Improving climate change reporting in Indigenous communities with conciliatory journalism

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ABSTRACT

Improving climate change reporting in Indigenous communities with conciliatory journalism

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This research-creation thesis explores how climate change reporting in Indigenous communities can be improved by integrating elements of conciliatory journalism. This involves the active use of conciliatory journalism principles, as well as visual and reconciliation journalism, and then reflective observation on the reporting undertaken in an Indigenous community. This work draws inspiration from Hautakangas & Ahva (2018) and Salas & Stevens (2021).

The project involved travel to Inukjuak, a community in Nunavik, Quebec, to carry out these observations. Inukjuak is located roughly 1500 km north of Montreal and is a community only accessible by boat or plane. The team for the trip involved three other people: Journalism professor Aphrodite Salas, the team leader; undergraduate student Luca Caruso-Moro (who also works at CTV Montreal), and undergraduate student Virginie Ann (who at the time worked at Canadian Press). The research-creation components involve the collaborative creation of a short documentary *"Innavik: Leading the Way to a Clean Energy Future*"; a video explaining Inukjuak's past titled *"Simeone Nalukturuk, in his own words"* (edited by Luca Caruso-Moro); a text piece (written by Virginie Ann); and the production of a conciliatory-informed photography portfolio (which I created). The written component of this thesis involves a reflection on the reporting notes taken in the field, as well as a reflection on the documentary creation process. The discussion is an autoethnographic analysis of the process behind reporting a piece of conciliatory-informed journalism in the community of Inukjuak. It also looks at the challenges behind creating this piece of visual journalism in the editing room. The

goal is to robustly explain how a conciliatory-informed approach was employed both in the field and during the journalism creation process.

The documentary and photography centres on the self-determination of the community to overcome the challenges of building a run-of-river hydroelectric project in the Arctic to reduce or eliminate their reliance on diesel fuel imports.

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Introduction

Climate change is one of the most pressing concerns of our time, and the responsibility of communicating related issues to the public in a manner that can easily be understood rests in part on the shoulders of journalists. Science and environmental beat journalists are in a good position to produce coverage that not only captures the complexities of climate science and policy, but which also translates these complexities in ways that lay audiences might find compelling (Gibson et al., 2016). To address some of the criticisms of science and environmental journalism—specifically within environment and climate change reporting (Bourassa, 2013; Boykoff, 2011; Gibson et al., 2016; Willig et al., 2021)—this thesis draws on journalistic techniques employed in conciliatory journalism and visual journalism to explore how they can be integrated when reporting on climate stories in Indigenous communities.

The reporting in this project focuses on the building of a hydroelectric facility in Inukjuak—the first of its kind in Arctic Quebec. Called the Innavik Hydroelectric Project, it is a partnership between the Pituvik Land Holding Corporation (an Inuit-led corporation), Hydro-Québec and Montreal-based renewable energy company Innergex. Originally initiated in 2008 by Pituvik, construction on the 7.5 megawatt dam began in 2020, with construction slated to end in 2023. The energy produced from the facility is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and replace Inukjuak's reliance on diesel for fuel. Revenue from the project is to be used to meet community, social, educational and traditional needs of community members (Innavik Hydro, 2017).

This is a research-creation thesis, which means that it is not a traditional research paper but rather an autoethnographic reflection and exploration of research concepts through the production of journalistic work.

Criticisms of climate change reporting

Environmental journalism has been specifically criticized for framing stories as conflict, and for having a narrow perspective by only quoting scientists and "experts" (Bourassa, 2013). Various authors have suggested looking outside the traditional source hierarchy to address the latter by seeking out non-traditional sources (Karlberg, 1997; Bourassa, 2013), such as Indigenous communities (Robie & Marbrook, 2020). With regards to conflict framing, conciliatory journalism—along with solutions journalism—provides an alternative that this thesis will explore.

Conciliatory journalism

Conciliatory journalism is a form of journalism that aims to ease social tensions rather than exacerbate conflict (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). The goal is to discuss controversial topics in ways that increase shared understanding of those topics, thereby seeking to avoid fuelling a conflict and aggression in public discussion (Democratic Innovations, 2019). The three principles of conciliatory journalism include: (i) clarifying tensions (rather than reporting them as disputes); (ii) encouraging listening and dialogue in journalistic endeavours and public discussions; and (iii) creating a trusting environment where people are safe to discuss social problems that are conflict prone (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). As an emerging model of journalism, it has roots in socially responsible forms of journalism—namely public journalism (Ahva, 2010), constructive journalism (Haagerup, 2014), and participatory journalism (Singer et al., 2011)—and mediation techniques (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). Its application has so far occurred between some media organizations and journalism projects in Finland, with one such project focusing on difficulties the Finnish media had on reporting issues related to the Indigenous minority of Sámi people in Lapland (Leukumaavaara, 2017).

Reconciliation and journalism

The stereotyping and misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and issues in the media has been a major problem and has caused great harm in Canada for generations (TRC, 2015). Indigenous peoples have been consistently framed as inherently inferior to a "more advanced" white culture (Todorova, 2016). In her analysis of media coverage of mercury contamination in Grassy Narrows First Nation, Stevens (2020) observes that the media "lend to the perpetuation of the idea that Indigenous peoples are still inferior and in need of colonial guidance." This issue has a history of academic study, with work addressing topics such as the misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in media coverage of Quebec's Oka crisis (Harding, 2006; Skea, 1994) and Ontario's Ipperwash crisis (Miller, 2008). More recently, scholars have analysed media coverage of the We'suwet'n land defence and Indigenous opposition to the Trans Mountain Pipeline, referring to the latter as a "Vietnam-like quagmire" (Budd, 2021). In this paper, I will reflect on the media's representation of Indigenous peoples; the criticisms of climate reporting; and the process of journalism creation in terms of how conciliatory journalism principles are best followed in Inukjuak. This focus is also novel because to my knowledge, it will be the first attempt to link conciliatory journalism, reconciliation, and visual journalism to issues in climate change reporting in Inukjuak, Nunavik.

