, issues, and actors by observation and data analysis, but it was unclear whether the changes I found contributed to transformation. This study indicates a need for additional research in assessing transformational effects. Although a brightline test seems inappropriate to evaluate a concept as broad and loaded as "transformation," a better theoretical framework is called for. In this sense, the study agrees with the literature that asks for a clearer definition of transformation (Mitchell 2002).

Recommendations

Although this section is entitled "Recommendations," the methodology of this research hinges upon the idea that people's actions are grounded in a socially constructed reality. Issuing recommendations would impose my construction on the reader. Instead of directing people to change, I interpret this section as an opportunity to highlight some concepts that I hope readers will incorporate into their own constructions. Rather than urge others to act, I am actively contributing to a construction of social reality that includes transformational change. This section invites the reader to participate.

I hope that the transformative qualities discussed in the Literature Review and subsequent data analysis and discussion will encourage the dissemination of these ideas in the public sector. Specifically, I hope that the five elements I identified as a theoretical framework will encourage practitioners to ask questions about how the processes they design can empower stakeholders to transform difficult issues. I hope that the findings

and discussion around obstacles to transformation can help public agencies overcome these obstacles and construct public engagement in a more inclusive, dialogic, and potentially transformative way. The discussion is meant to help community members think differently about how their voices can be heard in public process. Community members need to understand that it is sometimes necessary to engage with conflict in order to build a consensus toward transformation. Transformation will be more likely when its risks are outweighed by the risks of continued conflict. Overall, this case study demonstrates how constructions of conflict and of the world itself can both limit and expand our options in conflict. I hope this improved understanding will help practitioners and stakeholders alike envision a different approach to conflict and even a different future.

Questions for Further Research

Although this thesis explores the relationship between public policy and transformation, more research is needed. In particular, there is a serious problem of scale in transforming public conflict. Is it necessary or possible to involve every stakeholder in a public process? In addition, it would be worthwhile replicate this study (with a few changes to study design), and apply it to a case where public empowerment and transformative processes are intentionally built into the process. What would a public policy process look like if it were built on conflict transformation from the beginning? How well would it work? What would be the stumbling blocks, and how would a platform for dialogue be established? In addition, as noted in the previous section, this study highlights a need for a better methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of transformation. Finally, this study indicated that personal worldviews of process insiders

were overshadowed by institutionalized constructs. Research is needed into how worldview conflicts can be addressed in the context of an institutional worldview that denies the existence of other worldviews.

Conclusion

This case study of conflict transformation and worldview conflict in the Farm Assessment Review found that the public process lacked many transformative qualities; that worldview differences contributed to the conflict, but the differences were largely ignored within the process; and that few transformational changes were evident. The recommendations suggest future change processes, but they do not establish a platform for ongoing dialogue in that they do not address trust issues and future processes are likely to be based on a consultative approach similar to the approach taken in the FAR. Potential obstacles to transformative practice were identified at the provincial level, though no causal relationship was established between the obstacles in the case and the FAR public process. The intersections of social constructions within the FAR were examined, and the province's hegemonic position prevailed in most respects. The case study contributed to knowledge of the conflict in question, and provided insight into the degree to which public policy processes designed around consultative public engagement are able to address fundamental aspects of the conflict. The study also contributed to knowledge about worldview conflicts in public policy and explored reasons that worldview conflicts were not addressed.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Please describe your involvement in the farm assessment review process
 - a. Describe how you first become involved in this issue.
 - i. Do you remember what you were doing when you first heard about this issue? Please describe that experience.
 1. Do you remember what you were feeling? What was the first thought that crossed your mind?
 2. Describe the importance of this issue to you on a personal level
 - b. Why do you think you became involved in this issue?
Reflecting on your description of your involvement, what were the beliefs that motivated you?
2. Describe your general attitude toward the farm assessment review process at the beginning
 - a. Is your attitude now the same or different than it was at the outset?
 - b. Was there a particular point in the process where you changed your mind? Please describe how that happened.
 - i. Do you remember what you were feeling when you changed your mind? Do you have a conscious memory of realizing that something had changed? Please describe these experiences.
 - ii. Why do you think you changed your mind/didn't change your mind? What made it hard or easy to do? After these experiences, are you more or less likely to change your mind again in the future? why or why not?
 - c. Describe the other people involved in the process.
 - i. How has your experience with the Farm Assessment review process affected your relationships with the other people in the process? Do you think the process will affect your opinion of the Province's policy making process? Why?

