PUBLICLY FUNDED SATELLITE TELEVISION IN ALASKA: LOST IN SPACE

by

Rosemarie Alexander Isett

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ABSTRACT

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Rural Alaskans are the only television viewers in the United States to receive a state-owned and operated satellite channel broadcasting U.S. network entertainment to their homes. Small satellite earth stations in 224 rural communities beam the Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) into the homes of nearly 113,000 viewers, most of whom are Alaska Native.

This research combines case study, ethnography and survey methods to examine the impact of television on Alaska's native culture and lifestyle. In 1991, a survey was conducted among adults in three Northwest Arctic Inupiat Eskimo villages, which have received the RATNET signal since the late 1970s. More recently, these villages acquired small cable television systems. In this new multiple-channel environment, RATNET's distinguishing feature is Alaska news, weather and a smattering of locally produced Alaskan programs. RATNET remains the only television channel in more than half of the villages it serves.

The dissertation argues that RATNET should take into account the distinct cultures and lifestyles of rural Alaskans, and broadcast more culturally relevant programs. Respondents indicate they want more culturally proximate television, which reflects their daily lifestyle and

experiences, or the experiences of other rural Alaskans. The research also indicates that Inupiats link television to a decline in traditional activities and lifestyle, although they rank TV at the bottom of a list of machinery, appliances and other technologies affecting their lifestyle.

The research supports and augments Straubhaar's cultural proximity theory among Alaska Natives. Straubhaar finds that indigenous Latin American television viewers actively search for programs that reflect their lifestyle. The current study argues that cultural proximity also explains the use of technology to perpetuate a traditional native lifestyle. The preference for certain technology in the Inupiat villages parallels the preference for television programming content. Native villagers wish to maintain their subsistence lifestyle by making it more efficient and convenient. They want some of the television they watch to reflect their subsistence patterns, as well as their native culture, history and traditions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and assistance of many people.

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INTRODUCTION

> Now that we have TV, our people mostly seem to want to wait for their program rather than get their chores done...Out here we don't have running water or sewer, and we have to get wood or stove oil. It seems those are put aside for TV. It also interferes with subsistence hunting.[1]

Like many indigenous cultures around the world, the traditional lifestyle of Alaska natives is undergoing rapid changes and challenges. The once nomadic tribes now live in settlements, with modern schools, airstrips, electricity and telephones. Satellite television dishes occupy a large square of community land. Satellite television occupies a large portion of community time.

Satellite television was introduced in rural Alaska in 1977. By the mid-1980s, a state licensed and operated satellite television channel was received in 224 rural communities.[2] Known as the Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET), the channel broadcasts commercial entertainment as well as some noncommercial programming, and an overnight instructional classroom feed.[3] A 17-member board representing rural viewers and

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[1]Answer to "How do you think your life was different before you had TV?" Adult survey, Fall 1991.

[2]There were 224 communities with satellite earth stations in 1991. The RATNET signal can be picked up in approximately eight neighboring communities without earth stations. However, this number is not constant, therefore, the number of earth-station communities will be used throughout the paper.

[3]For a complete description of RATNET, see Rosemarie J. Alexander, "Politics, Not Policy: The Rural Alaska Television Network," unpublished manuscript, Michigan State University, December 1992.

educators selects the daily schedule. Native Alaskans comprise the largest segment of the RATNET audience. Very little programming is culturally oriented, or is produced in Alaska.

The satellite television service was created at a time when telecommunication played an important role in Alaska's rural development policy. Until recently, RATNET was the only television channel available in rural homes. Now, challenged by the intrusion of cable and other broadcast technologies, Alaska satellite television policy goals, direction and purpose need to be re-examined.[4]

This study examines satellite television policy and its impact on Alaska native culture and lifestyle, as reported by rural native Alaskans. Conducted in three Northwest Alaska Inupiat[5] Eskimo villages during the fall of 1991, the survey focused on Inupiat adults' perception of the effect of television on rural life. The dissertation is a product of a multi-method approach, combining a policy case study of RATNET with ethnography and quantitative data collection in the field.

The search for a RATNET policy model guided the initial stages of the inquiry. Driven by the novelty of satellite technology, no models were used to frame RATNET, resulting in a laissez-faire policy and unclear goals. The fieldwork phase of the inquiry was a result of the RATNET case study and the need for quantitative data about village television viewing. Many of the survey questions reflected assumptions state policy-makers have made -- but never tested -- that RATNET content has negative effects on rural viewers and the native lifestyle.

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Pronounced I-nu-pak.

Questions also were driven by the growing number of rural villages investing in cable television systems. In the late 1980s, legislators began to dispute state appropriations for free entertainment TV to rural viewers, when many rural viewers seemed willing to pay for similar programming on cable. Until this research, no one had attempted to empirically observe what role the free RATNET channel played in the villages with cable systems.

Several broad questions guided the research: (1) What changes do rural Inupiat Eskimos perceive in village life and culture since the arrival of television? (2) Is there a cultural impact of television in native communities which should be considered in Alaska satellite television policy? (3) Is Alaska programming (Alaskana) important enough to rural viewers that Alaska should foster an aboriginal broadcasting policy? (4) Is the Rural Alaska Television Network important enough to rural viewers that they would be willing to pay for it? (5) If so, what is this importance and why are villagers willing to pay, considering the availability of cable television?

Data description and analysis demonstrates a general preference for a "local" TV genre, that is, regional and culturally specific programming. It is clear from the data that native viewers rely on RATNET for news and public affairs. Due to the paucity of other media in rural Alaska and to the oral tradition of the native culture, television has become rural Alaskans' "window on the world." They perceive that TV interferes with traditional lifestyle, but believe it is only one of a multitude of changes in rural Alaska affecting native villages.

The study had three phases: (1) **pre-cable** surveys conducted in a village that received only the RATNET channel; (2) **post-cable** interviews in the same village after a six-channel cable system had been installed; and (3)

surveys in **established-cable** villages that have received both RATNET and a small number of cable channels for several years.

The data collection process was guided by perceived changes in the village and Inupiat culture since the arrival of television, the village media environment, and the role of RATNET and cable television within it; as well as demographic characteristics, particularly those that distinguish rural natives from other rural Alaskans, such as native language, mobility, education, occupation and lifestyle.

A village media environment is clearly distinguishable from the data. Demographics establish a village context. Both provide the context for understanding media-use habits and attitudes, and perceived changes in the Eskimo lifestyle since TV was introduced. From the data, the impact of RATNET programming policy on viewers' use of the channel emerges, as does the specific function that RATNET performs in the rural television viewing environment. As cable becomes available, RATNET remains the only television source of Alaska news and information.

Dissertation chapters two and three describe the rural setting and the development of the Rural Alaska Television Network from an educational, instructional and entertainment service to a primarily commercial entertainment service. Chapter four examines the applicability of certain policy models to the state-owned channel. Chapter five discusses research on the cultural effects of television and the application of that research to policy. The Alaska-specific material, including the policy history, provides the context for this literature review. Chapter six describes the methodology used for the policy and field research, and the hypotheses growing out of the policy analysis, literature search, key informant interviews, and observation. Chapters seven and eight establish the sample village setting, including the

media environment. Chapter nine analyzes the impact of RATNET on the Eskimo lifestyle from viewers' perception, and chapter ten suggests changes in state policy to foster culturally relevant programming.

Chapter Two

THE RURAL ALASKA SETTING

INTRODUCTION

The Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) is unique among U.S. television systems. Alaska is the only state to own and operate a primarily entertainment channel that is neither commercial nor public. RATNET is not a television station, cable channel, repeater, or translator. An analysis of the system requires an understanding of rural Alaska's population, the challenges posed to rural communication by Alaska's geography, and a discussion of Alaska's telecommunication history and policies.

THE NATIVE PEOPLE

Alaska natives were once the only people in Alaska. By 1990, they comprised only 15.6 percent of Alaska's total population of more than one-half million.[1]

Between the first Alaskan census of 1929 and the 1990 census, the state grew more than eight times, from 59,255 to 550,043. The native population increased from 29,983 to 85,700. The non-native population increased by a factor of 16, from 29,272 to 464,343.

Alaska native groups are comprised of Inupiat and Yup'ik Eskimo; Aleut; Athabascan Indian; and Tlingit, Haida and Tshimian Indian. All are

[1]Data from the 1990 U.S. Census was the benchmark for the 1991 television survey.

culturally diverse, but have common political, social, and economic problems and goals. Among rural natives, the desire to protect the subsistence lifestyle and traditional native culture and language is especially strong.

Inupiat and Yup'ik Eskimos, estimated at 44,400 in 1990, comprised Alaska's largest group of indigenous people; the 1,083 Haida Indians were the smallest group. Southeast Alaska's Indian groups are considered to be the most acculturated, having had the longest period of contact with Euro-Americans. Northern Inupiat Eskimos and interior Athabascan Indians may be the least acculturated, having the shortest history of contact.

Alaska's first explorers were Russian fur traders in the mid-1700s. The Russians later established a capital at Sitka in Southeast Alaska, then sold Alaska to the United States in 1867. Alaska was under U.S. military jurisdiction until 1884, when a civil government was put in place. Alaska's territorial years were marked by a rush to exploit its rich natural resources -- salmon, whale and walrus, furs and gold. Alaska natives became part of that process.

The U.S. policy to civilize and absorb the American Indian into Euro-American society was extended to Alaska. In the late 1800s, under the direction of Sheldon Jackson, General Agent of Education for Alaska, major Christian denominations divided their missionary activities among Alaska natives by geographical region.[2] A major element in the missionary plan was the eradication of native languages. Native students were forbidden to speak their languages in school, and were punished if they did. This language policy continued in Alaska schools until about 1970. Alaska native languages are rapidly dying, despite a 1990s movement among native groups to

[2]Today, certain Christian churches still dominate a given rural area. The Evangelical Friends Church was the only denomination in the three Inupiat sample villages.

preserve language and culture.[3] Few native children can speak their language fluently. [4]

Alaska is divided into vast geographic regions based on the indigenous residents who occupied each region before Euro-American contact. By statehood in 1959, Alaska natives were losing more than language and culture, they had lost land, and their subsistence hunting and fishing rights were threatened. The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) was formed in 1966 to pursue native land claims with the federal government. The result was the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), signed into law on December 18, 1971. ANCSA divided Alaska natives into 12 in-state regional and 200 village corporations. A thirteenth corporation encompasses Alaska natives living outside the state. The regional native corporations were given $962.5 million and 44 million acres of land, a much different system than the Indian reservations of the continental U.S.[5] The corporations were set up to own and manage the land and money. Individual natives were enrolled in the corporations based on their birthplace, or where they lived.[6]

Many of the corporations have invested in natural resource development in Alaska. Not all native corporations have been economically

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[3]The Alaska Legislature has considered, but never passed, legislation requiring native school districts to establish native language advisory committees, and to encourage local schools to teach the local language. According to linguist Michael Krauss, 20 native languages were spoken in Alaska in the early 1990s. Krauss estimates that five will be lost by 2015 and at least 15 by 2055. Michael Krauss, "Alaska Native Languages: Past, Present and Future," Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1980.

[4]The most fluent children are Yup'ik Eskimos, who live in very remote and traditional villages in western Alaska and on St. Lawrence Island. Linguistic studies show that children learn English better once they have mastered and speak their native language at home. Native parents, many of whom recall the punishment they received in school for speaking their language, generally encourage their children to speak English. David Hulen, "Two languages better than one," Anchorage Daily News, (Feb. 12, 1994), 1.

[5]Alaska has only one reservation, Metlakatla in Southeastern Alaska. After ANCSA, the Tshimian people were given the option of remaining in reservation status or becoming a corporation. Tshimians chose to remain a reservation.

[6]Each enrollee also was given 100 shares of stock. Alaska Natives are members of both a regional and a village corporation.

successful. Those that are provide village and regional services, offer some employment, and pay each shareholder born before 1971 an annual dividend.

The more than 224 rural villages served by the Rural Alaska Television Network are primarily native. Most are unconnected by roads, although a few are along the road system. Some coastal communities are served by the Alaska Marine Highway system.

These remote villages offer few health and social services, and many are plagued with health problems. Only 40 percent of Alaska's rural communities have piped residential water systems; 37 percent have flush toilets.[7] Outbreaks of hepatitis and other diseases related to unsanitary conditions are common. The health of Alaska natives is among the poorest in the nation. The statewide birth rate is highest among Alaska natives, and the native teen birth rate is 70 percent higher than the national average.[8] Alcoholism is a chronic problem in rural villages. The rate of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/ Effects among Alaska natives is the highest of any group studied in the world.[9] Alaska's suicide rate is three times the national average[10] and 22 times higher for Alaska native men.

Rural Employment

Rural Alaska unemployment was about 14 percent at the time of the 1991 village survey, compared to 8.8 percent statewide.[11] An estimated

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[7]Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, "A Commitment to Alaskans: Solving Today's Sanitation Problems While Planning for the 21st Century," draft report, (Juneau, AK: January 1992), 15.

[8]Judith Anderegg, Demographics: A Case for Equity in Alaska, (Juneau: Alaska Department of Education, June 1991), 29.

[9]Russ Christensen, "Health Problems Among Alaskan Eskimo Infants and Young Children," Arctic Medical Research (April 1990), 65; and Anderegg, Demographics, 22.

[10]Alaska State Legislature, Health Resources and Access Task Force, Final Report to the Governor and Legislature, (Juneau: January 1993), 29.

[11]Neal Fried, "Rural Alaska's Different Employment Picture," Alaska Economic Trends, (January 1994), 4.

21.4 percent of rural Alaskans lived in poverty, versus 9 percent for the rest of the state.[12] Poverty level in Alaska is derived by adding 25 percent to the national poverty criteria to take into account the higher cost of living in Alaska, updated annually to reflect change in the consumer price index.[13]

In rural Alaska, the term poverty is misleading. Rural natives still depend on subsistence hunting and fishing for the majority of their food and livelihood, and "no one has yet to come up with a way to convert subsistence into cash."[14] The role subsistence play in the sample villages is discussed in chapter seven.

Rural villages are slowly moving from a subsistence to a cash economy. Few jobs are available, and skill and education levels are low. Anthropologist Norman Chance believes that in order to get "money into the villages, more villagers will have to go elsewhere to work."[15] Also, many rural natives do not "want to fully relinquish their subsistence activities for the supposed security of wage employment."[16]

While Alaska ranks first among all states in percentage of high school graduates, only about 46 percent of its natives have completed high school.[17] Until the late 1970s, rural natives who wanted to attend high school had to leave their village. Many went to Anchorage, Fairbanks, or to federal Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools in Sitka and the Lower 48. In addition to the social disruption caused by sending teen-agers away from their village, many natives did not attend school. The drop-out rate was high among those

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[12]Ibid., 2.

[13]Neal Fried and Holly Stinson, "It's Getting Harder to Earn a Buck," Alaska Economic Trends, (December 1993), 6.

[14]Holly Stinson, Administrative Services, Alaska Department of Labor, interview by author, Anchorage, April 28, 1992.

[15]Norman A, Chance, The Inupiat and Arctic Alaska, An Ethnography of Development, (Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1990), 196.

[16]Ibid., xiv.

[17]Anderegg, Demographics, 29.

who did. A 1977 court decision required that local school districts provide a secondary school in communities that wanted one.[18] A massive building program ensued, and most Bush communities now have their own school, with very few students.

Rural Media

Rural Alaskans are media and information poor. About 40 percent of those living in the most remote regions still lacked telephones in 1991.[19] Daily newspapers were not available on a regular basis. Some regional centers, such as Kotzebue, Nome, and Bethel, published weekly or biweekly newspapers, delivered to rural villages. While most communities had access to radio, reception was often poor. Sixty-nine of the RATNET communities did not receive radio in 1991.[20] When RATNET was introduced in the late 1970s and early '80s, it was the only source of news and information in most rural Alaska villages. It remained the only source in many villages in 1991 at the time of the survey.[21] The village media discussion will be amplified later in this paper.

At the time of the 1991 survey, approximately 90 of the RATNET villages had cable television systems. The number of villages acquiring cable was rapidly growing.[22] Sixteen Southcentral Alaska RATNET communities

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[18]Tobeluk v. Raynolds, 4 AAC 05.040 (1976), also known as the "Molly Hootch" decision.

[19]Larry Pearson, "Desert Storm and the Tundra Telegraph: Information Diffusion in a Media-Poor Environment," in Bradley Greenberg and Walter Gantz, eds., Desert Storm and the Mass Media, (Cresskill, N. J.: Hampton Press, 1993), 9.

[20]Herb Holeman, chief engineer, Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission, Memorandum to the Alaska Department of Administration, February 1992.

[21]For a statewide look at rural Alaska media in the late 1980s, see Larry Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor: Knowledge Gaps and Communication Policy in Alaska" (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1990).

[22]Cable has been installed in communities with populations as small as 300, but operators indicate it would be economically impractical to provide cable to villages with 50 or fewer households. Larry Pearson, The Future of State-Supported Broadcasting in Alaska:

also received over-the-air signals from Anchorage public and commercial television stations that utilized a state-subsidized translator.[23] Several Southeast Alaska communities also received the Juneau public TV station via state-subsidized translator. Five public radio stations and one public TV station served a primarily native audience. Three radio and one TV station were broadcasting in English, Yup'ik and Inupiaq Eskimo.[24] Approximately 84 percent of rural residents owned videocassette recorders (VCR) in 1991.[25] Home satellite dishes were sprouting up throughout the Bush.

The consumer economy has moved to these isolated subsistence villages, mostly via the mass media. While no Alaska media studies have looked directly at rural consumption patterns, the broken and discarded remains of modern native society sit atop the permafrost as startling reminders of the transition from subsistence to cash:

> There must be hundreds of dead animals here, maybe a thousand if you dug under the piles of more ordinary trash -- the cola cans, diapers, pickle jars, and so on ... Alongside the animal parts lie the skeletal snow machine bodies and dead outboard motor fragments ... What we have at the Noatak dump is perhaps unique in world history: evidence of a high-tech hunter-gatherer society.[26]

Final Recommendations to the House Special Committee on Telecommunications, (Alaska Legislature, March 1987, revised August 1987), Appendix A.

[23]At the time RATNET became available, an over-the-air TV signal could not be received in these communities.

[24]Inupiaq is the language of the Inupiat Eskimo people.

[25]Pearson, "Desert Storm," 10.

[26]Noatak is a small Inupiat village in the Northwest Arctic Borough. "If you visited any of the ten village dumps in the region, you'd see more or less the same things." Nick Jans, The Last Light Breaking: Living Among Alaska's Inupiat Eskimos, (Seattle: Alaska Northwest Books, 1993), 118-119.

The mass media, particularly television, perpetuate this high-tech hunter-gather society. In the early 1990s, most rural communities still depend on the state-subsidized RATNET channel for their home entertainment and information. The following chapter recounts Alaska's satellite television history.

Chapter Three

ALASKA TELECOMMUNICATION HISTORY

The evolution of Alaska's state-sponsored satellite television system is best understood within the history of rural telecommunication development. The following description of Alaska's telecommunication history may be instructive in assessing satellite television policy.

Telephony

Telephone came to rural Alaska long after other rural areas of the U.S. were taking telephones for granted.

By statehood in 1959, Alaska had a confusing combination of U.S. military, community, and independently owned telephone systems, which served larger communities and military bases, supplemented in a few rural villages by high-frequency (HF) radio links. State policy-makers began taking an active role in telecommunication development in the 1960s, and by 1970 an Office of Telecommunications (OT) had been established within the governor's office, responsible for long-term telecommunication planning and policy.[1]

In 1969, the U.S. Department of Defense sold its Alaska Communication System (ACS) to RCA Global Communications, Inc., which incorporated in Alaska as RCA Alascom. The relationship that developed between Alascom and state policy-makers is an integral part of rural TV.

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[1]Telecommunication responsibilities now fall under the Department of Administration.

RCA Alascom's early years were marked by a reluctance to invest in rural satellite communications, although it was the only feasible technology for Alaska's vast, rugged terrain and extreme weather conditions. For the most part, state government provided leadership into the satellite age out of frustration with RCA's resistance. Alaskans also believed that telecommunication was a lifeline to the Bush and would spur development.

In May 1975, the Legislature appropriated $5 million for construction of 100 small satellite-telephone earth stations in rural villages with 25 or more permanent residents.[2] Television was added almost immediately. In fact, when the Ninth Legislature took up the $5 million satellite-telephone earth station appropriations bill, it may have been the prospect of television that sealed the vote.[3]

Radio and Television Stations

Territorial lawmakers' first foray into broadcasting was a $5,000 subsidy in 1931 to an Anchorage and Ketchikan station "to disseminate news, executive proclamations and inquiries, information about the Territory, etc."[4] Government support of these commercial stations continued until 1936.

Public radio's roots reach deep into state government. Funded with state and federal grants, the first public radio station began broadcasting in 1962 from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and remained the only

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[2]Session Laws of Alaska 1975, Chapter 88.

[3]The $5 million appropriation was to begin "procurement and installation of satellite terminals..." SLA 75, Chapter 88. By 1989, Alascom owned 146 earth stations and the state of Alaska owned 102. That year, the state paid Alascom $2,304 million in earth-station and transponder-lease charges. The Legislature authorized purchase of Alascom's earth stations in 1989, saving more than $4 million over five years. Alascom's charges now are about $1 million annually for satellite distribution. In addition to the savings, it was thought that if the state owned all the earth stations and transmitters, it could at some point competitively bid TV service to the private sector, eventually ridding itself of the television business.

[4]John Thomas Duncan, "Alaska Broadcasting 1922-1977: An Examination of Government Influence," (Ph.D. diss., University of Oregon, 1982), 33.

public station through the 1960s. In 1970, the Legislature created the Alaska Educational Broadcasting Commission (AEBC), charged with facilitating broadcast services in rural areas. The first rural public radio station went on the air in 1971 in the Yup'ik Eskimo community of Bethel, broadcasting in English and Yup'ik. Through the 1970s, the political philosophy toward broadcasting was clearly stated in the intent language accompanying a 1976 legislative appropriation for a statewide public radio network:

> A public radio network is an economic way of bringing the State together. Existing radio stations can be interconnected in a network to make new informational material available so that all Alaskans can be informed as to what Alaska is doing.[5]

At the time of the 1991 three-village study, 16 public and 61 commercial radio stations were operating in Alaska.[6] Commercial stations were predominantly located in markets with an economic base large enough to foster competition and support radio advertising. Rural Alaska was served by public radio, with stations in 12 communities. The four urban public stations were carried on state-funded translators into other rural regions. Alaska public stations are licensed to local community groups or educational facilities; no stations are licensed to the state. The Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission (APBC), was created in 1976 to replace the AEBC, and to establish guidelines for the use of state funds. The APBC is precluded from influencing public broadcast content.

In 1952, the Federal Communication Commission allotted Alaska 19 VHF television channels, including four educational and two military

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[5]Session Laws of Alaska 1976, Chapter 223, intent language.

[6]Broadcasting and Cable Yearbook 1991, (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Publications, 1991).

channels. All channels were assigned to larger population centers with a commercial economic base. No primarily native areas were in the FCC allotment.[7] In 1991 at the time of this research, Alaska had 11 commercial and four public television stations.

Mini-TV

Rural television began in 1971 as an AEBC experiment with 10-watt transmitters connected to three-quarter-inch videotape machines. With the AEBC as licensee, the state built transmitters in about 20 rural sites. A network director was hired and a "Mini-TV" association created, with members representing the sites and acting as a program-selection board. Each site maintained a local "station" and paid a fee to cover tape shipping. Tapes were a combination of public and commercial television fare, including a lot of "cops and robbers-type stuff."[8] Copyright problems were numerous -- in fact, mini-TV "was probably all illegal."[9]

The primary objective of the experiment was to test the feasibility of providing low-cost TV to isolated communities. Few people involved in Mini-TV showed concern about content. Local Mini-TV stations could originate production, but aired only pre-taped programs.[10] The AEBC also had little

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[7]Alaska Allotment:

Anchorage:	2, 7*, 11, 13
Fairbanks:	2, 4, 7, 9*, 11, 13
Juneau:	3*, 8, 10
Ketchikan:	2, 4, 9*
Seward:	4, 9
Sitka:	13

*Reserved for noncommercial educational use. Channels 5 and 6 were reserved for military use. 17 Fed. Reg. 3905-4048, (May 2, 1952); 41 FCC 148, (April 14, 1952).

[8]Kay Shepherd, RATNET Council member and former Mini-TV Association member. Interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, August 1989.

[9]Charles Northrip, executive director, Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission, interview by author, Juneau, July 1989.

[10]Only the Aleutian Island community of Unalaska originated local production, including 57 hours of school activities, weekly basketball games, pottery-making, fishing instruction, and local news and weather. Alaska Educational Broadcasting Commission, informal discussion paper on Mini-TV, (1974), 6-7.

interest in local origination. A consultant hired to evaluate the experiment criticized both local operators and the AEBC for not addressing content issues:

> There is a critical difference between laissez-faire and accepting responsibility for helping communities help themselves. If this is not done, it is not unlikely that we shall see some replication in rural Alaska of the adverse aspects of television viewing so frequently documented in the nation at large.[11]

Content was not an issue for another mini-TV network that operated during construction of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. The national networks considered the pipeline transmitters an extension of two Fairbanks stations' affiliation agreements, an action which paved the way for network agreements for the RATNET channel.[12]

Early Satellite Television Demonstrations

At the time of Mini-TV, satellite companies were being courted to conduct an Alaska experiment, based on research indicating that satellite was not only feasible but necessary:

> In many respects, the satellite was 'invented' for Alaska because of Alaska's unique communications problems, lack of terrestrial communications

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[11]Anthropos, "Evaluation of the Impact of Mini-TV Stations Upon Three Remote Communities in Alaska," in Beverly James and Patrick Daley, "Origin of State-Supported Entertainment Television in Rural Alaska," Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 31 (Spring 1987), 173.

[12]The Fairbanks stations were primarily CBS and NBC affiliates, and shared ABC programming. Under network copyright agreement, the Fairbanks stations were required to dub 18 copies of each program, one for each camp. Each tape had to be erased after it had aired once at the camp. The pipeline network operated from 1974 to 1976, with tapes airlifted daily from Fairbanks to each camp. A. Hiebert, President, Northern Television, Inc., interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, Sept. 1, 1989. Also, Hiebert, Letter to Joan Kasson, Alaska Office of Management and Budget, Jan. 8, 1988.

facilities, mountainous terrain, harsh climate and sparse population.[13]

The 1974 - '75 ATS-6 Health/Education Telecommunication experiment (ATS-6) truly put Alaska into the satellite-television age. Its objective was to give the state technical and content information on which to plan a future statewide satellite communications system. Nineteen rural communities were included in the demonstration, representing Southeast Alaska's Tlingit Indians, Athabaskans in the Interior, Central Yup'ik Eskimos in the Southwest and Lower Kuskokwim region, and several non-native villages.[14]

Medical and educational programs were the top priority of ATS-6.[15] Native-based programming, made possible by citizen input, also was a major concern. Committees from participating communities assisted in the planning and design of health, language, early childhood education, and viewer-defined programs. Community aides also were hired to operate local satellite-terminal equipment, publicize programs and collect audience data.

In most cases, the consumer programming committees recommended that ATS-6 include native-oriented programming be broadcast in English as well as some Alaska native languages. State telecommunication advisors considered consumer input a top priority of ATS-6 mainly because it was in "communities isolated from towns and cities that satellite technology is so

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[13]Cassier, H. R. and Wigren, H., "Alaska: Implications of Satellite Communications for Education," United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, May 1972, quoted in Office of Educational Telecommunications for Alaska, Educational Telecommunications for Alaska, Vol. II, (Juneau: Alaska Department of Education, 1982), 3.

[14]Sixty-three of 270 mostly rural communities were within the satellite footprint. No Inupiat Eskimo and only a few Yup'ik villages were represented in the experiment, although Alaska's largest native group was Eskimo. Many of the selected sites were not as isolated as most of the northern and western villages beyond the footprint, which any future system would serve.

[15]Alaska Office of Telecommunications, Alaska ATS-6 Health/Education Telecommunications Experiment: Alaska Education Experiment Final Report (ALED), Vol. 1, (Juneau: Office of the Governor, 1975), 12 & 14.

urgently required and can make the most significant contribution."[16] State officials believed local feedback would increase program relevance, thus increasing audience size. They also thought audience feedback would help them determine the most effective use of rural satellite television.[17]

The eight-month ATS-6 experiment was the forerunner of the Television Demonstration Project (TVDP), or RATNET as it is known today. While ATS-6 pioneered the concept of consumer committee involvement and relevance in programming, none of the culturally relevant programs became models for TVDP. The success of the ATS-6 project was measured by technology, not content:

> It got enough attention and showed the capability of the use of small earth stations...It was good in that it demonstrated to educators that you can have distance education and also to the medical profession that you could supply medical services or enhance the supply via telecommunication. The problem was that there were no costs involved for people. They were being funded by the federal government and people were getting a free ride on the satellite, so there was no thought about cost effectiveness or anything. Everybody said, 'Hot dog, we got satellites and we can use them.'[18]

ATS-6 evaluators recommended that future satellite television policy include culturally relevant and region-specific programming. Evaluations stated that Alaska natives should have "direct participation in programming," and be trained and employed as media professionals.[19]

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[16]ALED, Vol. I, 39.

[17]ALED, Summary, 4; Vol. I, 78.

[18]Robert Walp, former director, Governor's Office of Telecommunication. Interview by author, Anchorage, August 1989. Confirmed by Northrip and others, and ALED report.

[19]Theda S. Pittman and James. M. Orvik, ATS-6 and State Telecommunications Policy for Rural Alaska: An Analysis of Recommendations, (Fairbanks: Center for Northern Educational Research, University of Alaska, December 1976), 6.

Just as the mini-TV network demonstrated low-power TV technology, ATS-6 showed the feasibility of satellite television in Alaska. When the experiment was over, it was easy to transfer the technology to a new satellite, but any lessons learned about the importance of culturally relevant content were forgotten. The only carry-over from Mini-TV and ATS-6 to RATNET has been the use of a consumer board to select programming.

THE ALASKA SATELLITE TELEVISION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

At the start of the 1977 satellite Television Demonstration Project, 85 percent of Alaskans received at least one television channel, whether from commercial or public stations, translator, cable, Mini-TV, or Armed Forces Television (AFTV). The 15 percent who did not see television were primarily rural Alaska natives.[20]

Prior to TVDP, even urban viewers did not receive timely television. Programs were videotaped at ABC, CBS and NBC commercial network affiliates on the West Coast. The tapes were shipped via the scheduled airlines to Anchorage, where dubs were recorded, then shipped to stations in Fairbanks and Juneau. Network news had always been seen at least one day late in Alaska, often more.

The state fostered network-affiliate participation in the satellite service for several reasons, including the need for network copyright agreements. A deal was struck whereby Anchorage affiliates would get live TV, and in return, the stations would tape programs for the TVDP at no cost.

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[20]Alaska Office of Telecommunications, Satellite Television Demonstration Project, Preliminary Report (TVDP), (Juneau: Office of the Governor, March 15, 1977), 3.

The TVDP began its 23-village service in January 1977, several months after the target date.[21] Then, the TV demonstration just "took off...all the rest that has happened has been legislatively driven."[22]

Live and same-day broadcasts to the Alaska affiliates had daytime priority over other transponder uses. A single-channel "bush format" was developed for live transmission from a tape-delay center in Anchorage, to rural areas, so timely programming could be seen simultaneously in urban and village homes. Network agreements required that each program be aired in its entirety, including all commercials. The state was not charged a fee for the network programming.

An Anchorage broadcaster, who had negotiated the FCC and network agreements, said Alaska broadcasters knew it was a "good deal":

> (W)e recognized that the Bush is pretty isolated and if they are deprived of something that we have here (Anchorage) it's going to create some discontentment. So we thought it was a good idea as a service to the Bush. But what the broadcasters got out of it on a quid pro quo basis was some live sports and live news...So we got something and the Bush got something.[23]

Broadcasters continued to receive live programming from the state until the mid-1980s when most stations invested in satellite technology.

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[21]The appropriation called for earth stations in 24 communities, but it was nearly impossible to install an earth station in the Bering Sea island village of Diomede. A 10-watt transmitter was installed and videotapes were supplied to Diomede by mail. State records indicate other delays were technical in nature, generally because new technology was being used. OT engineers worked with RCA to establish new technical standards and parameters for the small receivers, which had one telephone and one public health service line into each village. Television-receive couplers were added for the TVDP. As the project expanded into villages with landline or microwave service, television receive-only stations (TVROs) were installed. T. McIntire, former director, Division of Information Services, interview by author, Juneau, July 20, 1989.

[22]Cynthia Halterman, former telecommunications planner, Department of Administration. Interview by author, Juneau, June 2, 1989.

[23]Augie Hiebert, general manager, KTVA Television, Anchorage. Interview by author, Anchorage, August 1989.

The first TVDP communities represented specific geographic as well as native regions of the state, with selection based on these criteria: (1) An earth station had to be installed in the village, or scheduled for completion, by the TVDP operations deadline; (2) sufficient electrical power had to be available in the village; and (3) in regions with more than two earth stations, villages with a secondary school had priority over those with only a primary school.[24]

The original legislation is silent on content. For a few years, the Legislature appropriated approximately $100,000 for a "video legislative information service to all broadcast stations, public and commercial, throughout the state...."[25] The Legislature designated an Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) committee to select TVDP programs offered by the Anchorage network affiliates, Alaska PBS stations, as well as education-material suppliers and in-state independent producers. A TVDP preliminary report notes:

> A great deal of the Committee's time was involved in discussing whether or not there was sufficient programs produced in Alaska or by the Canadian Broadcasters that would be relevant to rural Alaska...The AFN Committee, in making their program selections, was acutely aware of the vast cultural and educational differences in their regions and of the harmful effects that commercial television could have. They were also aware of the fact that they had complete control over what types

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[24]Satellite Television Demonstration Project (TVDP) Final Report, Vol. 1, (Juneau: Governor's Office of Telecommunication, Feb. 1, 1978), 5.

[25]Alaska Legislature, House Journal, May 25, 1976: 1571. The program was an independently produced, daily 30-minute legislative newscast, which was carried on RATNET and public stations. Segments were offered to commercial stations for use in newscasts. The Legislative Council, a joint House and Senate committee, negotiated the contract with commercial or public station producers, or independent producers who submitted proposals in response to an annual Request for Proposal (RFP). The 1989 legislative session was the last time an RFP was offered.

> of programs that would be televised to rural Alaska.[sic][26]

The AFN selection meetings were open to the public, and some guests "voiced their opinion that commercial television with its violence and sexism would be harmful to bush villages."[27] Similar concerns were raised at legislative hearings on the TVDP; most were dismissed by legislators as comments from "academic white eyes."[28] The Legislature adopted a policy that it would not set content standards or intervene in programming decisions.

During the TV demonstration, the system delivered 122 hours of programming per week to both urban and rural viewers. Rural viewers were treated to an average of 30 1/2 hours of entertainment per week, 15 1/2 hours of news and public affairs, and 15 1/2 hours of educational TV. Little culturally relevant programming was available for rural broadcast.

The demonstration offered "an ingenious combination of things. If it had been just entertainment TV to the Bush, it probably would not have flown."[29] High school and college-credit courses, children's educational (such as "Sesame Street") and health-related programs were aired during daytime hours. Evening hours began at 5 p.m. with NBC network news, followed by network entertainment, then CBS network news.

A year into the TV demonstration, the Hammond administration, wary of state involvement in an enterprise normally left to the private sector, hired a Los Angeles-based contractor to program and operate the rural network.[30]

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[26]TVDP, Preliminary Report, 36.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Rep. Fred Brown, former member, Alaska House of Representatives. During the 1970s, Brown was instrumental in steering telecommunication legislation through the Alaska Legislature. Interview by author, Fairbanks, August 1989.

[29]Northrip interview.

[30]The Robert Wold Company also controlled satellite feeds to Hawaii.

The contract was challenged by Alaskan providers. A subsequent state ombudsman's investigation recommended it not be renewed, and that a nationwide search be undertaken for a manager who would establish a user-pay system. The contract expired, the search for the manager never materialized, and by 1979 the state was politically entrenched in providing free TV to remote villages throughout the state.

An important aspect of the contract was its attempt to reduce the state's costs as sole provider of rural television, by charging a user fee. Later attempts to establish user fees have been rejected.[31] As this study will suggest, however, a user fee may well be feasible.

The contract also sparked criticism from natives who felt that the Los Angeles company had little understanding of rural Alaskan programming needs:

> The Wold Company never asked us what we want.
> Are they going to put on what we want to see out
> in the Bush or just what goes on in Anchorage?[32]

Bush viewers were not asked what they wanted to watch on TV. They continue to receive mostly commercial entertainment provided by the Anchorage affiliates. While this study will show a desire for a regionally and culturally relevant genre, it is also the first to ask village viewers what kinds of programs they want outside of those already offered.

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[31]Department of Administration officials estimate a cost of $3.33 per month per household for the current service, based on 1990 U.S. Census figures 35,440 occupied housing units. Deborah Gazaway, Division of Information Services, Department of Administration. Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Alaska Population Overview: 1991 Estimates, (Juneau: July 1993).

[32]The speaker was a Mini-TV Association member, who asked the question at the time the contract was announced. Anchorage Times, Dec. 11, 1978. (Photocopy. Title, reporter not supplied).

The TV "Demonstration" Becomes Permanent

When the Legislature approved the satellite demonstration project in 1978, Gov. Jay Hammond let the bill become law without his signature, with this caveat:

> I agree with the intent of this bill to provide timely programming for urban as well as rural areas of the state, not just for news, sports and entertainment, but also for instruction and social service. I am concerned, however, that we may be setting a precedent which will require continuing expenditures, increasing year after year.[33]

Hammond predicted the future accurately. As the Alaska state treasury filled with oil money, state government involvement in telecommunication grew. In fiscal year (FY) 1980 for example, more than $13 million was appropriated by the Legislature for telephone, the satellite television project, public broadcasting, instructional television, data transmission, electronic mail and radio communications. The prevailing notion that drove the original telephone/television expenditures remained at work: telecommunication was seen as a way to improve life in the backwoods and bind the state together.

The state also had money to spend, and rural television was politically expedient -- the ultimate pork-barrel legislation for rural lawmakers. "It was a real badge of honor if (a legislator) could get TV" for his or her district, according to then-APBC director Michael Porcaro, who was responsible for tape-delay center operations in the early years of the TVDP. "I was the only bureaucrat in the world who got ten times more money in my budget than I asked for," Porcaro said.[34]

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[33]Gov. Jay Hammond, cited in (TVDP), Final Report, Vol. 1, 4.

[34]Porcaro recalls that some legislators were so anxious to get TV in their district that they introduced bills for television in villages that had no electrical power. Michael Porcaro,

No one state agency had responsibility for planning, coordinating or administering telecommunication activities; consequently, appropriations were spread among various divisions within the departments of Education (DOE), Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF), Law, Administration (DOA), the Governor's Office of Telecommunications, and the University of Alaska system.

A 1981 executive order by the governor[35] consolidated all state telecommunication activities, including satellite TV, under the Department of Administration. The order also clarified the state's hands-off TV programming policy:

> Decisions and policies relating to programming under the satellite television project, including scheduling and allocation policies ... may only be made by a network that is representative of participating rural television users, by commercial broadcast users or by other participating user groups and entities....[36]

In 1981, the name Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) was formally adopted. The 1981 executive order extended RATNET into many more villages, with continued service dependent upon available revenue. DOA also was directed to "actively seek alternatives to open-ended state subsidization of television."[37] An educational television channel was given priority by the Legislature:

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former APBC executive director, interview by author, Anchorage, Oct. 4, 1990. Confirmed by Shepherd and others.

[35]Under Alaska law, the governor can reorganize the executive branch of government by executive order, subject to legislative approval within 60 days from time of introduction. Alaska Constitution, 1959, art. III, sec 23.

[36]Known as Executive Order 50, the order also required DOA to act as liaison between satellite TV user groups and state government, and to provide management support and technical assistance for the project. Session Laws of Alaska 1981, Chapter 82, sec. (d), 99.