It is important for environmental reporters to keep in mind the colonial biases that exist within the media when writing their stories (Callison & Young, 2021). Often times journalists reporting on Indigenous topics can fall into the mindset of "giving a voice to the voiceless". This just goes to reinforce colonial biases and power structures, and journalists don't realise the moral implications of claiming to speak for others (Callison & Young, 2021). It is important to point out that through this journalism project, we are not telling the story of the people in Inukjuak. Rather, we have been privileged enough to share the story, and this has all been done in collaboration with the community.

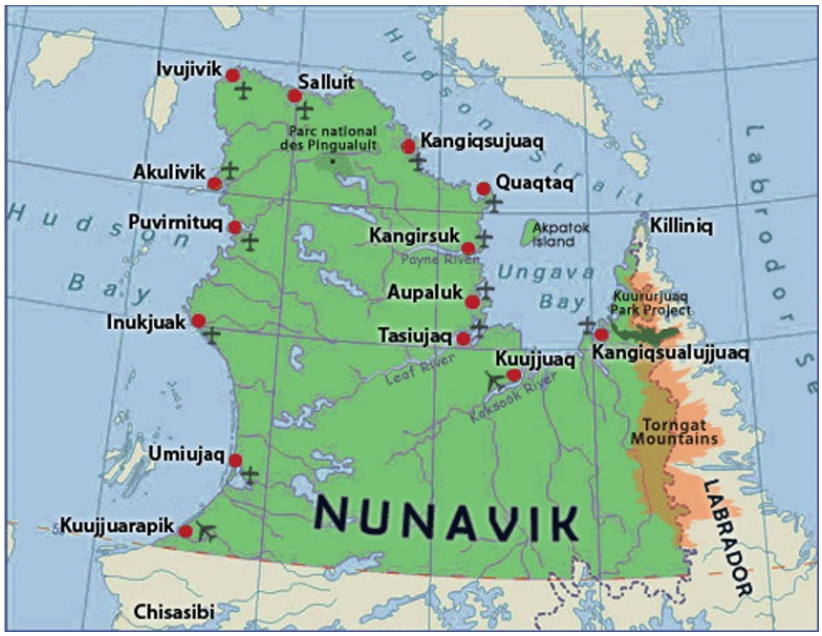
Indigenous peoples usually appear not as representatives or spokespersons speaking on their own terms, but as symbols to illustrate a story on a newsworthy event or theme (Mason, 2012). As Anishinaabe journalist Duncan McCue put it, "Indigenous peoples only receive news coverage when they are drumming, dancing, drunk, or dead" (Budd, 2021). Journalism that focuses on conciliatory journalism (Leukumaavaara, 2017; Salas & Stevens, 2021) and reconciliation (Stevens, 2020; Buswa, 2021) looks to move away from this stereotypical framing of reporting by facilitating collaboration between journalists and Indigenous peoples on stories which concern them (Salas & Stevens, 2021).

These issues are distinctly important in climate reporting: when it comes to dealing with the climate crisis in Canada, the participation and leadership of Indigenous peoples is necessary given the overlap of Indigenous territories and carbon sinks (Townsend et al., 2020). A carbon sink is an area that absorbs more CO_2 from the atmosphere than it releases, such as forests. Stefanelli et al. (2019) has specifically written about this need with reference to climate change and reconciliation efforts in Canada. While using scientists as sources has been noted to lend a certain degree of accuracy to environmental stories, it is often argued that environmental journalists need to expand their sourcing practices to feature non-traditional voices to improve the narrow framing of stories (Nettlefold & Pecl, 2020).

Visual Journalism

In keeping with this ideal of collaboration and seeking out non-traditional voices, I wanted to create a cinema verité styled documentary that would allow Indigenous peoples to share their story on their own terms. Cinéma verité is where the journalist is not present, but rather, the voices of the people in the story drive it. However due to challenges in the documentary creation process, my team and I had to drop the verité approach—I will delve into this more in the discussion and explain what style we opted for instead and why.

Video as a medium is an essential part of how news organizations tell stories; it is the language in which audiences—especially younger audiences—increasingly communicate (Savitt, 2016). This project also explored photo narratives as a storytelling tool, because "pictures have always been the surest way of conveying an idea" (Lippmann, 1922).



Map of Nunavik (Croteau, 2011).

Location of Inukjuak in relation to Montreal (screenshot from our documentary). The dotted red line shows the shipping route for diesel, goods and supplies.

Research Question

The aim for this research-creation thesis is to ask: ***How can conciliatory journalism improve climate change reporting in Indigenous communities***? My interest is to deepen conversations on various journalistic styles and how they might help journalists who report Indigenous stories. Three areas are of particular relevance to this inquiry:

a) **Conciliatory journalism** (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018) and how it can be practically used while reporting a story of climate leadership in the Inuit community of Inukjuak. This area considers how a story might be shared without framing it as a conflict and still make it interesting; what challenges may arise in creating a supportive and trusting environment if you are not Indigenous; how much collaboration is necessary when working in Indigenous communities and what this collaboration looks like. This area is also informed by solutions journalism (McIntyre, 2019) and visual solutions journalism (Midberry & Dahmen, 2020) as a comparator to conciliatory journalism, with specific reference to what effect framing Indigenous stories as solutions rather than problems (the latter being seen in mainstream media) has on the journalistic process.

b) **Reconciliation and journalism** and the need for this type of journalistic work (Blewett, 2017; Salas & Stevens 2021; Stevens, 2020). This area is interested in how Indigenous peoples sharing their stories may improve the quality of the climate change reporting; reflections on what reconciliation in climate change reporting means; and avoiding stereotypes when reporting in Indigenous communities.

c) **Visual journalism/storytelling** and how documentary and different photography styles impact this work. This area is interested in how to effectively communicate Indigenous stories; which documentary styles positively interface with climate change reporting in Indigenous communities; the use of photo narratives; and the advantage and challenges of sharing an Indigenous story visually rather than in a written form.

Literature Review

This paper seeks to make connections across different journalistic styles and show how they might help when reporting on climate issues in Indigenous communities. These include (a) conciliatory journalism, (b) reconciliation and journalism, and (c) visual journalism.

Conciliatory journalism

Drawing from mediation techniques, conciliatory journalism strives to enhance human interactions and enable all parties to better understand each other and the conflict at hand (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). It does not aim to be a peacemaker or bridge-builder but rather offers help in supporting dialogue between different voices and people's "right to be understood" (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018).