3. Please explain your overall opinion of this issue in terms of problem solving. In other words, what makes it difficult to resolve? What factors make it easy to resolve?
 - a. Has your assessment of this issue changed over time? Describe those changes and how they happened. What were you feeling when the changes occurred?
 - b. What are the key issues for you in this conflict? How did you decide what those were?
 - c. Describe an experience when an issue that is important to you was being discussed in this context.
 - d. Describe an experience when an issue that is important wasn't being discussed.

4. During the Farm Assessment Review, did you ever have an experience where you felt you could understand where another person was coming from, even if you didn't agree with them? If so, please describe that experience. What were your thoughts and feelings at that time?
 - a. What were the factors that made it easy or hard to identify with another person you didn't agree with?

5. During the Farm Assessment Review, did you ever have an experience where you felt another person was hard to understand or didn't make sense? If so, what were your thoughts and feelings?

6. Reflecting on the overall experience of being involved in the FAR conflict, how would you describe your feelings about it now? What do you think will happen from here?
 - a. If the province provided another opportunity to discuss the farm assessment, how would you feel? How would your experience with the Farm Panel affect your participation in future efforts to resolve this dispute?

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS APPROVAL

-omitted-

APPENDIX 3: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

I sent the following text to the interview participants for their feedback:

Summary of Research Conclusions

Research Question One:

How can transformative approaches be applied to public policy?

Conclusions:

In the case of the Farm Assessment Review, the public participation process exhibited few characteristics that would be consistent with a transformative approach.

- The decision-making is reserved for government elected and appointed officials
- The consultation process did not provide equal access to influence the process
- There was a lack of dialogue between the Farm Assessment Review Panel and stakeholders;
- Issues were defined narrowly and did not address concerns about values, identity, and rights
- The goals of the process focussed on resolving conflicting interests rather than transforming relationships and structures

Research question two:

Did worldview conflict arise in the case? If so, was it recognized and accommodated?

Conclusions:

In the Case of the farm assessment review, there were differences among stakeholders and government representatives as to:

- Ontology, the nature of being. Some stakeholders described a holistic conception of reality, while data suggest the government's perspective is more mechanistic
- Epistemology, the nature of truth. Some stakeholders referred to the value of subjective, emotional and experiential ways of knowing, while a panel insider was concerned with empirical and quantitative information.
- Axiology, what things are valued. There were clear differences in whether farming's value was best measured in economic, social, or environmental terms.
- Ethics. Although there were data regarding ethics, there was not evidence of different beliefs.
- Logic. Although there were data regarding logic, there was not evidence of different beliefs.
- Recognition of worldview differences: Stakeholders and panel insiders exhibited signs that they recognized fundamental differences among parties in terms of basic assumption and values.

Research question three:

What were the effects of the public policy process in terms of transformative capability?

Conclusions:

In the case of the farm assessment review, some potentially transformative changes occurred in personalities, issues, and actors. The degree of transformation was evaluated in terms of relational indicators:

- Reduction in conflict: Data indicated a reduction in conflict.
- Improved relations: Relations deteriorated for some stakeholders, improved for other stakeholders, and for many stakeholders there were no data.
- Cognitive and affective shifts: There were significant cognitive shifts for each of the interview participants.
- Ability to resolve subsequent disputes: Data indicated a lack of trust, reservations about participation in future processes for some stakeholders. Data also indicated willingness and interest on the part of other stakeholders.
- Empowerment and recognition: Data indicated empowerment and recognition for two of the three interview participants.
- Major shifts in perception: Data did not support the presence of major shifts in perception.

Overall, there were few fundamental changes in relations and structures and few indications that the parties' capacity and willingness for ongoing and future dialogue had increased.