[37]Ibid.

> A channel for instructional television and a channel for the state satellite television project may be provided to communities, which want this service, with at least 25 year-round residents, including at least 8 students attending school there, or taking correspondence courses. This is not intended to prevent use of state funds for additional television channels.[38]

The educational channel, named the Learn Alaska Network (LAN), went on the air in 1982, leaving RATNET's daytime hours free for entertainment. Those hours were soon filled with commercial network fare such as soap operas and game shows. By 1982, both channels were available in the Bush, but not in all villages.[39] At its height, about 227 sites received Learn Alaska.[40]

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[38]Alaska Legislature, "Letter of Intent," Senate Journal, June 24, 1981, 1731. The Legislature already had defined educational television in a 1979 resolution as "public affairs and cultural programs of general public interest, as well as instructional programs for (1) preschool; (2) kindergarten through 12th grade; (3) adult education; (4) post-secondary education; (5) continuing and professional education; and (6) other specialized education. The resolution directed the legislature to conduct an educational TV feasibility study. Session Laws of Alaska 1979, Legislative Resolve No. 25. The first educational television appropriation, $85,000, was awarded in 1976 to the Department of Education to develop an "educational telecommunications systems proposal." Funds also were given that year to the DOE and University of Alaska for educational programs to be run on the TVDP. Session Laws of Alaska 1976, Chapter 213.

[39]In some villages, the two systems were installed simultaneously, other villages received RATNET before Learn Alaska; and some, LAN before RATNET. Alascom received numerous complaints from viewers in villages that had the education but not the entertainment channel. For example, in the Bering Sea coastal whaling village of Shishmareff, villagers soon learned how to flip the transponder switch from Learn Alaska to RATNET. Until the village got RATNET, Alascom engineers were frequently dispatched to repair broken locks on the Shishmareff earth-station building. Tom Jensen, director of public affairs, Alascom. Interview by author, Anchorage, August 1989.

[40]Only a technical upgrade of existing village and regional-center earth stations was required to receive the second channel. About 43 new low-power transmitters (LPTV's) had to be installed in other communities. The state owned 80 LAN receivers, the remainder were owned by Alascom. The state paid Alascom an annual transmission fee of $880,000 and nearly $1.2 million in uplink and downlink charges for LAN.

Education vs. Entertainment

A 1979 consultant's report to the Alaska Legislature concluded that Alaska could not support both instructional and public television.[41] The information was ignored in legislative debates regarding the annual appropriations for Learn Alaska, RATNET, and public broadcasting. The report accurately predicted the future, which came to pass in 1986 when Learn Alaska was scrapped because the state could not fund two channels.

When the Alaska economy began to sag in the mid-1980s, legislative proposals ranged from major cuts in public broadcasting to merging public TV with Learn Alaska. The greatest RATNET and Learn Alaska expense was satellite transponder time. Consequently, lawmakers could not nibble away at Learn Alaska or RATNET -- it was necessary to eliminate an entire channel. In the end, public broadcasting suffered some loss in funding, and Learn Alaska was "merged" with RATNET. The action saved the state about $2 million annually.[42] Learn Alaska's low-power transmitters (LPTV'S) were warehoused, to be used as backups for RATNET LPTV's. Legislative intent language accompanying the RATNET appropriation intended that the RATNET Council increase the amount of educational content in the daily schedule. No guidelines were given.

Legislators generally blame lack of revenue for the demise of the educational channel, but money was only part of the problem. In retrospect, local school districts were not extensively involved in program planning, and

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[41]Larry Goldin and Becky Bear, Comparisons of Selected Instructional Television Networks: Programming, Management and Funding Models, (Juneau: Alaska Department of Education, June 1979), 36.

[42]The state had a 10-year agreement with Alascom for Learn Alaska transmission. Because the system was terminated before the agreement ended, termination fees were nearly $2 million. The Alascom satellite, Aurora II, is the only U.S. satellite dedicated to a single state.

Learn Alaska had few home viewers.[43] LAN managers had "failed to produce a product that people wanted...they didn't take the pulse of the community."[44]

For those leading the charge for state-supported television, two channels were always part of the plan, so no thought had been given to programming a combined channel. The demise of Learn Alaska was a catalyst for legislative attempts to intervene into the workings of the RATNET Council. The Legislature's new goal of providing a balance between education and entertainment on two channels conflicted with the RATNET Council's policy of programming the entertainment channel to a broad, homogeneous audience. The RATNET Council had always been an autonomous group, so legislative intent language without the force of law and without clear directives could easily be ignored. As an entertainment channel without Learn Alaska's insulation, RATNET became a more noticeable target for legislators, simply because it is more difficult to defend state expenditures for entertainment than for education.

THE RURAL ALASKA TELEVISION NETWORK

At the time of the 1991 three-village survey, the Rural Alaska Television Network served more than 224 rural communities. RATNET was not transmitted to cities and towns which received commercial and public TV station signals.[45] Under the original agreements negotiated for the Satellite Television Demonstration Project (TVDP), the Anchorage commercial network affiliates offered the RATNET Council network programs. Alaska public stations and a few independent producers also offered programs to the

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[43]Lois Steigemeir, Alaska Department of Education representative to RATNET Council, interview by author, Juneau, Aug. 4, 1989.

[44]Harold Hopper, RATNET Council representative, interview by author, tape recording, Haines, Aug. 1, 1989.

[45]A few rural areas had begun to receive commercial and public station signals via state-owned transmitter. These signals had not been available at the start of RATNET.

rural satellite service. The state does not pay for the programs RATNET broadcasts, and rural viewers have never paid a fee for the RATNET service. RATNET's major expenditure continued to be the Alascom satellite transponder lease. The fiscal year 1992 RATNET appropriation totaled $1.361 million, of which slightly more than $1 million went to Alascom for transponder lease. In 1992, the state of Alaska completed its purchase from Alascom of all the RATNET earth stations, which significantly reduced state costs. Appropriations for RATNET maintenance and engineering had been reduced, as well as RATNET Council travel to Anchorage for quarterly meetings. State support for all broadcast services, including public radio and TV, was at an all-time low.

The Current RATNET Council

At the start of the 1977 TVDP, the Legislature enlisted the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) to select programs so "the people who were getting the programs" would be making the decisions "without any interference or dictating of government."[46] The AFN programming committee grew into the 14-member RATNET Council, with 12 members selected by Alaska's regional native associations (See Chapter Two), and two at-large members appointed by the governor. After the 1986 legislative "merger" of LAN and RATNET, the Legislature, through intent language, required the RATNET Council be expanded to 17 members with the addition of three LAN representatives.[47]

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[46]F. Brown interview. Confirmed by Northrip and others. Also, RATNET Council, "Minutes," Dec. 2, 1981, 3: "It was state policy at that time (1977) that the people that lived in the rural areas would select the programming...."

[47]The Learn Alaska members to the RATNET Council represent the Alaska Department of Education, the University of Alaska Anchorage, and public broadcasting.

The council is not named in statute.[48] Its only official recognition as a "network...representative of participating rural television users" is found in the section of law that precludes DOA from making content decisions.[49]

RATNET Council Policies and Bylaws

As a satellite demonstration project, entertainment, news and public service programs shared the single channel with education and instruction. Entertainment was selected from popular network shows. Alaska-produced programs had to be of "value and interest to the general public," affecting a "significant portion" of RATNET communities.[50] Rural instruction, selected by the Department of Education, could be pre-empted for "programming of national or statewide importance," such as a presidential or gubernatorial speech, news conference, natural disaster or other imminent news coverage.[51]

As the demonstration was expanded to more villages, programmers were encouraged to carry Alaska-oriented programs, presumably to make the channel more relevant to its audience. However, with the official formation in 1981 of the RATNET Council and general acceptance that satellite TV was no longer a demonstration, state officials encouraged a general-interest programming policy, without regard for region and ethnicity.[52]

At the time of this research, council bylaws describe the volunteer council as the "ombudsman" for the rural residents served by RATNET.

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[48]Members of the ill-defined TV programming committee asked the Legislature in 1981 to recognize the committee in statute. Intent language describing the "user groups" was the result of that request. A second request for official status was made but denied in 1983. Hopper interview. Also, C. Derfner, special assistant for boards and commissions, Sheffield Administration; and "Minutes," Oct. 19, 1983.

[49]Alaska Statutes, Article 6, Section 44.21.320 (c), 74.

[50]Alaska Department of Administration, Policy Statement, Alaska Satellite Television System, (1978), 6.

[51]Ibid., 8.

[52]In 1981, the RATNET Council adopted policies written in conjunction with Department of Administration officials and approved, where necessary, by the state attorney general.

Satellite TV is to be used to bring rural Alaskans "into sharp focus as viable members of the current political and economic community."[53] The council also is to "develop the means by which to implement a regular policy of community assessment to survey community television preferences."[54] The council has never been given funding nor expertise to conduct audience surveys. Consequently, "community assessment" has been inadequate and subjective. Neither the bylaws nor program guidelines recognize the audience's unique native characteristics.

Program Guidelines

RATNET Council program guidelines state that network entertainment "will be evaluated as required," and sports on a seasonal basis. "Public service" (including news) is evaluated when the council meets. The council is to encourage programs produced "for the Alaska statewide audience."[55] The council has no mechanism for soliciting such programs.

Instructional programming, required with the 1986 merger of LAN and RATNET, must be of network quality and "will be assigned on a time slot basis."[56] Since the merger, the council has reserved 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. for instructional programming, which is generally for classroom use.

Programming by the 17-member committee is a lengthy and cumbersome, but democratic process. The 14 rural representatives told the author they could not imagine another way to select programming. The three educational members believe the state should hire a professional television programmer who would suggest, solicit and schedule programs, using the

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[53]RATNET Council, "Bylaws," Feb. 12, 1982, revised May 29, 1987, 2.
[54]RATNET, "Bylaws," amended, Sept. 18, 1984, 2.
[55]RATNET Council, "Guidelines," adopted 1981, revised 1987, 3.
[56]Ibid.

council as advisors.[57] Rural and educational members often disagreed over content.[58]

RATNET Audience Surveys

RATNET Council members assume that rural Alaskans' television tastes are little different from urban-Alaska viewers or those in the Lower 48. A true "community assessment" of TV preferences has not been done since 1977 when the satellite demonstration project reached only 23 villages. That survey indicated the most popular shows were action-adventure, crime and police, including "Six Million Dollar Man," "Bionic Woman," "Charlie's Angels," and "Hawaii 5-0." The least liked were documentary and educational programs, news about the Alaska Legislature, and musical variety, such as "American Band Stand."[59] Sports, the perennial favorite in most markets, rated poorly in 1977.[60] Viewers requested more movies, police stories and longer total viewing hours. Setting precedent for future programming groups, the TVDP committee added an hour to total viewing time and decreased some sports coverage.[61]

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[57]An Anchorage commercial network-affiliate program manager, who worked with the council, described the RATNET Council program selection process as a "nightmare." He marveled that agreement could even be reached. B. G. Randlett, program director, KIMO-TV, interview by author, Anchorage, Aug. 30, 1989.

[58]This became clear to the author during several RATNET Council meetings and in interviewing the 17 council members, as well as past council members and Alaska Department of Administration advisors to the RATNET Council.

[59]The results were based on 490 responses from viewers in the original 23 TVDP villages. The total number of open-ended questionnaires, which were mailed with a monthly TV schedule, is unknown. TVDP, Final Report, Vol. II, 1978, 6-9.

[60]Some sports such as golf or tennis were unknown to most rural Alaskans. Even basketball, an extremely popular sport in Alaska, was foreign as an "arm-chair" game. Also, basketball may not have been quite as well-known in the late 1970s because many communities did not have gymnasiums until after the Molly Hootch settlement. Tiny villages now have high schools with gymnasiums and basketball teams that travel throughout their region playing in school and community leagues.

[61]TVDP, Preliminary Report, 54.

Response to a simple questionnaire in a 1977 television program guide may have been an accurate reflection of viewers' tastes in the few villages receiving the TVDP at that time. Knowledge of viewer preferences is harder to gauge now that 224 communities receive the RATNET signal. Since 1977, several attempts have been made to survey this wide-spread, culturally diverse population, without much success.

A 1983 questionnaire, distributed by mail with 20,000 Learn Alaska/RATNET program guides, garnered only 124 valid responses from 75 communities.[62] A state DOA report claimed the responses represented "a good mix of geographic distribution and community size." The report failed to recognize that the demographic distribution was subject to self-selection bias. According to the report, tastes had changed since 1977, and the "most liked" program category was news -- both national and Alaska. Even more significant were requests that RATNET carry more shows about Alaska.[63]

Attempts by the RATNET Council in 1985 and 1988 to survey rural postal patrons fizzled -- "no time, no money; that's the story of (the) council."[64]

A 1986 University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) survey of 100 Anchorage and 100 rural households, funded by legislative appropriation, reported widespread dissatisfaction with RATNET programming, and disagreement about what it should be.[65] A 1991 UAA media-use survey of 500 urban and rural respondents found, among other things, that rural

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[62]One-hundred sixty responses were received, including letters.

[63]Alaska, Division of Information Services, "Learn Alaska-Television Project Program Survey," (Juneau: Department of Administration, Feb. 14, 1984).

[64]Tony Ramirez, RATNET Project Coordinator, interview by author, Anchorage, Nov. 16, 1990.

[65]Larry Pearson and Douglas Barry, Talking to Each Other, Talking to Machines: Alaska's Telecommunication Future, report to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, (Juneau: Alaska Legislature, January 1987), 60.

Alaskans preferred television to other media.[66] The data to be described here confirms those findings.

The cost of conducting a truly representative survey in rural Alaska has been estimated at more than $20,000.[67] Alaska telephone surveys cost more than $20 per completed long-distance call in 1991.[68] Mail survey response generally is low, and would omit many natives who do not read English. Using the RATNET channel itself as a survey conduit has been discussed, but the system lacks production and interactive capability.

The annual RATNET budget has never included funds for audience surveys. Still, RATNET Council members take seriously their role of assessing audience needs and desires, reacting to constituents' telephone calls, postcards and letters. Numerous examples can be found in council minutes where individual members have attempted to survey the viewers they represent.[69] It is impossible to tell, however, whether those who voice their opinions are truly representative of the entire audience. An objective third-party sample would be the most effective method of tapping the rural audience. The results of the three-village survey reported here provide baseline data for a broader survey.

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[66]Pearson, "Desert Storm."

[67]Costs for attempted, but incomplete, surveys have ranged from $3,500 to $10,000, paid out of the state telecommunications division budget. John Morrone, Division of Telecommunications, DOA, interview by author, tape recording, Sept. 1, 1989, Anchorage. Also, Morrone, teleconference with legislative staff, RATNET Council DOE representative and at-large member, Juneau, July 14, 1989.

[68]Based on figures from a 1991 statewide telephone survey conducted by the Institute for Social and Economic Research and the Center for Information Technology, University of Alaska Anchorage.

[69]Ibid. Prior to council meetings, Russell Nelson, a long-time RATNET Council member, asked local newspapers to publish questionnaires listing current programs prior to council meetings. He claims to have received responses from as many as 30 villages. When "people were given a choice, everyone wanted something different," he said. RATNET "Minutes," Nov. 13, 1986; also, Nelson, interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, Aug. 30, 1989.

Alaskana

RATNET program selection guidelines offer council members broad principles, not detailed rules, and require considerable individual interpretation. The council bases its decisions on "the general value and interest of the program to the public..."[70] This general-interest principle is bolstered by council bylaws requiring that members "represent the interest of the rural residents...in the matters of programming..." and serve "without bias or preferential treatment to any select group, agency or organization."[71]

The general-interest principle has caused the council to reject some locally produced Alaska programs as being too regional, too native, too controversial, too educational, or "too newsy."[72]

The council generally has followed commercial network seasons, picking shows that are popular with national audiences.[73] Rather than encourage local producers to capitalize on Alaska's rich native diversity, the council has seldom deviated from selecting formula, lowest-common-denominator programming -- reaching the broadest possible audience.[74] As a result, the council has selected shows that appeal to a large, homogeneous audience. The major difference between RATNET and commercial broadcast program selection is that commercial broadcasters base program choice on audience demographics and ratings. As a RATNET Council president put it,

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[70]RATNET, "Guidelines," 1981, 2 & 4.

[71]RATNET, "Guidelines," amended Feb. 17, 1984 and June 14, 1984. These guidelines remained in effect in 1992.

[72]RATNET, "Minutes," Feb. 16, 1984, 3.

[73]For example, top-running shows on CBS are scheduled and balanced by popular programs from ABC and NBC, and more recently, the Fox Network. Science, nature and children's' programs from PBS are considered educational material.

[74]Confirmed by RATNET minutes and program schedules from all years. Also, Halterman, interview by author, tape recording, Juneau, Sept. 5, 1989.

"We try to have something for everyone -- though there's only one channel. There will always be complaints. Serving 100,000 people is no easy job."[75]

The RATNET Council has found it difficult to emphasize Alaska productions, or "Alaskana," for several reasons: (1) the RATNET Council general-interest policy discourages the selection of regional, ethnic and native-language programs; (2) the council's policy on accepting Alaska-produced programs is erratic and has changed over time; (3) the council has no empirical data regarding Alaska or native programming, although informal feedback indicates that rural viewers want more of it; (4) neither commercial nor public stations can produce a truly statewide newscast, due to the high cost of rural news gathering; (5) an insufficient number of well-produced Alaska programs are available; and (6) the RATNET Council does not have the authority or mechanism to solicit locally produced programs.

A review of council minutes indicates a need for clear policy on Alaska-produced programs, including definitions of broadcast quality. Prior to the late 1980s, when the Legislature requested that the council carry more Alaskana, council members often rejected such shows because there were no specific selection criteria. For example, the council rejected an Alaska Federation of Natives request for one hour per day of native-language programming, although no reference to an "English only" policy is made in RATNET guidelines.[76] Members have always assumed that the "general value and interest" policy precluded native language programs. The council consistently refused to carry the Bethel public station's daily news program in Yup'ik and English, because of its native language and regional flavor,

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[75]Russell Nelson, RATNET Council president, remarks at Chugach Conference, Anchorage, Oct. 5, 1990.

[76]Alaska Federation of Natives, Resolution No. 83-08, Annual Convention, Anchorage, October 1983.

despite its regional popularity and the large number of Yup'ik Eskimos who live throughout the state. The data analysis for the present study indicates viewer interest in native-language programs.

Program selection committees generally have held fast to the general-interest policy. An example was a 1983 proposal that RATNET carry a weekly news magazine on Southeast Alaska. Despite positive viewer comments, it was canceled after:

> Discussion ensued about the entertainment value of "Southeast Magazine" versus the Council's commitment to promote carriage of Alaska produced programming. Comments were made that "Southeast Magazine" was "too newsy" and that producers have a difficult time producing "real" statewide programs due to logistics and costs.[77]

That year the council rejected all Juneau-produced programs, including a statewide call-in with the governor, legislators and other public officials; a weekly legislative debate; and another weekly Southeast Alaska news-feature program. The shows could not be aired, the chairman said, because they were not about "ordinary people; rather, coverage was about officials, bureaucrats, etc., or about Anchorage and Juneau."[78] Such an attitude defeated the original purpose of the satellite channel, which was to bring rural residents "into sharp focus as viable members of the current political and economic community."[79]

At the time of this 1991 three-village survey, RATNET broadcast a weekday average of two hours of Alaska programming each day, including Anchorage news, which seldom covered rural areas and events. The only truly statewide program was "Alaska Weather." Had more Alaska

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[77]RATNET, "Minutes," Feb. 16, 1984, 3.
[78]Ibid.
[79]RATNET, "Bylaws," 2.

programming been available, the council probably would have scheduled it, in a renewed effort to encourage Alaskana.

The RATNET Council vs. the Alaska Legislature

The 1986 so-called merger of RATNET and Learn Alaska seemed only to muddle satellite TV policy, which already lacked clear direction. Rural council members believed education and instruction had little place in the RATNET schedule. To them, the major purpose of RATNET was "entertainment and a window on the world" for rural Alaskans.[80] In interviews, rural members told the author:

> TV "brings everybody together,"[81] and provides something "for the youngsters to do."[82] It was "awfully hard to include as much education because of a lack of popularity. Kids are getting an education by watching entertainment -- be it good or bad...(The) instructional stuff should stay in the classroom."[83]

In 1994, classroom material continued to be run overnight, the policy rural council members adopted in 1986 when legislators eliminated Learn Alaska and called for more education on RATNET.

Over the years, the political swipes at RATNET have come most often from non-native, non-rural legislators, who seem to have little understanding of the channel, the council and its job, or life in rural Alaska. The council has been insulated from the Legislature by the staff of the Department of Administration's Division of Information Services (DIS), which carried its

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[80]Nelson interview.

[81]Peter Twitchell, RATNET Council member, interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, Aug. 31, 1989.

[82]Rhea Knagin, RATNET Council member, interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, Aug. 31, 1989.

[83]Tim Towarek, RATNET Council member, interview by author, tape recording, Anchorage, Aug. 31, 1989.

budget. The council has not had to interact with the governing body which controlled its budget.

In 1986, when the Legislature eliminated LAN and required that three LAN representatives be added to the RATNET Council, legislative intent called for more educational, instructional and informational programs on RATNET. The old council resisted both actions, while new educational members resisted council history. The tension within the council was high in the first few months after the merger.[84] Each group perceived its responsibility differently -- native members saw themselves as entertainment programmers and educational members saw themselves as programmers instructed to carry out the intent of the Legislature, as well as to provide a balance between education and entertainment.

In the late 1980s, council reluctance to devote large blocks of time to instructional TV was a major reason for legislative attacks and budget cuts. During FY '93 budget discussions, an Anchorage legislator was bent on requiring more educational and instructional broadcasts. "I know what they (rural Alaskans) need," she said in an interview. "Education, education, education!"[85] She authored intent language requiring that a task force study a combined RATNET, public television, and instructional-television system. The language was vetoed by the governor.

Over the years, some lawmakers who opposed RATNET or its programming have become believers. After nine years in the Legislature, the

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[84]The merger got off to a bad start when the director of the defunct Learn Alaska requested that RATNET broadcast a full daytime schedule of education and instructional material, like the original TVDP. His action heightened RATNET Council members' fear that Learn Alaska would try to take over RATNET. One Learn Alaska representative noted "so much hostility" from RATNET members that meetings were "emotionally draining. You have to constantly make an effort to not appear threatening," she said, "but you're constantly perceived that way." Steigemeir interview.

[85]Rep. Kay Brown, interview by author, Juneau, April 14, 1992.

same Anchorage legislator told a House Finance Subcommittee that she had become "convinced that RATNET is a valuable service." RATNET was a bridge to rural communities, she said, offering news and information that rural Alaskans would otherwise be without. In the 1990s, the entire RATNET appropriation was less than $1.3 million, "not a lot of money in the big context of things, and we're getting a lot out of it."[86]

Proposed legislation in 1989 to codify the council and set terms of office for native members, but not for educational members, was the strongest attempt to tighten council reins. The legislators who sponsored the bills did so because RATNET was "the only board that has no statutory authority. The only board that is appointed for life."[87] The legislation would have provided "new blood on the council," according to proponents. "Serving a certain term makes them (members) more accountable."[88] Had the bills passed, the board would have been controlled by the governor's office. Despite the failure of the legislation, it is indicative of legislative reaction to ignoring legislative intent. The rural television service became an even bigger target in the budget process.

Since the 1986 Learn Alaska/RATNET merger, proposals have ranged from eliminating RATNET to finding alternatives to the service. By FY 1992, all RATNET Council travel and meeting funds had been eliminated and programming was selected during one to two council teleconferences per year.[89] By FY '94, maintenance and engineering budgets had dwindled to the

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[86]Brown, House Finance Subcommittee on the Department of Administration, March 10, 1995.

[87]Rep. Mike Davis, interview by author, Fairbanks, Aug. 23, 1989.

[88]Ibid.

[89]During peak funding years, council members met in Anchorage four times a year, taking two to three days to select the schedule. In the 1990s, the RATNET operations manager makes video dubs of all proposed programs and sends the half-inch tapes to members prior to each meeting. Members view the tapes and discuss the merits by

point that if a community had "a problem which requires more than a telephone trouble call to fix, then the cost for travel, shipping, etc. is borne by the community or an individual or individuals within that community."[90] A 1994 House Finance Committee suggestion that RATNET be eliminated resulted in legislative intent language that public television hold a broadcast fund-raiser for RATNET. Broadcasting only to RATNET communities, a three-hour, four-night telethon raised $92,000 in pledges; $65,000 was collected. After expenses, approximately $40,000 was available to offset budget cuts. The public stations received no money for the effort, but hoped "to see greater broadcast of public TV programs on RATNET."[91]

Where once it was a "badge of honor if (a legislator) could get TV" for his or her district,[92] RATNET had become the proverbial political football.

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telephone conference. A RATNET Council executive committee has the power to make decisions for the full council between formal meetings.

[90]Internal memo, Department of Administration, Division of Information Services, Aug. 1, 1994.

[91]Ron Clarke, KTOO-TV development director, in "Rural TV network asks viewers to pledge support," Juneau Empire, (Nov. 16, 1994), 3.

[92]Porcaro interview.

Chapter Four

RATNET POLICY MODELS

In theory, RATNET operations policy is to be made by the Alaska Legislature and programming policy by the RATNET Council. Without policy directives, however, RATNET has been regulated more by political factors than actual policy.

On a government level, policy is generally defined as a particular course of action which government bodies follow to deal with problems or concerns. Anderson argues that public policies are not "things that just happen. They are intended to produce certain results."[1] The intended results of a rural satellite television channel have never been clear. Anderson also suggests that public policy is authoritative and based on law. However, neither the channel nor the council have ever been clearly defined in statute. On the state government level, RATNET policy has changed over the years, generally in reaction to falling revenues. Such ad-hoc policy has often been determined through intent language in the annual RATNET appropriation; language which is subject to veto by the governor, interpretation by the RATNET Council, and can even be ignored, since it has no force of law. And while policy is spelled out in the RATNET Council bylaws and guidelines, it is subject to interpretation, availability of programming, and insufficient information about the audience.

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[1]James E. Anderson, Public Policy-Making, 3rd ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984), 3.

Neither the RATNET service nor the council fit neatly into a particular policy model. The RATNET service can be analyzed at the channel level as a quasi-public utility and as a broadcast facility licensed to the state. At the content decision-making level, the RATNET Council can be analyzed as an expert board.

The Council as an "Expert Board"

The RATNET Council is not a traditional state decision-making body. It is neither a state board nor a commission, nor does it act in an advisory capacity to policy-makers.

While the council has been given the authority to make decisions, it is only loosely described in law as a user group. Lawmakers involved in the creation of the channel stayed clear of programming -- "the whole idea was to not have government telling people what they're going to have on the television...the decisions (were) to be made by the people who were getting the programs."[2]

Hypothetically, as representatives of rural viewers, the RATNET Council lends a particular expertise to its job. In that sense, both Mosco's and Ferejohn's descriptions of government agencies seem to apply as possible models on the content decision-making level.

Mosco defines expertise as a method of processing social claims in capitalist societies. Using this definition, one could interpret the RATNET Council as an expert board, a group of "people whose right to governance is based on socially defined expertise."[3] As the RATNET board was originally

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[2]F. Brown interview.

[3]Vincent Mosco, "Toward a Theory of the State and Telecommunications Policy," Journal of Communication 39, (Winter 1988); John A. Ferejohn, "The Structure of Agency Decision Processes," in Matthew McCubbins and Terry Sullivan, eds., Congress: Structure and Policy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 111.

established, members could claim some expertise as village natives representing a larger rural native population. Under the new board configuration, educational members can also claim a certain expertise in selecting educational/instructional content.

The success of expert boards in reducing social claims against the state depends on the ability of the experts to "show convincingly that expertise achieves satisfactory results and that only a select few, highly trained individuals can claim expert status."[4] Such boards proliferate in an advisory capacity to government. However, the RATNET Council has not acted in an advisory capacity, nor has the government ever requested that it do so. Hence, with a literal interpretation of Mosco's definition, none of the RATNET Council members can claim expert status as "highly trained individuals." While the board represents the rural audience, it has fallen short in showing "convincingly that expertise achieves satisfactory results."[5] The board has prescribed programming for the lowest common denominator instead of using its native experience and culture to define programs that would inform the audience it serves.[6] The board's resistance, and sometimes failure to fulfill legislative intent has prompted legislators to search for ways to control the council and prescribe content. On the other hand, the council has recognized the difficulty of programming to varied ethnic and cultural groups, considering the constraints of limited sources. Without costly technology that only recently has become available, narrowcasting to ethnic groups would be impossible on a single channel.

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[4]Ibid., 109.

[5]Ibid.

[6] During annual legislative RATNET budget hearings, primarily non-native lawmakers make the argument that education and information would be more suitable for village viewers. Davis, Ulmer, Brown interviews. Also, Sen. Johne Binkley, interview by author, Fairbanks, Aug. 22, 1989; and others.

Ferejohn's study of agency decision-making processes also has some application to the RATNET Council. He states that expert board members are likely to have similar preferences and work within a decision-making structure that anticipates opposition so members can modify decisions. "Without such a structure, the agency will find its decisions challenged or reversed, its members demoralized, and its funding cut, or worse."[7]

A review of programming decisions indicate that rural council members have similar program preferences. They also have made most decisions on an ad-hoc, case-by-case basis, described by Ferejohn as a cumbersome and expensive process that generally does not treat similar cases equally. The council historically has not treated requests for air time equally, simply because it lacks audience data and specific criteria for selecting non-network material. But Ferejohn also says there may be an advantage to case-by-case decisions, particularly their impermeability to external interference. In the case of RATNET, decisions are impermeable simply because there is no mechanism for review until the annual appropriations process. The council's inability to anticipate lawmakers' challenges has resulted in attacks on its autonomy, funding cuts, and editorial challenges, as Ferejohn predicts.

The Channel as a Public Utility

Just as the RATNET Council does not fit into a traditional model, the lack of legal, administrative and economic structure make it difficult to define the RATNET channel in a strict policy sense. The channel is neither a television station, cable system, repeater nor translator. Linked to satellite telephony, which was considered a lifeline to remote regions, rural television was initially just another aspect of Alaska's satellite technology. If RATNET

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[7]Ferejohn, 442.

could be strictly considered a satellite service, it could be treated as a quasi-public utility / common carrier, as defined as in the federal Communications Act.[8]

Public utilities were first defined in 1887 by the U.S. Supreme Court in Munn v. Illinois: When "one devotes his property to a use in which the public has an interest, he, in effect, grants to the public an interest in that use, and must submit to being controlled by the public for the common good, to the extent of the interest he has created...."[9]

Public interest, as it relates to utilities, means that large sections of the population become dependent on products and services. "The public interest appears most clearly where there are both importance of service and a condition of monopoly."[10] Utilities historically are required to serve all users equally and in a nondiscriminatory manner.

By analogy, Alaska law required RATNET be made accessible to villages with a stable population of 25 or more. The channel is dedicated to the public interest of rural Alaska, and for several years, it provided the only television signal to the rural Alaska public. In many villages, it remains the only signal. The state, through the RATNET Council, has granted the public an interest in the use of the channel. In principle, the public controls the channel by appointing representatives to select programming, and by guiding their decision-making through communicating television preferences to the council.

Most public utilities charge a service fee and are subject to government regulation. RATNET has no user fee, and attempts to set one have been

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[8]47 USC, Section 702, p 713.

[9]Munn v. Illinois, U.S. 113, 126 (1887).

[10]John Bauer, Effective Regulation of Public Utilities, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1925, reprint, 1976), 8.

rejected.[11] In terms of regulation, a public utility commission (PUC) generally regulates utilities; PUC decisions are subject to judicial review. The state of Alaska, as owner/operator, regulates RATNET through the annual appropriations process. RATNET Council decisions are not immediately or formally reviewed by any group, including the Legislature. Challenges to council decisions come after the fact, during legislative session budget debates.

One could say RATNET content is regulated by the normal limits of a broadcast day, by the editorial process of selecting programs from limited sources, through legislative intent and the budget process. Using the U.S. Supreme Court's definition of public utility, the RATNET Council, being the public, would regulate content for the common good. The definition of common good is subjective, however, and the legislature, the administration and the council have all had various interpretations.

The utility model also fails in that utilities are generally self-sufficient. For example, Alaska telephone companies have their own internal and economic structure, and their operations are subject to regulation by the Alaska Public Utilities Commission (APUC). RATNET has no internal economic structure and is entirely dependent upon legislative appropriation.

The Channel as a Broadcast Facility

It also is difficult to apply a broadcast station model to RATNET, because of the lack of physical, administrative and economic structure.[12] RATNET receives state money like public television, but has no other sources

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[11]Legislative intent language in the fiscal year 1995 RATNET appropriation requested the Department of Administration to investigate the feasibility of a RATNET user fee.

[12]See Richard Taylor, "Localizing Television in Alaska." Transcript of presentation to Center for Northern Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, May 25, 1987.

of income or ability to raise funds. It has no power to produce, purchase or solicit programs.

If RATNET were a broadcast station, the common carrier/public utility model would certainly fail. The U.S. Supreme Court interprets the 1934 Communications Act as prohibiting broadcasters from becoming common carriers. The high court "has never approved a general right of access to the media,"[13] as it has for common carriers.

Policy models would be easier to apply if RATNET were a public or commercial television station, and First Amendment questions raised by the government as editor would be easier to answer. The 1967 federal public broadcasting act specifies that public broadcasting provide "programs of high quality, responsive to the cultural and educational needs of the people...."[14] Canby argues that this, in itself, requires specific program selection and editing.[15] He suggests that in state-licensed public radio and TV stations, a public board be given responsibility for editorial decision-making that includes well-publicized general policies, prohibits religious advocacy, and requires fairness[16] -- policies similar to those stated by the RATNET Council, but not always observed.

The Supreme Court has defined a type of public facility where the state is allowed some discretion in regulating access and expression.[17] Charkes suggests a state-licensed television station may belong to this class of public facilities. Public access is limited, and content-based discrimination is

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[13]CBS, Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission, 453 U.S. 367, 396 (1981). See also, FCC v. Midwest Video Corp. et al., 440 U.S. 689 (1979).

[14]Senate Reports. No. 222, 90th Cong., 1st Sess. 2 (1967). Public Law 90 - 129.

[15]William S. Canby Jr., "The First Amendment and the State as Editor: Implications for Public Broadcasting," Texas Law Review 52, (1974): 1123-1165.

[16]Ibid., 1163. Canby suggests that "unreasonable enforcement procedures" should be avoided in requiring fairness.

[17]S. D. Charkes, "Editorial Discretion of State Public Broadcasting Licensees," Columbia Law Review 82, (1982): 1161 - 1182.

allowed on subject matter: "Government may draw reasonable distinctions between types of subject matter when it regulates expression in its facilities (assuming they are not public forums)."[18]

Thus, the state could argue that requiring more education, instruction and information among the mix of commercial entertainment and sports is its legitimate function as licensee. The original demonstration project was, after all, a combination of education, instruction and entertainment. And, if RATNET were a considered a public television station, there would be little question that broadcasting more education would fall within the public broadcast ideal of providing alternatives to commercial channels that serve a mass audience.

Content neutrality is not required by state-operated media, according to the federal courts, in Muir v. Alabama Educational Television Commission:

> The first amendment does not dictate that what will be said or performed or published or broadcast in these activities will be entirely content neutral. In those activities, like television broadcasting to the general public, that depend in part on audience interest, appraisal of audience interest and suitability for publication or broadcast inevitably involves judgment of content.[19]

Although the RATNET Council has responsibility for programming, the state of Alaska could have claimed itself channel editor, by virtue of its

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[18]Ibid., 1179.

[19]Muir v. Alabama Educational Television Commission, 688 F 2d 1033, 1050 (5th cir. 1982., cert. den. 103 S. Ct. 1274); Barnstone v. University of Houston, 660 F. 2d 137 (5th cir. 1981). The en banc decision incorporated two cases involving the broadcast of "Death of a Princess" on one Texas and nine Alabama public stations. In both cases, the film had been scheduled, then canceled. Viewers sued to compel the stations to run the film as scheduled. In Alabama, a district court refused to order the Alabama Educational Television Commission (AETC) to air the film. A Texas federal court held that the Houston station was a "public forum" and therefore compelled to show it. The Fifth Circuit Court upheld the Alabama court decision and reversed the Texas decision.

license. And while the State has not prohibited RATNET from broadcasting particular programs, nor edited within programs, legislative intent has not remained content-neutral.[20]

By nature of the medium, broadcasters already have less editorial freedom than the print media.[21] Not all speech will be heard, subject to time and space limitations. Charles Northrip, long-time APBC executive director, argues that those limitations are enough:

> Should the government decide what's appropriate programming? The FCC has a fairly simple answer for that...the licensee decides. Here the state is the licensee. But I don't think that's a politically acceptable answer.
>
> If the state has power to make a good programming decision, it also has the power to make a bad one. I don't want them to have the power to do either one.[22]

On a statewide political level, state funding for public TV is easier to justify than state funding for entertainment TV. Thus, as Northrip notes, those who "rail out against RATNET say public TV is OK because there's precedent for it."[23]

SUMMARY

Alaska telecommunication policy can be divided into two areas: One in which technology was used to open channels of communication and deliver

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[20]Some legislators have suggested that beer commercials within network programs be eliminated, which would violate network agreements. See chapter nine.

[21]See, for example, Miami Herald Pub. Co. v. Tornillo, 418 U.S. 241 (1974). The court noted that "a newspaper is not subject to the finite technological limitations of time that confront a broadcaster...." (pp 256-257). Also, CBS v. Democratic Nat'l Comm. (DNC), 412 U.S. 94, (1973).

[22]Northrip interview.

[23]Northrip was the first general manager of KUAC, Alaska's first public radio station. He played an instrumental role in many of Alaska television projects, including Mini-TV and the ATS-6.

information to isolated populations, and one in which the technology was maintained with little or no regard for content and information.[24] A dependence on technology and a lack of overriding goals have often dictated Alaska's telecommunication policy. Examples range from Alascom's arguments with state officials over rural telephone service, to the Legislature's attempts to regulate the RATNET Council through statute (See Chapter Three).

The Legislature and the RATNET Council have conflicting principles -- political and administrative. The Legislature plays several political roles -- it is the proprietor of the channel license, it is the RATNET funding agency; and it is a group of individual politicians who must be re-elected. Eliminating the channel could certainly affect re-elections. The council is administrator of channel programming, and thereby, the reflector of rural viewers' program preferences. At times when the Legislature's political principles conflict with the council's administrative principles, RATNET becomes yet a bigger political pawn in the budgetary process.

In creating the channel, the Legislature declined to offer content guidelines, giving the RATNET Council program responsibility. As the sole-funding agency, however, the Legislature left open the door of intervention. Were RATNET a public utility, it would have its own economic structure and state appropriations would not apply; if it were a public broadcast station, content would not be an issue for the legislature and cuts in appropriations could be partially offset by station fund-raising, underwriting and other grants.

In the grand scheme of Alaska television, education and instruction may be able to share the same channel once again, if clear content policy is

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[24]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor."

developed, and if a mechanism is provided to ensure the accountability of the program decision-makers. But where state policy-makers once waived their administrative option, they cannot expect to exercise control without some dissent. If a court declared RATNET similar to a state-owned public station, then government could declare itself editor.

Chapter Five

CULTURAL AND POLICY ISSUES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

The Alaska-specific material preceding this literature review provides the context for the application of the literature to rural Alaska.

This study attempts to intersect Alaska satellite television structure and policy, and television impact on native culture and lifestyle. During legislative debate on funding for a statewide channel, the effects of television content were eschewed by legislators. Television effects research, as well as major broadcast policy studies from Latin America and Canada, could have informed Alaska's satellite television policy discussions.

The possible effects of commercial entertainment television in remote native communities covers a wide range. Third World and Canadian literature suggests, for example, that an increase in consumption patterns;[1] a decrease in traditional behavior;[2] a loss of native language, self-esteem, and native identity[3] are possible by-products of watching commercial U.S.