Solutions journalism is a rigorous and fact-driven approach to reporting credible solutions to social problems (Walth, 2019), and includes four main pillars: response to a social problem; insight on solutions; evidence of results; and limitations of the solution (SJN, 2017). It is similar to conciliatory journalism in the sense that it tries to balance the overemphasis on problems and negativity, and instead offers an audience forward-looking perspectives (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). The difference, however, is that where conciliatory journalism aims to provide room for constructive disagreements, it does not strive for consensus or solutions (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). In a study of the public's perception towards climate change journalism, Willig et al. (2021) found that the journalistic functions of providing solutions to everyday life were valued more in climate journalism compared to journalism in general.

Solutions journalism does not come without its criticisms. One of the major critiques is that solutions stories may seem overly optimistic, as if the response will simply happen on its own (Walth, 2019). Benesch (1998) claims that solutions journalism "does not put heat on leaders

who have failed to act in the past or who need to take up solutions in the present" and worries that solutions reporting can be oversimplified and made into promotional pieces.

Reconciliation and journalism

Reconciliation and conciliatory journalism both aim to establish relationships which create and support a trusting environment (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018; TCPS 2, 2018). One aspect of reconciliation in journalism that can enhance climate change reporting in Indigenous territories is seeking out non-traditional voices in stories, considering Indigenous peoples tend to be underrepresented in mainstream media (Mason, 2012). Whenever Indigenous peoples are represented in a story, they are normally portrayed in a stereotypical way: as victims, deviants, law and order problems, criminals, or dysfunctional (Mason, 2012).

Collaboration is key when working on stories with Indigenous peoples because Indigenous peoples are the experts of their own realities and histories (Swiftwolfe, 2019).

Rather than just relying on scientists—who at times have their own agenda and may hold back information (Bourassa 2013)—amplifying Indigenous voices allows an audience to get a different perspective. Mason (2012) argues that a journalist-source collaboration challenges the orthodox ideals of reporting, and that this collaboration provides a basis for social inclusion. Inclusion of non-traditional voices is heavily linked to a concept called *Talanoa Journalism*. This is a type of journalism that involves a higher degree of consultation and engagement for journalists, and puts more focus on local voices in stories that would normally be marginalized by mainstream media (Robie & Marbrook, 2020). There is an emphasis on community engagement and empowerment, and it embraces Indigenous traditions and cultural values (Robie & Marbrook, 2020). Concepts of talanoa journalism have been practiced in the "Bearing Witness Project," which housed reporting students in Pacific communities living with the

realities of climate change, allowing them to gain a greater empathy for the urgency of the crisis in the Pacific.

This is what reconciliation in journalism is all about. One of the pillars of reconciliation journalism according to Blewett (2017) is the seeking of unique Indigenous voices to share stories. (While outside the scope of this proposal, I recognize and acknowledge that there is much more to be explored on the topic of reconciliation in journalism; those interested can, for example, see Stevens, 2020; McCue 2022; Callison & Young 2021; Mason, 2012.)

Visual journalism: documentary storytelling and photo narratives

Longer narratives with complex characters and strong storylines can have a deep impact on readers who take the time to read from start to finish, argue Sillesen et al. (2015). Once engaged and transported by a story, readers are more likely to change their beliefs about the world to match that narrative. “Documentaries take you places. You're creating invisible spaces in people's heads and taking them there,” said CBC radio documentary producer David Guthnik during the Zoom seminar “The Camera as a Storyteller” (Pelletier, 2020). Guthnik was referring to being so engaged in a story that it feels as if you inhabit that space and time and feeling so connected to the characters that their joys and sorrows spark a physical reaction in you (Sillesen et al., 2015). The more transported you feel, the more likely you’ll be to change your opinions and beliefs about the real world (Green & Brock, 2000). Scholars in journalism studies continue to write about and explore these ideas (e.g., Dahmen et al., 2021; Thomson, 2021), and this thesis will focus on the use of emotion-driven storytelling as a method of documentary filmmaking.

Documentary is a suitable medium to share the story in Inukjuak because as Blewett (2017) points out, oral storytelling is a foundation of Indigenous culture. The stories that come out of

Indigenous communities are often best shared in video, audio, or photo form; mediums that can increase audience engagement if used effectively. A documentary can either be told by a narrator or without a narrator (cinema verité). The cinema verité style developed by Robert Drew in the early 1960s seeks to "record human events more directly and with less intrusion" by the production team. An example of this is the 2014 documentary *Virunga*, which looks at habitat destruction of mountain gorillas in the Congo. The aforementioned Talanoa journalism method (Robie & Marbrook, 2020) emphasizes empowering non-traditional voices to drive a story.

Photo narrative will also be explored in this thesis. In a photo narrative, the images are not random; rather, the photographer is carefully displaying a select set of pictures to tell a particular story. According to Ohio University's Terry Eiler, a former photographer for National Geographic, different forms of sharing a story through photos include a photo essay, a photo package or a photo story. The ones I think are best suited for this project are the photo essay and photo story, since they are not as text heavy as photo packages tend to be (Shurbaji, 2014). Some photo narratives of note are Al Jazeera's 2013 photo essay of child amputees in Syria (Gordon, 2013) and National Geographic's *Greenland's Ice: A Photographic Eulogy* (Ingram & Klo, 2019). I especially liked Klo's photography of Greenland; the captions for his photos also include details about the day when he took the picture, which I found was a nice personal touch and also helped to draw in the audience further.

Photo essays are a collection of photos revolving around a particular theme and are assembled with text captions which describe what is depicted in the photo (Shurbaji, 2014). However, the audience can still understand the story being shared without having to read the text—the text is more of a supplement for added context. Photo stories are slightly more intimate, as they focus on a person, place or situation (Shurbaji, 2014). As the name goes, photo stories are structured in a way where there is a beginning, middle and end.

Methodology

This thesis consists of two components. Firstly, it involves a thesis report in the form of an autoethnography, which linked the theory I researched to what was done in the field. Secondly, for the research-creation aspect, I produced two forms of visual content: a collaborative documentary and a photo series.

Theoretical Report: Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a method that seeks to analyse personal experiences in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011). It uses elements of both biography and ethnography, and one of its aims according to Ellis et al. (2011) is to make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders. Following the work of Adams et al. (2015), I analysed my personal experiences during a trip to Inukjuak keeping in mind my goal of exploring how conciliatory, reconciliation and visual journalism might play a role in improving reporting on climate change. Adams et al. (2015) write about autoethnography as a process of studying culture—through the reflection of self—that other research methods are not best-suited for, such as analysing the complex elements of social life. This is important in the context of seeking to more wholly understand various Indigenous cultures, where "storytelling can spiral into a bigger pattern, an interconnectedness that recognises and links together infinite experiences across time and space" (Bishop, 2021). The study also describes the process of autoethnography from an Indigenous standpoint, showing that Western qualitative methodologies are not always a good fit when doing research in Indigenous communities. As Kovach (2009, p.31) puts it, "those who attempt to fit tribal epistemology into Western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the squirm." This ethnography was completed from my perspective as a non-Indigenous person who grew up in a formerly colonized country (Trinidad

& Tobago). Trinidad & Tobago is a twin-island country in the Caribbean that gained independence from Britain in 1962, but is still subject to neo-colonial influences. In coming to Canada five years ago, I found I could relate somewhat to Indigenous culture here as we have a shared experience of resisting colonization.

I focused on taking field notes of my personal experiences with mindfulness on ethical and responsible research-creation methods in Indigenous communities, then assessed these notes as they related to the three types of journalism outlined in the literature review. This was a new methodological experience for me, but one that allowed me to link my personal experiences to previous research to see how climate change reporting might be improved. I chose this method because recording both culture and personal experience is a subjective matter, something which autoethnography is best suited for. I did consider other forms of more quantitative research for improving climate change journalism, such as content analysis (Stoddart et al., 2015; Broadbent et al., 2016). Other than the fact that this method has already been used frequently in this field, I think my research-creation experience would best be analysed from a cultural standpoint, as reconciliation is a big part of this report. I'm not so much focused on *what* can be improved in climate change journalism (i.e. previous research on climate change reporting has already identified this); I'm more intent on showing *how* it can be improved based on conciliatory journalism and my experience in the field—and ultimately this is what I hope to share through this thesis.

Research Creation

For the research-creation, I travelled with a team of three other journalists to Inukjuak, Nunavik: Concordia Journalism professor Aphrodite Salas, our supervisor; and undergraduate students Luca Caruso-Moro and Virginie Ann. Inukjuak is located 1500km north of Montreal

and has a population of approximately 1800 people. We flew out of Montreal on Monday November 1st, 2021 at 8:00 AM EST, and stayed in Inukjuak until Thursday November 4th. Tickets were booked on Air Inuit, an airline created in 1978 to provide air connections between Nunavik's fourteen coastal villages to facilitate trade and preserve Inuit culture (Air Inuit, 2021). Travel was particularly difficult at this time due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the fact that the region had recently experienced an increase in cases. A Nunavik Territory Access Authorization was issued for the purpose of the trip, and a pre-departure covid test was required within 48 hours of travel. We booked accommodations at the Inukjuak Cooperative Hotel for our stay and hired a driver and Inuktitut translator to facilitate our work in the community, as there are no official car rental agencies there and not everyone speaks English or French.

A major roadblock I faced on the way to Inukjuak occurred when my luggage was held back at the airport in Montreal. As I was about to board the flight, an airport attendant explained that my luggage was not authorized to fly. The most likely explanation is that the suitcase was flagged because I had packed a drone and batteries and was not aware that this kind of equipment needed to be declared before boarding. I asked if there was anything I could do to retrieve it, but the airport attendant assured me it would come on the next flight to Inukjuak, which was scheduled for the following day. Despite multiple inquiries, filling out a missing suitcase form and checking in at the Inukjuak airport daily, the luggage did not come. In retrospect, it would have been smarter to pack additional clothing in my hand luggage. Lack of cell service made it difficult for me to get in touch with the Montreal airport also, but I had a supportive team who lent me clothes. Thankfully most of my camera equipment was in my carry-on, and I was able to adapt to conditions there with what I had with me. Only after a couple days following my return to Montreal was I able to retrieve my suitcase.

In terms of our journalism, we produced one 12 minute, 48 second documentary, another 12 minute, 14 second documentary, a written article, several sidebars and a multimedia story map

that is now featured on the CTV Montreal website. Additionally, I was responsible for producing an extensive photo gallery featuring mostly my own work as well as photos by the team.

In preparation for the trip, the team met twice with a community resource person from Inukjuak via zoom for a seminar on the history of colonization in Nunavik and its disastrous affects, on October 18th and October 29th, 2021. He advised the group to watch the 1922 documentary "Nanook of the North," which was filmed in Inukjuak and has been widely criticized for its depiction of Inuit in Arctic Quebec. We also had an extensive reading list including the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) and the Calls to Action (2015). The TRC's Call to Action 86 in particular calls upon journalism schools to better educate themselves on the history of Indigenous peoples and issues. We also had an Indigenous reporting workshop with the Globe and Mail's Willow Fiddler (an Oji-Cree Anishinaabe journalist from Sandy Lake First Nation), arranged through Journalists for Human Rights on October 21st, 2021. Our pre-departure team meetings were held on October 14th and October 21st, 2021, during which we discussed logistics and ideas for the trip.

Once in Inukjuak, I filmed and took pictures of the town, the people, the construction site where the hydroelectric facility was being built and Inuit sled dogs. In terms of equipment, I was shooting with a DSLR camera (Canon 5D), along with a tripod, flash and Rode microphone. We also had a GoPro camera with us, and multiple smartphones, the latter of which I ended up using to film instead of the Canon. We also had a DJI Mavic drone, but that got stuck at the airport along with my luggage on the way to Inukjuak so we never got to use it.

I also did some preliminary research into Arctic photography in order to inform my work in Inukjuak. I especially like National Geographic's Paul Nicklen, who does a lot of wildlife photography in polar climates. His photos always get up close to nature, and there's an artistic

element to the way he captures them—essentially this is what I attempted to do with my photos in Inukjuak. I've also come across articles which highlight Arctic photography, such as *Polar Obsession* by National Geographic. Books on different techniques used in various forms of photography were reviewed in preparation for the trip—such as industrial photography (Giebelhausen, 1967)—to help with taking shots of the hydroelectric facility.