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[1]See, for example, Omar Souki Oliveira, "Consumer Behavior and the Brazilian Media: Socio-Cultural Implications," paper presented to the International Communications Association, New Orleans, June 1988; also, Oliveira, "Satellite TV and Dependency: An Empirical Approach," Gazette 38, (1986): 127-145.

[2]See, for example, Forbes, Social and Cognitive Effects; Conrad Kottak, Prime-Time Society, (Belmont, CA; Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990).

[3]See, for example, Gail Valaskakis, "Television and Cultural Integration: Implications for Native Communities in the Canadian North," in R. M. Lorimer and D. C. Wilson, Communication Canada: Issues in Broadcasting and New Technologies, (Toronto: Kagan and Woo Limited, 1988). Reprint. (No page numbers). Also, Thomas Wilson, "Ten years of Network Television in the Eastern Arctic," (Ph.D. diss., Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1987).

television. The major policy and effects literature explored in this research includes media imperialism, cultivation, village migration, cultural proximity, and Canadian indigenous broadcast policy.

Media Imperialism

Rural Alaska has been likened to a Third World country, and is sometimes called a Fourth World state, in that it has a large indigenous population within a dominant Western culture. All of the television beamed into rural communities represents a culture that is mostly foreign to native viewers, whether Yup'ik or Inupiat Eskimo; Aleut; or Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida or Tshimsian Indian. Although the programs that seemed alien to native viewers in 1977 are now familiar, there is little that is relevant to the rural native lifestyle.

The dominant paradigm of the early years of television research was based on the belief that mass media would enhance acculturation and modernization in undeveloped nations. Lerner[4] in the late 1950s, for example, proposed that new media would have direct effects upon the socialization process when introduced into a society. Lerner and Rogers' 1960s work suggested that development would result from the transfer of technology.[5] Content effects were not part of the framework. As previously discussed, Alaska telecommunication projects were undertaken as part of rural development, but very little development in the Bush can be linked directly to television. The direct effects theories are passé.

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[4]Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East, (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958).

[5]See Everett Rogers, Modernization Among Peasants, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), and Rogers, "The Passing of the Dominant Paradigm: Reflections of Diffusion Research," in Wilbur Schramm and Daniel Lerner, eds., Communication and Change: The Last Ten Years and the Next, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, East-West Center Press, 1978).

The free flow of Western media into Third World countries has now been popularized as media imperialism, which looks seriously at the content of the technology being transferred to the Third (and Fourth) World. Media imperialism occurs when a dominant culture, such as the U.S., imposes its values, beliefs and language on a dependent culture via the mass media.[6]

Beltran's analysis of early Latin American television research noted the pervasiveness of U. S. television, which attempted "to induce in its audience an adherence to a number of beliefs about human life and destiny, which several critics rate as noxious."[7] Beltran adopted Hartman and Husband's proposition that media help create culture and a social reality,[8] a theory refined by Gerbner. Gerbner's cultivation theory will be discussed in chapter six.

Media imperialism has been blamed for a variety of effects, including economic and cultural dependency. The loss of cultural and ethnic values and mores, presumably brought about when foreign programming is all that is available in a nation, occupies a body of media-effects literature known as cultural dependency.[9] When considering media content, cultural dependency

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[6]See for example, Elihu Katz and George Wedell, Broadcasting in the Third World: Promise and Performance, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977); Chin-Chuan Lee, Media Imperialism Reconsidered: The Homogenizing of Television Culture, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1980); and O. Boyd-Barrett, "Media Imperialism: Toward an International Framework for the Analysis of Media Systems," in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and J. Wollacott, eds., Mass Communication and Society, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1977).

[7]Luis Ramiro Beltran S., "TV Etchings in the Minds of Latin Americans: Conservatism, Materialism, and Conformism," Gazette 24 (1978): 75.

[8]P. Hartmann and C. Husband, "The mass media and racial conflict," in Beltran, 63.

[9]See, for example, Herbert I. Schiller, Communication and Cultural Domination, (White Plains, NY: International Arts and Sciences Press, Inc., 1976); Kaarle Nordenstreng and Herbert I. Schiller, eds., National Sovereignty and International Communication, (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1979); Lee, Media Imperialism Reconsidered; Oliveira, "Media and Dependency: A View from Latin America," Media Development 34, (1989): 10-14.

may be more appropriately named media dependency. The result is cultural homogenization, according to some dependency theorists.[10]

In contrast, media diffusionists posit that Third World nations will borrow and adapt from the alien culture portrayed in Western media, eventually developing their own communication industries by adapting and borrowing elements from imported media. Pool predicted such an adaptation;[11] Blumler, Katz and others theorized that audience members use the media in various ways, each to gratify a particular need. This is called uses and gratifications theory.[12]

Lee's evaluation of media imperialism criticizes the diffusionist theory as more appropriately related to technology than to culture. He also suggests that media dependency theory is overstated. Lee advocates clear media policies in developing nations that will allow them to control their own media destiny.[13]

A later study by Skinner documented U.S. media dependency in Trinidad and Tobago, although the path from U. S. television viewing to U.S. dependency was more indirect than direct. Skinner also concluded that Third World nations need to define their cultural place in the world by developing indigenous information and cultural enterprises.[14]

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[10]See, for example, Cees J. Hamelink, Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications, (New York: Longman Inc., 1983). Also, Lee's Media Imperialism Reconsidered provides an excellent discussion of media dependency and homogeneity.

[11]Ithiel de Sola Pool, "The Changing Flow of Television," Journal of Communication 27 (1977): 139-149.

[12]See, for example, Jay Blumler and Elihu Katz, eds., The Uses of Mass Communication: Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1974).

[13]Lee, 52 and 55.

[14] Ewart C. Skinner, "Foreign TV Program Viewing and Dependency: A Case Study of U.S. Television Viewing in Trinidad and Tobago," (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1984), 180.

Western media consumption increases the consumption of Western products among those who can afford it and frustration among those who cannot.[15] Oliveira's research in Belize indicates that viewers who watch a lot of U.S. television are more inclined to purchase U.S. products. On the other hand, he also found that viewers who spent more time watching Mexican television were more likely to consume local and regional products.[16] In Brazilian studies, Oliveira found a preference for TV Globo, the Brazilian network which resembles the entertainment and commercialism of U.S. television, but emphasizes Latin American themes.[17]

In many nations where television was once dominated by imported U.S. programming, there is now a shift to national and regional programming. This is especially true in Latin America, where U.S. images share the broadcast day with Latin American genres.[18] For example, Mexico and Brazil have developed large television industries, and export a significant amount of programming to other Latin American nations. On a smaller scale, Venezuela,[19] Columbia and Argentina also have national television, some of which is exported.

Media researchers have found a Latin American preference for domestic television. Viewers actively search for programs that reflect their culture and daily experience, which Straubhaar calls a search for cultural

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[15]Oliveira, "Media and dependency: A view from Latin America," Media Development 36: 10 - 14 (1989).

[16]Oliveira, "Satellite TV and Dependency."

[17]Oliveira, "Brazilian Media Usage as a Test of Dependency Theory," Canadian Journal of Communication 13: 16 - 27 (1988).

[18]See, for example, L. Antola and Rogers, "Television Flows in Latin America," Communication Research 11 (1984): 183-202.

[19]Seth F. Geiger, "Social Reality in the Third World: The Influence of American Television on Venezuelan Values," paper presented to the Mass Communication Division, International Communications Association, Miami, FL., May 1992.

proximity.[20] He has found this to be true in Brazil, which has a well-developed national television system. While Brazil's TV Globo is patterned after the U.S. commercial television model, Brazilian genres, particularly telenovelas, are most popular.[21] In the Dominican Republic, where U.S. television still dominates, Dominican television has several widely watched genres, including local news and informational programs, plus comedies and variety shows that reflect Dominican culture.[22] Straubhaar finds examples of cultural proximity in other Latin American nations and in Asia, but found little evidence in the Caribbean, where English is the cultural language. He speculates that to develop local genres, populations may need both language and cultural barriers to U.S. television, as in Latin America and Asia.[23]

The active audience search for relevant programming plays an important role in Straubhaar's' new definition of asymmetrical interdependence. He suggests that asymmetrical interdependence is a more appropriate term for the extent of media development now seen throughout the world, which ranges from complete dependency on foreign media to dominant interdependence. Asymmetrical interdependence reinterprets media imperialism, dependency, and uses and gratification theories into a more flexible paradigm. It suggests that the search for cultural proximity, the decreasing cost of technology, and a nation's acquired ability to use

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[20]Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity," Critical Studies in Mass Communication 8 (1991): 39-59.

[21]See, among others, Straubhaar, "The Development of the Telenovela as the Pre-eminent Form of Popular Culture in Brazil," Studies in Latin American Popular Culture (1982): 138-150; and Kottak, Prime-Time Society.

[22]Straubhaar and Gloria M. Viscasillas, "Class, Genre, and the Regionalization of Television Programming in the Dominican Republic," Journal of Communication 41 (Winter 1991): 53-69.

[23]Straubhaar, "Regional TV Markets and TV Program Flows: Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean," paper presented to the International Communication Association, Miami, FL, May 1992.

technology, lead to a new cultural products industry for nations once dependent on foreign media.

The Search for Cultural Proximity Among the Inuit

Nowhere is the active audience more relevant to Alaska than in northern Canada, where the Inuit Eskimos demanded access to television technology and now have their own broadcasting corporation. Straubhaar's asymmetrical interdependence is an excellent model with which to examine the media interdependence of the Canadian Inuit Eskimo.

Commercial television was beamed into the rural Canadian north in the early 1970s in much the same way as satellite television came to Alaska -- with little regard for the audience it served, no culturally relevant programming, and lacking clear government policy.[24] The Inuit Eskimos recognized the challenge to their culture and subsistence lifestyle, and made the active choice to create their own cultural product -- regional and culturally specific TV programming in the Inuit language. The result was an Inuit TV channel and a change in Canadian national broadcast policy to foster aboriginal broadcasting.[25] While government support was crucial to the development of Inuit broadcasting, it also was receptive.

The Canadian television experience is important to Alaska television policy because it represents the impact of television on remote Eskimos and Indians, who are directly related to Alaska natives. Of even greater interest is the change in Canadian broadcast policy brought about by television research, and by the Inuit's demand for television access.

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[24]Lorna Roth, "The Role of Communication Projects and Inuit Participation in the Formation of a Communication Policy for the North," (MA thesis, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1982).

[25]Native-language radio has been heard across Canada since the 1970s.

After more than a decade of television research in northern Canada that began with the arrival of TV in the early 1970s, Coldevin reported an increasing cultural gap between Canadian native adult and adolescent viewers.[26] Valaskakis, Wilson, Granzberg and others[27] actively researched the impact of TV among the northern Inuit Eskimos, the Cree and Algonkian Indians. Their work can be summarized by Valaskakis, who states that commercial television constitutes one of the most serious assaults on Canadian native identity and cohesion:

> Television has become the major channel bringing southern information to native people. Images and concepts of what is valued in the dominant culture are gleaned primarily through this medium. Native people must integrate that information into their lives, but the current process does not lead to cultural stability or community cohesion.[28]

Wilson believes that television has permanently altered the northern Canadian native culture. The early U.S. television which poured across the satellite contributed only to cultural de-stabilization. But he also suggests that the role of television has been somewhat checked as novelty effect decreased, and with the creation of Canadian regional and native cultural programming on the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC).[29]

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[26]Gary Coldevin, "Effects of a Decade of Satellite Television in the Canadian Arctic," Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology 16 (September 1985): 329-354. See also, Coldevin, "Satellite Television and Cultural Replacement among Canadian Eskimos," Communication Research 6 (April 1979): 115-134.

[27]Gail Valaskakis, "Media and Acculturation Patterns: Implication for Northern Native Communities," paper presented to the Canadian Association for American Studies, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 1976; Valaskakis, "Television and Cultural Integration;" also Gary Granzberg, "Television as Storyteller: The Algonkian Indians of Central Canada," Journal of Communication 32 (Winter 1982): 43-52. Granzberg, Jack Steinbring, and John Hamer, "New Magic for Old: TV in Cree Culture," Journal of Communication 27 (Autumn 1977): 154-157; and Wilson, "Ten Years of Network Television."

[28]Valaskakis, "Television and Cultural Integration."

[29]Wilson, 224 - 235.

Canadian television research was seriously considered as Inuit and government officials worked out an indigenous television policy that would "strengthen the social, cultural, and linguistic fabric of Inuit life."[30]

> The negative effects on many native communities of unmitigated southern television programming not only contribute to cultural and linguistic erosion, but also weaken the measures being taken by both the native people and governments to attempt to strengthen northern native cultures and languages. On the other hand, as demonstrated by the Inuit with television, media can be adapted to serve the needs of native communities and become a positive and complementary factor in the development of northern native languages and serve specific informational, educational and entertainment needs.[31]

Two 1970s Inuit satellite experiments demonstrated that native cultural and language programming was feasible and would be watched. By 1982, the IBC was producing regional programs in Inuktitut, the Inuit language. Canadian national broadcast policy now includes a native plan, called the Northern Native Broadcast Access Plan (NNBAP). Native broadcast societies across northern Canada are producing regional and culturally relevant programs in native languages and English.

A 1984 study in ten Northwest Territory communities demonstrated that Inuit viewers of all ages wanted more native programming, especially shows emphasizing traditional skills, hunting, regional news and

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[30]Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, (1982), ii, quoted in Kate Madden, "Video and Cultural Identity: The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation Experience," in Felipe Korzenny and Stella Ting-Toomey, eds., Mass Media Effects Across Cultures, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1992), 135.

[31]Canadian Minister of Communications, Secretary of State, and Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, Northern Broadcasting Discussion Paper, DOC-1-83-DP, (1983), 45, photocopy.

information, and Inuktitut language and music.[32] Inuktitut language was, of course, most popular with non-English speakers, but Valaskakis notes that IBC is "reinforcing the use of Inuktitut among the young; and its emphasis on traditional knowledge, regional news and practical information is showing signs of 'spin off ' related to CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) programming."[33]

A more recent survey indicates that 95 percent of Inuit viewers watch one to three hours of IBC programming per day, a "better record than any single broadcaster in southern Canada can claim."[34]

In 1992, Television Northern Canada (TVNC) began to distribute programming produced by the native broadcast groups. TVNC is a consortium of six aboriginal broadcasters, including the IBC; two northern province governments, and a national native organization known as the National Aboriginal Communications Society. The government provides educational material and native broadcasters produce culturally relevant programming. In 1992, more than 90 northern Canadian communities received the TVNC satellite signal, which is funded by the Canadian government. The native groups are responsible for their own programming costs, primarily through grants from the federal NNBAP.

Canadian native broadcasting is not without its problems, particularly the high cost of television production. IBC and the other native broadcast societies probably will remain tied to the majority culture of southern Canada for political and financial support, thus continually riding the roller-coaster of

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[32]Gail Valaskakis and Thomas Wilson, The Inuit Broadcasting Corporation: A Survey of Viewing Behavior and Audience Preferences among the Inuit of Ten Communities in the Baffin and Keewatin Regions of the Northwest Territories, (Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Concordia University, April 1984), 78.

[33]Valaskakis, "Television and Cultural Integration."

[34]Mary Williams Walsh, "Canadian Natives Take Another Look at Television," Anchorage Daily News, Oct. 25, 1992.

national funding. But the programs generally offered are by no means a Euro-Canadian version of nativeness; IBC programs, for example, are written and produced by Inuits trained in television production. Madden's content analysis of IBC programming demonstrates that "the IBC possesses the potential to create a culturally sensitive television broadcasting service that can help Inuit preserve their culture...."[35]

Thus, in Canada, as well as several Latin American countries, an interdependent indigenous cultural industry has emerged. The Eskimos and Indians living in Canada's remote northern regions still receive CBC and American programming, but the genre they prefer reflects their unique culture and lifestyle, and informs them of their unique political and social issues and problems. The Canadian native broadcast groups have achieved a sort of media interdependency.

The Canadian government was forced to adopt a native broadcast policy "by dint of political pressure."[36] With the TVNC, the government made a $10-million, four-year commitment to northern television. Whether this "dedicated window of programming...will strengthen and contribute to the flowering of indigenous languages and culture," as Canadian officials claim,[37] is the test of the federal policy and of native politics.

American Indians and TV Access

One of the few surveys of American Indian tribes and organizations in the Lower 48 indicated that native viewers wanted broadcast access, and

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[35]Madden, 146.

[36]Wilson, "Ten Years of Network Television," 222.

[37]Marcell Masse, Minister of Communications, quoted in "Masse Announces Funding for Northern TV," (news release), (Ottawa, Quebec, Canada: Information Services, Department of Communications, May 9, 1990), 1.

needed culturally relevant and native-issue programming.[38] The 1981 study by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting showed that television and radio coverage of natives was inadequate and often negative. It clearly indicated that local public stations did not serve rural reservation Indians, despite the stations' proximity to the reservations.

Native viewers believed local broadcasters should provide more tribal news, and cover specific topics reflecting economic, health and social concerns, including "how to deal with the dominant society."[39] In the study, they said, "Let us see ourselves, our accomplishments, our talents. Let us show others."[40] Public broadcasters, however, preferred general-audience topics such as native art and history, or profiles of outstanding native Americans. The dichotomy is not unusual. The American Indian stereotype still flourishes in the U.S.

As native respondents pointed out, the survey was asking the wrong questions. The adequacy of media coverage is not the issue. It is more appropriate to ask how native Americans can "learn to utilize and avail themselves of the services of TV." As respondents put it, "We must learn to manipulate the mass communication system to better serve our needs!"[41]

Self-esteem, Migration and Other Effects

While Canadian government policy now fosters native broadcasting, it took a dramatic effort on the part of native groups and policy-makers to

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[38]The surveys were sponsored by the Corporation of Public Broadcasting and the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation, a major public broadcast program and communications-research funding organization. E. B. Eiselein, Native Americans and Broadcasting, (Lincoln, NE: Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, January 1982).

[39]E. B. Eiselein, Serving Native American Media Needs, (Lincoln, NE: Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, January 1982), 6.

[40]Ibid., 22.

[41]Ibid.

arrive at such a policy. Wilson reports that Inuit leaders considered satellite television in the Canadian North a "kind of cultural neutron bomb; it leaves people alive but kills the culture."[42]

Television is one of many major changes coming to remote native groups across North America. Valaskakis reports that the loss of native self-esteem in northern Canadian villages is more a result of non-native control and development, than of southern media influence.[43] Wilson suggests that satellite television has reinforced the sense of helplessness in an already changing culture, especially among young Eskimo males.[44] The suicide rates among young native males is high in both rural Alaska and northern Canada, but the connection to television remains undocumented.

The fear that U.S. television would lead Canadian, or Alaska natives, or Third World viewers to migrate "from village to the town, from rural areas to industrial, and from poor countries to richer countries,"[45] has not come to pass. In Belize, Snyder, et. al., found television to be positively related to emigration, but secondary to economic and political factors, as well as personal contact with the U.S.[46] In Alaska, Forbes found that desire to migrate was related more to living in a larger village, or having already lived or visited outside the home village.[47] Choi observed in Korea that U.S. television reinforced indigenous viewers' traditional values, decreasing their desire to travel to the U.S.[48]

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[42]Wilson, 224.

[43]Valaskakis, "Television and Cultural Integration."

[44]Thomas C. Wilson, "The Role of Television in the Eastern Arctic: An Educational Perspective," (M.A. thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 1981).

[45]Katz and Wedell, 5.

[46]Leslie Snyder, Connie Roser, and Steven Chaffee, "Foreign Media and the Desire to Emigrate from Belize," Journal of Communication 41, (Winter 1977), 117 -132.

[47]Forbes, Social and Cognitive Effects, 40.

[48]Jeonghwa Choi, "American Armed Forces Television in Korea and Its Shadow Audience: Who Views What for What Reasons with What Impact?" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1989).

Alaska Television Research

While few Alaska effects studies have been conducted, the Alaska literature also is enlightening to a state television policy debate. Many of Alaska's telecommunication projects were conducted to demonstrate the feasibility of using satellites to overcome Alaska's geography; content was secondary. Some also were intended to provide guidelines for a statewide telecommunication system, including the best uses of television in rural areas.

Forbes' longitudinal study of the cognitive and social effects of TV, and an earlier two-village study by Madigan and Peterson[49] were the first quantitative measures of TV in Alaska. This research and several later studies suggested that the impact of TV on isolated native villages be considered in developing content for a future TV system. Some research concluded that natives should be involved in all aspects of telecommunication development, from programming to management. Evaluations recommended that rural television be region and culture-specific.[50] According to one study, village residents preferred locally selected shows to satellite TV; it prescribed user-selected programming.[51] In the course of setting up RATNET, however, only a user-representative programming board was adopted from all the recommendations.

The Madigan/Peterson study was conducted in 1973 when electricity came to the tiny Eskimo village of Wales on the Bering Sea coast.

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[49]R. J. Madigan and W. Jack Peterson, "Television on the Bering Strait," Journal of Communication 27, (Autumn 1977): 183-187.

[50]See, for example, James M. Orvik, "ESCD/Alaska: An Educational Demonstration," Journal of Communication 27, (Winter 1977); also Pittman and Orvik, ATS-6 and State Telecommunications Policy for Rural Alaska.

[51]Michael Porcaro, "Mini-TV: The Case for Cassettes," Journal of Communication 27, (Winter 1977).

Researchers set up a small cable-television system in the village that broadcast entertainment and educational material. The six-month experiment, known as Project Wales, found that new television viewers watched more than twice as much commercial entertainment as educational television. In fact, viewers watched educational TV only when entertainment was not available. Madigan and Peterson also found that nature programs rated as some of the most popular, a phenomenon that would seem to parallel the experience of living with nature in rural Alaska.

Madigan and Peterson's most significant findings were an improvement in some communication skills, but no differences in educational achievement between children who were exposed to TV and those who were not. Forbes' five-year comprehensive research in ten native villages found no evidence that television, by itself, had a major effect on children's cognitive abilities. However, the study, which began shortly after the advent of the 1977 satellite project, indicated major social effects. Among other things, Forbes found that TV significantly influenced native children's gender-role stereotypes, their perception of their own and other cultures, and their knowledge of the outside world.

Forbes' study is especially important because it offers data from the Inupiat Eskimo region in which the 1991 Northwest Alaska village study was conducted. In Forbes' research, Inupiats were the heaviest viewers of television of all groups studied. Also, some of Forbes' young respondents were adult respondents in the 1991 study, and were very important as key informants.

Forbes adapted Gerbner's theory that television cultivates a social reality, especially among heavy viewers, who watch more than four hours of

TV per day.[52] In the late 1960s, Gerbner established a TV violence index, used extensively in the U.S. Surgeon General's investigation of the effects of TV violence on children and youth. The largest volume of research on television violence and aggression comes from this federally subsidized Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee report and subsequent U.S. Senate hearings. Although controversial and inconclusive, the violence studies support hypotheses that viewing violent entertainment increases the possibility of aggressive behavior.[53]

From his violence index, Gerbner developed a cultivation theory, which predicts that the more a person is exposed to TV, the more likely his/her perceptions of social realities will match those represented on TV. Gerbner's work suggests that "television viewing cultivates a general sense of danger and mistrust,"[54] sometimes called the "mean" or "scary" world view.

Forbes adaptation of Gerbner's social reality studies confirmed that native Alaskan youth's social reality was affected by TV: The "longer rural Alaskan children are exposed to television, the more likely they are to believe that what they see represents expected and usual behavior, even when they know programs involve actors and acting."[55]

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[52]The national average is nearly seven hours. See George Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan, and Nancy Signorielli, "The Demonstration of Power: Violence Profile No. 10," Journal of Communication 27, (1979), 177-196; and Gerbner and Gross, "Living with Television: The Violence Profile," Journal of Communication 26, (1976), 173-199; also, Gerbner, "Communication and Social Environment," Scientific American 228, (1972), 153-160.

[53]Gerbner was one of many media-effects researchers contributing to the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior. For a summary of the reports, see Shearon A. Lowery and Melvin L. De Fleur, "Television and Social Behavior: The Surgeon General's Report," in Milestones in Mass Communication Research, 2nd ed., (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Inc., 1988), 297-326.

[54]Gerbner, et al., "The Demonstration of Power," 191.

[55]Forbes, "Television's Effects on Rural Alaska," Summary of Final Report, (Fairbanks, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alaska, March 1984), 4.

Forbes demonstrated that much of rural native students' perceptions of the world beyond the village -- especially the majority culture -- was shaped by satellite television. Increased viewing increased the belief that the values, attitudes and behaviors portrayed on television represented social reality. With greater exposure to television, village children saw the city as a less safe, friendly and trustworthy place. Forbes hypothesized that this effect would generalize to the village, which it did not.[56] TV, however, strongly influenced natives' perception of their own culture.

In his Brazilian studies, Kottak also found that television cultivated a social reality among heavy viewers, a more "liberal" view about social issues and gender roles. In village anthropological research, he concluded that "TV-biased and TV-reinforced attitudes spread as villagers take courage from the daily validation of their unorthodox (local) views in (national) programming. More and more townsfolk encounter nontraditional views and come to see them as normal."[57]

While Kottak found more positive results from television's introduction into rural Brazilian villages, Forbes now believes "the state has been totally irresponsible," and has polluted native villagers' minds with violence and other typical television fare seen in mainstream America.[58]

Early in her study, as the Legislature was extending satellite TV into more and more villages, Forbes called for government leaders to consider television-effects research in content decisions.[59] Her comments were met

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[56]Ibid., 104-105.

[57]Conrad Kottak, Assault on Paradise: Social Change in a Brazilian Village, 2d ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992), 285.

[58]Norma Forbes, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, interview by author, Fairbanks, Aug. 22, 1989.

[59]Forbes and James Orvik, "Local, National, and International Policy Implications of Television Research in Alaska," unpublished manuscript, August 1978.

with disdain by legislators who saw television policy as either "we provide the service or we don't provide the service."[60]

Several anthropologists, including Langdon[61] and Chance,[62] note that TV has contributed to cultural change and a diminution of traditional native Alaskan ways. Although they provide no quantitative evidence of TV's effect on villages, their ethnographic work shows village changes over time, and suggest that television has played an important role in cultural change.

Pearson's study of Alaska's "media-rich" and "media-poor" used knowledge gap[63] and uses and gratifications theories to show how media use is affected by media availability.[64] Throughout most of rural Alaska, the media environment is limited to public radio and RATNET, with small cable systems in fewer than half of the RATNET communities. Pearson found that "channel diversity is not synonymous with content diversity," a conclusion that would be useful for policy-makers as they debate the place of RATNET within a growing cable environment.

SUMMARY

Straubhaar's cultural proximity theory is directly applicable to the current study, which found a preference for cultural and regional programming. The Canadian broadcast policy demonstrates the strength of the cultural relevance debate.

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[60]F. Brown interview.

[61]Steven J. Langdon, The Native People of Alaska, (Anchorage: Greatland Graphics, 1987).

[62]Norman A. Chance, The Inupiat and Arctic Alaska, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1990).

[63]Tichenor, et al., suggest that people of higher socioeconomic status tend to acquire information at a faster rate than those of lower status. Phillip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge," Public Opinion Quarterly 34, (1970): 159 - 160.

[64]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor."

Historically, fostering aboriginal culture is counter to the U.S. policy of cultural absorption. And though television-effects research comprises a large body of American mass communications literature, "In virtually no cases have the principal broadcasting sources or public policy-makers recognized the institution of research -- or more importantly, the ideas associated with its particular language, assumptions and methods...," according to Rowland.[65]

At a 1990 Alaska telecommunication conference, Canadian researcher Gail Valaskakis shook her head in disbelief when she heard that Alaska's rural TV channel carried the pop entertainment of the Lower 48. A strong proponent of native broadcasting, she told the audience, "If we had a channel dedicated to rural natives, we'd know how to use it!"[66]

Valaskakis' remark describes not only the difference between rural Canadian and U.S. television, but the difference in attitude toward research. Euro-Canadian officials have funded, studied and applied television research in an active native broadcasting policy that allows access to the media. U.S. broadcast policy has "involved less debate over ends and more over means; the issues were those of technique and engineering, not values and morals."[67] The Alaska experience has simply followed the U.S. model.

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[65]Willard D. Rowland, Jr., The Politics of TV Violence, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1983), 24.

[66]Valaskakis, remarks to Chugach Conference audience, Anchorage, Oct. 4, 1990.

[67]Rowland, 25.

Chapter Six

METHODOLOGY

The policy focus of the dissertation is the result of years of the author's observation of political events during the life of state-subsidized satellite television, from its unbridled growth in the early 1980s, to major funding cuts, the dissolution of Learn Alaska, and attempted legislative involvement in the programming process. The multiple-phase study began with an historical analysis of the legislation and grew into months of data collection in the Northwest Arctic villages. The multi-method approach to the research, combining case study, ethnography, and quantitative survey, has provided a more holistic analysis than a single method. Each method is described for its importance to the study.

RATNET Case Study

Case study is a frequently used method for examining contemporary events. It employs documentary research, direct observation and systematic interviewing. Yin defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that uses multiple sources to investigate the real-life context of an event or phenomenon, when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.[1]

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[1]Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1984), 23.

Case studies are often used in policy research. Majchrzak defines policy research as an iterative process in which information and model-building are continually interchanged and causal theories are induced.[2] Majchzrak's and Yin's approaches to gathering and synthesizing information have been modified for this research.

In this case, RATNET history was traced through documentary sources and interviews with key informants. The reconstruction of the process that led to the original satellite demonstration, and the long-term problems associated with a state-operated television channel were the major focus of the policy research.

Legislation, committee meeting minutes, research papers, letters, memos and other documents from the Alaska Legislature, as well as published and unpublished reports, memos, letters and other information from the Alaska Department of Administration (DOA), were examined.[3] Also, a sample of program logs from the first year to 1991 and RATNET Council meeting minutes were perused.

This documentary evidence was confirmed in interviews with persons involved in the conceptual and planning stages of the original Satellite Television Demonstration Project, including legislators, project engineers, directors and staff, and commercial and public broadcasters. Documents also were confirmed through interviews with former and present DOA officials and staff, RATNET operations staff, former and present RATNET Council members, and former and present legislators. In addition, the author

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[2]Ann Majchrzak, Methods for Policy Research, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications Inc., 1984).

[3]The Department of Administration is responsible for RATNET operations and maintenance.

observed several legislative work sessions on RATNET and RATNET Council meetings.

Blending Ethnography and Survey in Rural Alaska

The merger of anthropology and media research is a small but growing field. Kottak used an anthropological framework to study television among indigenous Brazilian societies.[4] Lull also adopted ethnographic methods to examine the relationship between television and family life in various world cultures.[5] Valaskakis' experience in Canadian Inuit Eskimo villages led her to encourage this researcher to take an ethnographic approach to the Alaskan villages.[6]

Ethnography -- the process of describing cultures primarily through fieldwork -- requires the researcher to become a participant observer and interpreter of a society; it identifies the "behaviors and the beliefs, understanding, attitudes and values"[7] implied in the society. Although the time in the Alaska villages was not enough to result in the "thick description" of Geertz[8] and other ethnologists, village context was an integral part of the current study. A cultural media ethnography would be a natural follow-up if additional ethnographic research were to evolve from this study.

Ethnography can only describe the impact of television, therefore a statistical survey was needed to measure the use of RATNET and cable in the three villages. Any qualitative relationship observed between policy and audience preference for culturally relevant programming is made stronger

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[4]Kottak, Prime-Time Society.

[5]James Lull, World Families Watch Television, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988).

[6]Gail Valaskakis, interview by author, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, January 1991.

[7]Gerald D. Berreman, "Ethnography: Method and Product," in R. M. Emerson, ed., Contemporary Field Research, (Prospect Heights, IL.: Waveland Press, 1983), 19.

[8]Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Emerson, 37-59.

with measurement. The two methods were successfully merged to understand the full nature of the issues under study.

From September through December 1991, the principal researcher and a trained interviewer made two visits to Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik, extending the stay in Ambler. During that time, patterns in village life emerged as residents prepared for winter, daylight hours diminished, and seasons changed. September is the busiest month of the year, when food is gathered, preserved and stored. By mid-November, village life had stabilized for the long and cold winter.[9] All survey work was completed before the Christmas holiday could disrupt village routine.

Before the survey began, the research team spent several days exploring and mapping each village, establishing rapport with village leaders, hiring and training local interviewers and Inupiaq-language interpreters. With the cable system to be installed in Ambler in October, a pre-cable survey was conducted in September. The post-cable survey was conducted in December. During each village survey, the research team generally stayed in the school, the hub of community activities. Before and during each survey, the principal researcher conducted key informant interviews, and observed and participated in community events, including family gatherings. As the survey data was analyzed, the attempt at ethnography gave better understanding of the influence of television on Inupiat life and culture than survey method alone would have provided.

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[9]Original plans were to begin interviewing simultaneously in all three villages in mid-October, after much of the fall hunting season was over. It was learned in late August that Ambler, the non-cable village, planned to install cable. This provided the opportunity to study the transition from the single RATNET channel to multiple channels. While this change of course may have resulted in a compromise in the data due to less fieldwork preparation time, it also resulted in richer data.

The Sample

According to 1990 census data, Ambler and Buckland had populations of 311 and 318; Noorvik, 531.[10] Based on the census information, households became the sampling frame. Each village was mapped for the number of current households.

The "nuclear family" has never been the norm in Eskimo society, where extended families, including non-family members, live together in the same household. Therefore, adult individuals, not households or families, were the unit of research. One adult per household was randomly selected by birth date. If the person whose birthday closest to the day of interview was not at home, an appointment was made for a return call. Substitutions had to be made in a few cases, when the selected respondent was absent from the village for the entire survey period, or was too ill to respond.

Approximately 220 adults in the three villages were interviewed; 212 were included in the data analysis, 35 percent of the total adult population. A personal interview was conducted with one adult in almost every household in Ambler and Buckland. Fewer than ten households were missed in Noorvik. Advisors at the University of Alaska's Institute for Social and Economic Research considered the sample to be representative of the three village populations.[11] While they also may be representative of other Inupiat villages, no attempt will be made to generalize to other RATNET and cable communities in the Northwest Arctic region.

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[10]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Alaska Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1990 Census," compiled by Alaska Department of Labor, Research and Analysis, June 1991.

[11]Advisors were John Kruse, director of Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), University of Alaska Anchorage, and assistant Virgene Hanna, both of whom have directed many rural surveys.

The Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was pre-tested on Inupiat village Eskimos who had recently moved to the Anchorage area. They advised against using agree/disagree scales because it is an inherent Eskimo cultural trait to agree. Other rating scales were also found to be confusing. A three-part variation on a scale was successfully used for RATNET content questions and measures of traditionalism.[12] The Eskimo advisors also suggested "village English" phrasing, so that questions would be clear to respondents of all ages, some of whom have little contact with Caucasian English speakers. Many elders still speak mostly Inupiaq.

In cross-cultural research, not all problems in the field can be anticipated, consequently, some minor adjustments were made to the Ambler pre-cable questionnaire after interviewing began, which improved the data-collection process.

The survey instrument blended open-ended with closed questions. Some open-ended questions were quantified in the Ambler post-cable and Buckland/Noorvik surveys in order to be precisely measured. Due to the small sample and population traits, most of the variables are categorical (discrete), yielding nominal and ordinal data. This limits the analysis to summations, percentages, means and rankings. Statistical associations between dependent and independent variables were observed by using crosstabulation tables and chi-square tests.

[12]For example, respondents were asked if they wanted "more, less or about the same amount of" a program category, such as Alaska news.

HYPOTHESES

The research design allowed comparison (1) of **pre-cable Ambler,** when viewers received only RATNET, with the **established-cable villages** of Buckland and Noorvik, both of which had RATNET and cable; (2) pre-cable Ambler with **post-cable Ambler** -- after cable was available; and (3) post-cable Ambler with the established-cable villages. Comparing pre- and post-cable Ambler indicates the immediate impact of cable TV on RATNET use. The novelty effect of multiple channels was assessed by comparing post-cable with the established-cable villages.

The theoretical and policy-oriented questions grew out of the effects literature and policy analysis of the RATNET system.[13] Research questions regarding the cultural impact of television in rural villages and villagers' interest in RATNET guided participant observation, key informant and informal interviews, as well as the quantitative survey. The resulting nine hypotheses (H1-9) were tested by a systematic analysis of the ethnographic and quantitative data. The hypotheses are listed in the order in which they are discussed in the analysis of survey and ethnographic data (See Chapter Nine).

> **(H1)** Viewers will watch more cable television than RATNET when cable is available.
>
> **(H2)** Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages consider RATNET their major source of news and information about Alaska.
>
> **(H3)** Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages would be willing to pay a fee for RATNET.
>
> **(H4)** Viewers have a preference for programming which reflects their local interests and cultural characteristics.

[13]See Alexander, "Politics, Not Policy."

(H5) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages want to see more programs on RATNET about the region in which they live and about their culture.

(H6) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages want to see more programming about other parts of Alaska on RATNET, including other regions and other native groups.

(H7) Inupiat viewers believe other modern technology has had a greater effect than TV on their way of life.

(H8) Inupiat viewers believe TV contributes to a decrease in participation in traditional lifestyle activities, such as subsistence hunting and fishing, visiting, native arts, etc.

(H9) There is little relationship between TV viewing and Inupiat viewers' desire to live outside the village.

The independent variables include (1) demographic information, such as sex, age, ethnicity, language, and education. Occupation and income, while normally considered demographic data, do not vary enough in these villages to be used as independent variables, as will be discussed in chapter seven. Other independent variables are: (2) measures of traditionalism and mobility, which also do not vary enough to be useful predictors. The independent variable of (3) media use is effective in determining support for the hypotheses. Media use includes the amount of time spent reading newspapers and listening to radio, the number of TV-viewing hours, cable-TV exposure, cable-TV subscription, and VCR ownership. Media use can also be considered a dependent variable.

The major dependent variables are (1) preferred news source; (2) medium most enjoyed, most educational, least and most-important;

(3) RATNET and cable content preferences; (4) viewers' perception of beer commercials and TV violence; (5) perceived differences between cable and RATNET; (6) choice between cable and RATNET; (7) viewers' willingness to pay for RATNET; (8) the importance of RATNET to cable and non-cable respondents; (9) villagers' perception of how life has changed since TV; and (10) the effect of TV on viewers' desire to leave or remain in the village.

While the analysis of the variables is basically descriptive, it does indicate support for the hypotheses. Chapter eight discusses the relationships between the variables as defined in the hypotheses.

The following chapters provide a demographic description of the sample villages and the data analysis.

Chapter Seven

VILLAGE SELECTION

The sample villages of Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik are within Alaska's Northwest Arctic Borough, where the majority population is Inupiat Eskimo. The Inupiat were incorporated in 1971 under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act as the NANA Regional Corporation. Alaska's Inupiat Eskimos are directly related to Inuit Eskimos of the Canadian Arctic region.

The Northwest Arctic Borough crosses the Arctic Circle, and spans an area from Kotzebue Sound, off the Chukchi Sea, to Alaska's interior. (See map). Ambler and Noorvik lie above the Arctic Circle, on the Kobuk River, a traditional trade route when Eskimo and Indian tribes were nomadic. The Kobuk links Ambler, Noorvik and several other villages with Kotzebue, the borough center and largest community in the region.[1] Buckland is south of the Arctic Circle on the flood plain of the Buckland River. The only village on the river, Buckland is more remote than Ambler and Noorvik, and has fewer outside visitors.

No roads connect these Northwest Arctic villages to other parts of the state. Small air carriers fly passengers, freight and mail, depending on the fickle Arctic weather. If river levels rise high enough in summer, a barge brings in freight. Four-wheelers and boats are the vehicles of summer; snowmobiles have replaced most dog teams in winter.

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[1]Population 2,952 as of January 1993. Alaska Department of Labor statistics.

The American vision of deep snow and Eskimos living in igloos is strictly a myth. Arctic weather, however, does determine much of the local lifestyle. For about two months in the winter, the sun never rises. On cloudless days, daylight -- a sort of twilight -- lasts two and a half to three hours. Winter temperatures in all three villages can plunge to 50 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, sometimes colder. Annual snowfall ranges from an average of 35 inches in Buckland to 80 inches in Ambler. Traditional clothing, made of animal skins, provides the best warmth in Arctic winter conditions.