Description of Research Creation Content

The documentary on the hydroelectric project has a runtime of 12 minutes and 48 seconds; that's what felt right after consultation with community and after assessing the materials. Though we planned to have a cinema verité approach for this film, we opted to include narration in the end (see Section 3.a. of the Discussion).

I submitted about 150 photos, with roughly 20 of these being used for the photo essay. A photo essay is a collection of pictures with an overall topic or theme, with the photos appearing alongside text. The idea is that both the text and the photos drive the story: the pictures support what is in the text, but a person can understand the topic without having to read text or captions (Shurbaji 2014).

In addition to the photos and the documentary "Innavik: Leading the way to a clean energy future", we produced a short video focusing on the injustices Inukjuak faced in the past "Canada's history in Inukjuak" (edited by Luca Caruso-Moro), as well as a text piece "Inuit community leads Arctic shift to clean energy: hydroelectric project to replace diesel" (written by Virginie Ann).

Ethical Reflections to Support Autoethnography as a Method

As I read literature in preparation for my trip (see pages 8-11), I also reflected on my ethical approach to this research-creation project, including how to create safe boundaries, thereby seeking to respect the focus on this thesis. To complete this report as supported by autoethnography, I returned to these readings. Journalists and scholars have written extensively about this topic (see page 3, section 'Reconciliation journalism' for examples) and important new texts continue to be produced (McCue, 2022). The TCPS 2 was also consulted with reference to the core principles of respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice, where guidance has been "offered in a spirit of respect and are not intended to override or replace ethical guidance offered by Aboriginal peoples themselves" (TCPS 2, 2018).

When creating journalism in Indigenous communities, it is especially important to adhere to a clear reporting approach (McCue, 2022), as journalists must keep in mind that they are entering the territories of people that have been subject to unethical treatment, racism and genocide among other atrocities for centuries. In Canada, work involving Indigenous peoples has been carried out primarily by non-Indigenous researchers—and a lot of times, the work has not benefitted the communities in which they were carried out (TCPS 2, 2018).

Lastly, in completing this report and creating journalism in an Indigenous community, I note the importance of seeking collaboration with its formal leaders, as they are respected persons in communities who may provide cultural context during all stages of a project. Community engagement is necessary, as it establishes a respectful relationship between the project team and the community. This includes activities such as meeting informally with community members and consulting with Elders. As part of this project, we engaged in frequent collaboration with several community members to build relationships over time and to make sure we got the story right.

Discussion

Part 1: Reporting with conciliatory journalism and its challenges

1.a. Conciliatory journalism in the field

Creating a piece of work within the frame of conciliatory journalism requires an entire change in mindset from the traditional conflict-frame of reporting. "We have the old-fashioned journalists who think that a good story is always about conflict," says a journalist from Finnish public service media YLE in Hautakangas & Ahva's (2018) paper on conciliatory journalism, "so it is a challenge to go and suggest [to] them that hey, let's do things differently." In Canada there is debate and reflection of these issues from Salas & Stevens (2021), who considered a journalism project Salas completed with the community of Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek-Gull Bay First Nation (KZA), about 200 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Ontario. From my experience in the field, conciliatory journalism does not apply just to how you write the story, but also in the way that you approach the subject; the way that you interact with the participants; the thought process in the field and in the editing room. Conciliatory journalism implies that it is important "not only to understand a problem but also to solve it with the people involved, i.e., deliberately intervening in the social realities being studied" (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018).

Collaboration is a key part of conciliatory journalism when working with Indigenous communities, as I learned in an email correspondence with Mikko Hautakangas and Laura Ahva—the researchers who first conceptualized conciliatory journalism. "[Producing] more accurate journalism that can be read as balanced and fair by the different parties involved requires collaboration and dialogue with several stakeholders," says Hautakangas, referencing the reporting done with the Sámi people in Lapland. If the journalist is viewed as an outsider, or as taking the side of the Finnish government, then it can lead to exacerbating the conflict—hence the need for collaboration. "I see this as part of 'encouraging listening' - not just 'giving

voice' to different parties," he adds, "but also making visible the dialogue, the relationships, the attempts to collaborate for common goals."

Collaboration can also come in different forms, such as between news outlets; or between journalists and citizens "to be able to find the real topics underneath the surface disputes; this in the fashion of citizen participation, but not necessarily in terms of content production by citizens, but getting the connection," says Avha.

From the beginning, our team engaged in collaborative discussions with the community in Inukjuak; and importantly this was done before travel occurred. My co-supervisor Aphrodite Salas had been developing the relationship for two years before we visited Inukjuak. In the weeks leading up to the trip, we engaged in online meetings with Eric Atagotaaluk, the director of the Pituvik Landholding Corporation and our community contact, and with Willow Fiddler, a trainer for the Indigenous Reporting Program organized by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR). During the meetings we would learn the history of the community we were going into to better understand the context within which to craft our story—as well as the ethical guidelines we had to follow. To properly "clarify tensions and create a trusting environment" as outlined by Hautakangas & Ahva (2018), we really had to work in tandem with the people in Inukjuak. This might seem straightforward, but I've never engaged in this much collaboration when writing for mainstream news outlets.

From the moment we arrived in the community, which is 1500km north of Montreal in Arctic Quebec, we were greeted by Eric and our hired driver, Johnny Mina (along with 60km/h winds and snow). They both helped us navigate our way through the community, helped organize interviews (most of which were set up before arrival), drove us to each location, and provided insight along the way. Many car-ride discussions quickly turned into informal interviews, and they explained to us the extent of diesel use in their community, as well as other difficult stories

such as the government relocation of a third of the town's population to Resolute Bay and Grisse Fjord (White, 2010), both some 2000km north of Inukjuak.