Winter travel depends on weather, as temperatures must be warm enough to keep snowmobile and airplane engines running. Air carriers will not fly passengers when temperatures fall to 30 degrees or more below zero, although some Bush pilots continue to make freight runs at these temperatures. Darkness also affects the time of travel, because small air carriers are authorized to operate only in daylight hours, and most rural village airstrips do not have runway lights.

Winter days begin late in the morning for those who are not working or do not have children in school.[2] On the coldest of days, few people seem to venture forth unless they have a destination. By contrast, the long spring and summer days are busy with subsistence harvest and food preservation for winter. In the height of summer, the sun never sets.

Village Selection Criteria

The three Inupiat villages were selected in part because data was available from Forbes' earlier study on the cognitive and social effects of

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[2] During the 1991 survey, home interviews did not begin before 10 a.m., even in homes with school children. Schools provided breakfasts, and household members without jobs slept late.

television on rural Alaskan children.[3] Forbes found that Inupiats, previously unexposed to television, became the heaviest viewers. Several participants in the 1991 study were school children in Forbes' study. Others were parents and had participated in interviews with Forbes regarding the effects they thought TV would have on their children.

By sampling villages in the same region, ethnic identity could be held fairly constant, an important consideration in culturally diverse Alaska, where native economic, cultural and social changes were rapid. On the advice of Forbes and others, sociological factors such as village history of alcohol abuse, were considered in the decision to sample the Inupiat villages.[4] Conducting house-to-house surveys could be more difficult in "wet" villages where alcohol abuse was a critical problem. The selected villages had banned the sale and importation of alcohol in the 1980s,[5] which reportedly had led to a decrease in alcohol-related problems.[6]

Regional and local cooperation also were major considerations in village selection. Participation by borough and local community officials, regional and local native leaders was important to gaining individual cooperation.

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[3]Forbes, Social and Cognitive Effects.

[4]Forbes, interview by author; Willie Hensley, president, NANA Regional Corp., interview by author, Anchorage, Sept. 7, 1991. Hensley is an Inupiat Eskimo from Kotzebue. Also, several conversations with Paul Ongtooguk, Ph.D. candidate, Department of Education, Michigan State University, 1989 - 1990. Ongtooguk is Yup'ik Eskimo from Bethel, AK.

[5]The Alaska Legislature passed a local option law in 1980, allowing communities to (1) prohibit the sale of alcohol; (2) prohibit sale and importation of alcohol; (3) place restrictions on liquor licenses; and (4) restrict alcohol sales to community-owned liquor stores. Ambler banned the sale and importation of alcohol in 1981, Buckland in 1982, and Noorvik in 1987.

[6]A 1991 Alaska Native Health Board survey indicated that 35 percent of respondents believed alcohol abuse to be less a problem in a dry village. Anne Marie Holen, "Our Spirit: Strong and Sober. A Brief History of the Alaska Native Sobriety Movement," unpublished manuscript, University of Alaska Anchorage, 1991. Many villages find that drunkenness is simply less noticeable and that bootlegging increases once a village goes "dry."

The original study was designed to compare viewing habits of RATNET viewers with the habits of viewers in communities that had both RATNET and cable. However, during the preliminary research stage, the city of Ambler purchased a six-channel cable system, providing an excellent opportunity to observe the immediate impact of cable TV on RATNET viewing, while comparing it with villages where the novelty of multiple channels was no longer a factor.

Village Demographics

All three villages are incorporated under the laws of Alaska, and also retain a traditional native government. A local sales tax was the major source of revenue for each community. None of the villages levied a property tax. Each community maintains a few local services, such as water and sewer, or honey bucket hauling. The villages have a Village Public Safety Officer position funded through the state of Alaska. The closest state trooper is in Kotzebue. The state of Alaska provided municipal assistance and revenue sharing to rural communities, as well as periodic grants for capitol projects.

Each village has a pre-school or Head Start program, elementary, middle and high school. Eskimo language and cultural studies programs are a required part of the curriculum in the Northwest Arctic Borough School District. Basketball is very important in rural Alaska, and is the main school athletic program. Each village has a high school team that travels throughout the region. The school gymnasiums are packed for every game, with village supporters ranging from the youngest baby to the oldest elder. Basketball, declared one elder in an interview, has done more to change the village than television or any other modern intrusion. Aside from traditional

community holiday celebrations, basketball is the only activity in which nearly the entire community is involved.

Village Employment

The school district and other government agencies were the major employers in each village. The communities also operated a state and federally funded medical clinic, which employed trained health aides.[7] The Red Dog zinc mine, owned by the NANA Corporation and operated by Cominco, Inc. had the potential to be the largest contributor to the economy of the region. At the time of the study, however, market forces prevented it from operating at peak production. A few men and women who were willing to leave their village for weeks at a time worked at Red Dog, and some had been laid off during the village survey. Some villagers found work on summer construction projects outside of the village, as commercial fishers or crew, and fighting forest fires.

Other sources of income for all village residents were the Alaska Permanent Fund (about $900 per person in 1991).[8] Senior-citizens also received the Longevity Bonus ($3,000 in 1991).[9] All Inupiat Eskimos born before 1971 received a $500 dividend in 1991 from the NANA Corporation.

An average of one-third of the residents in the three villages drew some sort of public assistance in 1991, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), food stamps, old age assistance, or

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[7]Funded by Alaska Area Native Health Service/Indian Health Service, each clinic had one or more full and part-time aides, who were in contact with doctors and nurses at the regional hospital in Kotzebue. The aides were trained by Maniilaq Association, a regional non-profit health and social service organization.

[8]Created in 1976 as a state savings account for mineral royalties, the Alaska Permanent Fund pays an annual dividend to all qualified Alaskans.

[9]The Longevity Bonus paid $250 a month to all qualified Alaskan senior citizens. The program was started during the oil-boom days as a way to reward pioneering Alaskans. It was broadened to include all persons age 62 and over, who had lived in Alaska two years. The Alaska Legislature in 1993 approved legislation to phase out the program.

unemployment insurance.[10] In addition, rural energy costs were government-subsidized and natives qualified for low-income federal housing. At the time of the survey, village housing ranged from one-room, drafty cabins, to newly constructed two and three-bedroom homes, courtesy of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Data analysis indicated the mean income of non-natives in the three villages was over $30,000 in 1990, compared to native respondents' reported average of $14,750, including public assistance and various dividends. The author does not consider native income reporting to be accurate, however, because many villagers, particularly elders, had not held daily employment, and did not seem to understand the concept of wages and income. Alaska does not collect an income tax, and some villagers do not report federal taxes. According to 1990 census figures, 23 percent of Northwest Arctic Borough residents were considered to be living below poverty level, with borough per capita income at $10,040. Buckland per capita income was $4,479, Noorvik per capita income was $7,324, and Ambler was $7,189 per capita.[11] Income and occupation do not vary enough in the rural villages to be used as independent variables.

Forbes has argued that income has no meaning in subsistence villages.[12] The conundrum, of course, is that the new consumerism, much of it brought into rural homes via television, continues to promote higher expectations for material goods and community services. As more services and conveniences are offered locally, more cash will be required to pay for these services, but more jobs may not be available.

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[10]Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance. January 1992.

[11]Alaska Population Overview.

[12]Forbes' interview.

Subsistence

Subsistence was considered to be a major contributor to the economy. Virtually all species of subsistence fish and game present in the area were used to some degree for food, clothing, or crafts.[13] The Alaska Department of Fish and Game estimates an annual wild food harvest in the Arctic region of 652 pounds per person per year.[14] Ambler and Noorvik Inupiat depend on large game and fish, supplemented by tundra plants and berries. Buckland Inupiat depend more on sea mammals, such as seal and beluga whale. All of Buckland goes to summer whaling camp at Elephant Point on Kotzebue Sound. If a whale is harvested, it is divided among village residents. A reindeer herd also supplements the Buckland diet and economy. Local herders are paid in meat.

It is typical for active hunters to share their bounty with elders and families who are unable to harvest enough for their needs. While subsistence contributes to the local economy, fish and game are not commodities which are bought and sold; rather, sharing among the Inupiat is considered a social, cultural and kinship transaction.[15] Because subsistence foods do not circulate in the market place, it is difficult to attach a dollar value to subsistence. According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, it would take 31 percent of an Arctic native family's annual income to replace subsistence foods with imported and purchased food.[16]

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[13]Robert F. Schroeder, et al., Subsistence in Alaska: Arctic, Interior, Southcentral, Southwest, and Western Regional Summaries, (Juneau: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, September 1987), 94.

[14]Robert J. Wolfe and Robert G. Bosworth, Subsistence in Alaska: 1994 Update, (Juneau: Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, March 1994) 2.

[15]Schroeder, 97.

[16]Assuming a replacement value of $3 to $5 per pound, the cost to replace wild food harvest in the Arctic region would range from $31.5 million to $52.5 million annually, based on a mean per capita income for natives of $8,247. Wolfe and Bosworth, 3-4.

Women in all three villages still use animal fur and hides for clothing, mukluks and moccasins. Ambler women are famous for their birch bark and willow baskets. Buckland women weave traditional baskets from various tundra and coastal grasses. Traditional handicrafts are carried on by the elders; many younger women, who are in the work force at least part time, were much less familiar with skin sewing and basket making.

Language and Other Cultural Indicators

Language was a strong cultural indicator in these rural native villages. In Noorvik and Buckland, nearly two-thirds of the sample spoke both Inupiaq and English, with English being the second language for older adults.[17] Three-quarters of the Ambler sample spoke both languages. Some elders in all three villages spoke little or no English.

Nearly all adults, including non-natives, thought it important that Inupiat children learn to speak their native language. Many recalled being punished for speaking their language in school. However, most parents did not speak Inupiaq at home with their children. While culture and language were taught in school, it was clear that Inupiat children, like most American children, were more interested in modern fads than cultural traditions.

Village church activity also was a cultural indicator. The Friends' Church was the dominant church in the region, and the only active denomination in Buckland, Noorvik and Ambler. Inupiat elders, who had grown up among village missionaries, were the most active in the church.

The Noorvik Friends' Church was the busiest church in the three villages, and the site of regional missionary conferences. Several non-native

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[17]When questioning elders who had difficulty with English, Caucasian interviewers were accompanied by an Inupiaq-language interpreter, or the elder was queried by a trained Inupiat interviewer. Inupiat is the spelling of the people and culture. The language is Inupiaq.

missionary families had settled in the village, and other non-native residents regularly came to services. Like the church buildings in other rural villages, it was used for community activities, such as the Noorvik Thanksgiving Day feast, a symbol of the strong family and community orientation of the Inupiat.

Village Non-natives

The entire community, native and non-native, turned out for the Inupiat Thanksgiving, which was the fruit of the summer and fall subsistence harvest. Thanksgiving was representative of many Inupiat community celebrations, and illustrated the acceptance, though not necessarily integration of, non-native village residents.

Most non-natives in the sample villages were employed by the school district. In all villages, non-natives generally were defined by their role in the community, such as school teacher, lodge or store owner, or as a member of an ethnically mixed family. Many non-natives were active participants in school and sports, but remained cultural observers in other activities, such as church and celebrations.

In all three communities, a definite polarity existed between natives and non-natives in terms of lifestyle, work, and education. This was more noticeable in Buckland and Noorvik, where plumbed, warm and modern housing located away from the rest of village residents and near the school was available for teachers. Ambler did not offer teacher housing.

The number of non-natives in rural Alaska is small, but growing. Non-natives make up the transient part of the rural Alaska population. Chance described many of the non-natives living in rural Alaska as "drawn by the high wages. Others, seeing numerous opportunities, planned to stay. Still in the back of every one's mind was the realization that if the economic

problems became too severe, non-native inhabitants could always go home. For the Inupiat, they were already home."[18]

THE SAMPLE VILLAGES

Noorvik

Noorvik was established as Oksik in the early 1900s by Eskimo fishermen and hunters from two other villages in the region. About 1914, Oksik became known as Noorvik, which, in Inupiaq, means "a place that is moved to."

The small village on the bluff of the Kobuk River lies down river from the 1.7 million acre Kobuk Valley National Park. Like the remote park, Noorvik has few visitors from outside the region. The seemingly endless, flat tundra surrounding the village supports only small bushes and trees. Low, rolling hills can be seen in the distance.

Incorporated as a second class city in 1964, Noorvik had both a native village council and mayor/council form of government. Local revenue was generated by a 3 percent village sales tax.

The city operated an above-ground water and vacuum sewer utilidor system, which required special vacuum toilets and water valves controlled from a central utility building. In 1991, more than half of the vacuum system was inoperable for the second year, to be repaired and upgraded sometime in the future with federal and state funds.

Residents in homes without water hauled treated Kobuk River water from one of several sites. Monthly water and sewer bills averaged $60 to $80

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[18]Chance, 192. Chance's description of Barrow, the farthest north Inupiat community, is an appropriate description of other rural villages.

per household. The Arctic Village Electrical Cooperative provided diesel-generated electricity at 37.2 cents per kwh for residential service.[19]

The Noorvik Sample

Noorvik was the largest village in the sample, with a 1990 U.S. Census population of 531. The average size of the 105 households was 4.96.[20] Nearly 94 percent of Noorvik residents were Alaska native. As discussed in methods, the 1991 survey reported here attempted to sample one person from each household, but fell slightly short in Noorvik. The 93 Noorvik survey respondents included 37 Inupiat male adults, 43 Inupiat females, one Athabascan female,[21] four non-native males, and eight non-native females.

Census data shows that 149 native male adults, 117 native females, 11 non-native males, and 11 non-native females lived in the village in 1990. One-half of all respondents were between the ages of 18 and 39; half were over 40. The mean age of Inupiat respondents was 42.8 years, and 41.2 for non-natives. The average Noorvik Inupiat had completed eleventh grade, while non-natives had completed college. Fourteen had some college or vocational school, and three had a bachelor's degree. While Noorvik adults were not an especially mobile group, three-fourths of the sample had lived somewhere else, mostly in the northwest region.

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[19]A monthly average was not available.

[20]U.S. Census data.

[21]This woman was married to an Inupiat and had lived in Noorvik for many years. She spoke Athabascan, Inupiaq, and English.

Buckland

Buckland, the most remote of the three villages, is located on the west bank of the Buckland River. Nearly all Buckland residents were descendants of five Eskimo families.

Only a few low bushes dotted the barren Buckland tundra. Across the river, remains of the old village could be seen, abandoned when the school was built on the west bank in the 1970s.[22]

Buckland was incorporated in 1966 as a second-class city, with a mayor-council form of government. City revenue was generated by a 2 percent sales tax.

The village had the barest of necessities. In 1991, only the school, nearby teacher housing, and the medical clinic had water and sewer. All native homes used honey buckets, with containers supplied by the city at a rate of $15 per month. The buckets were dumped in city-owned receptacles, and pumped out weekly. Residents showered, did laundry, visited and hauled treated Buckland River water from the community washeteria.[23] A Buckland cooperative, subsidized by the NANA Regional Corporation, provided oil-generated electricity. At 33 cents per kilowatt hour, residential electricity averaged more than $100 per month.

The Buckland Sample

The 1990 Buckland census population of 318 included 154 adults. The average size of the 69 households was 4.61. Ninety-four percent of Buckland residents were Inupiat Eskimo. Sixty-six adults comprised the 1991 sample, nearly one from every household. Almost 91 percent were Inupiat. The

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[22]Buckland has existed under various names at other sites along the river. The village generally was moved due to flooding.

[23]A joint U.S. Public Health Service/City of Buckland project.

sample included: 25 Inupiat males, 34 Inupiat females, one Athabaskan male, one Cherokee female, two non-native males, and three non-native females. 1990 census information shows 76 native and five non-native adult males; 69 native and four adult non-native females.

The mean age of Buckland Inupiat respondents was 40 years. Buckland Inupiat had completed an average of 11.9 years of school. Seven had attended college or trade school. Although 47 of the 66 Buckland respondents (71 percent) said they had lived elsewhere, Buckland Inupiat were not very mobile people. Most had lived at previous Buckland sites along the river, at a nearby defunct mining community, or other parts of the region. Only the five non-natives in the sample were considered mobile.

Ambler

Ambler, a tiny village at the base of the Jade Mountains in Alaska's Brooks Range, was the newest community in the region. Near the confluence of the Kobuk and Ambler rivers, the fertile ground supports aspen trees, a spruce forest, all the wild foods of the Arctic, and bountiful gardens. Ambler has a much different setting than the other barren Arctic villages.

Ambler was settled in 1958 by Kowagmuit Eskimos from the villages of Shungnak and Kobuk, who moved up river for the rich hunting, fishing and vegetation. Ambler is one of the few Arctic villages where ample wood is available.

The village was incorporated as a second class city in 1971, with a mayor/council form of government. A 2 percent sales tax provided some services, including sewer and water at a rate of $50 per month. Residential electricity averaged $37.2 cents per kwh. An Ambler traditional native

council represented the village native corporation, but the extent of traditional council activity was hard to gauge.

The Ambler Sample

Ambler's 311 residents lived in 71 households during the 1990 census. Average household size was 4.38. Most residents -- 276 --were Inupiat Eskimo, 30 were Caucasian.

In 1991, there were 63 full-time households. Sixty-two people were interviewed during both phases of the survey, with 53 included in the sample analysis. Ten native homes,[24] under construction in September, were completed in December 1991, changing the number and configuration of households in the post-cable survey. Some of the new householders were interviewed at their request, with the information used only for anecdotes.

To compare television viewing before and after cable, pre and post-cable surveys were matched, with 53 in the final sample for both phases. The nine respondents who were dropped from the final analysis (1) did not own a television set; (2) were temporarily away from the village during the second phase; (3) had moved permanently from Ambler; or (4) had moved into different households within Ambler.

The 53 Ambler respondents included 15 Inupiat males and 27 Inupiat females; six non-native males and five non-native females. Census data showed 68 Inupiat male adults and 60 Inupiat females; 16 non-native males and 10 non-native females.

Several reasons could account for the fewer number of males in the survey: (1) During the September phase, many adult men were hunting, or were searching for an Eskimo man who had been missing from another

[24]The homes were built by the Northwest Inupiat Housing Authority, with a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Northwest Arctic community;[25] (2) Some men were working away from the village; and (3) More women than men had birthdays closest to the time of the survey. Due to their absence, no effort was made to sample more men than women.

The mean age of Ambler Inupiats was 44 years. Non-natives' average age was 42. The 1991 survey indicated that the average Ambler Inupiat had completed ninth grade. Three Inupiat had some college or vocational school; one had a bachelor's degree. The eldest Inupiat had completed fifth grade.

Most Inupiat adults had lived all their lives in the Northwest Arctic region, having moved to Ambler from Shungnak. They were not considered a mobile group.[26] For most, travel was limited to other villages in the Northwest region.

The non-natives in the village were the most frequent travelers. Ambler's 30 Caucasians were either teachers, part of a teacher family, or had come to Ambler years before as teachers and stayed after retirement. Some had met their Eskimo spouse outside the village and moved there to raise children. This group was generally well-integrated into the community. A few non-natives who did not seem comfortably integrated into village life were teachers who were there only long enough to salt away the high salary. For a non-native, Ambler was the most comfortable of the three communities in which to work.

The following chapter describes the village media environment.

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[25]A missing person, an accident, a suicide or other tragedy seems to bring the Northwest Arctic villages together. During the survey period, men from all three villages joined the search for the missing elder. Also drowning deaths in the Kobuk River at Noorvik brought men into the village from other communities to search for the bodies, while women from other villages came to feed the searchers.

[26]A mobility variable was created by combining three questions. Mobility is discussed in greater detail in the analysis chapter.

Chapter Eight

VILLAGE MEDIA CONTEXT

Ambler CB radios crackled every morning as residents awoke and greeted their neighbors: "Good morning, Ambler."

"Good morning, Ambler."

"Good morning, Ambler."

These Inupiat relied on CB radio for communication between homes, calls to the store, post office, school, city offices. Telephones were sparse and required a monthly payment. The phone was not an efficient medium for these close-knit Bush communities; it could not reach an entire village at once, or talk to relatives at fish camp. The CB had been in rural villages long before the telephone, and it will still be used in the villages long after every home has a telephone. As the early morning greeting portrays, the CB gives these Inupiat villagers a more personal feeling than the telephone.

Pearson's characterization of rural Alaskans as "media poor"[1] was an apt description of Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik residents. During the 1991 survey, the only regional newspaper, the Arctic Sounder, was published weekly, although it did not always arrive in the villages weekly. A few copies of The Anchorage Times and Anchorage Daily News were delivered each week to the village schools, seldom to get beyond teachers' desks.[2] Data from

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[1]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor," 4.

[2]The Anchorage Times has since stopped publishing. The only statewide native newspaper, the Tundra Times, published for many years until 1991, when economic troubles forced it to stop publishing. It began publishing again in 1992.

the 1991 survey indicate that nearly all Inupiat respondents read newspapers less than once a week. The Arctic Sounder was the newspaper read most often.

The regional public station, KOTZ, provided local and regional news and a message service. Its Inupiaq-language programs were especially important to older Inupiat. But KOTZ reception was spotty in the sample villages. In the 1991 survey, radio was generally ignored by the youth; it was secondary to TV for adults.

Computers and facsimile machines were found in schools and local government offices. Only a handful of teachers and business owners had personal computers.

Television was a window on the world for these remote Eskimos, as it was for many rural Alaska natives. Survey results indicated that TV was the medium used most often, considered the most enjoyable, the most educational, and the most important. It was the most important source of international and national news in all villages. RATNET, specifically, was the most important source of Alaska news. Media use will be described in more detail in chapter nine.

While television was one of several changes in these subsistence villages, it emphasized the dichotomy between the old and the new ways more than any other instrument of change. It was not unusual to see an elder woman tanning a caribou hide for mukluks while watching a soap opera showing the glitz, glamour, and broken relationships of the rich and famous. TV brought a consumer economy into the village that many had never before experienced. Stories abound of the early days of television when children came to school asking teachers if something they saw on TV portrayed the rest of the world. Now, many children have traveled outside their village.

Television is taken for granted and RATNET has been joined by cable systems offering several channels.

The Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik cable systems were similar to other community-owned systems in rural villages. Most were six channel systems operated and maintained by the local community. Microcom, an Anchorage-based company specializing in Bush cable systems, provided the satellite dish, cable installation and financing.

Private Cable Company, a Microcom partner, supplied programming. Microcom offered villages a choice of a community-owned and operated system, or a utility system similar to telephone. For communities interested in becoming cable owners, Microcom provided a revenue model based on population and probable number of subscribers. A village-owned system generally created one to two local jobs.

If the community selected ownership, Microcom financed the system, hired and trained local residents to help install, connect households and maintain the cable system after installation. The company provided local access and message channels, as well as a graphics computer and video equipment.[3] Few Microcom villages purchased the video-access channel, while most selected the graphics-message channel. Like rural public radio and the CB, the message channel provided a local and regional message service for individuals, the community, school, church and other local entities.

Cable penetration reached 90 percent in rural villages that purchased a cable system. Penetration was as low as 30 percent in villages where cable was operated by Microcom as a utility.[4] With a community-owned system, all revenue stayed with the village once the Microcom loan was paid. The

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[3]The video camera, editing and switching system cost about $4,000. Sandra Blinstrubaus, director, Microcom Corp., interview by author, Anchorage, August 1991.

[4]Blinstrubaus.

community levied connection and monthly fees, and regulated the service. Residents voted for the channels they wanted on the system. Private Cable offered basic packages which included premium channels. By contrast, the Anchorage cable system offered 60 channels in 1991, with substantial price differences between basic and premium channels.

Although the state of Alaska maintained a RATNET dish in 224 villages, Microcom added RATNET to village cable systems as a way of being "a good neighbor."[5] The quality of the RATNET signal was sometimes poor, but was clearer on cable. Also, RATNET was the only source of Alaskana, and Microcom realized that villagers depended on it for local and statewide news and weather.

Cable undoubtedly will be sought by more rural communities as they seek to expand their revenue base. The impact of cable on RATNET viewing and viewers' attitudes toward TV is discussed at length in chapter nine.

Village demographics and each village cable system are discussed below.

Noorvik Media

All Noorvik Inupiat respondents remembered life without television. The RATNET channel became available in 1978. In 1991, each household had at least one television set,[6] and 61 of the 93 households (66.7 percent) had a videocassette recorder (VCR). Noorvik purchased its cable system in 1986. Fifty-one of the 93 Noorvik respondents subscribed to cable during the 1991 survey; most subscribers recalled being connected in 1988. Thirty-eight did not subscribe to cable in 1991, mainly because they could not afford it. Seven non-subscribers said cable was not worth the fee.

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[5]Ibid.

[6]Village average was 1.7 sets per home.

Village-wide, rented or purchased videotapes were viewed an average of three hours and 40 minutes a week. Cable subscribers watched an average of three hours, 25 minutes of tapes each week. The highest VCR use was among non-cable respondents, who watched tapes nearly four hours each week. Cable, RATNET and videotape viewing was the most important leisure-time activity for 22 Noorvik respondents.

The city-owned, six-channel cable system carried HBO, ESPN, CNN, WTBS, Family Channel, Discovery, an unused local-access channel, and RATNET. Some city officials expressed hope that the local-access channel would be used to broadcast church and other community meetings, plus high school basketball games.[7] HBO was the channel watched most often. Discovery and CNN tied for second place; RATNET ranked third.

The Noorvik system had been purchased and installed with a $76,000 loan financed by Microcom. Programming was supplied by Private Cable. The city paid Microcom approximately $2,000 per month, which was scheduled to be paid off in the mid-1990s.[8] Local cable revenues and state revenue sharing had been used to pay off the loan.

Noorvik had opted for ownership because city officials did not "want an outsider to come in and take all that money out."[9] Cable had created a part-time job for one person.

Noorvik cable hook-up was $50, with a $50 security deposit. Monthly subscription fees were $50, plus 3 percent sales tax. Rates would be reduced, according to city officials, when the Microcom loan was paid off and the number of subscribers increased. The security deposit and a $60 fee for a second hook-up had been imposed in 1991, because of the high cost of

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[7]At the time of the 1991 survey, basketball games were broadcast on CB radio.
[8]Ivan Field, mayor, City of Noorvik, interview by author, September 1991.
[9]Ibid.

defaults. Between 1989 and the November 1991 survey, the city had terminated service to nearly one-third of its subscribers for non-payment. Considering the high cable default rate and the low income for Noorvik residents, it was surprising that only 12 Noorvik subscribers reported having adjusted their household budget for cable.

Buckland Media

Many Buckland homes -- 25 of the 66 respondents -- still did not have a telephone in 1991, but every home had at least one TV set.[10] Most adults remembered village life before RATNET, which came in 1978. More than one-half of the village homes had a VCR. Respondents from non-cable homes watched an average of seven hours and 45 minutes of videotapes per week -- far more than cable subscribers who reported watching an average of two and one-half hours of tapes.

Buckland had acquired a four-channel cable system in 1983, which had grown to eight channels by 1991. At the time of the survey, 55 of the 66 Buckland respondents subscribed to cable. One-third recalled connecting to cable in 1983. The original four-channel package cost $50 per month, based on a rate of $12.50 per channel, with a reduction for bad reception. Every three years since 1983 the city had conducted a survey of subscribers to find out what new channels they wanted. Four channels had been added and the monthly rate capped at $50. In 1991, city officials declared that any future additions would increase the monthly fee.

Villagers paid a $20 cable connection fee, but no security deposit. If they did not pay their cable bill for three months, service was disconnected. Cable was reconnected for a $20 fee, but not until all payments were made.

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[10]The village average was 1.6 sets per home.

Over the years, nearly half of the Buckland subscribers had discontinued their subscription for a time, mainly because they could not make their monthly payment. Nearly half also reported making no changes in their household budget to afford the $50 monthly cable fee. Many of those who made budget changes said they staggered their payments of cable and other monthly utilities.

Watching RATNET and cable TV was the major leisure-time activity for 16 of Buckland's 66 respondents (24 percent). Premium and basic cable channels were mixed into one package: TNT, ESPN, CNN, WTBS, WGN, USA, HBO, and Discovery. RATNET also was on cable. HBO was the channel watched most often; ESPN ranked second. RATNET tied for third place with CNN and USA Network. Forty-three subscribers said they would like more channels, preferring more children's programming such as the Disney and Discovery channels. Most subscribers said they were not willing to pay more for the additional channels.

Unlike Noorvik, Buckland had not borrowed money from Microcom when it acquired cable in 1983; rather, it had paid cash. In 1991, monthly cable revenue to the city averaged $2,500. Programming payments to Private Cable Company were $613 per month. The remainder of the cable revenue went into the city treasury to reimburse itself for its original investment. Cable installation and maintenance created a part-time job for one Buckland resident.

Ambler Media

Ambler was as information poor as Buckland and Noorvik. Thirty-three of Ambler's 53 respondents had a telephone (62 percent), while every household in the survey had at least one TV set.

RATNET came to the village in 1978. Watching television was the most important leisure-time activity for 10 of the 53 respondents (18.9 percent). Forty-three of Ambler's 53 respondents had videocassette recorders, used mainly for watching purchased or rental tapes. Before cable, Ambler VCR owners watched videotapes an average of three hours each week. In the post-cable survey, subscribers watched videotapes about one hour and 20 minutes each week.[11] It was expected that videotape viewing would decrease with cable,[12] which was evidenced in Buckland/Noorvik.

Ambler was one of the last villages in the Northwest Arctic Borough to get cable. When the city council decided to go into the cable business, members believed cable would become a major revenue producer for local government:

> I look at it as a good investment for our city ... It will pay our water and sewer and other expenses.[13]

Ambler purchased a six-channel system, financed with a nine-year, $70,000 loan from Microcom. Programming was supplied by Private Cable Company, at a cost to the village of $1,300 per month in 1991.

As a cable operator, Ambler was clearly feeling its way. Cable had been not included in the 1991 fiscal year budget, resulting in a $5,000 general fund deficit in the first month of cable operation. When the city administrator reported the problem, council members sounded unconcerned:

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[11]The nine non-cable respondents watched VCR tapes for two hours, 45 minutes after cable -- only slightly less than before.

[12]This effect of cable was not predicted in the hypotheses.

[13]Louis Commack, mayor, City of Ambler, Dec. 17, 1991 council meeting.

> Wait 'til next month to see how it settles out. Once all houses are hooked up, we may have to increase the monthly fee.[14]

City officials did not seem to understand the relationship between Microcom and city government, or their role as cable administrator and operator. Cable policies were unclear and fees were continually changing as city officials felt their way along. The initial $85 hook-up fee was increased to $100 after Ambler's first month as a cable operator. A month into operation, it was discovered that several villagers who had moved to new homes had not paid the re-connection fee.

Ambler's monthly cable subscription rate was $50, the same as water and sewer. No security deposit was required. The TV service was to be disconnected if a subscriber's bill was not paid by the fifteenth of the following month. A $25 fee, plus the balance of the bill was to be paid before the city would reconnect the cable.

Ambler's attitude toward operating a cable system seemed typical of government in all three villages. From interviews and observation, it seemed all the communities sort of "ran themselves" until a crisis developed.

Pre-cable Anticipation

The possibility of new TV channels in Ambler generated a high level of anticipation among villagers. Prior to cable, 39 respondents said they planned to subscribe, five were not sure, and only seven said they definitely would not subscribe, because of the cost of cable. After cable was available, 42 subscribed; eleven did not, some because the cable did not reach their homes. Of the eleven non-subscribers, only four said they would connect to

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[14]Wallace Cleveland, Ambler city council, Dec. 17, 1991 council meeting.

cable if it were available to their home, mainly for more news, sports and movies.

Before cable was installed, Private Cable Company provided a list of available channels to every villager, who then voted for the channels they most preferred. Discovery, Disney, TNT, CNN, ESPN, and HBO received the greatest number of votes. Once installed, ESPN was replaced with USA Network, to the disappointment of many sports fans. Discovery was the most popular channel among the 42 subscribers, with 15 saying they watched it most often. CNN ranked second, with six responses. RATNET was fifth of seven, a ranking which likely shows the novelty effect of multiple channels.

The pre-cable phase of this research attempted to assess Ambler residents' experience with cable and their expectations. Most respondents had watched cable during visits outside the village. Only the elders generally were unfamiliar with cable, and many planned to subscribe just to find out what it was.

Experience with cable aside, most Ambler respondents knew there would be some major differences between RATNET and cable. In spontaneous answers to an open-ended question, 30 respondents (58.8 percent) believed choice and variety of programs would be the biggest difference. Choice and variety were also the reasons most villagers planned to subscribe. Only eight (15.7 percent) noted that cable would have more movies than RATNET, although it was clear that movies were very popular in Ambler, especially among youth, who kept the local video outlet busy.[15]

Four respondents were concerned that cable would have a negative impact on the community, including an increase in vandalism. It was thought that expense would be an obvious difference between cable and

[15]The Kobuk Valley Lodge general store rented videotapes.

RATNET, but only two pre-cable Ambler respondents noted that cable cost money, whereas RATNET was free.

More than half the respondents believed the $50 monthly cable fee was reasonable, but said they would not want to pay any more. Adjusting the household budget did not seem to be a priority for those planning to subscribe. Only six respondents said they planned to give up something in order to afford cable, including "junk" food and video rental. One respondent planned to travel less on his "gas-guzzling" snowmachine, another said the family would cut its use of other utilities.

Once cable was available, the reasons people subscribed were not nearly as clear as the reasons they thought they would subscribe. Among other things, subscribers cited too little entertainment in Ambler, more program variety on cable, and curiosity about cable. Most of the 42 subscribers said they were satisfied with Ambler's new cable system, although more than half wanted more channels, including a religious channel, sports, country music and more movies. Most were not willing to pay for additional channels.

Once cable was offered, six respondents said they had subscribed because other adults wanted them to. At least three grandmothers said they subscribed to cable because their adult children wanted the grandchildren to have more channels to watch when they visited their "aana."[16] These grandmothers continued to watch their favorite and familiar RATNET programs when they were by themselves. One adult daughter said she paid the monthly cable fee for her elderly mother, so the grandchildren would have more entertainment at aana's house. For the price of the cable, which this aana did not watch and could not understand, the 87-year-old Inupiaq- and

[16]Inupiaq for grandmother.

Athabaskan-speaking woman could have been reconnected to sewer and water, which she had been without for several months, because she could not afford the $50 monthly fee. Instead, she hauled water everyday and used a honey bucket, while her grandchildren watched cable TV.

Addendum

Ambler cable was being strung in September 1991 as this researcher was conducting the first phase of the survey. After numerous satellite equipment delays, about half the village was wired by October 27. Installation was completed by mid-December.

The post-cable phase of the survey was conducted between December 1 and December 19, 1991. Subscribers getting cable late in the survey period were not interviewed until they had watched cable for at least one week. This could be considered a weakness in the research; conversely, the novelty of cable could last for many months, so the effects probably would have been apparent several months later. The survey was purposely designed to control for novelty effects by comparing Ambler with Buckland and Noorvik, where cable had been available since the 1980s. As will be seen in the quantitative analysis chapter, novelty effect did not seem to be as strong as expected and was often explained by the comparison. Ideally, the post-cable survey would have been conducted at a later time and would be followed much later by another survey.

Chapter Nine

DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The village research includes cable television impact on the state-owned RATNET channel, as well as the function of television in traditional native communities.

The analysis focuses on the attitudes, opinions and television use of Inupiat Eskimos, who comprise the largest, most stable and most important group in the Northwest Arctic region. As previously discussed, Inupiat lives are in transition, caused by an onslaught of changes affecting their traditional subsistence lifestyle. Many feel their culture is threatened by these changes, including television. The sample included 181 Inupiat Eskimos.

Only 28 non-natives, all Caucasian, participated in all phases of the survey. Like most non-natives living in the Bush, none had grown up in rural Alaska, but had moved there from the Lower 48 states, or other parts of Alaska. For many, rural Alaska was a short-term adventure, not a permanent home. Non-natives were peripheral to the study, and there were not enough in the sample to support ethnic comparisons. Where appropriate, ethnic differences will be discussed in the narrative. The significance of ethnic differences will not be reported, however, because it cannot be supported by the non-native sample size. For nearly all variables, survey

results will describe Inupiat villagers, who were the focal point of the study. While the text amplifies Inupiat results, some tables reflect the entire village.

The analysis included 53 Ambler, and 159 Buckland and Noorvik residents.[1] Due to the small number of participants in the surveys, both numbers and percentages will be reported for individual villages. In most cases, Buckland and Noorvik is presented as a single group in comparison with Ambler.

The Ambler survey was conducted in September 1991, before cable television was available, and between December 1 - 19, 1991, after cable had been hooked up. The same 53 respondents were interviewed in the pre- and post-cable Ambler surveys. Buckland and Noorvik interviews were completed between November 14 - 28, 1991.

In addition to the independent variables of ethnicity, language, age, sex, and education, a mobility variable was created. This variable combined questions that measured whether respondents had lived elsewhere, if they had traveled outside of Alaska within the past year, or if they had traveled to major Alaska cities within the past year. In all three villages, mobility was an ethnic trait, with Inupiats being the least mobile. Non-natives were considered mobile, many of them being teachers who left the village during school breaks and several other times a year. In the three villages, mobility was linked to education, those with a high school diploma or less being the least mobile. Education also was an ethnic trait, with non-natives having attended college or completed at least a bachelor's degree, and natives having attended but not completed high school. When sex and mobility were associated, a greater number of females (25) than males (15) were considered immobile, although the association was not significant. In traditional Eskimo

[1]Several individuals were interviewed for an over-sample in each village.

culture, men were hunters and therefore more mobile. In the 1990s village, some men travel outside their communities for employment. Mobility is an interesting descriptive variable, but it is not used as a predictor.

Language was thought to be a cultural indicator of traditionalism, which was more appropriate in Buckland and Noorvik, where 34 Inupiats did not speak the Inupiaq language, than in Ambler, where all Inupiat respondents spoke their native language.

Cross-tabulation tables were used to observe associations between dependent and independent variables. Cross-tabs, however, do not determine causality, only that a relationship exists. Chi-square tests were used to determine if the relationships found in the sample could be generalized to the population from which the sample was drawn. For example, if the relationship between the amount of television viewed and cable subscription was statistically significant, one could consider cable subscription to be a factor in determining how much TV these rural villagers watched. The .05 level of significance was the standard used in determining whether the observed relationships would be of interest. If significance is not mentioned, the relationship was not significant. In many cases, relationships were not significant, but consistent patterns could be seen, which could be considered support for the hypotheses. Many of these cases are discussed.

Interval data includes hours spent watching cable and RATNET. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare means and to test for significant differences. Missing data were not figured into any of the percentages used in the analysis. Where appropriate, ethnographic and anecdotal information is used to support and provide clarity to the survey analysis.

Due to the small numbers of non-natives in the sample, any differences observed between the mobile and non-mobile, Inupiaq speakers and English-only speakers, Inupiats and non-natives, or educational differences cannot be supported in the population. These variables will be discussed in the narrative only when noteworthy. The following analysis is primarily descriptive and concentrates on Inupiat responses.

TV-- the medium of choice

Television is the medium of choice for entertainment and information in rural Alaska, as well as the primary medium. Seventy-three percent, or 155 of the 212 native and non-native respondents in the three villages said they used television more often than any other medium. About 58.5 percent, or 124, considered it the most enjoyable medium; 41 percent, or 87 respondents thought TV the most educational; and 42 percent, or 89 respondents rated TV as the most important of all media.[2]

Table 1 and Table 2 summarize media use by **village**. Community by community, relationships between media variables and demographics were not always significant, but as a whole, percentages show television's continuing importance to the entire village, and especially the Inupiat people. In pre-cable Ambler, where RATNET was the only channel, 33 Inupiats, more than 78 percent, cited TV as the medium they most enjoyed. The relationship held for TV as the most important medium, although radio fought for importance.[3]

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[2]Magazines were considered the least important of all the media, probably because of their unfamiliarity and cost. They are not sold in the local store, and subscription costs are high. A few, mostly news magazines, were purchased by the school. Caucasians, most of whom were teachers, read magazines more than Inupiats.

[3]Slightly more than 35 percent, or 15 Inupiats cited TV; 33.3 percent (14) cited radio as most important.

Table 1: Village Media Use, Ambler

N = 53
Native and non-native respondents

	Media used most often	Most enjoyable media	Most educational media	Least important media	Most important media
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Radio	8 / 15.1	5 / 9.4	2 / 3.8	9 / 17.0	14 / 26.4
TV	38 / 71.7	35 / 66.0	27 / 50.9	6 / 11.3	19 / 35.8
Magazines	1 / 1.9	1 / 1.9	5 / 9.4	21 / 39.6	
Newspapers		4 / 7.5	5 / 9.4	4 / 7.5	3 / 5.7
Books	3 / 5.7	8 / 15.1	12 / 22.6	6 / 11.3	10 / 18.9
Don't know	3 / 5.7		2 / 3.6	7 / 13.2	7 / 13.2

Table 2: Village Media Use, Buckland and Noorvik combined sample

N = 159
Native and non-native respondents

	Media used most often	Most enjoyable media	Most educational media	Least important media	Most important media
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Radio	19 / 11.9	20 / 12.6	11 / 6.9	25 / 15.7	34 / 21.4
TV	117 / 73.6	89 / 56.0	60 / 37.7	11 / 6.9	70 / 44.0
Magazines	6 / 3.8	15 / 9.4	17 / 10.7	73 / 45.9	1 / .6
Newspapers	1 / .6	8 / 5.0	19 / 11.9	11 / 6.9	16 / 10.1
Books	15 / 9.4	26 / 16.4	49 / 30.8	29 / 18.2	34 / 21.4
Don't know	1 / .6	1 / .6	3 / 1.8	10 / 6.2	4 / 2.5

Television was considered the most educational medium for Ambler Inupiats. This is in contrast to the non-native group which rated books, newspapers and magazines as the most educational, more important than other media, and more enjoyable than TV. While the number of non-natives in the sample is too small to support ethnic comparisons, some general contrasts can be made. For example, at the time of the survey, teachers, retired teachers and other more highly educated people made up the largest non-native group in the three villages. This would also be true in native villages statewide.

A significant association was apparent between language and television, one of the few language associations which can be discussed due to larger numbers of English/Inupiaq speakers. Nearly 60 percent of Inupiaq speakers considered TV the most educational. English speakers, including those who also spoke Inupiat, consistently preferred print media. In most other cases, language comparisons fell strictly along ethnic lines, with the number of English-only speakers reflecting the non-native sample, which is too small to support comparisons.

In Buckland and Noorvik, 44 of the 106 bilingual respondents believed TV to be the most educational medium (41.5 percent). Thirty reported that books were most educational (28.3 percent). Newspapers, magazines and radio rank a distant third. Of the 46 English-only speakers, 23 reported newspapers and books to be more educational for them (50 percent), while 16 selected television (34.8 percent).[4] These relationships were significant.

Especially for elders who speak English as a second language, the combination of pictures and words makes television more understandable than other media. As one Inupiat woman said, "I learn words from 'Wheel of

[4]This includes 34 Inupiats who did not speak their language.

Fortune,' and numbers from the 'Price is Right.' " These and other game shows were popular among older women, primarily for these reasons.

Anecdotal information indicates that reading dropped off quickly among Inupiat adults once television was introduced. In Buckland, for example, the Buckland school principal noted that Inupiat adults, once daily visitors to the school library, stopped checking out books immediately after cable became available in 1983. Between 1983 and the 1991 survey, school records show no Buckland Inupiat adults had borrowed school library books.[5]

Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives

Field observations intersect cultural impact and current policy issues in the study, to answer several major research questions: (1) What changes do rural Inupiat Eskimos perceive in village life and culture since the arrival of television? (2) Is there a cultural impact of television in native communities which should be considered in RATNET policy? (3) Is Alaskana important enough to viewers that Alaska should foster an aboriginal broadcasting policy to "strengthen the social, cultural, and linguistic fabric"[6] of native life, similar to the Canadian broadcast policy? (See Chapter Five). (4) Are rural viewers willing to pay for the RATNET channel? (5) If so, why are villagers willing to pay, considering the availability of cable television and the similarity of entertainment programming on RATNET and cable?

A relationship between rural television policy and TV viewers' interests and attitudes toward RATNET clearly emerged from the data analysis. The analysis confirmed that indigenous societies prefer indigenous television as noted in the television effects literature (See Chapter Five).

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[5]School libraries were the only libraries in these villages, and were open to the public. John Bania, Buckland School Superintendent, interview by author, Sept., Nov. 1991.

[6]Inuit Broadcasting Corporation, quoted in Madden, 135.

Respondents indicated a general preference for a "local" TV genre, that is, regional and culturally relevant programs that would be related to their daily lives and experiences. This suggests that RATNET would provide a better service if the rural Alaska context was considered. Current RATNET policy calls for general-interest entertainment and information (See Chapter Three).

The statistical analysis illustrates the impact of this policy on viewers' use of RATNET and cable channels. It suggests that an increase in Alaskana, plus regional and cultural programming on RATNET, would be appropriate in rural Alaska's new multiple-channel environment.

The analysis clearly indicates that cultural issues are important considerations in setting content policy. This confirms such cultural effects literature as Straubhaar, Valaskakis and Skinner. One could also argue that a survey of a larger, more culturally diverse sample of rural Alaska villages would produce similar results.

HYPOTHESES

Cable vs. RATNET Viewing

(H1) Viewers will watch more cable television than RATNET when cable is available.

Television did not absorb as much time in these native villages in 1991 as it did in the average American home, where TV viewing occupied about seven hours a day.[7] During the coldest, darkest month of the year, the Inupiat villagers watched only about five hours of TV on a weekday, slightly more on weekends, and some of that could be attributed to the novelty of cable television.

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[7]A Short Course in Broadcasting, 1991," The Broadcasting Yearbook 1991. (Washington, D.C.: Broadcasting Publications, 1991).

Cable Novelty

As TV dials began flipping from channel to channel in Ambler, total television viewing increased an average of one hour and 10 minutes daily. Total RATNET viewing decreased among all viewers, as cable subscribers discovered new channels. In Buckland and Noorvik, where cable television was far from a novelty, RATNET viewing also was lower than cable, though the differences were small.

Other components affected Ambler viewing. During the September pre-cable survey period, viewing probably was lower because Ambler residents were busy fishing, hunting, gathering and preserving food for the winter. Also, school was just beginning, and September weather was exceptionally warm and dry. During the post-cable phase in December, much of the winter's food had been preserved, temperatures were well-below zero, snow covered the ground and days were very short. The anticipation of cable TV was high, as subscribers had waited two months longer than expected for the new channels.

While these considerations affect only Ambler, the amount of RATNET and cable viewing in all villages with cable has statewide policy implications. Policy issues are much more complex than viewing habits. It is clear from the data that RATNET has a specific function in rural Alaska households and without it, rural viewers would have little access to Alaska news, weather, and other information unique to their state. Cable cannot replace this service.

Notwithstanding viewers' admission that they watch less RATNET than cable, survey responses showed that viewers clearly want more regional, cultural and statewide information, which only RATNET can offer. As

Alaska policy-makers decide the future of rural television, including issues raised by the encroachment of cable, RATNET's function is continually being reevaluated, but never from a cultural perspective. Even if RATNET was privatized, the information gathered from this small pilot study will be enlightening to channel programmers.

Ambler Viewing

Data from all three villages support the hypothesis that RATNET viewing will decrease once cable is available in the home. As illustrated in Table 3, Ambler RATNET viewing declined by more than one-half after cable was installed. Ambler's 53 respondents reported watching an average of three hours, 10 minutes of RATNET each weekday **before cable** was available, compared to one hour, 20 minutes of RATNET viewing for all respondents **after cable.**[8]

Table 3: RATNET Viewing, Ambler

N=53
Native and non-native respondents

	September 1991 Pre-cable RATNET N = 53	**December 1991 Post-cable RATNET** N = 53
Weekday	3:10	1:20
Weekend (2-day total)	6:41	3:22

Daily television viewing in the 42 new cable households increased nearly one hour and 45 minutes once cable was installed. During the December post-cable survey period, cable subscribers reported watching an average of one hour, 39 minutes of RATNET each weekday, compared to

[8]Using a T-test of independent means, the differences between the two means were significant at the .001 level. All means are rounded to the nearest tenth of an hour. All means exclude missing responses and those who reported "don't know."

about three hours and 15 minutes of cable. Weekend television viewing among cable subscribers totaled eight hours and 47 minutes. RATNET accounted for three hours and 22 minutes; cable consumed five hours, 25 minutes. The weekend total is the sum of Saturday and Sunday viewing averages. (See Table 4). Only two non-cable household respondents reported going to cable homes to watch TV during the survey period. One reported watching one hour of cable, the other three hours of cable, both on a Saturday evening.

Table 4: Cable Subscribers' Viewing, Ambler

N=42
Native and non-native respondents

	RATNET N = 42	Cable N = 42
Weekday	1:39	3:15
Weekend (2-day total)	3:22	5:25

Due to the small number of non-natives in the survey, ethnicity was not a statistically significant determinant of television viewing in Ambler, but it is interesting to note the differences. Thirty-eight Inupiat and four non-natives subscribed to cable. On weekdays Inupiats averaged one hour, 30 minutes of RATNET and three hours, 24 minutes of cable viewing. The four non-natives watched about one hour of RATNET on weekdays, and one hour, 56 minutes of cable. These differences could be due to several factors, including non-native interest in other media, non-native experience with cable prior to coming to the village, as well as non-native work load. As previously indicated, most non-natives had full-time jobs, while Inupiats did not.

Among other demographic groups, gender, age and education were statistically significant factors in determining the amount of cable TV viewing in post-cable Ambler. Men watched almost two hours more cable TV each weekday than women. All adults, ages 18 to 28, watched an average of six and one-half hours of cable on the average weekday, while viewing was less than half of that amount for all other age groups. Age also was statistically related to the amount of RATNET viewing among the 42 Ambler cable subscribers. Respondents ages 29 to 39 watched about one hour of RATNET, compared to nearly three hours for those ages 18 to 28. The over-40 age group watched about one hour, 30 minutes of RATNET on the average weekday. From observation and interviewing, it was clear that these two age groups were more busy than younger adults, with full or part-time work, or traditional Eskimo activities such as visiting or handicrafts.

Education also affected viewing, with averages varying from 30 minutes for two respondents with graduate degrees, to four hours and 40 minutes for 21 respondents who had attended high school. While the association between education and TV viewing was significant, it is affected by ethnic sample size. As previously stated, the average native educational level in Ambler was ninth grade, while non-natives had completed college. Education, therefore, is an ethnic characteristic and significance cannot be supported due to the small non-native sample size. The differences are worth noting, as will be discussed in the Buckland/Noorvik sample.

Buckland/Noorvik Viewing

As predicted, total RATNET viewing was consistently lower than cable in the established-cable villages of Buckland and Noorvik, where cable had been available since 1983 and 1986, respectively. Of the 159 respondents in the combined-village sample, 106 subscribed to cable. Average weekday RATNET viewing among both cable and non-cable respondents was two and one-half hours.[9] The weekend RATNET total for cable and non-cable homes was four hours and seven minutes.

The 106 Buckland and Noorvik cable subscribers average an additional two and one-half hours per day of total TV viewing, both cable and RATNET. (See Table 5 and Table 6). They watched RATNET for about two hours each weekday; compared to three hours of cable. Weekend RATNET viewing among cable subscribers totaled four hours and 11 minutes, compared to six hours, 36 minutes.

Table 5: RATNET Viewing, Buckland and Noorvik combined sample, November 1991

Native and non-native respondents

	Village sample N = 159	Cable subscribers N = 106
Weekday	2:30	2:00
Weekend (2-day total)	4:07	4:11

[9]During the Buckland and Noorvik survey period, RATNET was off the air for 29 and one-half hours, from Thursday, November 22 to Friday, November 23. To compensate, respondents who were interviewed on Friday and Saturday were asked how much RATNET and cable they had watched on Wednesday, November 21. Although attempts were made to mitigate the effect of the outage, it could have affected self-reporting.

Table 6: Cable Subscribers' Viewing,
Buckland and Noorvik combined sample, November 1991

Native and non-native respondents

	RATNET N = 106	Cable N = 106
Weekday	2:00	3:00
Weekend (2-day total)	4:11	6:36

Although the number of Buckland/Noorvik non-natives in the sample is low, ethnic comparisons are worth noting. Overall, the 98 Inupiat cable subscribers in Buckland and Noorvik watched more TV than their six non-native counterparts -- about three hours and 10 minutes of cable, and two hours, 10 minutes of RATNET on the average weekday. Non-native subscribers watched an average of one hour of cable, and 40 minutes of RATNET on a typical weekday. Some of the differences could be explained by employment and interest in other media.

Education was a significant factor in cable viewing in Buckland and Noorvik, but it was not a factor in RATNET viewing. Respondents with some college or vocational training watched nearly two hours less cable than those with a high school education. These people would be more apt to use other sources for entertainment and information, such as newspapers, magazines, books and public radio.[10] While the educational level of natives was slightly higher in Buckland and Noorvik than in Ambler (See Chapter Seven), education in the two established-cable villages appeared to be associated with ethnicity, as it is in Ambler and in most rural native villages statewide.

Comparing the villages, it is clear that Ambler viewing was affected by the novelty of multiple channels. In the established-cable villages of Buckland and Noorvik, cable subscribers watched about one hour more cable

[10]Twelve respondents indicated that they had some post-secondary education.

than RATNET on a weekday. In the new cable village of Ambler, cable respondents watched approximately one and one-half hours more cable than RATNET each weekday. The differences between RATNET and cable in Buckland and Noorvik indicate that cable viewing will level off in Ambler once the newness wears off. It also suggests that RATNET provides a specific service which cable cannot replace. From the data, which will be discussed below, it is clear that special service is Alaska news and information.

The competition between multiple cable channels and the single RATNET channel is little different in tiny Inupiat Eskimo villages than in large television markets across the nation. Throughout the United States, local stations, whether network affiliates or independents, continue to lose audience share to cable.[11] To improve ratings, networks and local stations are forced to adjust programming and schedules to compete with cable channels. On the local level, stations often counterprogram or increase local and regional news and other public affairs programming to compete with other local and distant cable channels.[12] In rural Alaska, RATNET no longer has the monopoly on television. As villages install cable systems, RATNET becomes an even greater policy question than it has in the past. If the state is to live up to its policy of making "new informational material available so that all Alaskans can be informed as to what Alaska is doing,"[13] RATNET needs to provide more information "as to what Alaska is doing." Cable actually provides RATNET an opportunity to pay greater attention to rural, ethnic and cultural needs.

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[11]"TV Viewing Shares: Broadcast Years 1983 - 1992," Cable Television Developments, June 1993. In: Funk and Wagnalls Corp., The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1994, 295.

[12]Susan Tyler Eastman, Sydney W. Head, and Lewis Klein, Broadcast Cable Programming: Strategies and Practices, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989).

[13]Session Laws of Alaska 1976, Chapter 223, intent language.

The small decrease in RATNET viewing indicates potential audience support for the channel and its unique role in rural Alaska. The following hypotheses examine an audience preference for increased regional and cultural programming on RATNET.

RATNET's Importance Among Village Viewers

(H2) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages consider RATNET their major source of news and information about Alaska.

(H3) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages would be willing to pay a fee for RATNET.

The continuing importance of the RATNET channel for village audiences is represented in hypotheses 2 and 3. Inasmuch as current cable television channels cannot replace the Alaskan programs that RATNET offers,[14] both hypotheses have state policy implications. The following data indicate that policy-makers probably would find ample support in a statewide survey for the Alaskan programming carried on RATNET, and a willingness by viewers to pay a household fee for the channel.

TV as the Primary News Source

The oral tradition remains strong in the Inupiat culture, one reason for the popularity of television. Given the culture and paucity of media voices in these rural communities, TV became the primary news source almost by default.

Support for the hypothesis that RATNET was villagers' major source of Alaska news and information was found in media use, news source and

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[14]Cable companies offer video camera and editing equipment to produce local and regional programs for a local access channel. No examples of local production were found among rural cable communities.

content questions, as well as observation. Nearly 80 percent of all respondents reported getting most of their world and state news from TV. RATNET became the source of Alaska news primarily because it was the only televised source, and because so few alternative news sources were regularly available in the villages. (See Table 7 and Table 8). RATNET was so important that viewers in all three villages said they would be willing to pay a monthly fee for it, generally because of Alaska news.

Table 7: Primary News Source, All Villages
National and International News

	AMBLER N = 53		BUCKLAND/NOORVIK N = 159	
	Native and non-native respondents			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Friends			6	3.8
Family			4	2.5
Radio	4	7.5	12	7.5
Newspapers	3	5.7	5	3.1
Television	41	77.4	128	80.5
Radio & TV	5	9.4	1	.6
Don't know/ No answer			3	1.9

Table 8: Primary News Source, All Villages
Alaska News

	AMBLER N = 53		BUCKLAND/NOORVIK N = 159	
	Native and non-native respondents			
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Friends	2	3.8	4	2.5
Family			1	.6
Radio	5	9.4	24	15.1
Newspapers	1	1.9	27	17.0
Television	38	71.7	100	62.9
Radio & TV	7	13.2		
Don't know/ No answer			3	1.8

During the pre-cable Ambler survey, RATNET was the only television channel available. Thirty-three, or 78 percent of Inupiats said they got most of their world news from TV, compared to four who said they listened to radio for world news. Five used both broadcast media for news, but no Inupiats mentioned newspaper as a news source. Despite the small number of non-natives, ethnic comparisons are worth noting, due to the primacy of TV in rural Alaska. Eight non-natives watched TV for news, three got it primarily from newspapers. Television also was the main source of world news for all age, gender and educational groups, though none of the relationships were significant. In the post-cable Ambler survey, 36 of 38 Inupiat cable subscribers (94.7 percent) relied on TV for national and international news; two of the four non-native subscribers used TV.

Ambler's new cable subscribers were asked whether they used Cable News Network or RATNET for national and world news. Twelve cable

subscribers were tuning into the 24-hour CNN, while 18 stayed with RATNET's "NBC Nightly News," presumably because it was familiar, was broadcast at a regular time, and was a concise half-hour.[15] Six reported using both channels equally. Overall, RATNET also was used for national and world news by 18 respondents from all age and education groups, plus men and women. CNN's popularity with some subscribers was observed several times. For example, one December afternoon, Ambler's mayor, an avid news viewer, told CB radio listeners to "Turn on channel five, turn on channel five!" One could envision TV dials all over town being flipped to channel five, including this author's, to see the verdict of the William Kennedy Smith rape trial being reported live on CNN.

RATNET was the only TV source of Alaska news in post-cable Ambler, as well as the medium used most often for Alaska news by all demographic groups. The majority -- 34, or 81 percent -- of all native and non-native respondents continued to switch to RATNET for Alaska news after they had cable. While this was to be expected, it also indicates the dependency rural Alaskans have on the channel for Alaskana.

In Buckland and Noorvik, 128 of the 159 native and non-native respondents (80.5 percent) relied on TV for their national and international news; 100 used it as the major source of Alaska news (63 percent). Again, RATNET was the only television channel offering Alaska news in Buckland and Noorvik. As in Ambler, Inupiats and all other demographic groups used television for both world and Alaska news. None of the relationships with sufficient sample size were significant.

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[15]Familiarity was key to other programming after cable hook-up. In spontaneous conversations, many new subscribers reported flipping the TV dial to learn what each new channel had to offer, and then coming back to RATNET because the programs were familiar.

Another indication that RATNET was the primary Alaska news source was seen in responses to programs that all villagers said they would miss if the channel was no longer available. In spontaneous answers to an open-ended question, most of those who said they would miss RATNET mentioned Alaska news as the reason.[16]

The data clearly support the hypothesis that RATNET was the major source of Alaska news for villagers. In fact, many respondents wanted more Alaska news. In closed-answer questions about RATNET content, 19 Inupiat Ambler respondents (37.3 percent), and 82 of Buckland and Noorvik respondents (53.6 percent) preferred more Alaska news than RATNET carried at the time. The findings of two previous statewide surveys, conducted by telephone in 1986 and 1991,[17] were similar: Rural Alaskans wanted more news and information about their region and their state.

Support for the news hypothesis verifies the regional and cultural proximity hypotheses, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The high viewership and the desire for Alaska news corroborate the prediction that rural villagers prefer programming about their region and about their lifestyle, traditions, their ethnicity and other aspects or their culture.

Other Indicators of RATNET's Importance

Even when viewers have a choice of channels, RATNET remains important, primarily because of Alaska news and Alaskana. Thirty-eight of Ambler's 53 pre-cable native and non-native respondents (75 percent)

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[16]Qualifying question: "If you had only cable, and not RATNET, do you think you'd be missing anything?" Those who answered "yes" (80 percent) were subsequently asked: "What kinds of shows do you think you'd be missing on TV if you had cable and not RATNET?"

[17]Larry Pearson and Doug Barry, "Talking to Each Other, Talking to Machines: Alaska's Telecommunication Future," Report to the Joint Committee on Telecommunication, Alaska State Legislature, January 1986. Pearson, "Desert Storm."

indicated that RATNET was important or very important to them. While RATNET's importance decreased among Ambler's 42 new cable subscribers, 24 still indicated it was important or very important to them (57 percent).[18]

It was clear that RATNET played a major role in these media-poor villages, even in Buckland and Noorvik, where the novelty of multiple channels had disappeared long before the survey. Of the 159 cable and non-cable (native and non-native) respondents in Buckland and Noorvik, 129 considered RATNET important or very important (84 percent). It remained so to the 106 cable subscribers, of which 89 indicated that RATNET was important or very important to them (58 percent).

Thirty-one Ambler Inupiat viewers considered RATNET important to very important. Of the 139 Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats in the sample, 114 rated RATNET as important or very important (84.4 percent). RATNET was more important to Buckland/Noorvik respondents over the age of 40 than to those under 40, a relationship which was significant. One reason may be familiarity with the channel -- after all, RATNET was the first television in these villages, and for many over the age of 40, it was the first television they had ever seen. It had even withstood the competition of multiple channels in Buckland and Noorvik. Age was not significant in Ambler, nor were there

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[18]The question was asked in pre-cable Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik. It was deliberately stated: "There's been some talk in recent years about the possibility of taking RATNET off the air. How important is RATNET to you? Is it very important, important, somewhat important, or not important at all?" It was common knowledge among viewers in all communities that RATNET was periodically threatened with extinction, and that the current administration had proposed eliminating the channel. As previously indicated, the question most asked by respondents was, "Are they (state officials) going to take RATNET off the air?" After pre-tests and pre-survey telephone interviews with regional and village leaders, it was determined that use of the qualifier with the question was appropriate. On the one hand, it could have skewed the answer for some respondents. It also indicates, however, the importance of RATNET for Alaskana in cable communities. The post-cable Ambler question also included a pre-qualifier: "Now that you have cable, how important is RATNET to you?" This also may have skewed the answers for some cable respondents; however, it was intended as a way of putting RATNET in its rightful place with cable.

any other statistically significant relationships found when importance was cross-tabulated with demographics in the three communities. However, overall percentages among all demographic groups corroborate audience support for the channel.

The importance of the rural channel also was clear in villagers' willingness to pay for it, both before and after cable. Most pre-cable Ambler respondents -- 44 of 53 -- said they would be willing to pay a $10 monthly fee for the channel (86.3 percent). In the post-cable survey, 32 of the 42 cable subscribers (76 percent) indicated their willingness to pay.

Of the 159 Buckland/Noorvik respondents, 125 indicated a willingness to pay for RATNET (81.7 percent); 82 of the 106 cable subscribers (77.4 percent) also would pay. Based on the data from these established-cable villages, the post-cable Ambler figure likely would not decrease and may even increase once cable becomes familiar.

Pre-cable Ambler's Inupiat respondents were more enthusiastic about paying for RATNET than post-cable Inupiats. Before cable, 35 Inupiat, or 87.5 percent, said they would pay a fee for the service. After cable, that decreased to 29, or 76.3 percent of the Inupiat respondents. In the established-cable villages of Buckland and Noorvik, 81.5 percent of Inupiat viewers indicated a willingness to pay for RATNET. Again, based on this data, the post-cable Ambler figure likely would not decrease and may even increase once cable becomes familiar.

Differences among all demographic groups were slight, except age: Older respondents were more likely to be willing to pay a fee than those under age 29. In Buckland and Noorvik, age differences were significant; not so in post-cable Ambler. The lack of differences among most demographic

groups indicates RATNET's importance to all rural Alaskans, not just to certain groups.

This data also supports a policy to charge viewers for this unique service to rural Alaska. A $10 monthly RATNET fee had once been suggested by legislators; however, according to Department of Administration figures, RATNET delivery costs are about $3.33 per household per month, based on an estimated 35,449 occupied housing units in the 224 villages with earth stations. At the time of the survey, monthly bills for Ambler and Noorvik's six cable channels (including RATNET) were $50, or $8.33 per channel. Buckland charged $50 per month for eight channels (including RATNET), or $6.25 for each channel.

Even when respondents were forced in the survey to choose between cable and RATNET, it was evident that RATNET was valued nearly as much as all other cable channels combined. In response to "If you had to choose between cable and RATNET, which would you choose?" 75, or 49 percent, of all Buckland/Noorvik respondents said they would select cable, while 69, or 45.1 percent, chose RATNET. Seven said they did not know. Of the Inupiat respondents, 68 preferred cable (50.4 percent); 59, or 43.7 percent, preferred RATNET; and 7, or 5.2 percent, did not know. Fourteen non-natives -- not enough to indicate ethnic differences, but worthy of mention -- answered the question; eight preferred RATNET, six cable. Of the 106 Buckland/Noorvik cable subscribers, the difference between those who preferred cable over RATNET was smaller than expected: 55, or 51.9 percent preferred cable, and 44, or 41.5 percent preferred RATNET.

In pre-cable Ambler, where anticipation for cable was high, overall differences were greater: 27, or 52.9 percent of the 53 respondents, said they would choose cable; 19, or 37.3 percent, would choose RATNET; and five, or

9.8 percent, could not decide. Of the 39 who said they planned to subscribe to cable, 23 thought they would prefer cable, and eleven said they would prefer RATNET. Five could not decide. Broken along ethnic lines, 23 Inupiat selected cable; 12 selected RATNET; five did not know. The choice question was not asked in post-cable Ambler.[19] Had it been, responses may have been similar to pre-cable, since cable had been available to most households for less than a month and novelty effect was high. However, considering the smaller difference in preference between cable and RATNET in Buckland and Noorvik, the gap probably would decrease over time.

No significant relationships were found between preference for cable or RATNET and demographic groups. Cable novelty makes the comparison of natives and non-natives interesting, despite the small number of non-natives. More than one-half of Ambler Inupiat respondents (23 of 42) chose cable; one-quarter, or 12, chose RATNET. Of the eleven non-natives, four selected cable and seven, RATNET. It was expected that the novelty of cable would have had little impact on the non-native group, and that they would appreciate RATNET for its Alaskana programming.

Although gender differences were not significant, gender provided another interesting comparison. As indicated, a greater number of women participated in all three village surveys; more women than men preferred RATNET.[20] When RATNET was compared to individual cable channels, it ranked second to HBO as the channel watched most often by

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[19] The question was dropped in the second survey because it had been suggested that questions assessing the importance of RATNET and viewers' willingness to pay were redundant. In the first survey, respondents perceived several questions as being the same. In retrospect, the question concerning choice between cable and RATNET should have been asked.

[20] Pre-cable Ambler, RATNET preference = 13 females, 6 males. Cable preference = 13 females, 14 males. Don't know = 4 females, 1 male. Buckland/Noorvik, RATNET preference = 45 females, 24 males. Cable preference = 38 females, 37 males. Don't know = 4 females, 4 males.

Buckland/Noorvik women. In post-cable Ambler, women's viewing was more fragmented. More women were interested in Discovery, Cable News Network, and Disney, than RATNET.

While more choice and variety of programming were the predominant reasons respondents wanted cable, the preference for RATNET is strong enough to argue that it will retain its importance even as cable expands throughout rural Alaska.

Although the data suggests that viewers are willing to pay for RATNET, this representation should be considered in light of cable collection experiences. Also, Ambler data indicates that cable subscribers were not interested in paying more than the $50 monthly fee for additional channels. It may be that $50 to $60 per month would be the maximum households would be willing to pay for TV service. It also may be likely that subscribers would be willing to substitute RATNET for one of the cable channels.

Cultural Proximity

(H4) Viewers have a preference for programming which reflects their local interests and cultural characteristics.

(H5) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages want to see more programs on RATNET about the region in which they live, and about their culture.

(H6) Viewers in both cable and non-cable villages want to see more programming about other parts of Alaska on RATNET, including other regions and other native groups.

Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6 refer to the same data, but hold different theoretical and policy implications. A preference for regional and culturally familiar programming has been demonstrated in the literature, especially in Latin America and northern Canada, where indigenous viewers actively search for programs that reflect their culture and daily experience.

Straubhaar calls this a search for cultural proximity.[21] The data supports Straubhaar's theory, and also raises policy questions about RATNET content (1) because it is the only TV channel available in many rural, mostly native, communities, and (2) in light of the increase of cable systems and home satellite dishes in rural Alaska.

The data, to be discussed elsewhere, indicates that these Inupiat Eskimos liked living in their village and the Northwest Arctic region, and had little aspiration to move elsewhere. One-half of respondents in Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik said they preferred to live in their village. Those who wanted to live somewhere else selected the Northwest Arctic region. Villagers' preference for their own cultural setting is consistent with the cultural proximity hypothesis. As more cable systems move into rural Alaska, data supporting the cultural proximity idea should be considered by RATNET programmers and policy makers, because RATNET is the only rural, statewide channel.

"If You Could Produce a TV Program..."

Television has the potential to perpetuate a culture, not just document a culture for historical purposes. This was evident to villagers, who showed a strong preference for programs relevant to viewers' local interests, geographic region, and ethnic culture. It was clear in answers to such open-ended questions as, "If you were making a TV program to be shown in rural Alaska, what do you think it should be about?" Responses fell into these categories, ordered according to category totals: (1) traditional subsistence hunting, fishing, and outdoor life; (2) traditional Inupiat Eskimo cultural activities, such as local handicrafts and art, Eskimo storytelling, Eskimo dance, or

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[21] Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism."

Eskimo games; (3) life among other native groups; and (4) current social issues such alcohol and drug abuse, health and education. The categories reflect the transition in which rural natives find themselves as they move from a traditional Eskimo lifestyle to a more modern, technological one.

Both natives and non-natives in all three villages thought traditional Eskimo life was important. Forty-one of Ambler's 53 respondents (77.4 percent), and 114 of the 159 Buckland/Noorvik respondents (71.7 percent) preferred TV programs that depicted the traditional Eskimo way of life, from subsistence to basket making to storytelling.

Among Ambler Inupiats, television depiction of subsistence far outweighed a preference for culture: subsistence = 30 of 53 (or 56.6 percent); culture = six of 53 (or 11.3 percent).[22] Again, the number of non-native responses was too small to discuss ethnic differences. In general conversations and in-depth interviews, non-natives placed a great deal of importance on subsistence and culture, concerned that Alaska native traditions were quickly disappearing. They also were concerned about social issues, and thought television would be a good mechanism for discussing these issues. It was clear from numerous conversations with village non-natives that they believed the Inupiat should attach more importance to education. They also were concerned about major social problems such as alcoholism, which gripped other villages and some families in the sample villages. Inupiat respondents seldom mentioned social concerns as worthy of television discussion.

Perhaps because of the larger sample, Buckland/Noorvik Inupiat Eskimos rated social issues a slightly more popular topic for TV than Ambler

[22]Four answers fell into an "other" category because they could not be classified; two respondents said they did not know how to answer this question.

Eskimos. Subsistence, however, still ranked as the most important subject among Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats: 72, or 94.7 percent of Inupiat respondents. Eskimo culture rated second: 27, or 81.8 percent of Inupiats. Overall numbers corroborate an Inupiat preference for programs that reflect their local interests and cultural characteristics. Although ethnic differences cannot be supported due to the small numbers of non-natives, traditional cultural activities and social issues were also the most important among non-natives.

Despite the small number of those with higher educational levels, education was found to be an interesting variable when cross-tabulated with the program-preference variable in Buckland/Noorvik. The less educated had greater interest in subsistence and culture than social issues, while respondents with some post-secondary education put social issues before culture. But all education groups considered subsistence their first preference.

In all three villages, more men then women preferred subsistence as the topic of a TV program, while more women preferred Eskimo culture and social issues. Although not statistically significant, the difference between the sexes was predictable, if one considers male and female roles in Eskimo society. In traditional Eskimo culture, men were hunters, while women tanned and sewed animal skins for clothing, preserved food, and raised children.

Native Language Television

If native-language TV were offered, it would likely be popular in Ambler. Ninety-five percent of pre-cable Ambler Inupiat respondents said they would watch RATNET programs in Inupiat.

All Ambler adults in the survey spoke their language fluently, or were at least conversant. They preferred local interest and cultural topics, similar to the kinds of programs viewers said they would like to produce for rural TV: (1) traditional Eskimo subsistence lifestyle and outdoor survival; (2) Eskimo culture, including language teaching; and (3) programs about other Alaska natives. Some said they would watch any program in the Inupiat language.

More than two-thirds of Ambler Inupiats also said they would watch RATNET programs in other native languages, even if they did not understand the language.[23] Age was a determining factor here, as those over 29 reported a preference for programs in other native languages. Despite the language barrier, they said they would watch such shows to learn how other native groups live and work.

Native language programming is both a policy and theoretical issue. The preference found here supports the premise that native viewers favor programs which are culturally proximate. It also suggests that a change in RATNET policy could be warranted. Current policy specifies general programming to the exclusion of native-language programs, and often to the exclusion of regional and cultural programs in the English language. For several years, productions have been available in Alaskan Yup'ik and Canadian Inuit languages,[24] but have not been carried on the channel. Although the Ambler responses represent only a small sample, they indicate that other rural ethnic groups may well watch such native-language

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[23]After the pre-cable survey was conducted in Ambler, the question was dropped in the Buckland/Noorvik survey due to its redundancy with other cultural programming questions. In retrospect, the language questions should have been attempted in the other villages, however, it is expected the outcome would be the same.

[24]Television Northern Canada (TVNC) offers quality native produced programs, in Native languages as well as English, which would be available for airing on RATNET. KYUK-TV, a public station in Bethel, AK produces the evening news in Yup'ik, and periodically offers other Yupik-language programs.

programs because of their interest in their own culture and that of other native groups.

Other Alaskana

A regional programming bias also was evident in responses to questions about RATNET content.[25] A greater percentage of all respondents -- 64.7 percent, or 33 of the 53 pre-cable Ambler respondents, as well as 81.7 percent, or 125 of the 159 Buckland/Noorvik respondents -- favored more information about rural Alaska. As discussed above, many wanted more statewide news: 37.3 percent, or 19 of pre-cable Ambler, and 53.6 percent, or 82 of Buckland/Noorvik respondents. Both content choices reflect a geographic and cultural preference.

A cultural and geographic preference was supported by the number of respondents who wanted more programs about native issues and events -- 41 of 53, or 80.4 percent of Ambler; 127 of 159, or 83 percent of Buckland/Noorvik. An increase in educational material, most of which fell into geography and nature categories, also was preferred by 36 of 53 Ambler respondents (70 percent), and by 73 of 159 of Buckland/Noorvik respondents (47.7 percent.)

Several Ambler demographic groups -- Inupiat, men and women, respondents with a high school education or less (Inupiat), and villagers who planned to subscribe to cable -- desired an increase in the amount of RATNET coverage of rural Alaska, and/or native issues and events. (See Table 9 and

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[25]The question: "About how many (category) shows do you think RATNET should have? What it has now, more, or less?" Categories were distinctive to RATNET: family shows, such as "The Cosby Show," popular in 1991; sports; Alaska news, including news about state government; programs about rural Alaska, Alaska natives and native events; cartoons; and PBS educational programs for children and adults, such as "Sesame Street" and "Nature." The question was not asked in the post-cable survey, because it was believed the answers would change little, as indicated in Buckland/Noorvik responses.

Table 10). While only the relationship between cable subscription and a preference for more rural Alaska programs was significant, the variables support both hypotheses that village viewers prefer regionally and culturally proximate programs.[26] And, as stated earlier, Ambler Inupiats also wanted RATNET to carry more Alaska news.

Table 9: Cable Subscription by Cultural Proximity, Ambler Alaska News

D2 PLAN TO SUBSCRIBE TO CABLE by C3 ALASKA NEWS/RATNET

D2	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	C3: WHAT IT HAS NOW (1)	MORE (2)	LESS (3)	DONT KNOW (8)	Row Total
YES	1	21	17	1		39
		53.8	43.6	2.6		76.5
		70.0	89.5	100.0		
		41.2	33.3	2.0		
NO	2	6	1			7
		85.7	14.3			13.7
		20.0	5.3			
		11.8	2.0			
DONT KNOW	8	3	1		1	5
		60.0	20.0		20.0	9.8
		10.0	5.3		100.0	
		5.9	2.0		2.0	
	Column Total	30	19	1	1	51
		58.8	37.3	2.0	2.0	100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	12.34462	6	.05471
Likelihood Ratio	8.28274	6	.21811
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	4.67858	1	.03054

Minimum Expected Frequency - .098
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 10 OF 12 (83.3%)

Number of Missing Observations: 2

[26]As indicated, sample size for non-native and higher education groups is too small to support the significant association in the population. The numbers, however, corroborate the argument for support of the hypothesis.

Table 10: Cable Subscription by Cultural Proximity, Ambler Shows About Rural Alaska

D2 PLAN TO SUBSCRIBE TO CABLE by C5 RURAL AK SHOWS/RATNET

D2	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	C5 WHAT IT HAS NOW 1	MORE 2	LESS 3	DONT KNOW 8	Row Total
YES	1	12 30.8 85.7 23.5	24 61.5 72.7 47.1	3 7.7 100.0 5.9		39 76.5
NO	2		7 100.0 21.2 13.7			7 13.7
DONT KNOW	8	2 40.0 14.3 3.9	2 40.0 6.1 3.9		1 20.0 100.0 2.0	5 9.8
	Column Total	14 27.5	33 64.7	3 5.9	1 2.0	51 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	14.36763	6	.02579
Likelihood Ratio	12.26044	6	.05640
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	4.51787	1	.03354

Minimum Expected Frequency - .098
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 10 OF 12 (83.3%)

Number of Missing Observations: 2

Table 11: Cable Subscription and Cultural Proximity
Buckland and Noorvik

KD6 AK NATIVE EVENTS/RATNET by KB1 SUBSCRIBE TO CABLE TV

KB1 Page 1 of 1

KD6	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	YES 1	NO 2	Row Total
MORE	1	94 74.0 88.7 61.4	33 26.0 70.2 21.6	127 83.0
WHAT IT HAS NOW	2	12 48.0 11.3 7.8	13 52.0 27.7 8.5	25 16.3
LESS	3		1 100.0 2.1 .7	1 .7
	Column Total	106 69.3	47 30.7	153 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	8.91297	2	.01160
Likelihood Ratio	8.61909	2	.01344
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	8.66153	1	.00325

Minimum Expected Frequency - .307
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 2 OF 6 (33.3%)

Number of Missing Observations: 6

Table 12: Cable Subscription by Cultural Proximity
Buckland and Noorvik, Alaska News

KD3 ALASKA NEWS/RATNET by KB1 SUBSCRIBE TO CABLE TV

KD3	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	KB1 YES (1)	KB1 NO (2)	Row Total
MORE	1	64 78.0 60.4 41.8	18 22.0 38.3 11.8	82 53.6
WHAT IT HAS NOW	2	41 59.4 38.7 26.8	28 40.6 59.6 18.3	69 45.1
LESS	3	1 50.0 .9 .7	1 50.0 2.1 .7	2 1.3
	Column Total	106 69.3	47 30.7	153 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	6.46369	2	.03948
Likelihood Ratio	6.47658	2	.03923
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	6.35203	1	.01172

Minimum Expected Frequency - .614
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 2 OF 6 (33.3%)

Number of Missing Observations: 6

Table 13: Cable Subscription and Education
Buckland and Noorvik

KD6 AK NATIVE EVENTS/RATNET by KEDGRP Education grouping

KD6	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	KEDGRP 9th grad e or les 1.00	9th grad e throug 2.00	Some pos t High S 3.00	Bachelor s degree 4.00	Post Gra duate ed 5.00	Row Total
MORE	1	29 23.2 76.3 19.2	69 55.2 92.0 45.7	18 14.4 85.7 11.9	1 .8 20.0 .7	8 6.4 66.7 5.3	125 82.8
WHAT IT HAS NOW	2	9 36.0 23.7 6.0	5 20.0 6.7 3.3	3 12.0 14.3 2.0	4 16.0 80.0 2.6	4 16.0 33.3 2.6	25 16.6
LESS	3		1 100.0 1.3 .7				1 .7
	Column Total	38 25.2	75 49.7	21 13.9	5 3.3	12 7.9	151 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	24.61208	8	.00181
Likelihood Ratio	20.86555	8	.00751
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	2.65746	1	.10306

Minimum Expected Frequency - .033
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 9 OF 15 (60.0%)

Number of Missing Observations: 8

In Buckland/Noorvik, Inupiats wanted more Alaska news, more native events and more programs about rural Alaska. Cable subscription also was significantly associated with a preference for more Alaska news and native events. (See Table 11 and Table 12). Those with some high school or less also wanted more Alaska news and native events, an association which was significant. (See Table 13). Both associations further corroborate villagers' appetite for cultural proximity and RATNET's importance in the Bush. Those with less than a high school education were Inupiat viewers, who would be less inclined to seek information from other media. Cable viewers who want more Alaskana realize that cable cannot fulfill one of RATNET's basic functions, to provide Alaska news and information to those who have little access to other media.