I've reported on Indigenous communities when working for Le Devoir and the Canadian Institute of Mining (CIM) Magazine in the past but crafting this Inukjuak story in a conciliatory manner had me doing things I'd never done before as a journalist. One night for example, we went onto the community radio show to introduce ourselves to everyone, since that is the primary method of communication in town. We wanted to explain what we were doing there and to invite anyone with questions to call in. We were trying to create more opportunities for dialogue. This was an interesting experience that eventually allowed us to find an additional interviewee: someone who was opposed to the construction of the hydro project reached out to us to give his opinion. I felt that had we not tried to collaborate with the community by going on their radio show, we would not have been able to get that perspective. Immersing oneself into the community is not specific to conciliatory journalism; it is also practiced in *collaborative journalism*, which is another form of socially responsible journalism (Center for Cooperative Media, 2017). In Habib (2019), it is quoted that Discourse Media reporter Jacqueline Ronson says that Discourse's model is drastically different from her previous experience as a community reporter: "The main thing that's different is the engagement work, for sure, and insisting that all of our stories come from a demand from the community" (Habib 2019).

Another example of collaboration was asking some of the participants, mainly Eric Atagotaaluk, what he thought about how we planned to frame the story. We obviously didn't know the exact storyline we'd be working with yet, but as the story started to take shape based on the interviews we did, we'd ask Eric if he thought we were on the right path. This is a story about the community of Inukjuak, and as such, the community should have as much say as possible on how the story is told. Genuine collaboration with community Elders seeks to

maintain a respectful relationship. I remember standing up in the middle of a snowfall outside the co-op hotel, discussing with Johnny and Eric on how we should do things. Below are some excerpts of my field notes from that day:

Field Notes 1: We had an informal meeting in the snowy downpour today with Eric and Johnny to find out if they were okay with how we planned to present the story. We're hesitant about using the Resolute and dog slaughter stories as a precursor linking to the building of the dam. Do Inuit want that story told, and if they do, is using it to foreshadow the dam something they would want? It could potentially change the entire trajectory of our story structure, but we think it's still important to have that collaboration first just to be on the safe side. They said they were okay with what we have planned, just not to focus the doc on the dog slaughter and Resolute stuff too much, but rather have it as background info.

Our informal meeting in the snow. From left to right: Aphrodite Salas, Eric Atagotaaluk, Johnny Mina and Luca Caruso-Moro

Collaboration with the community also took place throughout the editing phase. For example, when looking for a narrator, we contacted the community for recommendations on who they thought would be a good voice for the documentary. The same went for the translation, because the dialect of Inukitut (Inukjuamiutitut) used in Inukjuak is specific to that area.

These experiences cause me to self-define *conciliatory journalism* in the field as a journalism practice needing to incorporate collaboration and active listening with the parties involved. Hautakangas & Ahva (2018) write about conciliatory journalism as a form of journalism that revolves around mediation and properly understanding conflicts to avoid social polarisation. This is important to fully explain the extent of the problem at hand and not to make it seem like it is one side against another, because often a problem is more complex than that.

1.b. Using conciliatory journalism to avoid the conflict-framing of climate change reporting

Creating a conciliatory-framed story provided an entirely different challenge, as we had to find ways to share the story without relying on conflict as a storytelling tool. We did not approach the story trying to eliminate conflict, rather, we knew there was not a lot of conflict going on considering that most people supported the hydro project. Hautakangas & Ahva (2018) argue for the importance of this point in writing that conciliatory journalism "critically examine and clarify tensions that are causing conflicts, instead of just reporting them as disputes." A sound structure can help to turn any documentary subject—no matter how seemingly banal—into an engaging intellectual experience (Reid, 2021). The standard "three act" story structure of documentary storytelling (Desktop Documentaries, 2022) includes an introduction to the hero/conflict (Act I), obstacles/setbacks (Act II) and a resolution (Act III). The high point of the story, the "climax", comes at the end of Act II, and is normally where the conflict reaches its peak. So how do we create a documentary that does not revolve around a conflict?

Presenting controversies as clear-cut conflicts with opposing camps does not help audiences understand the world in the best possible way (Hautakangas & Ahva 2018). It is normal for humans to want to organize ideas into neat categories. In the perfect binary opposition, everything is either in category A or category B, and by imposing such categories upon the world we are starting to make sense of it (Fiske, 1990). Presenting a story as a conflict lends to the idea that there are two sides to a story—with one side being the guilty party—and tends to simplify the issue at hand.

For example, there was one member of the community in Inukjuak who strongly disagreed with the hydroelectric project construction. He gave us a 20-minute interview in which we could have easily crafted a story around the conflict of pro-dam versus anti-dam. He however represented a small minority of dissenters; although there were some community concerns about the dam construction, a large majority of the community (83 per cent) voted in favour of the project in a 2010 referendum (Rogers, 2010). The story we are sharing is not about pitting these sides against each other to ask whether the project should be built. As a community they voted in favour, and in part, our job as journalists is to report on why this decision was made and how the community feels that the project will help them. Bourassa (2013) critiques climate change reporting for exposing conflicting opinions as a form of balance, hence we avoided creating "sides" to this story with equal platform for each.

We didn't want to polarise the story into "heroes vs villains", because the situation is not so black and white. There are no "good guys" or "bad guys" in this story, but rather multiple forces at play, some with different goals or concerns than others—and simplifying the story into two opposing sides would not be an accurate representation. In addition, "conciliatory" in this context could refer to explaining a conflict but not making it the main point around which the story revolves, which in theory engages with the ideas of solutions journalism (McIntyre, 2019), and in practice made me reflect on how to structure this story to still make it engaging.

Creating a narrative story arc within a conciliatory journalism framework was a big challenge, and I think this is an area that can be improved upon with more research.

There are points of conflict that we identified: the relocation of people to Resolute Bay, for example, and the dog slaughter in the 1950s (White, 2010).

Locations of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord in relation to Inukjuak (screenshot from our documentary).

The former—known as the Inuit High Arctic Relocations—occurred in the early 1950s when the Canadian government decided it wanted to establish Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic (Madwar, 2018). Families in Inukjuak were misled into believing that they would have a better quality of life when relocated and endured many hardships. Although they were promised the option to return home after two years, we learned during an interview with the late former mayor Simeonie Nalukturuk that some never made it back to Inukjuak. The slaughtering of sled dogs by RCMP officers and the Quebec provincial police occurred around the same time (mid 1950s to late 1960s). “The killings of dogs, I see it now as a tool to further assimilate the

Inuit into a mainstream Canadian way of life, to weaken them from their lands," said Nalukturuk. The RCMP was cleared of any wrongdoing in a report published in 2006, on the grounds that the dogs "had been killed by the RCMP but solely for health and safety reasons and in accordance with the law" (Croteau, 2011). Former Quebec Premier Jean Charest did however acknowledge the dog slaughter and issued an apology (Qikiqtani Truth Commission, 2011).