A regional preference was supported by the importance that respondents attached to "Alaska Weather," a nightly half-hour program, particularly meaningful in rural regions where small planes are a major form of transportation.[27] Overall reporting showed that a large number of residents in the three villages considered the weather forecast important to very important (Ambler = 43, or 84.3 percent; Buckland/Noorvik = 115, or 75.2 percent). Villagers especially rely on the program in winter when temperatures can dip to 50 or more degrees below zero, preventing any kind of travel. If RATNET were no longer available, many said they would miss "Alaska Weather."

[27]"Alaska Weather" was produced by an Anchorage public television station and offered to the RATNET.

Cultural Proximity and Leisure Time

While television is a popular leisure-time activity in rural Alaska, it does not consume as much time as other activities. An analysis of all leisure-time activities supports the idea that these rural villagers want more culturally proximate television programming.

Only 10 Ambler viewers and 38 in Buckland and Noorvik reported watching TV during their free time. Other activities ranged from making traditional handicrafts to doing chores. A leisure-time variable was created from individual responses by combining media-oriented activities (watching TV, listening to radio, and reading); traditional activities (attending community, church and school events, visiting, making handicrafts or doing other hobbies, participating in outdoor activities, and doing chores); and play, (playing games and doing nothing).

Percentages from a cross-tabulation of the leisure-time variable by RATNET content supports the cultural proximity hypothesis that viewers prefer culture close to their own. However, none of the leisure-time activities were significantly associated with program preference. Most respondents in all three villages -- the media-oriented, those considered more traditional, and those reporting "play" activities -- said they wanted RATNET to broadcast more educational material, as well as more programs about rural Alaska and native events. General satisfaction was found among the traditional and play groups for the present amount of Alaska news, while the media-oriented preferred more news.

Discovery Channel and Cultural Proximity

It could be argued that support for the cultural proximity hypothesis was found in cable-channel preference. Many pre-cable Ambler viewers

hoped cable would offer The Discovery Channel and more wildlife programs. Once cable was available, Discovery was the channel watched most often by Ambler Inupiat viewers.[28] While the relationship was not statistically significant, a preference for outdoor and wildlife programs is consistent with the Inupiat experience, which has always depended on the outdoor environment for physical survival. This preference was corroborated through participant observation: Ambler elders, especially women, liked the travel, outdoor, wildlife, and educational documentaries found on Discovery and other channels. In Noorvik, Discovery could not compete with movies, which were far more popular among Inupiats.[29] Although Noorvik was also a traditional, subsistence-oriented village, one could speculate that the longer cable has been available, and the more channels the cable system has, the more disparate the viewing will be. Discovery was not available in Buckland, but several cable subscribers said they hoped Discovery would be added to the Buckland cable system.[30]

Family Programming

The Discovery Channel provides family entertainment, a program category many villagers would like increased on RATNET. The desire for more family shows probably reflects the family-oriented character of these Inupiat villages. In Ambler, nearly one-half of Inupiats preferred more family programs. In Buckland/Noorvik, almost two-thirds favored more family entertainment. Family programs have always been popular on the RATNET lineup and rated high among all groups at the time of the survey.

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[28]Discovery = 13 Inupiat viewers. CNN and USA Network were tied for second place with five each.

[29]HBO = 20 Inupiat viewers; Discovery = 7 Inupiats.

[30]Of the 43 Buckland cable subscribers who said they wanted more channels, children's programming ranked first = 13; Discovery = 8; more movies = 7. Other channels, ranging from more sports to country music, drew one and two votes.

Even 69 of Buckland/Noorvik's 106 cable subscribers said they would like more family entertainment on RATNET. Other data indicate that this may be more an indication of viewers' dissatisfaction with all television channels, not just RATNET.[31] For example, 86 of the 106 Buckland and Noorvik cable subscribers said they would like to have more cable channels available, particularly the Disney channel and others offering family entertainment. While movies ranked second,[32] many Buckland/Noorvik adults limited the kinds of movies children could watch, confirming the conclusion that villagers wanted more family viewing.[33]

Ambler respondents planning to subscribe to cable favored more RATNET family entertainment. And while variety and choice were the major reasons that most Amblerites wanted cable, a few said they would subscribe to cable so their children would have more channels such as Disney.

Many adults in the three villages claimed to set limits on the kinds of programs children could watch, limiting adult and R-rated shows, violence and "scary movies." They said they were concerned that children would learn "bad things" from these shows. This data also supports an interest in more family-oriented entertainment.

Viewers in all three villages also wanted more educational programs. Public television's "Newton's Apple," "3-2-1 Contact," and "Sesame Street" were popular, perhaps because viewers considered them family shows. Other results indicated general satisfaction with the amount of sports and cartoons offered on RATNET.

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[31]The question quizzed viewers only on RATNET.

[32]Respondents had three opportunities to list a channel they would like added to the local cable system. Disney and children's programming consistently ranked first in Buckland and Noorvik, 21 of 86 who said they wanted more cable channels; 19 preferred more movies.

[33]In Buckland/Noorvik, 114 respondents had children in the household. Sixty-eight percent said they set limits on television viewing, particularly "R" and other adult-rated movies, violence and the Home Box Office channel, or HBO, an all-movie cable channel.

Viewer preference for various kinds of RATNET content is an important consideration in the cultural proximity discussion. Requests for more family and educational programs, concern over violence, and satisfaction with sports and cartoons, reinforce the hypotheses that village viewers would value culturally proximate TV programs. Adult Inupiats say they are distressed about the loss of Eskimo family values in their changing society. They also express alarm at the loss of their heritage, language and traditions. As seen in the discussion below, some Inupiats blame television for part of that loss.

Possible Effects of Television on Village Life

(H7) Inupiat viewers believe other modern technology has had a greater effect than TV on their way of life.

(H8) Inupiat viewers believe TV contributes to a decrease in participation in traditional lifestyle activities, such as subsistence hunting and fishing, visiting, native arts, family cooperation, etc.

(H9) There is little relationship between TV viewing and Inupiat viewers' desire to live outside the village.

Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 address the impact of television on a macro level -- the relationship of television to the rural village -- and on the micro level -- the relationship of television to mobility, traditional Eskimo activity, and to other technologies influencing modern Eskimo life.

In simple conversations and in-depth interviews, villagers reported: (1) Television has changed their daily routine; (2) TV has had an effect on their children; and (3) TV has slowly gnawed away at traditional Eskimo lifestyle. But when television is stacked against other fairly recent changes in the villages, it apparently plays a minor role.

Compared to other parts of the United States, television came late to these rural Alaska villages. Its effects are intermingled with many changes brought into this primarily native context. It is impossible to study the effect of television alone; during the 1991 study, it was necessary to rely on villagers' perception of television's impact on their society, and on observation.

Television vs. Rural Life

Television is so new in rural Alaska that 86.5 percent of all viewers in the three villages remembered life without it (188 of 212). They admit TV has changed their lives -- and not always for the better. Most, however, actually rated television toward the bottom of a list of other modern technologies that have changed village life (hypothesis 7).

Buckland, Noorvik and post-cable Ambler respondents were asked to rank the impact of various technologies on their way of life according to the first, second and third greatest effect. The changes fell into categories that make rural life easier: (1) improved transportation (i.e., airplanes, four-wheelers, snowmobiles, and motor boats); (2) household conveniences (i.e., electricity; oil, propane and gas heat) water and sewer;[34] and (3) modern communications (i.e., CB radios, telephone, television and computers).

As summarized in Table 14, transportation and household conveniences were considered to be the most important. The effect of modern communications was slight by comparison. Even in post-cable Ambler, where the novelty of cable was high, television ranked poorly among other changes.

[34]As previously explained (see chapter two), water and sewer are available in less than half of rural Alaska communities.

Table 14: Changes Affecting Native Villages, Summary

Question: Many changes have come to Alaska villages in the last few years. Which one do you think has had the greatest effect on your way of life?

BUCKLAND/NOORVIK INUPIATS
N = 139

Transportation	=	42.4 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	41.7 percent
Communications	=	13.6 percent

AMBLER INUPIATS
N = 42

Transportation	=	35.7 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	35.7 percent
Communications	=	23.8 percent

Electricity and snowmobiles had the greatest impact on modern village life. And while many rural villages got television about the same time as electricity, it wasn't long before electrical appliances and gadgets -- refrigerators, VCR's, microwave ovens, etc. -- filled their homes. Such things came late to rural villages compared to urban Alaska, and all are part of the recent wave of modernity. As one respondent stated:

> "Many things came all at the same time, such as snow machines, water, electricity, etc. They all together changed people ... TV was just a part of it all."

In these rural villages, unconnected to the rest of the world, snowmobiles allowed travel over greater distances in a shorter period of time. Electricity brought many things, from heat and lights to microwaves, all of which has made life more convenient. Television was simply a bonus of electricity. As for sewer and water, all of Buckland and most of Noorvik were

still waiting for it. Buckland natives hauled water from the public washeteria, where they also did laundry and showered. They dumped their honey buckets into a receptacle near their homes. Only about half of Noorvik was connected to an operational sewer and water system.

Thirty-three Inupiats (23.7 percent) in Buckland/Noorvik ranked snowmobiles, 37 ranked electricity (26.6 percent), and 12 ranked television (8.6 percent) as having the greatest effect on their way of life.[35]

Buckland/Noorvik males thought snowmobiles had the biggest impact on their lives, although the "iron dogs" were not nearly as important to females: 25 of 69 males, or 36.2 percent; compared to 10 of 90 females, or 11.1 percent. Electricity was nearly as important to males as to females: 15 of 69 males, or 21.7 percent; and 25 of 90 females, or 27.8 percent. As for television, only four males and 10 females (5.8 percent and 11 percent, respectively) ranked it as having had the greatest effect on their way of life. At the .05 level of significance, gender was statistically associated with the importance of these changes in village life. (See Table 15). While age was not significant, the numbers are worth noting in that electricity was more important to elders than the snowmobile. The "snowgo," as it was called locally, had the greatest impact on villagers ages 18 to 39. From observation, the convenience of a comfortable home was more important to older natives, especially women, who traveled less in the winter. Their younger counterparts were more apt to want greater mobility. The snowgo also is important for hunting during several months of the year. (See Chapter Seven).

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[35]Most Buckland/Noorvik non-natives lived in village teacher housing which had modern conveniences, including flush toilets and running water. If teacher housing lacked such, they had access to showers, laundry facilities and flush toilets at the school. In Buckland, no Inupiats had ever enjoyed such comfort in their homes, and only a few in Noorvik had these luxuries.

Table 15: Changes with Greatest Effect by Gender
Buckland and Noorvik

KA1 CHANGE W/GREATEST EFFECT by KSEX SEX OF RESPONDENT

KA1	Count / Row Pct / Col Pct / Tot Pct	KSEX MALE 1	FEMALE 2	Row Total
AIRPLANES	1	9 45.0 13.0 5.7	11 55.0 12.2 6.9	20 12.6
4-WHEELERS	2	2 40.0 2.9 1.3	3 60.0 3.3 1.9	5 3.1
SNOWMOBILES	3	25 71.4 36.2 15.7	10 28.6 11.1 6.3	35 22.0
BOATS	4	2 40.0 2.9 1.3	3 60.0 3.3 1.9	5 3.1
OIL/PROPANE/GAS	6	5 55.6 7.2 3.1	4 44.4 4.4 2.5	9 5.7
WATER/SEWER SYST	7	4 25.0 5.8 2.5	12 75.0 13.3 7.5	16 10.1
ELECTRICITY	8	15 37.5 21.7 9.4	25 62.5 27.8 15.7	40 25.2
TELEPHONE	9	1 10.0 1.4 .6	9 90.0 10.0 5.7	10 6.3
(Continued)	Column Total	69 43.4	90 56.6	159 100.0

Table 15, continued

KA1 CHANGE W/GREATEST EFFECT by KSEX SEX OF RESPONDENT

KA1		KSEX MALE 1	KSEX FEMALE 2	Row Total
TELEVISION	10	4 28.6 5.8 2.5	10 71.4 11.1 6.3	14 8.8
COMPUTERS	11		1 100.0 1.1 .6	1 .6
	12	1 50.0 1.4 .6	1 50.0 1.1 .6	2 1.3
DONT KNOW	98	1 100.0 1.4 .6		1 .6
NA	99		1 100.0 1.1 .6	1 .6
	Column Total	69 43.4	90 56.6	159 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	23.24298	12	.02573
Likelihood Ratio	25.46355	12	.01277
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	.45651	1	.49926

Minimum Expected Frequency - .434
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 14 OF 26 (53.8%)

Number of Missing Observations: 0

A similar story was told in post-cable Ambler, where 10 of 42 Inupiats (23.8 percent) ranked snowmobiles, eight ranked electricity (19 percent), six ranked water and sewer (14.3 percent), and five selected television (11.9 percent) as the change with the greatest effect. All age, education and gender groups ranked snowmobiles and electricity in first place (snowmobiles = 10, electricity = 10 of 53); only five members of each group ranked television as the most important change.[36] Among these groups, only education was statistically significant. Those with high school or less ranked snowmobiles higher than other forms of transportation, and ranked electricity the most important of the household conveniences. As previously stated, education reflects ethnicity: Inupiats generally had less than a high school education, and non-natives had some post-secondary or a college degree. Therefore, statistical significance could be considered problematic here.

New, fully modern homes may be one reason household conveniences took a higher profile in Ambler. Ten federally subsidized houses had just been completed at the time of the post-cable survey. There was much excitement in Ambler as the Inupiat occupants moved into their new homes. (See Chapter Seven).

Of the changes with the second greatest effect, summarized in Table 16, transportation devices and household conveniences were again the most highly ranked in all villages. Modern communications increased slightly in importance. Among changes with the third greatest effect, communications surpassed modern conveniences.

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[36]Despite the newness of cable, only 9.5 percent of Ambler cable subscribers ranked television in general as the change with the greatest effect. Cable offered, after all, more of the same type of entertainment that RATNET carried. It also was not a new medium. Had cable been the first television to come to this rural native community, it may have ranked higher among changes affecting the village.

Table 16: Changes Affecting Native Villages, Summary

Question: Which change do you think has had the second greatest effect on your way of life?

BUCKLAND/NOORVIK INUPIATS
N= 139

Transportation	=	39.6 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	30.9 percent
Communications	=	25.8 percent

AMBLER INUPIATS
N = 53

Transportation	=	47.6 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	38.1 percent
Communications	=	11.9 percent

Question: Which change do you think has had the third greatest effect on your way of life?

BUCKLAND/NOORVIK INUPIATS

Transportation	=	40.3 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	22.3 percent
Communications	=	31.7 percent

AMBLER INUPIATS

Transportation	=	49.6 percent
Modern Conveniences	=	9.5 percent
Communications	=	33.3 percent

TV Effects on Eskimo Lifestyle

Television steals time from all who let it, whether a rural Eskimo, or a non-native oil executive in urban Anchorage. In rural native villages it is clearly just one of many factors accelerating cultural change. The important difference is lifestyle. In the Inupiat villages, where hunting and fishing are the main source of food, a move away from subsistence has a definite impact on daily life. Although the amount of change due to television cannot be precisely measured, it seemed to concern many people. And while adults said cooperation and neighborliness have been in decline since television, both remain an important part of Eskimo life. There was no evidence that anyone in the three villages would go hungry watching television instead of feeding their family and sharing with their neighbors. Still, TV was thought to be the culprit of wasted time:[37]

> (Before TV) everybody would do more subsistence activities like gathering wood and water.
>
> It was better without TV, because we had more time to do other things. Things like knitting, sewing and hunting.
>
> (Before TV, I) used to do more hunting. Used to visit friends a lot. Used to use less alcohol.[38]

Respondents in all three villages were given several opportunities to spontaneously assess the impact television has had on their life and their communities (hypothesis 8). In an open-ended question at the beginning of

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[37]These comments from three respondents are in response to: "How do you think your life was different before you had television?"

[38]As previously discussed, alcohol could not be sold nor legally brought into the sample villages. Alcohol consumption as it relates to television viewing was not part of the survey. This was the only mention of alcohol by any respondent in an open-ended question. Some comments were made in response to the closed question, "The number of beer commercials on RATNET, do you think that is a problem?" That question is discussed later in the dissertation.

the survey, they were asked how their **personal lives** had been different before television. They reported different daily living patterns, in which: (1) Families communicated, cooperated, worked and played together more; (2) Friends and families visited each other more; (3) Villagers took a more active part in the community; and (4) All maintained a traditional Eskimo lifestyle:

> (We) got more work done, but now that we have TV our people mostly seem to want to wait for their program rather than get their chores done...Out here we don't have running water or sewer, and we have to get wood or stove oil. It seems those are put aside for TV. It also interferes with subsistence hunting.[39]

Pre-cable Ambler Inupiats were especially concerned about the loss of family cooperation and communication, and attributed part of that loss to TV. Eighteen ranked this loss ahead of other concerns (52.9 percent). Eight Inupiats believed that television -- as a provider of information and entertainment -- had a positive effect on their village (23.5 percent).[40] Other demographic groups showed the same concern, although the associations were not significant. As might be expected, women were more disturbed than men by the loss of family cooperation and communication.[41] Those over 29 also noticed this loss more than those 18 to 28, who were youngsters when TV arrived in the village (no significance).

Concerns were similar among Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats. Of the 137 Inupiats who said they remembered life without TV, 67 reported loss of

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[39]Response to: "How do you think your life was different before you had television?"

[40]Forty-six of the 53 Ambler respondents remembered life without TV. The N for the ethnic breakdown on the first response to this question was 42, with four answers categorized as "other," "don't know" and "no answer."

[41]Women = 13, or 31 percent of the total answering this question; men = 7, or 16.7 percent.

family communication and cooperation as the major difference in their lives since TV (54.9 percent). Twelve (9.8 percent) thought life was better since television, because they were now better informed and more entertained. When cross-tabulated with sex and age, 39 women (28.3 percent of the sample) and 35 men (25.4 percent) were concerned about the loss of family activities. Those 29 and over were more concerned than younger adults. Neither variable was significant.

In an open-ended question at the end of the survey, respondents were asked how television had changed life in their **village**. Several of the spontaneous answers were similar to personal-life changes: (1) Villagers participated less in traditional activities, including subsistence; (2) Adults and children were less physically active; and (3) Many stayed at home more. Some thought their "at-home" time, as well as their neighbors', was used to watch TV rather than do essential household chores. Responses indicate that Inupiats believe TV contributes to a decrease in participation of traditional Eskimo village life (hypothesis 8).

Open-ended responses to pre-cable Ambler questions about TV impact on personal and village life were quantified in the post-cable and Buckland/Noorvik surveys. Villagers were asked if they spent more, less or about the same amount of time (1) hunting, fishing, berry picking and gathering other food; (2) visiting friends and relatives; (3) going to community gatherings; (4) doing traditional Eskimo handicrafts. They also were asked (5) if children were spending about the same amount of time, more, or less time learning traditional Eskimo ways.

This data indicates that TV has led to a decrease in **all** adult traditional activities, however small it might be. Villagers also partially blamed TV for the fact that Eskimo children were not being trained in

traditional ways. Table 17 indicates that 24 of 42 post-cable Ambler Inupiats said children spend less time learning about Eskimo ways now than before TV (57.1 percent), while 13 (31 percent) indicated that things were about the same.[42]

Table 17: Learning Traditional Eskimo Ways, Inupiat Eskimos

Question: Thinking about how children learn traditional Eskimo ways, do they spend about the same amount of time, more or less time learning them now than they did before television?

Learning Eskimo Ways
Inupiat Eskimos

	More time	About the same	Less time	Don't know, no answer
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Ambler N = 42	2 / 4.8	13 / 31.0	24 / 57.1	3 / 7.1
Buckland/ Noorvik N = 135	8 / 5.9	39 / 28.9	84 / 62.2	4 / 3.0

In Buckland/Noorvik 84 of the 135 Inupiats answering this series of questions (62 percent of Inupiats)[43] agreed that children were not learning traditional ways as they had before television; 39 (or 28.9 percent) thought there was little change.[44] (See Table 17). It is interesting to note that in survey and in-depth interviews, the small number of non-natives in both communities agreed that Eskimo children were not learning traditional Eskimo culture, or even subsistence skills. Both men and women were concerned about this, a relationship which was significant. Cross-tabulation shows 54 of the 87 women (62 percent) and 45 of 66 men (68 percent) in Buckland/Noorvik believed that children were spending less time learning

[42]Two believed that children were spending more time learning traditional ways since television; three did not know.

[43]Four respondents did not answer this series of questions.

[44]Eight said children spent more time learning traditional ways; four did not know.

the old ways. (See Table 18). One-third, or 29 women thought there was little change, while 12, or 18 percent of men indicated little change.[45] Observation and in-depth interviews verified the survey results. Some Inupiat adults seemed genuinely concerned that the Eskimo lifestyle would be forever lost on the young.

"They are learning some in school," a 30-year-old Inupiat male said, "but learning about traditions at home would have a much better and lasting effect." A thoughtful child noted, "TV takes time from my parents away." In one village, the elders organized annual weekend outings to teach young native boys about camping and hunting. In the past, it was expected that all boys from an early age would accompany their fathers on subsistence hunts. As Ambler high school teacher and author Nick Jans writes of former times, "Education for boys meant learning to hunt, travel and make tools; girls learned to sew skins, cook and store food, and raise families. All their needs came from the land."[46]

[45]In Ambler, gender was not significant, although the numbers reflect a similar concern among women.

[46]Jans, The Last Light Breaking, 42.

Table 18: Learning Traditional Eskimo Ways by Gender
Buckland and Noorvik

KF8 KIDS TIME LEARNING TRADL WAYS by KSEX SEX OF RESPONDENT

KF8	KSEX MALE 1	FEMALE 2	Row Total
1 MORE TIME	Count 5	4	9
	Row Pct 55.6	44.4	5.9
	Col Pct 7.6	4.6	
	Tot Pct 3.3	2.6	
2 ABOUT THE SAME	Count 12	29	41
	Row Pct 29.3	70.7	26.8
	Col Pct 18.2	33.3	
	Tot Pct 7.8	19.0	
3 LESS TIME	Count 45	54	99
	Row Pct 45.5	54.5	64.7
	Col Pct 68.2	62.1	
	Tot Pct 29.4	35.3	
8 DONT KNOW	Count 4		4
	Row Pct 100.0		2.6
	Col Pct 6.1		
	Tot Pct 2.6		
Column Total	66 43.1	87 56.9	153 100.0

Chi-Square	Value	DF	Significance
Pearson	9.27036	3	.02590
Likelihood Ratio	10.85044	3	.01256
Mantel-Haenszel test for linear association	5.32728	1	.02099

Minimum Expected Frequency - 1.725
Cells with Expected Frequency < 5 - 3 OF 8 (37.5%)

Number of Missing Observations: 6

Television is one factor among many contributing to an erosion of tradition among native village youth. Given the changing times, some Inupiats thought television could be used to teach children traditional native customs, outdoor survival, hunting and fishing skills, and native languages. These adults were less concerned about the impact that TV has had on their own lives, than on children. In fact, when quantified, many of the concerns about a loss of traditional activities diminished. (See Table 19). Most Ambler Inupiats -- 32 of 42 -- said they spent about the same amount of time in subsistence activities now as they did before they had TV (76.2 percent). Only seven reported spending less time gathering food (16.7 percent).[47]

Table 19: Subsistence, Inupiat Eskimos

Question: Thinking about the amount of time you spend hunting, fishing, berry picking and gathering other food, do you spend about the same amount of time, more, or less time now than you did before TV?

Subsistence
Inupiat Eskimos

	More time	About the same	Less time	Don't know, no answer
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Ambler N = 42	3 / 7.1	32 / 76.2	7 / 16.7	
Buckland/ Noorvik N = 135	8 / 5.9	73 / 54.1	53 / 39.3	1 / .7

Differences were greater among Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats, with 53 Inupiats reporting that they spent less time in subsistence activities (39.3 percent), while 73 said they spent about the same amount of time with subsistence (54.1 percent).[48]

[47]Three reported spending more time with subsistence.
[48]Eight reported more time.

Visiting also was traditionally an important pastime in native communities. In spontaneous answers to open-ended questions, many Inupiats said visiting had declined since the arrival of television. When the question was quantified, however, most reported visiting with friends and family as much after television as before. (See Table 20). Twenty-six of 42 Ambler Inupiats said they continued to visit relatives and friends (61.9 percent), while 13 noticed a decrease (31 percent).[49] Seventy-five Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats visited less (55.6 percent), compared to 51 who said they visited the same amount now than before TV (37.8 percent).[50]

Table 20: Visiting Friends and Relatives, Inupiat Eskimos

Question: Do you visit your friends and relatives (in the village) about the same amount of time, more or less time now than before you had TV?

Visiting Friends and Relatives
Inupiat Eskimos

	More time	About the same	Less time	Don't know, no answer
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Ambler N = 42	2 / 4.8	26 / 61.9	13 / 31.0	
Buckland/ Noorvik N = 135	9 / 6.7	51 / 37.8	75 / 55.6	

Visiting among the elders sometimes included television. For example, elder women would gather to watch TV at news time, or when a documentary or nature program was being broadcast. Conversations often revolved around the program, or ceased as their attention turned to an interesting scene, or would. If a non-native person were present, questions often were asked about the meaning of the broadcast, especially news stories. A statistically

[49]Two said they visited more; one did not know.
[50]Nine indicated more time.

significant relationship between this variable and age was found in Buckland/Noorvik. All age groups reported spending less time visiting, especially those between ages 18 and 39. Television may have had little impact on those over 50, most of whom reported visiting as much since the box had invaded their homes as before. As previously indicated, Inupiat elders remained quite traditional despite the numerous changes in their villages.

Ambler Inupiats said they were still as much involved in community activities in 1991 as they were before TV -- 35 of 42, compared to four who reported spending less time (83.3 percent and 9.5 percent, respectively).[51] (See Table 21). Participant observation, however, belies the Inupiat data. During two months in Ambler, the number of villagers attending city council meetings, school board or church could be counted on one hand. In fact, meetings were often canceled for lack of attendance. High school basketball games were always well-attended, as were open gym nights. Village histories and informal conversations indicated that fewer community activities are held now that rural villages have television.

Buckland/Noorvik meetings also were sparsely attended, but basketball games were packed. More than one-half of Inupiats, or 76 reported about the same amount of attendance at community events now than before TV (56.3 percent), while 51 reported less attendance (37.8 percent).[52]

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[51]The question: "Do you go to community gatherings about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?" The question did not distinguish between sporting events and other community gatherings. One respondent indicated more time spent; two did not know.

[52]Six said they spent more time; two did not know.

Table 21: Community Gatherings, Inupiat Eskimos

Question: Do you go to community gatherings about the same amount of time, more, or less time now than you before you had TV?

Community Gatherings
Inupiat Eskimos

	More time	About the same	Less time	Don't know, no answer
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Ambler N = 42	1 / 2.4	35 / 83.3	4 / 9.5	2 / 4.8
Buckland/ Noorvik N = 135	6 / 4.4	76 / 56.3	51 / 37.8	2 / 1.4

Finally, 22 of 42 Ambler Inupiats (52.4 percent) said they spent about the same amount of time doing traditional handicrafts as they did before TV; 12 of 42 spent less time (28.6 percent).[53] (See Table 22). Traditional Eskimo handicrafts included such things as building dog sleds, making ulus[54] or other tools, skin sewing and basket-making. As previously discussed, Ambler elders prided themselves in well-made Eskimo crafts. If one could judge from participant observation, these percentages would be fairly accurate.

Sixty-three Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats also said they spend less time with traditional handicrafts (46.7 percent), while 53 said they still actively worked at traditional handicrafts (39.3 percent).[55] Again, in Buckland and Noorvik, the traditional handicraft variable is age-oriented and was statistically related to age. Twenty-seven of those over age 50 reported that television had little effect on the amount of time they spent making traditional Eskimo handicrafts; ten, or 25.6 percent, admitted spending less time.

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[53]Four said they spent more time; four did not know.

[54]An ulu is a triangular knife used by Eskimos in skinning and cutting the flesh of animals and fish.

[55]Two said they spent more time; 17 did not know.

Table 22: Traditional Eskimo Handicrafts, Inupiat Eskimos

Question: Do you do traditional Eskimo handicrafts about the same amount of time, more or less time now than before you had TV?

Traditional Eskimo Handicrafts
Inupiat Eskimos

	More time	About the same	Less time	Don't know, no answer
	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %	Freq. / %
Ambler N = 42	4 / 9.5	22 / 52.4	12 / 28.6	4 / 9.5
Buckland/ Noorvik N = 135	2 / 1.5	53 / 39.3	63 / 46.7	17 / 12.6

TV Effects on Village Migration

While adults believe television has had an effect on their personal lives and on the collective life of the village, it does not seem to influence their desire to leave the village. Most respondents said TV shows them places they would like to visit, but beyond that TV seems to be a factor that makes them want to stay in the village. In Buckland/Noorvik, 124 of all native and non-native respondents said television made them **glad** to live in their village (82 percent). A greater percentage of Ambler respondents agreed -- 48 or 91 percent of all natives and non-natives. Far fewer villagers said TV made them want to experience life somewhere else (Buckland/Noorvik = 55, or about 36 percent; Ambler = 15, or 28.3 percent). An experience away from the village probably would be temporary, judging by other responses that indicated most villagers preferred to live in their home community. Overall results of this data support the contention that television has little affect on mobility.

When these variables were cross-tabulated with ethnicity, 15 pre-cable Ambler Inupiats (53.7 percent) indicated that television made them "want to get out of Ambler and experience life somewhere else," while 24 (or 57 percent) said it did not. The opposite question: "Does what you see on TV make you glad that you live in Ambler?" elicited nearly a 93 percent positive response (39 Inupiat respondents). Only two answered "no."

Inupiats felt similarly in Buckland and Noorvik, where 83, or 61.5 percent said TV had no effect on their desire to experience other places, while 50, or 37 percent, said it had an effect. More than 80 percent, or 109 Inupiats said TV made them glad they lived in Buckland or Noorvik. In contrast, less than 15 percent, or 20 Inupiats said TV made them dissatisfied with their tiny community. No statistically significant associations were found between these variables and village demographics. However, the overall numbers support the hypothesis that there is little relationship between TV viewing and Inupiat viewers' desire to live outside the village.

Many villagers cited TV news stories about big cities with the homeless, crime, violence and pollution as reasons to be satisfied with their village. What they saw on television made them grateful for the bounty of the Arctic:

> Here, food is available. We don't have to starve like the homeless and hungry in other places. Even those without money here will not go hungry.

Said another way, "We (Inupiats) are closer than non-native people. They really don't care for each other much."[56]

The fear that watching television would spur village migration[57] has not been supported in any Alaskan studies or other literature. According to

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[56]Response to" "Does what you see on TV make you glad that you live in Ambler?"
[57] Katz and Wedell.

Forbes' earlier RATNET study, the desire to migrate from native villages was related more to living in a larger village, or having already lived or visited outside the home village.[58] In Belize, economic and political factors, as well as personal contact with the U.S., were greater indications than television of the desire to emigrate.[59] Other foreign studies, such as Choi's research in Korea,[60] show that U.S. television reinforces traditional values among indigenous viewers. In the Canadian north, Euro-Canadian and U.S. TV served to mobilize the Inuit Eskimos into starting their own television system with native programming. As previously discussed, the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation is very popular in Arctic Canada.

The Effects of Cable TV on Ambler

The post-cable survey was conducted about a month after cable TV came to Ambler. Although it may have been too early to tell what impact, if any, the additional channels would have on Ambler, more than one-half of all respondents (34 of 53) believed that cable would have a detrimental effect. From categories emerging from the open-ended question "What kinds of changes do you think you will see in Ambler, now that it has cable TV?" respondents were concerned that (1) adults would become less physically active, watching TV more and working less; (2) children would watch TV more and play outside less, an important activity for village children; (3) children would learn bad things from TV, such as fighting, vandalism, and bad language, and act them out in the village. One Inupiat respondent noted that many villagers would have trouble paying their bills. Seven saw positive

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[58]Forbes, et al., Social and Cognitive Effects.
[59]Snyder, Roser and Chaffee.
[60]Choi.

influences from cable: more information, kids staying out of trouble, a quieter village.

These responses support the hypothesis that Inupiat viewers believe television contributes to a decrease in traditional life, especially family communication and cooperation.

Other Television Effects

Television Violence

The effects of television violence are both theoretical and policy considerations. During RATNET's infancy, when programming was still a balanced mix of news, public affairs, academic instruction, and entertainment, Forbes suggested the legislature consider television effects, including the literature on violence. (See Chapter Five). Many of the violence studies support hypotheses that viewing violent entertainment increases the possibility of aggressive behavior.[61] The U.S. Senate hearings on television violence held in the 1960s set precedent for politicians' questions about television content.[62]

In Alaska, politicians did not question the effects of television violence until the RATNET channel was well-established in nearly every rural village. Then questions were framed without research and fact, only conjecture. Part of RATNET's legislative history includes proposed legislation in 1989 to codify the RATNET council, setting terms of office for native members only, not for the educational representatives. The legislation was introduced to

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[61]For a summary of the reports, see Lowery and De Fleur, "Television and Social Behavior."

[62]An excellent case study of television effects research and political policy can be found in Rowland.

make "them more accountable," according to the non-native, urban sponsors.[63] Had the bills passed, the RATNET programming board would have been controlled by the governor's office, making it easier to control channel content.

These legislators were among RATNET critics who charge that much of the violence televised on RATNET has led to more social problems in rural villages, many of which are already rife with high rates of alcoholism and suicide. Politicians' criticism of RATNET generally is split along non-native/native lines, as seen in this 1989 House Finance Committee dialogue:

> "I don't see entertainment as an essential function," a non-native Anchorage-area representative said. "If we maintain it (RATNET), I think it would be appropriate to shift its focus to more educational (programming)."
>
> A Juneau non-native legislator agreed: "We've got lots of problems in the villages. There's a lot of violence on TV. Maybe you could take away 'Miami Vice' and maybe there'd be fewer problems in the villages."[64]
>
> A rural native legislator responded that many social problems in rural Alaska are caused by a lack of activities, and TV helps fill the void.[65]

To date, none of the Alaskan television research studies has looked directly at television's effects on violence or aggression, although Forbes used a picture frustration test designed to elicit verbal aggression from children and found no effect of TV.[66] Forbes also asked parents whether they thought the amount of violence on TV was a problem.[67] Forbes had the opportunity to

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[63]Davis interview.

[64]RATNET is not seen in Juneau or Anchorage.

[65]Larry Persily, "Legislators Question if State-Funded TV is an Essential Service," Associated Press, March 3, 1989.

[66]Forbes, Social and Cognitive Effects, 110-112.

[67]Ibid., 61.

asked the question twice -- in 1979, shortly after television had been introduced in the villages, and again in 1982, when the novelty of TV was no longer a factor.

In both cases, fewer than half of the Northwest Arctic parents interviewed were concerned about the number of RATNET programs that portrayed violence. However, the percentage believing violence was a problem increased between 1979 and 1982, from 40 percent to 45 percent.[68] It would be expected that the increased concern is due to exposure to television. It could also be due to an increase in the amount of violence in 1982 programs compared to 1979, but without a content analysis, such an explanation is strictly conjecture.

The same question was asked in 1991 three-village survey, although it was not limited to RATNET content, because of the presence of cable in two of the three villages. In the case of pre-cable Ambler, most viewers had some previous experience with cable. All demographic groups in pre-cable Ambler, Buckland and Noorvik, affirmed that TV violence was a problem:[69]

> Most of the movies we watch are so violent. Cops, even "Matlock." We need more family-type of movies like we used to have ... "Little House on the Prairie."

More than 90 Buckland/Noorvik respondents, or nearly 60 percent, thought televised violence was a problem; 59 respondents, or 38.6 percent, did not. In Ambler, 34 respondents, or 66.7 percent, said it was a problem;

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[68]The N in 1982 was 75. It is impossible to tell from the Forbes' report how many Northwest Arctic parents were interviewed in 1979.

[69]Only sex and TV violence in Buckland and Noorvik were statistically related -- nearly twice as many women as men felt that TV violence was a problem. The relationship was not statistically related in Ambler.

29.4 percent said it was not a problem. Several explanations are possible for the increase between 1982 and 1991: (1) In Forbes' 1982 survey, the question referred to the single RATNET channel; (2) In 1982, as a "demonstration project," RATNET still carried educational and instructional programs during the day, with entertainment at night. (3) In the 1991 survey, the question referred to all television channels, including cable. More programs could be categorized as "violent" in 1991 than in 1982. (4) In the minds of some viewers, sex, profanity and violence may be one and the same. From survey comments and general conversation, it seemed that these respondents put programs using profanity, and portraying partial nudity or sexual activities (such as R-rated movies on HBO) in the same category as violence.

Responses show greater concern about violence among cable subscribers than non-cable subscribers. In Buckland/Noorvik, 67 of the 106 cable subscribers, or 63.2 percent, thought the amount of violence on TV was a problem; 37 subscribers, or 34.9 percent, did not. Of the 47 non-cable subscribers, 24 indicated violence was a problem (51.1 percent), and 22 said it was not (46.8 percent). The question was not asked in post-cable Ambler. It was expected the answers would not change, given unfamiliarity with the new channels.

Among Ambler Inupiat viewers, 27 said they thought televised violence was a problem (64.5 percent), while 11 did not (27.5 percent). In Buckland/Noorvik, 76 labeled it a problem (56.3 percent), and 56 did not (41.5 percent). None of the demographic variables were significant when cross-tabulated with the television violence responses.

Informal comments in the 1991 survey indicated that some adults, especially grandparents, believed children learned "bad things" from cable TV, especially sex, profanity and fighting. As two elderly women stated:

> HBO has too many sex films. Us old people were not raised that way. Kids are learning bad things from the HBO movies.
>
> Violence should not be there. It causes too much trouble with the young kids nowadays!

Teachers also were concerned that students were acting out what they saw on TV:

> When you work with the school system and you see children come in and imitate TV in the classroom, you know that they're influenced by it.