However, based on our conversations with the community (see Field Notes 1 above), we didn't focus on these in the climate documentary. Instead, we created a second documentary featuring Simeonie Nalukturuk, to highlight these historical realities in a respectful way that was supported both by Nalukturuk's widow and other community members.

1.c Incorporating solutions journalism

Trying to incorporate solutions journalism (McIntyre, 2019) into the story also proved difficult. Despite their differences, one of the major similarities between solutions journalism and conciliatory journalism is that they both do not emphasize conflict in a story (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018). Below are some more field notes I took while shooting the documentary.

Field notes 2: It's a real challenge coming up with a climax for a solutions story that doesn't focus on conflict. We're thinking of building the climax around the characters achieving their goals, rather than at the high point of the conflict. There is some conflict in the story e.g. People opposed to construction, but we really don't want to put so much focus on a minority opinion and give the story a false sense of balance. The other conflict we can think of is the challenge in building a hydro electric dam, or the challenges the community has faced in getting to this point.

Research has demonstrated that pictures are a key component of audience engagement (Midberry & Dahmen, 2020). According to Midberry & Dahmen's paper *Visual Solutions Journalism: A Theoretical Framework*, good solutions imagery should be comprehensive, explanatory, clarifying and ethical: "The majority of photojournalism of climate change has depicted negative consequences (O'Neill, 2013)," they say, whereas "pictures of renewable energy (O'Neill et al., 2013) and mitigation imagery (Hart & Feldman, 2016) led to increased feelings of self-efficacy in combating climate change." They also state that both the problem and the response to the problem should be shown due to the comprehensive nature of solutions journalism visuals. Whereas my images of Inukjuak included a few photos of the problem (see Images: 5-7), I focused mostly on the responses to the problem (i.e., the renewable energy project; see Images: 10-15).

Part 2: Reconciliation and journalism

2.a. Reconciliation and journalism, and reporting in an Indigenous community

"Reconciliation is a hot button term that needs a lot of unpacking," said Anishinaabe and Cree journalist Cheryl McKenzie—Director of News and Current Affairs for the APTN—during the 2022 Concordia University Readers Digest Lecture organized and moderated by Aphrodite Salas (Salas & McKenzie, 2022). "Re-conciliation…sounds like conciliation, but we do it again. Seems kind of futile."

"So how do we know when reconciliation has occurred?" I asked McKenzie.

"There's a big reconciliation meter that will go 'ding ding ding!'," she joked, before adding that for reconciliation to occur, "a lot of it will have to do with Indigenous people getting land back."

According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015), "reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been indicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior." The TRC was a commission formed between 2007 and 2015, with the purpose of providing those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences (Government of Canada, 2021).

Before pursuing this journalism project, I participated in online training by Journalists for Human Rights (JHR), moderated by Willow Fiddler. As part of the JHR training, I learned that it is important to ensure the stories are respectful and don't cause harm. According to Fiddler, journalists should include positive stories to counter crisis-based reporting. I feel like that is exactly what we are doing by focusing our story on the construction of the hydroelectric project

in Inukjuak. Rather than putting a spotlight on issues or problems, we are highlighting the leadership of the community in striving for an environmentally cleaner future.

I want to stress again that I am not Indigenous, and as such I need all the training and experience that I can get in order to properly report on Indigenous stories.

When making the documentary, we took the advice of the community by not focusing on the traumas of the past (see Field Notes 1 above). At first, we planned to have a section of the documentary briefly touch on the dog slaughter of the 1950s and the relocation of the people of Inukjuak to Resolute, which was explained to us by former Inukjuak mayor Simeonie Nalukturuk:

"The government relocated about one-third of the territory here and brought them to Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord. They promised a whole bunch of good things when they were sent up there, and I guess everybody knows that their promises were not kept. Those people that were sent away were traumatized big time, but they left family as well, and the people that were left were also traumatized. They were expecting their families and friends to come home in two years, and they didn't come back home until about forty years."

In spring 2022, Nalukturuk sadly passed away. We wanted to honour him in some way, and after further discussions with key community members, we decided to make a separate video (which included the above quote) to go alongside the climate documentary. The video includes excerpts from Nalukturuk's interview in a standalone "mini doc" tribute. This way, the injustices the community faced are not a major focus of the documentary, but rather provide context in a separate video. This was something that needed to be approved by Nalukturuk's family before any publication. Aphrodite met with Simeonie's wife, and privately showed her the final cut of the video and asked for permission to share the story. She ultimately gave her

approval and permission at that meeting and supported the launch of the project with a public viewing in the community in November 2022.

The vast majority of the climate documentary therefore focuses on what the community is currently doing, i.e. building the hydroelectric project. This was also the focus of the photo gallery (eg. Images: 10, 11 & 20). Only Image 8 mentioned the past. By focusing on the strong climate leadership happening in Inukjuak, we avoided falling into the trope of reporting only problems in Indigenous communities. The new facility is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 700,000 tonnes over 40 years, and excess revenue from the project is going to be used to meet community, social, educational and traditional needs of community members (Innavik Hydro, 2017). Inukjuak is a community that is taking an initiative in the fight against climate change, and we wanted to make sure this was at the forefront of the story.

Bourassa (2013) mentions that to improve the narrow framing of climate change stories, journalists should look outside of the traditional source hierarchy (such as scientists). Although my team and I talked to the head contractor on the hydroelectric dam to learn about the logistics of the project, as well as the team at Indigenous Clean Energy (ICE), most of our interviews were with members of the Inukjuak community. They were better suited to talk to us about the impact of the project and what it means to the community. That said, we also did considerable research on the science and technology behind the project through academic publications and publicly available information from the renewable energy company building the facility, Innergex.