While RATNET carries some violent and R-rated programs, the RATNET Council generally schedules such shows later in the evening, after most young children might be in bed. Whether or not violent programs should be part of the RATNET broadcast day is not a legislative question for several reasons: (1) The legislature has delegated the programming function to the RATNET Council; (2) The council has limited sources from which to select programming; (3) The council has no means to solicit or produce programs. RATNET simply broadcasts what is available to Anchorage viewers via the commercial network affiliates, or what is offered from Alaska sources. And while this researcher would argue that the channel should attempt to carry more Alaskan and culturally-relevant programming, the argument that rural native villagers should not watch the same shows as their Anchorage counterparts, is, perhaps, bigoted and parochial.

Beer Commercials

Television also has been blamed as a contributor to village alcohol problems. Alcohol abuse is a chronic problem in native villages, and most rural suicides and violent deaths are alcohol-related.

In the late 1980s, the Alaska Legislature questioned whether the state-subsidized RATNET should carry beer commercials. The question was irrelevant, however, because network agreements require the channel to carry programs in their entirety, including all commercials. Since the mid-1980s, RATNET has aired a disclaimer several times daily, which declares that the state of Alaska does not endorse the alcohol commercials or alcohol consumption seen on the channel.

The beer question occupied a major portion of a Senate Finance Committee debate in 1989. The debate was largely emotional and uninformed, but resulted in plans for at least one senator to visit network officials in New York to ask that Alaska network programs be edited. The trip was eventually scrapped, and the beer question has not received much attention since that time. Editing the programs would have been a logistical nightmare for the small crew at the RATNET operations center, where network programs are recorded off the satellite.

The legislative debate prompted a question on the 1991 survey. Villagers were asked whether RATNET viewers thought televised beer commercials were a problem or not a problem. In Buckland and Noorvik, 72 viewers said they believed the number of alcohol commercials on RATNET were a problem (47 percent); 77 said they were not (50.3 percent). In Ambler, 28 said beer commercials were a problem (54.9 percent); 20 said they were not (39.2 percent).

Although the question requested information about RATNET only, the presence of cable in Buckland and Noorvik could have skewed some responses. When the beer commercial variable was paired with cable subscription, there were few differences between percentages: 52 cable subscribers, or 49 percent, said RATNET beer commercials posed a problem for viewers, and 51, or 48 percent, said they did not. Non-cable respondents thought beer commercials were less a problem than cable subscribers: 20 non-cable subscribers (42.6 percent) said beer commercials were a problem, while 26 non-cable respondents said beer commercials were not a problem on RATNET -- the only channel they could watch at home. Had the question been asked in post-cable Ambler, a cable effect might have been apparent, which could help discern a cable effect in Buckland and Noorvik.

In recent years, more attention has been paid to finding a solution to the alcohol abuse problem among Alaska natives. The sample villages were "dry," meaning alcohol could not be brought into the village, or bought and sold. Alcohol problems still existed in these villages. The 1991 survey reflected some concern about these problems. Among Ambler Inupiats, 22 thought beer commercials posed a problem (55 percent); 15 did not (37.5 percent). Buckland/Noorvik Inupiats were less concerned: 63, or 46.7 percent, said the commercials were problematic, and 68, or 50.4 percent, said they were not.

Most respondents who offered comments thought that beer commercials were generally a problem for the young, not the old:

> They (beer commercials) are a very bad influence on all the kids. They cause them to want to try liquor.
>
> Too many (beer commercials) in sports. When you're trying to teach kids not to abuse drugs and

alcohol, it makes them wonder. Different ads are needed.

While none of the demographic variables were significant when cross-tabulated with the beer commercial question, the numbers do not support the 1989 legislative request for a change in network agreements so that beer commercials could be edited from network programs. The effect of beer commercials, like televised violence, is not a question within legislative purview. Lawmakers gave up that authority when they brought commercial network television into the Bush. The "quid pro quo" of the original satellite demonstration was, after all, live TV for Anchorage viewers -- who see the same beer commercials as their rural counterparts.

The results of the questions regarding TV violence and beer commercials reinforce the hypothesis that village viewers would value culturally proximate TV programs. As previously indicated, adult Inupiats are distressed about a loss of Eskimo family values in their ever-changing culture.

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

In summary, survey results clearly support several points: (1) Rural viewers want more regional and culturally proximate television. This preference seems to be stronger among Inupiats, who are most closely tied to rural culture, than among the small, transient, non-native population. (2) Despite decreases in RATNET viewing as cable is introduced, RATNET still plays an important role in rural Alaska. Alaska news, weather, and other Alaska or native-oriented content is particularly important to Inupiat viewers, and it is not carried on cable channels. (3) RATNET remains important enough to these Inupiat that they say they would be willing to pay

for it, just as they now pay for cable. (4) The fear that television is the cause of migration from the village is unsupported in this study, just as it is in similar studies. (5) Inupiats perceive that television is related to a decline in traditional activities and lifestyle, but this cannot be precisely measured. (6) Television is only one of many technological changes having a major effect on rural Alaskan natives. It ranks at the bottom of a list of machinery, appliances and other technologies affecting change in the village. (7) Native viewers are somewhat concerned about the effects that TV violence, sexual content and beer commercials may have, particularly on children.

The theoretical and political importance of these results will be discussed in the conclusions.

Chapter Ten

CONCLUSIONS

> Isn't the white man's burden great. You're telling them that they have to stay pure -- stay pure for what? If they say they want it, they get it. The public policy decision is we provide the service or we don't provide the service. The well-intentioned academic that wants to keep the anthropological unit pure in its own innocent little ethos is garbage....[1]

If rural Alaska natives had never seen commercial television, the anthropological unit still would not be "pure in its own innocent little ethos." The march of the outside world into the rural village was, and is, inevitable. Television is simply one of many changes affecting the rural native lifestyle. Its effect cannot be isolated and precisely measured, nor can it be reversed, but, as this study demonstrates, television can become more relevant to its viewers.

Summary of Findings

While causal statements cannot be made from the nominal and ordinal data of this study, implications for RATNET policy can be drawn from the data analysis and informed by cross-cultural effects theory and literature.

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[1]Brown, in response to questions about content discussions during early legislative Satellite Television Demonstration Project debates.

Cultural relevance is the strongest conclusion that can be drawn from the ethnographic and quantitative data. Relevance, in its simplest definition, means "relation to the matter at hand ... especially social applicability."[2]

Viewers in the three Inupiat villages have little media to search for cultural relevance and social applicability. Newspapers are sparse and untimely; reading has only recently become a part of Eskimo life, which is traditionally an oral culture with no written language.[3] Public radio is the most timely and provides local and regional news, information, and Inupiaq-language programming, but radio reception in these villages is spotty. Television is the most pervasive and most enjoyed medium. The few programs applicable to the native culture are found mainly on RATNET; cable's Discovery channel offers nature and wildlife programs that are akin to the rural native lifestyle, or at least of great interest to many native viewers.

Theoretical Adaptation

This is the first study among the Alaska native population to apply Straubhaar's cultural proximity theory. Taken as a whole, the major findings support and augment the theory.

Theoretically, Straubhaar defines social applicability as cultural proximity, a term he has applied to Latin American television viewers' active search for programs that reflect their culture and daily experience.[4] A refinement of uses and gratifications theory, cultural proximity is an excellent term for native societies who find most of U. S. commercial television alien to their lifestyle and daily experience.

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[2]Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1975), 976.

[3]A written Inupiaq language has appeared very recently.

[4]Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism."

Cultural proximity anticipates a preference for cultural relevance and social applicability. It is not surprising that an ethnic group's values, philosophies and traditions would be reflected in its preference for entertainment and informational content. People everywhere have a desire to reinforce their particular lifestyle and experience. News media predicate their sale of news on local coverage. But cultural proximity could have other adaptations. It is evident from this study that cultural proximity theory goes beyond content -- it reflects the use of technology to perpetuate, as well as ease the burden of a particular lifestyle, in this case, subsistence.

Cultural proximity theory helps explain the use of and preference for certain technologies. The introduction of technology in the Alaska Bush -- new weapons for hunting, vehicles for travel, electricity for convenience, telephones for communicating, and TV sets for entertainment -- has had a tremendous impact on the rural lifestyle. The context for this introduction was a traditional hunter-gatherer society that has slowly changed, even with new technologies. In the 1990s, subsistence remained a very important aspect of life in the sample villages.

The present data indicate that village natives prefer technologies that improved transportation, made food gathering quicker and more efficient, and made life more convenient and comfortable. When ranked with other technologies, television fell to the bottom of the list. (See Chapter Nine). The two technologies with the greatest effect on villagers' personal lives -- the snowmobile and electricity -- make rural life easier and are far more relevant to the culture and daily experience than television. A snowmobile takes people greater distances in a shorter period of time to hunt; electricity makes life more comfortable, more convenient with time-saving appliances. TV was

a byproduct of electricity. Television provides information and entertainment; it cannot feed the family.

The cultural proximity theory is useful in explaining native villagers' desire to maintain a traditional subsistence lifestyle by making it more convenient and efficient, while at the same time perpetuating that lifestyle through the mass medium of television. In the native village context, the preference for certain technology parallels the preference for entertainment.

Lifestyle Changes

The theory that television may be a factor in leading new viewers away from the village is refuted here, as it is in other studies. Many adults in the study said television is one reason they are **glad** to live in the village. They cite the negative aspects of life seen on TV, such as war, violence, crime and homelessness as reasons to be satisfied with their surroundings. Choi found similar reactions among Koreans who watched Armed Forces television. His research indicates that Koreans' desire to visit the United States decreased after viewing the violence depicted on American TV.[5]

Because other media generally are not available in these villages, these Inupiat villagers seldom see or hear "the rest of the story," which limits their knowledge of the outside world to television. Whether this has cultivated a social reality of the world away from the village was not tested here.[6] Television seems to reinforce villagers' satisfaction with village life. If TV were an indicator of dissatisfaction with their lifestyle, it's doubtful there would be the desire to see more of that lifestyle on TV.

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[5]Choi.

[6]As previously described, Forbes confirmed Gerbner's cultivation theory among rural village children who were heavy viewers of television (see chapter five).

Traditional activities and lifestyle are declining in rural villages, one reason villagers cite for wanting more programming about subsistence and other native traditions. The fact that Inupiat villagers blame some of this decline on television lends support to the cultural proximity theory. And while they would not want to give up TV, its place among other instruments of change may indicate that TV does not detract as much from traditional rural life as some policy-makers would like to believe.

Policy and Cultural Proximity

Years before satellite television came to the villages, Madigan and Peterson summed up the policy eventually adopted by the state for rural TV: "Television will come to most communities in the state. The decision as to whether, or when, a particular village should have television (or electricity, a water system, sewers, or an airport), it seems to us, should be based on only two considerations. Is it in any way economically feasible, and do the people of the village want it?"[7]

The people of the village wanted television and it was economically feasible, so the policy to provide or not to provide was one of politics. As described in the history portion of this paper, Alaska broadcast systems have evolved from an initial stage in which technology was utilized as a communication and information lifeline to isolated Alaskans, and "a maintenance stage in which technology issues pushed information issues off stage."[8]

When the state joined with Alascom in 1975 to install satellite telephone earth stations, the need for a communication lifeline to the Bush was significant; television was added because it was affordable. Current

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[7]Madigan and Peterson, 128.

[8]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media Poor," 126.

satellite television policy is the result of technology, political expedience and the economics of that time. Content was generally avoided in discussions by policy-makers who saw any content discussion as trampling on villagers' First Amendment rights.

The state of Alaska started providing satellite television at a time when it was economically impractical for private enterprise to do so. Such a policy is relatively easy to justify when governments have plenty of revenue.[9] In the mid-1970s, state oil coffers were bulging, and a spending frenzy was in the air. But these times can be risky for decision makers, according to House, "when policies are set to aspirations predicated on plenty, and the administration of these policies must be carried on in a period of scarcity."[10] Now Alaska lawmakers must focus on the benefit and need of government programs and policies rather than want, as oil revenues decline in the unavoidable cycle of an economy built on the boom and bust of natural resource extraction.

Because rural TV was part of a larger satellite-services package, assessing its benefit is difficult. It must now be analyzed apart from other telecommunication services. RATNET has remained protected simply because of its popularity. Providing commercial entertainment television is not an essential service of state government, if essential services are defined as maintaining health and safety. However, in this current information age, rural television which informs, educates and unites Alaskans could be considered essential. After all, the private sector does not provide such a service. Rural television serves an important social and informational

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[9]Peter W. House, The Art of Public Policy Analysis, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1982), 207.

[10]Ibid.

function in rural Alaska, a function which many of its detractors do not understand.

Inupiat village viewers understood the threats against RATNET. "Are they (state legislators) going to shut off RATNET?" was the most common question respondents asked when interviewers approached them about the survey. For years, it has been common knowledge among rural viewers that the channel was threatened by non-supportive administrations, falling revenue, and legislators who blamed TV for making rural social problems worse. A budget crunch in 1986 had already forced Learn Alaska off the air. When the 1994 House Finance Committee proposed to eliminate RATNET, letters from the public flooded the 60 legislative offices with this message: RATNET is rural Alaska's only source of Alaska news, weather and other information.

State-supported satellite television in an environment in which private enterprise is expanding presents both policy and theoretical questions. In the academic world, theory would be central to policy debate. The idea that viewers desire culturally relevant TV runs counter to the RATNET Council policy to program to a broad homogeneous audience, similar to commercial TV station policy. Straubhaar's cultural proximity hypothesis even suggests that RATNET should be programmed to account for population differences.

Broadcast funding in a period when essential state services are in jeopardy prescribes a strong policy that would give RATNET a distinct programming function. Whether it remains state-operated or becomes a private service, channel content and access are crucial to meeting the needs of the rural Alaska public.

Local and regional media voices are few in the Alaska Bush. Rural Alaska does not have the economic base required to support commercial TV.

Commercial stations find it difficult to produce statewide or rural programs. Public stations' ability to fulfill local program responsibilities and offer regional and statewide productions is becoming increasingly difficult due to declining state and federal grants. As media voices diminish in rural Alaska, audiences will be even less informed. RATNET, therefore, becomes an essential service.

Recommendations

In cable and non-cable communities, RATNET is the only television channel which can provide a distinct service to rural Alaska, similar to local stations in an urban market. No Alaska broadcast stations are carried on Bush cable systems. The Alaskana feature of RATNET is important enough, even to cable subscribers, that most respondents are willing to pay a small fee for receiving the state channel.

Cultural proximity theory could form the basis for a policy that would allow RATNET to function more as an Alaskan television channel than a general satellite service. In rural Alaska as elsewhere, television primarily provides an entertainment function. But rural audiences also want more Alaskana, i.e., news and information about Alaska, rural areas, and native issues, events, culture and lifestyle -- culturally proximate programming.

As a pilot study, the current research offers some descriptive data on which to base recommendations for further research. An empirical review of television use and attitudes across a broader and more culturally diverse spectrum of RATNET villages would be the next logical research phase. Policy recommendations include charging a household fee for RATNET, which could be used to develop a culturally relevant genre; and involving

local village natives in the development and production of programs, similar to the Canadian model.

Those policy-makers who now wonder if RATNET content has a negative affect on rural native villagers are too late. Rural Alaskans are like other Americans, and enjoy all kinds of commercial television entertainment. Northrip is probably correct in his assessment that "The same people who decry the programming mix (of RATNET) are probably not about to want to be known as the programming czar who took away the First Amendment rights of rural Alaskans."[11]

As cable becomes increasingly available in the Bush and revenue continues to decline, RATNET's detractors see one option: eliminate the channel. Any plan to eliminate should provide an alternative service and redefine satellite television policy to reflect the interests and unique cultural characteristics of the rural, native audience.

In several publications during her five-year Alaska study, Forbes stressed the importance of considering content in policy. Several years into satellite TV, her final report pointed out the basic flaw in the policy:

> The emphasis of the state's original Television Demonstration Project was on hardware and the delivery system, not on the possible social and cultural impact television might have on the viewing audience. This same emphasis continues to dominate policy and the allocation of funds. There are alternatives. Among them are the regionalizing of television and the support of programs to show adults and children how to critically use television. Policy-makers need to recognize that the television delivery system they support has influenced, and will continue to influence, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of its viewers throughout Alaska. Whether its influence is good or bad is a value judgment, not a research question...we hope we have provided information

[11]Northrip interview.

which policy-makers will use in making those judgments.[12]

The propriety of using state money for entertainment television does remain a legitimate and important question. It is not too late to consider research in formulating RATNET policy which would answer this question. Latin American, Canadian and Native American studies, among others, indicate a preference for an ethnic genre' along with their U.S. television shows; therefore stressing cultural proximity and more local production would seem to be the better model for Alaska.

Ironically, in 1984 then-Gov. Bill Sheffield requested that Alaska telecommunication experts research Canada's rural television distribution services, systems and policies.[13] The report makes no mention of the applicability of Canada's native broadcast services to Alaska, although it notes the similarities of Canada's and Alaska's vast geography and native population. Like any of the research cited above, the report would have been useful in television policy debates. So far, it has gone unnoticed.

The Canadian report is like many described here. A well-known state economist frequently criticizes Alaska decision-makers for making uninformed public policy decisions that are "chronically burdened by information gaps that could and should be overcome...."[14] Hence, the failure of Learn Alaska and the political nature of RATNET. Both might have been avoided had research been considered in the public policy process.

Some of the native leaders who were involved in the push for rural television now wonder why they weren't more concerned about the human

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[12]Forbes, Social and Cognitive Effects, 150-151.

[13]Mel Hoversten, Television Delivery in Rural Canada, (Juneau: Department of Administration, September 1984).

[14]D. Reaume, "Policy-makers often source of misinformation," Anchorage Daily News, (April 19, 1992), F-2.

aspects of putting a satellite-TV earth station in every village. "If we had it to do over again...I think we would have thought a lot harder about the ultimate effects on human beings. (Television) is such a powerful medium ... it has the potential for good and knowledge. But it, along with all the other things, has made us weak. Between the four-wheelers and the TV, we're just turning into soft people."[15] The current research indicates that TV may have less to do with this than the four-wheelers.

Alaska native and non-native leaders originally viewed satellite TV as a political and informational tool. While television is a source of information, some studies show a significant knowledge gap between "media-rich" urban and "media-poor" rural Alaska. (See Chapter Five).[16] However, the "chasm of ignorance would have been a lot greater today" had Alaska not developed a satellite system of communications.[17] Many political leaders believe "telecommunication has helped to bring about a greater sense of statewide unity."[18] Some native leaders have touted the local-access channels of village cable systems as a partial solution to informing their people and passing along cultural traditions.[19]

Rural Alaskans are more politically aware in the 1990s than they were in 1977, but much of that is due to better educational opportunities in the villages, improved transportation, natural resource development resulting in more jobs, and to the native corporations, which have attempted to politically mobilize and inform their people. In areas where public radio is strong, radio

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[15]Hensley, comments to the Chugach Conference, Oct. 5, 1991, Anchorage. Hensley served in the Alaska Legislature during the first years of the satellite project.

[16]See Pearson, "Desert Storm." Also, Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media Poor."

[17] Hensley, Chugach Conference remarks.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Hensley interview.

is considered a more useful informational medium than television,[20] because it is more localized and offers more news.

RATNET no longer has the monopoly on presenting the outside world to its audience. As more viewers have the option of cable television, home satellite receivers, and VCR, rural Alaska satellite TV should more closely represent its constituents. Cable and home satellite systems duplicate and supplement commercial entertainment; they cannot offer Alaskana.

Television "is a different thing to different people and its impact varies according to the cultural traditions that surround it."[21] In the midst of CBC and cable programming, rural Canadian natives have discovered that viewing culturally familiar programs is a way of retaining a sense of identity in their changing world, where the traditional lifestyle is greatly influenced by many modernization factors, such as education, mobility, new technologies, resource development, government policies affecting native land and subsistence, social and economic problems.

As Forbes said, there are alternatives to Alaska's satellite programming policy. The current study supports anecdotal information from the RATNET Council which indicates that Alaska news and weather, travel and nature programs are among the most popular shows on the channel. The RATNET Council could alter its general-interest policy to allow the selection of more Alaskana. It could carry Canadian native programming, available through the TVNC, and more national and Alaska public broadcasting programs. It would be feasible for the state to foster a native broadcast policy through mechanisms already in place, such as public television and the Alaska Public Radio Network. The private sector, including native

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[20]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor."

[21] Granzberg, Steinbring, and Hamer, "New Magic for Old," 157.

corporations, some of which are involved in public broadcasting, could be encouraged to participate and even develop culturally proximate broadcast programs.

The popularity of the few native radio and TV programs being broadcast statewide supports the data presented here. The RATNET Council believes the annual Alaska Federation of Natives convention, the annual Iditarod sled-dog race, and a weekly native feature called "Heartbeat Alaska," always draw a big audience. "Heartbeat Alaska," was said to give "the state's far-flung Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians a way to stay in touch, a sense of being part of the whole."[22] A RATNET Council member claimed that "Heartbeat Alaska" connected rural Alaska communities. "It's a spiritual thing. It touches on our cultures." [23]

The Economics of Rural Programming

In this era of declining revenue and changing attitudes toward government-supported broadcast services, it is clear that politics, not policy will determine broadcast funding. In the rush to eliminate government subsidies for broadcast, policy-makers would be wise to allow alternatives to develop before pulling the plug.

When RATNET was in its infancy, Hills and Morgan[24] proposed a statewide nonprofit corporation be set up to operate a system that would integrate local access, network programming, and local control, with partial funding from local community taxes. "If the state does find it feasible and desirable to play a wider financial role," they said, "that support should be ...

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[22]Robin Mackey Hill, Associated Press, "Alaska's 'Heartbeat' to go nationwide," Peninsula Clarion, (May 2, 1994), 1 & 14.

[23]Peter Twitchell, RATNET Council member, in Hill, "Alaska's 'Heartbeat," 14.

[24]Alex Hills and M. Granger Morgan, "Telecommunications in Alaskan Villages," Science 211, (Jan. 16, 1981): 241- 248.

used to facilitate the production and distribution of special state, regional, and local educational program materials."[25]

Mechanisms, such as a RATNET user fee, local taxes, or Hills' and Morgan's non-profit corporation, could be used to help fund new Alaskana programming. State officials argue that creating an efficient collection mechanism has been the biggest obstacle to charging a RATNET fee. Nevertheless, this data indicates viewers' willingness to pay $10 per month for RATNET, which is even higher than the $3.33 it costs to provide the service to each of the estimated 35,449 rural households. The study suggests that rural viewers would be willing to pay a fee for the opportunity to watch Alaska news, information, and other programming that is more socially applicable.

As Hills and Morgan suggested, part of that fee could be used to produce Alaskana. The cost of providing regularly scheduled culturally relevant programming for RATNET may not be prohibitive. To compete with cable channels such as Discovery, Arts and Entertainment, and others, public stations and independent producers now find it necessary to produce more local and regional material for their home audience, programs which could run on RATNET. Rural Alaska's diverse audience does not want an all-Alaska or an all-indigenous channel. Viewers would simply like more programs that are relevant to their region, the rural and native culture, and that provide information they can use to make informed decisions, such as when to hunt, or for whom to vote in an upcoming election.

Since data collection for this study, Alaska's four public television stations have formed the Alaska Public Broadcasting Service (APBS) with the goal of increasing Alaska-produced programming. APBS proposed to produce

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[25]Ibid., 248.

and distribute Alaskana, including programs of interest to native Alaskans, for statewide distribution on RATNET. To bring costs down, the Alaska public stations also proposed to centralize services, co-produce and share programs, and purchase programs from non-PBS sources as a state organization.[26] Public broadcasters believed it was in their best interest to facilitate RATNET. In 1994, the public television stations raised $92,000 for RATNET in a four-night telethon. After expenses, $65,000 were available to RATNET operations.

For years, state policy-makers were not willing to pull the RATNET plug without alternatives to the service, but in the 1990s, the RATNET appropriation was no longer guaranteed. Content remained a legislative concern, and always will be as long as RATNET receives state funds. Content also will be an issue for RATNET viewers simply because a single channel cannot serve the viewing desires of all television viewers.

Until RATNET is privatized, or the state develops a clear set of goals and policy, it will continue to be politicized. Proposals to privatize the channel have failed -- no telecommunications operators were interested. Turning a public TV channel into a RATNET service has been proposed, but in the 1990s Alaska public broadcast funding was in jeopardy. A proposal to blend public, commercial and Alaskan programming transmitted by the Bethel public station, was submitted in 1993 to the Department of Administration, but at publication of this dissertation, it had not yet been acted upon.

Digital compression of the satellite transponder signal would provide a technical solution to the RATNET programming problem. The RATNET

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[26]Bill Legere, "Creating Alaska's Telecommunity: Supporting APBS Stations, (Juneau: Alaska Public Broadcasting Service, October 1994), 4.

transponder now relays one TV channel. Through compression, four to eight video channels would be available. One could be educational; another, public; another, commercial entertainment; perhaps another could provide news and information. But digital technology is costly and has few proponents in state government. Additional channels also require more programming and more programming sources. Whatever solution is reached necessitates clear goals and policy directives. Given Alaska's telecommunications history and the political nature of legislatures and administrations, clear policy with goals for future service would be problematic.

The increasing availability of commercial entertainment channels continues to make it difficult to justify state support of RATNET if its programming is primarily entertainment and otherwise similar to cable television. The fact that state officials seem willing to let the system slowly die reflects the chronic burden of "information gaps" among lawmakers "that could and should be overcome."[27]

If RATNET survives as a state-owned channel, becomes a public/private entity, or is privatized, it will need an informed policy based on empirical data. This pilot study indicates that rural viewers' prefer culturally proximate programs that recognize their cultural uniqueness. As Pearson indicates, "There is no assurance that additional broadcast channels or greater diffusion of cable systems would provide content more responsive to the wishes and needs of rural Alaskans."[28]

Future justification of the RATNET service under any operator should be based on more knowledge of the RATNET audience, an assessment of the importance of RATNET to rural viewers, as well as the role RATNET viewers

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[27]Reaume.

[28]Pearson, "Media-Rich, Media-Poor," 163.

may be willing to play to keep the channel on the air. The broadcast policy of any operator must be facilitated by expertise and diversity among those who select the programming. The policy must provide clear guidelines for content selection. It must also provide resources to survey the audience and to solicit programs. Alaska has devised a unique service which fulfills a special function and could be even more responsive to the audience it serves. If Alaska policy-makers were to recognize RATNET's true function as rural Alaska's local channel, they could justify a broadcast policy that would celebrate diversity, preserve and enhance native and rural culture, and inform Alaskans "as to what Alaska is doing."[29]

[29]Session Laws of Alaska 1976, Chapter 223, intent language.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

ALASKA MAP

Used by permission.
Robert A. Henning,
Alaska Northwest Publishing

APPENDIX B:

QUESTIONNAIRES

LIST OF QUESTIONNAIRES

* Buckland and Noorvik were conducted simultaneously. The questionnaires were the same, except for the title page. Only the Noorvik title page has been included here.

ADULT SURVEY/ AMBLER
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID NUMBER: _____

RECORD OF CONTACT ATTEMPTS: STUDY ID NUMBER: _____

	DATE	TIME	COMMENTS
FIRST ATTEMPT			
SECOND ATTEMPT			
THIRD ATTEMPT			

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____ SEX: _____

DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

INTERVIEW START TIME: _____ FINISH TIME: _____

TOTAL MINUTES: _____

DEGREE OF PRIVACY:

☐ Done only with interviewee.

☐ Done with interviewer, interviewee and helper.

☐ Done with others present. Specify: _____

_____

OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW: 1 2 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

COMMENTS:

CODER: _____ CODE DATE: _____

REVIEWER: _____ DATA ENTRY DATE: _____

ADULT SURVEY/ AMBLER
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER ID _____ INTERVIEW NO. _____

STUDY NO. _____

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Information Technology, University of Alaska Anchorage, is studying the role of television in rural Alaska. We want to find out how important RATNET and cable television are to viewers. To do this we need to ask Ambler residents some questions about RATNET and cable television. We plan to follow up our survey later this fall with some questions over the telephone. Also, we'll be conducting a series of interviews in other Northwest Alaska villages. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used in combination with those of other rural Alaskans. We won't be using any names in presenting the survey findings.

We appreciate your help with our survey. You can choose not to participate at all, or not answer some of the questions. But all your answers are important to the success of our study.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION A
MEDIA USE

First, we'd like to ask you some questions about the kinds of media you use.

A1. How many working TV sets do you have in your home?

☐ SETS

9. DON'T KNOW, NOT ASCERTAINED

A2. Can you remember a time when you didn't have TV?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

IF YES
A2a. How do you think your life was different before you had television?

_____

_____

_____

A3. Do you have a video cassette recorder?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A3a. About how many hours did you watch VCR tapes during the last week?

☐ HOURS

99. DK, NA

A4. Do you have a camcorder?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A5. About how many hours did you listen to radio yesterday?

☐ HOURS

99. DK, NA

A6. About how many hours do you listen to the radio on an average day?

☐ HOURS

99. DK, NA

A7. Have you ever used a computer?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A7a. Do you have a computer in your home?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

IF R HAS COMPUTER IN HOME
Do you use the computer for

A7a1. Playing games?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a2. Doing school work?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a3. Word processing?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a4. Doing work for an employer?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a5. Spreadsheets/personal bookkeeping?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a6. Writing computer programs?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a7. Electronic mail?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A7a8. Other uses? Please specify _____

☐ 1. YES _____
2. NO _____

A8. Have you ever used a fax machine?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A9. About how many long-distance phone calls did you make in the last two weeks?

☐ CALLS

98. NO PHONE
99. NOT ASCERTAINED

A10. How often do you read a newspaper? Would you say you read one never, less than once a week, 2 to 3 times a week, or almost every day?

☐

1. NEVER
2. LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK
3. 2 TO 3 TIMES A WEEK
4. ALMOST EVERY DAY
9. DK, NA

UNLESS R SAYS "NEVER"

A10a. Which newspaper do you read most often? _____

A10b. Do you read any others? _____

(IF R SAYS "THE TIMES" ASK: Is that the Tundra Times or the Anchorage Times? IF R SAYS "TUNDRA," ASK: Is that the Tundra Times or the Tundra Drums?)

A11. Do you read magazines?

☐

1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A11a. Which ones? _____

_____

A12. Do you read books?

☐

1. YES
2. NO
9. NA

12a. What kinds of books do you mostly read? _____

_____

12b. When was the last time you read a book? Was it yesterday or today, within the past week, 2 to 3 weeks ago, a month ago or longer ago than that?

☐

1. YESTERDAY OR TODAY
2. WITHIN THE PAST WEEK
3. 2 TO 3 WEEKS AGO
4. A MONTH AGO
5. LONGER AGO THAN THAT
9. DK, NA

IF R READS BOOKS

A12c. Do you recall the name of the last book you read?

_____

Here's a list of various places we can get information from (INT'R HANDS R CARD 1). It may be helpful to refer to it as I ask you the next questions.

A13. Where would you say you get most of your information about national and international news events?

☐

1. FRIENDS
2. FAMILY
3. BOOKS
4. RADIO
5. NEWSPAPERS
6. TELEVISION
7. NEWSLETTERS
8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
9. DK, NA

A14. Which one do you use for most of your news about Alaska?

☐

1. FRIENDS
2. FAMILY
3. BOOKS
4. RADIO
5. NEWSPAPERS
6. TELEVISION
7. NEWSLETTERS
8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
9. DK, NA

Considering radio, magazines, newspapers, books, and television, which one

A15. Do you use most often?

☐

1. RADIO
2. TV
3. MAGAZINES
4. NEWSPAPERS
5. BOOKS
9. DK, NA

A16. Is most enjoyable?

☐

1. RADIO
2. TV
3. MAGAZINES
4. NEWSPAPERS
5. BOOKS
9. DK, NA

A17. Is most educational?

☐

1. RADIO
2. TV
3. MAGAZINES
4. NEWSPAPERS
5. BOOKS
9. DK, NA

A18. Is most entertaining?

☐

1. RADIO
2. TV
3. MAGAZINES
4. NEWSPAPERS
5. BOOKS
9. DK, NA

A19. Is least important to you?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A20. Is most important to you?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A21. To fill your free time, what do you do most often? (LET RESPONDENT ANSWER WITHOUT PROMPTING.)

☐
1. READ
2. GO TO COMMUNITY, CHURCH OR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
3. LISTEN TO RADIO
4. WATCH TELEVISION
5. DO ARTS OR CRAFTS
6. HOBBIES
7. GO HUNTING, FISHING OR TRAPPING
8. PLAY SPORTS
0. OTHER, SPECIFY
9. DK, NA

SECTION B
TELEVISION

Now I'd like to ask you some questions specifically about television.
(GO TO QUESTION C10 ON PAGE 12 FOR R'S WHO DON'T HAVE TELEVISION.)

B1. Please describe the quality of the RATNET picture on your TV screen.

_____

B2. How many hours did you watch RATNET yesterday (last Friday IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY)?

☐ 99. DK, NA
HOURS

B3. About how many hours do you usually watch RATNET each weekday?

☐ 99. DK, NA
HOURS

B4. How many hours did you watch RATNET last Saturday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

B5. About how many hours do you usually watch RATNET on a Saturday at this time of year?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

B6. How many hours did you watch RATNET last Sunday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

B7. How many hours do you usually watch RATNET on a Sunday at this time of year?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

B8. How often would you say that you do something else at the same time you watch TV? Would you say that you do something else always, more than half the time, about half the time, less than half the time, or never? (PROMPT: For example, washing dishes, fixing something. OR REPEAT THE ANSWERS.)

[ ]
1. ALWAYS
2. MORE THAN HALF THE TIME
3. ABOUT HALF
4. LESS THAN HALF
5. NEVER
6. OTHER. SPECIFY _____
9. DK, NA

B9. What are your three most favorite RATNET programs? (IF GIVE PROGRAM CATEGORIES, PROBE FOR SPECIFIC SHOWS)

_____

_____

B10. What are your three least favorite RATNET programs?

_____

_____

B11. How many people live in your household?

[ ] 99. NA

PEOPLE

IF OTHERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD

B11a. What is your relationship to these people?

_____

_____

B11b. Who mostly decides what television programs are watched in your home? (LET RESPONDENT ANSWER WITHOUT PROMPTING.)

[ ]
1. HUSBAND
2. WIFE
3. KIDS
4. GRANDMOTHER
5. GRANDFATHER
6. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

IF CHILDREN LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD

B11c. How many hours a day do the adults and children in your household watch RATNET together?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

B11d. Do you limit the amount of time your kids can watch RATNET?

[ ] 1. YES

B11D1. What are these time limits?

_____

2. NO

B11e. Why or why not?

_____

_____

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN,

B11f. Do you limit the kinds of RATNET programs your children watch?

☐ 1. YES

B11f1. What kinds of shows do you not let them watch?

_____

_____

B11f2. Why?

_____

_____

2. NO

B11f3. Why not?

_____

_____

B11g. Do you have any other household rules regarding television viewing?

☐ 1. YES

B11g1. What are these rules?

_____

_____

_____

2. NO
9. DK, NA

SECTION C
CONTENT

Now we want to ask you some questions about the kinds of programs you see on TV.

C1. About how much family entertainment do you think RATNET should have? Do you think it should have about what it has now, should it have more, or should it have less?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C2. About how much sports should RATNET have? (PROMPT: About what it has now, more, or less?)

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C3. About how much Alaska news should RATNET have?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C4. About how much news about state government should RATNET have?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C5. How many shows about rural Alaska should RATNET have?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C6. How many shows about Alaska Natives and Native events?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C7. How many weather reports?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C8. How many cartoons should RATNET have?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C9. And how many educational programs for young people and adults?

☐
1. WHAT IT HAS NOW
2. MORE
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C10 How important to you are the RATNET weather reports? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Very important, important, somewhat important, not important at all.)

☐
1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

C11. Do you think kids watch too much television?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

C12. TV interferes with my children's schoolwork.

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

C13. Do you think most adults watch too much television?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

C14. The number of beer commercials on TV, do you think that is a problem?

☐
1. YES, A PROBLEM
2. NO, NOT A PROBLEM
3. DK, NA

C15. The amount of violence on TV, do you think that is a problem?

☐
1. YES, A PROBLEM
2. NO, NOT A PROBLEM
3. DK, NA

C16. Is TV for you powerful or weak? (PROMPT: Would you say that it has a powerful or a weak influence?)

☐
1. POWERFUL
2. WEAK
9. DK, NA

SECTION D
CABLE TV

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about cable television.

D1. Have you watched cable TV when you visited other towns or villages?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

D1a. What kinds of channels did you watch? (CHECK ALL ANSWERS R GIVES. FIRST PROMPT: Did you watch any other channels? 2ND PROMPT: Any others?)

___ SPORTS
___ PREMIUM MOVIES (SUCH AS HBO, CINEMAX)
___ OLD MOVIES
___ NEWS
___ GENERAL TV CHANNELS (SUCH AS WGN, WTBS)
___ RELIGIOUS
___ SHOPPING
___ MUSIC TV
___ DISNEY
___ DISCOVERY (SCIENCE, NATURE)
___ ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT (ARTS, CRAFTS)
___ EDUCATIONAL
___ WEATHER CHANNEL
___ C-SPAN (GOVERNMENT)
___ OTHER. SPECIFY _____

_____

D2. Do you plan to subscribe to cable TV when it comes to Ambler?

☐ 1. YES

D2a. Why? _____

_____

D2b. Will you have to give up anything? (PROMPT: So you'll have enough money to pay for it?)

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

D2b1. What will you give up?

_____

_____

2. NO

D2c. Why not? _____

_____

D2d. Will you go to other places in Ambler to watch cable?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

9. DK, NA

D3. In what ways do you think cable TV will be different from RATNET?

_____

_____

_____

D4. If you had cable, do you think you'd watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV as you do now with RATNET?

☐ 1. MORE
2, LESS
3. ABOUT THE SAME
9. DK, NA

IF R HAS CHILDREN

D5. If you had cable, do you think your kids would watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV as you do now with RATNET?

☐
1. MORE
2. LESS
3. ABOUT THE SAME
9. DK, NA

D6. If you had to choose between cable and RATNET, which would you choose?

☐
1. CABLE
2. RATNET
9. DK, NA

D7. If you had only cable, and not RATNET, do you think you'd be missing anything?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

D7a. What kinds of shows do you think you'd be missing on TV if you had cable and not RATNET? (REPEAT QUESTION IF NECESSARY. PROVIDE NO OTHER PROMPT. CHECK ALL RESPONSES R GIVES.)

___ AVIATION WEATHER
___ ALASKA NEWS
___ PUBLIC BROADCASTING PROGRAMS
___ PROGRAMS ABOUT ALASKA NATIVES
___ PROGRAMS ABOUT RURAL ALASKA
___ ALCOHOL DISCLAIMER
___ IDITAROD SLED-DOG RACE
___ ALASKA BASKETBALL COVERAGE
___ AFN CONVENTION COVERAGE
___ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
___ NOTHING
___ OTHER. SPECIFY_____

_____

D8. If you had to pay $10 a month for RATNET, would you be willing to do that?

☐ 1. YES → D8a. Why? _____

2. NO → D8b. Why? _____

9. DK, NA

D9. Cable rates vary from community to community. What is the most you'd be willing to pay per month for cable service? Would you pay nothing, $10 a month, $30 a month, $50, $70, $90, or would you pay more than $90 for cable?

☐
1. NOTHING
2. $10 A MONTH
3. $30
4. $50
5. $70
6. $90
7. MORE
9. DK, NA

D10. Basic cable service in Ambler will cost $_____ each month. Do you think this is very high, high, low, very low or about the right amount for the service? (PROMPT. REPEAT CHOICES.)

☐
1. VERY HIGH
2. HIGH
3. ABOUT RIGHT
4. LOW
5. VERY LOW
9. DK, NA

D11. The premium cable service will be $____ each month. Do you think this is very high, high, low, very low or about the right amount for that service?

☐
1. VERY HIGH
2. HIGH
3. ABOUT RIGHT
4. LOW
5. VERY LOW
9. DK, NA

D12. There's been some talk in recent years about the possibility of taking RATNET off the air. How important is RATNET to you? Is it very important, somewhat important, or not important at all? (PROMPT: REPEAT CHOICES OR SHOW CARD.)

1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

SECTION E
DEMOGRAPHICS

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself.

E1. What is your age?

☐ YEARS

99. NA

E2. How long have you lived in Ambler? (IF R SAYS "ALL MY LIFE," WRITE AGE IN BOX)

☐ YEARS

99. NA

E3. Have you ever lived anywhere else?

☐

1. YES → E3a. Where? _____
2. NO
9. NA

E4. Do you plan to move away from Ambler permanently in the near future?

☐

1. YES → E4a. Where do you plan to move? _____
2. NO
9. DK, NA

E5. How many years of school have you completed?

☐ 99. DK, NA

YEARS

IF THERE ARE CHILDREN IN R'S HOME:

E6. How old are the children in your home and what grade are they in school?

	Age	In school?		Grade
		yes	no	
Child 1:				
Child 2:				
Child 3:				
Child 4:				
Child 5:				
Child 6:				
Child 7:				
Child 8:				
Child 9:				
Child 10:				

E7. To earn money, what do you and the people who live in your home do?

Interviewee _____

Others in home _____

_____

IF R HAS CHILDREN

E8. When your children are adults, where would you like them to live?

_____

E9. Have you visited other Alaska towns or villages in the past year?

☐ 1. YES

E9a. Where? _____

_____

E9b. How often do you go there? _____

2. NO

9. NA

E10. Have you travelled outside Alaska within the last year?

☐ 1. YES
   E10a. Where?_____
   E10b. How often do you go there?_____
2. NO
9. NA

E11. Would you say the way of life in Ambler is better, worse, or no different than life in other parts of Alaska?

☐ 1. BETTER
2. WORSE
3. NO DIFFERENT

E11a. Why? _____

_____

_____

E12. If you could live anywhere, including Ambler, where would you like to live?

☐ 1. AMBLER
2. ELSEWHERE IN ALASKA. SPECIFY _____
3. OUTSIDE ALASKA. SPECIFY _____

E12a. Why?_____

_____

_____

E13. Are you Inupiaq (or white)? (INTERVIEWER: IT SHOULD BE CLEAR WHETHER R IS NATIVE OR WHITE. IF NEITHER, ASK FOR ETHNIC AFFILIATION. DO NOT PROMPT.)

☐ 1. ALEUT
2. ESKIMO/ALEUT
3. YUPIK
4. ATHABASCAN
5. TLINGIT OR HAIDA
6. BLACK
7. HISPANIC
8. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDS
9. OTHER. SPECIFY
0. NA

E14. What languages do you speak? (DO NOT PROMPT.)

☐
1. ENGLISH ONLY
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ ONLY
4. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

IF R SPEAKS NATIVE LANGUAGE

E15. What language do you mostly speak at home? (DO NOT PROMPT.)

☐
1. ENGLISH ONLY
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ ONLY
4. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

E16. What language do you mostly speak with your friends?

☐
1. ENGLISH ONLY
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ ONLY
4. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

E17. Do you read Inupiaq?

☐
1. YES
2. NO

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

E18. That your children speak Inupiaq, would you say that is very important, important, somewhat important, or not at all important?

☐
1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT
5. DK, NA

E19. Would you watch any RATNET programs in Inupiaq?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
3. DK, NA

E19a. What kinds of programs would you like to see in Inupiaq?

_____

_____

IF R SPEAKS NATIVE LANGUAGE

E20. Would you watch any RATNET programs in other Alaska Native languages?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

E21. If you were making a TV program to be shown in rural Alaska, what do you think it should be about?

_____

_____

E22. How do you think television has changed life in Ambler?

_____

_____

E23. Does what you see on TV make you want to get out of Ambler and experience somewhere else?

_____

_____

E24. Does what you see on TV make you glad that you live in Ambler?

_____

_____

Thank you very much!

ADULT SURVEY/ Post-Cable Ambler
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID NUMBER: _____

RECORD OF CONTACT ATTEMPTS: STUDY ID NUMBER: _____

	DATE	TIME	COMMENTS
FIRST ATTEMPT			
SECOND ATTEMPT			
THIRD ATTEMPT			

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____ SEX: _____

DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

INTERVIEW START TIME: _____ FINISH TIME: _____

TOTAL MINUTES: _____

DEGREE OF PRIVACY:

☐ Done only with interviewee.

Location of TV in room: _____
Is VCR in room? _____
Was TV on during interview?_____

☐ Done with interviewer, interviewee and helper.

☐ Done with others present. Specify: _____

_____

OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW: 1 2 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

COMMENTS:

CODER: _____ CODE DATE: _____

REVIEWER: _____ DATA ENTRY DATE: _____

Pre-Interview Questions
About Household

1. How many male adults live in this household? (PROMPT: Age 18 and older.)

   ☐

   Male adults

   1a. What are their ages?

   _____

2. How many female adults live in this household?

   ☐

   Female adults

   2a. What are their ages?

   _____

3. How many male children live in this household?

   ☐

   Male children

   3a. What are their ages?

   _____

4. How many female children live in this household?

   ☐

   Female children

   4a. What are their ages?

   _____

5. Of the adults who live here, whose birthday is closest to today?

   _____

   That is the person I would like to interview. (INTERVIEWER, PLEASE NOTE CATEGORY FOR R.)

ADULT SURVEY: Post-Cable Ambler
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER ID _____ INTERVIEW NO. _____

STUDY NO. _____

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Information Technology, University of Alaska Anchorage, is studying the role of television in rural Alaska. We want to find out how important cable television and RATNET are to viewers. To do this, we're conducting a series of interviews in several Northwest Alaska villages. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used in combination with those of other rural Alaskans. We won't be using any names in presenting the survey findings.

We appreciate your help with our survey. You can choose not to take part at all, or not answer some of the questions. But all your answers are important to the success of the study.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION A
TECHNOLOGY

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about the kinds of technology you use.

A1. Many changes have come to Alaska villages in the last few years. Which one do you think has had the greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD A1-3. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the <u>most</u> effect.)

☐

01. AIRPLANES
02. FOUR-WHEELERS
03. SNOWMOBILES
04. BOATS
05. CB RADIOS
06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS
07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS
08. ELECTRICITY
09. TELEPHONE
10. TELEVISION
11. COMPUTERS
12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

98. DON'T KNOW
99. NO ANSWER

A2. Which change do you think has had the second greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the second-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

A3. Which one do you think has had the third greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the third-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

SECTION B
CABLE TELEVISION

Now I'd like to ask you some questions specifically about cable television.

B1. Why did you decide to get cable television? _____

_____

_____

_____

B2. When did cable get to your home? _____

B3. Is cable all you expected it to be?

☐ 1. YES → B3a. In what ways?_____

2. NO → B3b. Why not?_____

9. DK, NA

B4. Which channel do you watch most often? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please list the channel you watch more than any other.)

☐ 01. CNN (ALL NEWS)
02. ESPN (ALL SPORTS)

04. DISCOVERY (SCIENCE AND NATURE SHOWS)

06. HBO (CURRENT MOVIES)

10. RATNET (THE RURAL ALASKA TELEVISION NETWORK)

12. USA (VARIETY, INCLUDING MOVIES, CARTOONS, SPORTS)
13. DISNEY (CHILDREN'S MOVIES, CARTOONS)
98. DK
99. NA

B5. Ambler cable service is $50.00 each month. Do you think this is very high, high, low, very low or about the right amount for the service you now receive?

☐ 1. VERY HIGH
2. HIGH
3. ABOUT RIGHT
4. LOW
5. VERY LOW
9. DK, NA

B6. Have you had to make any changes in your household budget in order to be able to make cable TV payments each month?

☐ 1. YES → B6a. What changes have you made?_____

2. NO
9. DK, NA

B7. Would you like to have more cable channels available?

[ ]
1. YES ——
2. NO
9. DK, NA

B7a. Which ones? _____

_____

B7b. How much more would you be willing to pay per month for more channels? Would you pay nothing, $10 more a month, $20 more a month, $30 more a month, $50 a month, or more than that for additional channels?

[ ]
1. NOTHING
2. $10 MORE/MONTH
3. $20 MORE/MONTH
4. $30 MORE/MONTH
5. $50 MORE/MONTH
6. MORE
9. DK, NA

Here's a list of various places we can find information. (INT'R HANDS R CARD) It may be helpful to refer to it as I ask you the next two questions.

B8. Where would you say you get most of your information about national and international news events?

[ ]
1. FRIENDS
2. FAMILY
3. BOOKS
4. RADIO
5. NEWSPAPERS
6. TELEVISION
7. NEWSLETTERS
8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
9. DK, NA

B9. Which one do you use for most of your news about Alaska?

[ ]
1. FRIENDS
2. FAMILY
3. BOOKS
4. RADIO
5. NEWSPAPERS
6. TELEVISION
7. NEWSLETTERS
8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
9. DK, NA

SECTION C
AMOUNT OF VIEWING

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about how much RATNET and cable television you and your family watch. It may help you to think in terms of the times of day you watch TV.

C1. How many hours did you watch RATNET yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY. IF R HAS DIFFICULTY, REFER TO TV SCHEDULE.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C2. How many hours did you watch RATNET Saturday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C3. How many hours did you watch RATNET Sunday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C4. How many hours did you watch cable channels yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY.) (PROMPT: Not the statewide channel.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C5. How many hours did you watch cable Saturday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C6. How many hours did you watch cable channels on Sunday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C7. How often would you say that you do something else at the same time you watch TV? Would you say that you do something else always, more than half the time, about half the time, less than half the time, or never? (PROMPT: For example, making baskets, fixing something. OR REPEAT THE ANSWERS.)

☐

1. ALWAYS
2. MORE THAN HALF THE TIME
3. ABOUT HALF
4. LESS THAN HALF
5. NEVER
9. DK, NA

IF OTHERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD

C8a. Who mostly decides what television programs are watched in your home? (LET RESPONDENT ANSWER WITHOUT PROMPTING.)

1. RESPONDENT IF MALE
2. RESPONDENT IF FEMALE
3. HUSBAND/BOYFRIEND
4. WIFE/GIRLFRIEND
5. KIDS
6. GRANDMOTHER
7. GRANDFATHER
8. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

C8b. Do you limit the amount of time your kids can watch television?

☐ 1. YES —

C8b1. What are these time limits?_____

_____

2. NO

C8c. Why or why not?

C8d. Do you limit the kinds of television programs your children watch?

☐ 1. YES —

C8d1. What kinds of shows do you not let them watch?_____

_____

_____

C8d2. Why? _____

_____

_____

2. NO —

C8d3. Why not?_____

_____

_____

9. DK, NA

C8e. Do you have any other household rules regarding television viewing?

☐ 1. YES —

C8e1. What are these rules?_____

_____

_____

_____

2. NO

9. DK, NA

C9. Think back to when you had just one channel, the RATNET. Do you <u>now</u> watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV with cable?

☐
1. MORE
2 ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C10. Again think back to when you had just one channel, the RATNET. Do your kids <u>now</u> watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV with cable?

☐
1. MORE
2 ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C11. In what ways do you think cable is different from RATNET? _____

_____

_____

_____

C12. If you had to pay $10 a month for RATNET, would you be willing to do that?

☐
1. YES → C12a. Why? _____
2. NO → C12b. Why? _____
9. DK, NA

C13. Now that you have cable, how important is RATNET to you? Is it very important, important, somewhat important, or not important at all? (PROMPT: REPEAT CHOICES OR SHOW CARD.)

☐
1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

C13a. Why? _____

C14. What kinds of changes do you think you will see in Ambler, now that it has cable TV? _____

_____

_____

_____

C15. Are you Inupiat, other Alaska Native, white, or other?

☐
01. INUPIAT
02. WHITE
03. ALEUT
04. TLINGIT OR HAIDA
05. ATHABASCAN
06. YUPIK
07. BLACK
08. HISPANIC
09. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDS
10. OTHER. SPECIFY_____
99. NA

Ambler has had television for about 10 years.

C16. Thinking about the amount of time you spend hunting, fishing, berry picking and gathering other food, do you spend about the same amount of time, more, or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

C17. Thinking about how children learn traditional Eskimo ways, do they spend about the same amount of time, more or less time learning them now than they did before television?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

C18. Do you visit your friends and relatives about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

C19. Do you go to community gatherings about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

C20. Do you do traditional Eskimo handicrafts ("hobbies" FOR NON-NATIVES) about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

C21. What was your combined household income for last year? (from all sources?)

Thank you very much!

C22. Do you have a VCR?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

C22a. If YES, About how many hours did you watch VCR tapes during the last week?

☐ 9. DK, NA
Hours

ADULT SURVEY/ Post-Cable Ambler
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1991

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID NUMBER: _____

RECORD OF CONTACT ATTEMPTS: STUDY ID NUMBER: _____

	DATE	TIME	COMMENTS
FIRST ATTEMPT			
SECOND ATTEMPT			
THIRD ATTEMPT			

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____ SEX: _____

DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

INTERVIEW START TIME: _____ FINISH TIME: _____

TOTAL MINUTES: _____

DEGREE OF PRIVACY:

☐ Done only with interviewee.

Location of TV in room: _____
Is VCR in room? _____
Was TV on during interview?_____

☐ Done with interviewer, interviewee and helper.

☐ Done with others present. Specify: _____

_____

OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW: 1 2 3 4 5
Poor Excellent

COMMENTS:

CODER: _____ CODE DATE: _____

REVIEWER: _____ DATA ENTRY DATE: _____

Pre-Interview Questions
About Household

1. How many male adults live in this household? (PROMPT: Age 18 and older.)

   ☐
   Male adults

   1a. What are their ages?

   _____

2. How many female adults live in this household?

   ☐
   Female adults

   2a. What are their ages?

   _____

3. How many male children live in this household?

   ☐
   Male children

   3a. What are their ages?

   _____

4. How many female children live in this household?

   ☐
   Female children

   4a. What are their ages?

   _____

5. Of the adults who live here, whose birthday is closest to today?

   _____

   That is the person I would like to interview. (INTERVIEWER, PLEASE NOTE CATEGORY FOR R.)

ADULT SURVEY: Post-Cable Ambler
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER ID _____ INTERVIEW NO. _____

STUDY NO. _____

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Information Technology, University of Alaska Anchorage, is studying the role of television in rural Alaska. We want to find out how important cable television and RATNET are to viewers. To do this, we're conducting a series of interviews in several Northwest Alaska villages. Your answers will be kept confidential and will only be used in combination with those of other rural Alaskans. We won't be using any names in presenting the survey findings.

We appreciate your help with our survey. You can choose not to take part at all, or not answer some of the questions. But all your answers are important to the success of the study.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

SECTION A
TECHNOLOGY

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about the kinds of technology you use.

A1. Many changes have come to Alaska villages in the last few years. Which one do you think has had the greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD A1-3. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the <u>most</u> effect.)

☐

01. AIRPLANES
02. FOUR-WHEELERS
03. SNOWMOBILES
04. BOATS
05. CB RADIOS
06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS
07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS
08. ELECTRICITY
09. TELEPHONE
10. TELEVISION
11. COMPUTERS
12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

98. DON'T KNOW
99. NO ANSWER

A2. Which change do you think has had the second greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the second-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

A3. Which one do you think has had the third greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the third-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

Section B
CABLE and RATNET VIEWING

Now I'd like to ask some questions specifically about cable television.

B1. (If cable is available at R's home): Why did you decide **not** to get cable?

_____

_____

_____

B2. (If cable is not available at R's home): Would you connect to cable if it was available in this part of town?

_____YES
_____NO

B2a. Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

B3. What kinds of changes do you think you will see in Ambler, now that it has cable TV? _____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION C
AMOUNT OF TV VIEWING

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about how much RATNET and cable television you watch. It may be helpful to think of how much you watch television at different times of the day.

C1. How many hours did you watch RATNET yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW ON MONDAY. IF R HAS DIFFICULTY, REFER TO TV SCHEDULE.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C2. How many hours did you watch RATNET Saturday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C3. How many hours did you watch RATNET Sunday?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C4. How often do you go to friends' or relatives' homes in Ambler to watch cable? Would you say you go almost every day, two to three times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or never? (CARD)

5. ALMOST EVERY DAY
4. TWO TO THREE TIMES A WEEK
3. ONCE A WEEK
2. LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK
1. NEVER
9. DK, NA

C5. (If R visits others' homes to watch cable): How many hours did you watch cable channels yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY.) (PROMPT: Not the statewhide channel.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C6. (If R visits others' homes to watch cable): How many hours did you watch cable channels Saturday? ~~("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY.) (PROMPT: Not the statewhide channel.)~~

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C7. (If R visits others' homes to watch cable): How many hours did you watch cable channels yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY.) (PROMPT: Not the statewhide channel.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C8. Do you have a VCR (video cassette recorder)?

☐ 1. Yes 2. No 9. DK, NA

C8a. IF YES, about how may hours did you watch VCR tapes during the last week?

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

SECTION D
SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

Ambler has had television for about 14 years.

D1. Thinking about the amount of time you spend hunting, fishing, berry picking and gathering other food, do you spend about the same amount of time, more, or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

D2. Thinking about how children learn traditional Eskimo ways, do they spend about the same amount of time, more or less time learning them now than they did before television?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

D3. Do you visit your friends and relatives about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

D4. Do you go to community gatherings about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

D5. Do you do traditional Eskimo handicrafts ("hobbies" FOR NON-NATIVES) about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

D6. What was your combined household income for last year from all sources? _____

D7. Are you Inupiat, other Alaska Native, white, or other?

☐
01. INUPIAT
02. WHITE
03. ALEUT
04. TLINGIT OR HAIDA
05. ATHABASCAN
06. YUPIK
07. BLACK
08. HISPANIC
09. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDS
10. OTHER. SPECIFY_____
99. NA

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
TAIKUU!

ADULT SURVEY/ Noorvik
"The Role of Television in Rural Alaska"

UAA Center for Information Technology
1991

INTERVIEWER: _____ ID NUMBER: _____

RECORD OF CONTACT ATTEMPTS: STUDY ID NUMBER: _____

	DATE	TIME	COMMENTS
FIRST ATTEMPT			
SECOND ATTEMPT			
THIRD ATTEMPT			

RESPONDENT'S NAME: _____ SEX: _____

DATE: _____ TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

INTERVIEW START TIME: _____ FINISH TIME: _____

TOTAL MINUTES: _____

DEGREE OF PRIVACY:

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☐ Done with interviewer, interviewee and helper.

☐ Done with others present. Specify: _____

Location of TV in room: _____
Is VCR in room? _____
Was TV on during interview?_____

OVERALL QUALITY OF INTERVIEW: 1 2 3 4 5
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COMMENTS:

CODER: _____ CODE DATE: _____

REVIEWER: _____ DATA ENTRY DATE: _____

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About Household

1. How many male adults live in this household? (PROMPT: Age 18 and older.)

   ☐
   Male adults

   1a. What are their ages?

   _____

2. How many female adults live in this household?

   ☐
   Female adults

   2a. What are their ages?

   _____

3. How many male children live in this household?

   ☐
   Male children

   3a. What are their ages?

   _____

4. How many female children live in this household?

   ☐
   Female children

   4a. What are their ages?

   _____

5. Of the adults who live here, whose birthday is closest to today?

   _____

   That is the person I would like to interview. (INTERVIEWER, PLEASE NOTE CATEGORY FOR R.)

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☐

01. AIRPLANES
02. FOUR-WHEELERS
03. SNOWMOBILES
04. BOATS
05. CB RADIOS
06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS
07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS
08. ELECTRICITY
09. TELEPHONE
10. TELEVISION
11. COMPUTERS
12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____

98. DON'T KNOW
99. NO ANSWER

A2. Which change do you think has had the second greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the second-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

A3. Which one do you think has had the third greatest effect on your way of life? (SHOW CARD. PROMPT: Please select the one that has had the third-most effect.)

☐	01. AIRPLANES	98. DON'T KNOW
	02. FOUR-WHEELERS	99. NO ANSWER
	03. SNOWMOBILES	
	04. BOATS	
	05. CB RADIOS	
	06. OIL, PROPANE, GAS HEATING SYSTEMS	
	07. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS	
	08. ELECTRICITY	
	09. TELEPHONE	
	10. TELEVISION	
	11. COMPUTERS	
	12. OTHER. SPECIFY _____	

A4. How many working TV sets do you have in your home?

☐ SETS

9. DON'T KNOW, NO ANSWER

A5. Can you remember a time when you didn't have TV?

☐

1. YES → A5a. How do you think your life was different before you had television? _____
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A6. Do you have a video cassette recorder?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A6a. About how many hours did you watch VCR tapes during the last week?

☐ HOURS
99. DK, NA

A7. Do you have a camcorder?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A8. About how many hours did you listen to radio yesterday?

☐ HOURS
99. DK, NA

A9. Have you ever used a computer?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A9a. Do you have a computer in your home?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

Do you use the computer for

A9a1. Playing games?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a2. Doing school work?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a3. Word processing?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a4. Doing work for an employer?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a5. Spreadsheets/personal bookkeeping?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a6. Writing computer programs?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a7. Electronic mail?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO

A9a8. Other uses? Please specify _____

☐ 1. YES _____
2. NO _____

A10. Have you ever used a fax machine?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

A11. About how many long-distance phone calls did you make in the last two weeks?

☐ 98. NO PHONE
99. NOT ASCERTAINED

CALLS

A12. How often do you read a newspaper? Would you say you read one never, less than once a week, 2 to 3 times a week, or almost every day? (SHOW CARD)

☐ 1. NEVER
2. LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK
3. ONCE A WEEK
4. 2 TO 3 TIMES A WEEK
5. ALMOST EVERY DAY
9. DK, NA

UNLESS R SAYS "NEVER"

A12a. Which newspapers do you read most often?_____

_____

(IF R SAYS "THE TIMES" ASK: Is that the Tundra Times or the Anchorage Times? IF R SAYS "TUNDRA," ASK: Is that the Tundra Times or the Tundra Drums?)

Here's a list of various places we can find information. (SHOW CARD A13-14. It may be helpful to refer to the card as I ask you the next two questions.)

A13. Where would you say you get most of your information about national and international news events?

☐	1. FRIENDS	5. NEWSPAPERS
	2. FAMILY	6. TELEVISION
	3. BOOKS	7. NEWSLETTERS
	4. RADIO	8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
		9. DK, NA

A14. Which one do you use for most of your news about Alaska?

☐	1. FRIENDS	5. NEWSPAPERS
	2. FAMILY	6. TELEVISION
	3. BOOKS	7. NEWSLETTERS
	4. RADIO	8. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
		9. DK, NA

Considering radio, magazines, newspapers, books, and television, which one (SHOW CARD A15-19)

A15. Do you use most often?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A16. Is most enjoyable?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A17. Is most educational?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A18. Is least important to you?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A19. Is most important to you?

☐	1. RADIO	4. NEWSPAPERS
	2. TV	5. BOOKS
	3. MAGAZINES	9. DK, NA

A20. To fill your free time, what do you do most often? (LET RESPONDENT ANSWER WITHOUT PROMPTING.)

☐	1. READ
	2. GO TO COMMUNITY, CHURCH OR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES
	3. LISTEN TO RADIO
	4. WATCH TELEVISION
	5. DO ARTS OR CRAFTS
	6. HOBBIES
	7. GO HUNTING, FISHING OR TRAPPING
	8. PLAY SPORTS
	0. OTHER, SPECIFY _____
	9. DK, NA

SECTION B
CABLE TELEVISION

Now I'd like to ask you some questions specifically about cable television.

B1. Do you have cable television?

☐	1. YES
	2. NO —— SKIP TO QUESTION B10 ON PAGE 9

B2. What were your reasons for getting cable? _____

_____

_____

B3. When did you first connect to cable? _____

B4. Which channel do you watch most often? (SHOW CARD B4. PROMPT: Please list the channel you watch more than any other.)

☐	01. CNN (ALL NEWS)
	02. ESPN (ALL SPORTS)
	04. DISCOVERY (SCIENCE AND NATURE SHOWS)
	05. TNT (MOVIES, NBA, AND OTHER SPORTS)
	06. HBO (CURRENT MOVIES)
	07. THE FAMILY CHANNEL
	09. WTBS (TV STATION FROM ATLANTA)
	10. RATNET (THE RURAL ALASKA TELEVISION NETWORK)
	11. THE MOVIE CHANNEL
	98. DK
	99. NA

B5. Is cable all you expected it to be?

☐ 1. YES — B5a. In what ways? _____

2. NO — B5b. Why not? _____

9. DK, NA

B6. Noorvik cable service is $50.00 each month. Do you think this is very high, high, low, very low or about the right amount for the service you now receive? (CARD)

☐
1. VERY HIGH
2. HIGH
3. ABOUT RIGHT
4. LOW
5. VERY LOW
9. DK, NA

B7. Have you had to make any changes in your household budget in order to be able to make cable TV payments each month?

☐ 1. YES — B7a. What changes have you made? _____

2. NO
9. DK, NA

B8. Would you like to have more cable channels available?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

B8a. Which ones? _____

B8b. How much more would you be willing to pay per month for more channels? Would you pay nothing, $10 more a month, $20 more a month, $30 more a month, $50 a month, or more than that for additional channels?

☐
1. NOTHING (CARD B8b)
2. $10 MORE/MONTH
3. $20 MORE/MONTH
4. $30 MORE/MONTH
5. $50 MORE/MONTH
6. MORE
9. DK, NA

B9. Have you ever cut off your cable subscription for a period of time?

☐ 1. YES ——— B9a. Why did you cut it off? _____

2. NO
9. DK, NA

(SKIP TO SECTION C. REMAINING QUESTIONS IN SECTION B ARE FOR NON-CABLE HOUSEHOLDS ONLY.)

B10. Why do you not have cable? _____

B11. Have you had cable in the past?

☐ 1. YES ——— B11a. What were your reasons for getting cable then? _____

2. NO
9. DK, NA

B12. How often do you go to friends' or relatives' homes in Noorvik to watch cable? Would you say you go almost every day, two to three times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or never? (CARD A12, B11)

☐ 5. ALMOST EVERY DAY
4. TWO TO THREE TIMES A WEEK
3. ONCE A WEEK
2. LESS THAN ONCE A WEEK
1. NEVER
9. DK, NA

SECTION C
FAMILY VIEWING

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about family TV viewing.

IF OTHERS LIVE IN HOUSEHOLD

C1a. Who mostly decides what television programs are watched in your home? (LET RESPONDENT ANSWER WITHOUT PROMPTING.)

☐

1. RESPONDENT IF MALE
2. RESPONDENT IF FEMALE
3. HUSBAND/BOYFRIEND
4. WIFE/GIRLFRIEND
5. KIDS
6. GRANDMOTHER
7. GRANDFATHER
8. OTHER. SPECIFY

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

C1b. Do you limit the amount of time your kids can watch television?

☐ 1. YES

C1b1. What are these time limits?____

_____

_____

2. NO

C1c. Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C1d. Do you limit the kinds of television programs your children watch?

☐ 1. YES

C1d1. What kinds of shows do you not let them watch? _____

C1d2. Why? _____

2. NO

C1d3. Why not? _____

9. DK, NA

C1e. Do you have any other household rules regarding television viewing?

☐ 1. YES

C1e1. What are these rules? _____

2. NO

9. DK, NA

Now I'd like to ask some questions about how much RATNET and cable television you watch. It may be helpful to think of how much television you watch at different times of day.

C2. How many hours did you watch RATNET yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW ON MONDAY. IF R HAS DIFFICULTY, REFER TO TV SCHEDULE.)

☐ 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C3. How many hours did you watch RATNET Saturday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C4. How many hours did you watch RATNET Sunday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C5. How many hours did you watch cable channels yesterday? ("last Friday" IF INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE ON MONDAY.) (PROMPT: Not the statewide channel.)

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C6. How many hours did you watch cable Saturday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C7. How many hours did you watch cable channels on Sunday?

[ ] 99. DK, NA

HOURS

C8. How often would you say that you do something else at the same time you watch TV? Would you say that you do something else always, more than half the time, about half the time, less than half the time, or never? (PROMPT: For example, making baskets, fixing something. CARD C8.)

[ ]
1. ALWAYS
2. MORE THAN HALF THE TIME
3. ABOUT HALF
4. LESS THAN HALF
5. NEVER
9. DK, NA

C9. Think back to when you had just one channel, the RATNET. Do you now watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV with cable? (CARD C9-D8.)

[ ]
1. MORE
2 ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C10. Again think back to when you had just one channel, the RATNET. Do your kids now watch more, less, or about the same amount of TV with cable?

[ ] 1. MORE
2 ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

C11. Do you think kids watch too much television?

[ ] 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

C12. Do you think most adults watch too much television?

[ ] 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

SECTION D
RATNET CONTENT

Now I want to ask you some questions about the kinds of programs you see on RATNET.

D1. About how many family shows do you think RATNET should have? Do you think it should have what it has now, should it have more, or should it have less? (PROMPT: For example, "The Cosby Show." CARD D1-D8.)

[ ] 1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D2. About how much sports should RATNET have? (PROMPT: About what it has now, more, or less?)

[ ] 1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D3. About how much Alaska news should RATNET have?

[ ] 1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D4. About how much news about state government should RATNET have?

1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D5. How many shows about rural Alaska should RATNET have?

1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D6. How many shows about Alaska Natives and Native events?

1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D7. How many cartoons should RATNET have?

1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D8. And how many educational programs for young people and adults? For example, programs like "Sesame Street," "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" or "NOVA."

1. MORE
2. WHAT IT HAS NOW
3. LESS
9. DK, NA

D9. How important to you are the RATNET weather reports? (SHOW CARD D9-10, D16. PROMPT: Very important, important, somewhat important, not important at all.)

1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

D10. How important to you is the Statewide News? (CARD D9-10, D16)

[ ]
1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

D11. The number of beer commercials on RATNET, do you think that is a problem?

[ ]
1. YES, A PROBLEM
2, NO, NOT A PROBLEM
3. DK, NA

D12. The amount of violence on TV, do you think that is a problem?

[ ]
1. YES, A PROBLEM
2, NO, NOT A PROBLEM
3. DK, NA

(PROMPT: Both RATNET and cable, not VCR tapes.)

D13. If you had to choose between cable and RATNET, which would you choose?

[ ]
1. CABLE
2. RATNET
9. DK, NA

D14. If you had only cable, and not RATNET, do you think you'd be missing anything?

[ ]
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

D14a. What kinds of shows do you think you'd be missing on TV if you had cable and not RATNET? (REPEAT QUESTION IF NECESSARY. PROVIDE NO OTHER PROMPT. CHECK ALL RESPONSES R GIVES.)

___ ALASKA WEATHER
___ ALASKA NEWS
___ PUBLIC BROADCASTING PROGRAMS
___ PROGRAMS ABOUT ALASKA NATIVES
___ PROGRAMS ABOUT RURAL ALASKA
___ ALCOHOL DISCLAIMER
___ IDITAROD SLED-DOG RACE
___ ALASKA BASKETBALL COVERAGE
___ AFN CONVENTION COVERAGE
___ EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS
___ NOTHING
___ OTHER. SPECIFY _____

_____

D15. If you had to pay $10 a month for RATNET, would you be willing to do that?

☐ 1. YES → D15a. Why? _____

2. NO → D15b. Why? _____

9. DK, NA

D16. There's been some talk in recent years about the possibility of taking RATNET off the air. How important is RATNET to you? Is it very important, important, somewhat important, or not important at all? (PROMPT: REPEAT CHOICES OR SHOW CARD D9-D10, D16.)

☐ 1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
9. DK, NA

SECTION E
DEMOGRAPHICS

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about yourself.

E1. What is your age?

☐ 99. NA

YEARS

E2. How long have you lived in Noorvik? (IF R SAYS "ALL MY LIFE," WRITE AGE IN BOX)

☐ 99. NA

YEARS

E3. Have you ever lived anywhere else?

☐ 1. YES → E3a. Where? _____

2. NO
9. NA

E4. How many years of school have you completed?

☐ 99. DK, NA
YEARS

E5. To earn money, what do you and the people who live in your home do?

Interviewee _____
Others in home _____

E. 5a. What was your combined household income for last year? (from all sources?) _____

E6. Have you visited other Alaska towns or villages in the past year?

☐ 1. YES → E6a. Where? _____

IF TRAVEL TO ANCHORAGE, FAIRBANKS, JUNEAU:
E6b. How often do you go there? _____

2. NO
9. NA

E7. Have you travelled outside Alaska within the last year?

☐ 1. YES → E7a. Where? _____

E7b. How often do you go there? _____

2. NO
9. NA

E8. If you could live anywhere, including Noorvik, where would you like to live?

☐ 1. NOORVIK
2. ELSEWHERE IN ALASKA. SPECIFY _____
3. OUTSIDE ALASKA. SPECIFY _____

E8a. Why? _____

E9. Are you Inupiat, other Alaska Native, white or other?

☐
01. INUPIAT
02. WHITE
03. ALEUT
04. TLINGIT OR HAIDA
05. ATHABASCAN
06. YUPIK
07. BLACK
08. HISPANIC
09. ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDS
10. OTHER. SPECIFY
99. NA

SECTION F
SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

I have just a few more questions about television.

F1. If you were making a TV program to be shown in Alaska villages, what do you think it should be about?_____

_____

_____

F2. How do you think television has changed life in Noorvik? _____

_____

_____

_____

F3. Does what you see on TV make you want to get out of Noorvik and experience somewhere else?_____

_____

_____

_____

F4. Does what you see on TV make you glad that you live in Noorvik?

_____

_____

F5. Do you learn things from TV?

☐
1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

F5a. What kinds of things do you learn?_____

_____

_____

IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN

F6. Do your children learn anything from TV?

☐ 1. YES
2. NO
9. DK, NA

F6a. What kinds of things? _____

Noorvik has had television for about 10 years.

F7. Thinking about the amount of time you spend hunting, fishing, berry picking and gathering other food, do you spend about the same amount of time, more, or less now than before you had TV?

☐ 1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

F8. Thinking about how children learn traditional Eskimo ways, do they spend about the same amount of time, more or less time learning them now than they did before television?

☐ 1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

F9. Do you visit your friends and relatives about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐ 1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

F10. Do you go to community gatherings about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

F11. Do you do traditional Eskimo handicrafts ("hobbies" FOR NON-NATIVES) about the same amount of time, more or less now than before you had TV?

☐
1. MORE TIME
2. ABOUT THE SAME
3. LESS TIME
9. DK, NA

Thank you very much!

E10. What languages do you speak?

1. ENGLISH
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ ONLY
4. OTHER? SPECIFY_____

IF PERSON SPEAKS ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ, OR OTHER LANGUAGE:

E11. What language do you mostly speak at home?

1. ENGLISH
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ ONLY
4. OTHER

E12. What language do you mostly speak with your friends?

1. ENGLISH
2. ENGLISH AND INUPIAQ
3. INUPIAQ
4. OTHER

E13. Do you read the Inupiaq langauge?

1. YES
2. NO

E13. How important is it that your children be able to speak the Eskimo language? (CARD)

1. VERY IMPORTANT
2. IMPORTANT
3. SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
4. NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL

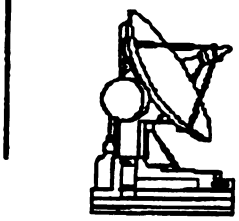
APPENDIX C:

RATNET SCHEDULE
NOVEMBER 1991

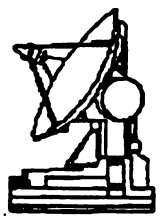
RATNET DAYTIME SCHEDULE

(DAYTIME - MONDAY THRU FRIDAY)

5:30 AM	THIS MORNING'S BUSINESS
6:00	ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING
7:00	GOOD MORNING AMERICA
9:00	CARTOONS
10:00	FAMILY FEUD
10:30	CLASSIC CONCENTRATION
11:00	SESAME STREET
12:00	ALL MY CHILDREN
1:00 PM	THE PRICE IS RIGHT
2:00	GENERAL HOSPITAL
3:00	MR. ROGERS
3:30	GOVERNOR'S WINDOW
4:00	MON. TUE. THURS, FRI
	(TINY TOON ADVENTURES)
	WED - THE ALASKA REPORT
4:30	MON - PETER PAN & THE PIRATES
	TUE - READING RAINBOW
	WED - MERRIE MEDOLIES
	THU - OWL-TV
	FRI - NEWTON'S APPLE
5:00	3-2-1 CONTACT
5:30	NBC NEWS
6:00	STATEWIDE NEWS (KIMO/CH 13)



Satellite Television Schedule
Week of November 17, 1991



SUNDAY 11/17

6:00 AM	BUSINESS WORLD
6:30	SUNDAY TODAY
8:00	MEET THE PRESS
8:30	NFL TODAY
9:00	NFL FOOTBALL (DOUBLEHEADER)
3:00 PM	CARTOON
3:30	RAIN COUNTRY
4:00	ALASKA HOME AND GARDEN
4:30	AUSTIN CITY LIMITS
5:30	NATIONAL NEWS
6:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
6:30	ALASKA VETERANS UPDATE
7:00	60 MINUTES
8:00	MURDER, SHE WROTE
9:00	CBS MINI-SERIES: IN A CHILD'S NAME (1 OF 2)
11:00	FLESH'N BLOOD
11:30	COMIC STRIP LIVE
12:30 AM	MARRIED WITH CHILDREN
1:00	BEST OF PEOPLE'S COURT

MONDAY 11/18

7:00 PM	NFL FOOTBALL (BUFFALO VS MIAMI)
10:00	THE ROYAL FAMILY
10:30	ASSIGNMENT ALASKA
11:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
11:30	MOVIE: FRANKENSTEIN: THE COLLEGE YEARS

TUESDAY 11/19

4:00 PM	CBS SCHOOLBREAK SPECIAL (DEDICATED TO THE ONE I LOVE)
7:00	STEP BY STEP
7:30	BROOKLYN BRIDGE
8:00	CBS MINI-SERIES: IN A CHILD'S NAME (2 OF 2)
10:00	UNSOLVED MYSTERIES
11:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
11:30	ABC NIGHTLINE
12:00	I'LL FLY AWAY
1:00 AM	AMERICAN DETECTIVE

WEDNESDAY 11/20

7:00 PM	FULL HOUSE
7:30	AMERICA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS
8:00	CHEERS
8:30	GROWING PAINS
9:00	QUANTUM LEAP
10:00	L. A. LAW
11:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
11:30	AMERICA'S MOST WANTED
12:30 AM	SISTERS

THURSDAY 11/21

7:00 PM	DINOSAURS
7:30	MAJOR DAD
8:00	EMPTY NEST
8:30	NURSES
9:00	MACGYVER
10:00	THE CAROL BURNETT SHOW
11:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
11:30	ABC NIGHTLINE
12:00	HOMEFRONT
1:00 AM	DEAR JOHN

FRIDAY 11/22

7:00 PM	THE WONDER YEARS
7:30	THE COSBY SHOW
8:00	RESCUE 911
9:00	20/20
10:00	NORTHERN EXPOSURE
11:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
11:30	COPS
12:30 AM	REASONABLE DOUBTS

SATURDAY 11/23

6:00 AM	CARTOONS
8:00	ABC'S COLLEGE FOOTBALL (DOUBLEHEADER)
3:00 PM	CARTOON
3:30	THE INFINITE VOYAGE (CRISIS IN THE ATMOSPHERE)
4:30	DREXELL'S CLASS
5:00	FAMILY MATTERS
5:30	NATIONAL NEWS
6:00	CHANNEL 2 NEWS
6:30	STAR TREK: T H E N E X T G E N E R A T I O N
7:30	MURPHY BROWN
8:00	BOB NEWHART ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL
9:00	A PARTY FOR RICHARD PRYOR
11:00	HOME IMPROVEMENT
11:30	SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE
1:00 AM	NIGHT COURT

CBS SCHOOLBREAK SPECIAL

"DEDICATED TO THE ONE I LOVE" IS A NEW SCHOOLBREAK SPECIAL EPISODE ABOUT A TEENAGE GIRL COPING WITH A FORMER BOYFRIEND'S DEATH AND HER SUBSEQUENT DISCOVERY THAT HE HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO AIDS.

WATCH IT - TUESDAY 4PM

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