2.b. Avoiding Western stereotypes in imaging Inuit communities in the Arctic

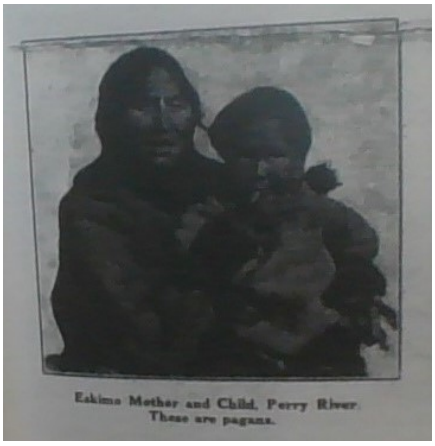
One of the first feature-length documentary ever made was filmed in Inukjuak in the early 1900s (Rony, 1996). *Nanook of the North* (1922) is an early rendition of Inuit life through the lens of a white American filmmaker, Robert J. Flaherty. It follows the life of Inuit hunter Nanook the Bear and his family. Although hailed as a pioneer in the filmmaking world as one of the first feature-length documentaries (Zimmerman & Auyash, 2015), it is also heavily criticised for providing a dramatized depiction of Inuit life: "it fed upon an already established craze in [Europe and the United States] for Inuit as a kind of cuddly, 'primitive' man" (Rony, 1996). According to Zimmermann & Auyash (2015), Rony argues that Flaherty subjugated pre-existing Western stereotypes onto Inuit, rather than challenging these notions.

One of the goals with *Innavik: Leading the Way to a Clean Energy Future* was to avoid framing the story according to Western stereotypes. I hope that through the use of conciliatory journalism—by clarifying tensions and creating a trusting environment (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018)—and collaboration with the members of the community (Robie & Marbrook, 2020; TCPS 2, 2018), that this has been achieved. We'll only know once the people in the community see the documentary and give their opinions, but so far the feedback we've gotten is very positive. We have been invited back to cover the official opening of the hydro facility in the Spring of 2023, which is a very good sign.

Peter Pitseolak was the Canadian Arctic's first native documentary photographer. However, in its early days Arctic photography was frequently done by white men documenting what they thought was a "a Twighlight Land, where 'pagans' continued to co-exist with the converted" (British Museum Trustees 1998). A classic example of this is the photography of Bishop Archibald Lang Fleming in 1928, who documented Inuit life before Christian missionaries showed up and after. The bias in the images is clearly visible, and Fleming would make use of lights and darks in his images to compare Inuit life to Christian life. The contrasting images

would juxtapose the “darkness and savagery” of the pagan to the light and enlightenment of progress with the Christian (British Museum Trustees 1998). Captions are also a powerful tool that can influence the viewer, and Fleming made use of this:

“An Unevangelized Eskimo”



“Eskimo Mother and Child, Perry River. These are pagans.” Juxtaposed with smiling images of Indigenous boys in Western clothing (below).

Photographs make no noise, say no words. They seem, rather, to wait for someone to provide the story, the facts that can transform images into a mysterious aspect of oral history (British Museum Trustees, 1998). The order in which photos are laid out, or the captions that go with them can go a long way towards changing the viewer’s perception of the story being told. In creating my photo essay, I spent a lot of time trying to lay out the photos (see section *3.c. Photo*

Essay) in a way that would best express how Inuit are harnessing the energy of their rivers to produce electricity. I would characterise my photo layout for this thesis as attempting to (i) share a cohesive story, (ii) highlight the work that the people of Inukjuak are doing to move towards renewable energy and, (iii) show respect for persons and concern for welfare (TCPS 2, 2018). In this way, my journalism attempts to avoid Western stereotypes by refraining from any kinds of biased comparisons/juxtaposing as done by Fleming in 1928, and by accurately describing the photos without taking things out of context.

Part 3: Reflection on challenges of visual storytelling in imaging the Arctic

3.a. Challenges of filmmaking in the Arctic

Having grown up in the tropics, I have to say that cold temperatures are not my best friend, and filming in the Arctic was not something I'm used to. The temperatures we felt in Inukjuak were not too extreme as it was November, but the wind chill made it difficult to operate camera equipment. To make things worse, I was underequipped in terms of winter clothing, as my suitcase with my winter clothes was held back at the airport in Montreal (I learned the hard way that I can't bring drone batteries in my checked luggage). Luckily all my camera gear was in my carry-on, but the only clothes I had was what I wore on the plane which included jeans, sneakers, and a winter coat. I didn't have proper shoes or gloves, and within minutes of filming on the first day, I had to immediately return to the car to warm up. My first day of filming went pretty much that way: every ten minutes I'd have to abandon whatever I was filming to avoid freezing my toes off. The subsequent days were not as difficult as the winds eased up, but overall, it was not the most comfortable filming experience (although my team did graciously lend me some of their extra clothes). Regardless, this is all part of the experience, and outdoor photographer Chris Burkand (2015) put it best:

"When you want to get these images, these moments, you have to be out in the elements really experiencing it. For me, I love to suffer; the idea of having cold fingers and brittle skin and chapped lips; really putting yourself out there in the elements. I guess that's when you feel like you're really paying the price, but the greatest rewards come."

Some other issues encountered with filming in an Arctic snowstorm (other than feeling cold) were visibility and battery durability. Below are some field notes from that day:

Field Notes 3: Wind and snow were crazy (50-60 km/h wind gusts with a max of 90km/h). Lenses kept getting fogged up and had to constantly wipe with cloth gloves. Also visibility was

poor when snow was flying into my face, and I had to press my eye to the viewfinder to be able to actually see. My hands felt frozen within minutes, so shooting was limited to approx. 10-minute shoots, followed by a couple minutes of warming up in the car.

I had to put on glasses at one point just to have a protective barrier for my eyes from the snow. The camera batteries also drained quicker than usual, most likely due to the low temperatures.

However, the discomfort endured to get the shots made it all more satisfying in the end. Again, Burkand (2015) helps sum up the challenge of shooting in frigid temperatures:

"They may not be the most beautiful images, but the ones where you come back and you're like, 'Wow I really gave something of myself to get that shot'. I think that that's the beauty of going to those places, is learning new things about yourself every time you take a photograph."

Filming in the Arctic was a novel experience for me, and I learned a lot of new things about photography that I never would have contemplated before, or even understood from reading books and articles.

An obstacle we ran into during post-production was whether to use the cinema-verité approach. We thought that this method would best allow us to express the story of this community: by sharing the words from their interviews to drive the story. However, upon completing a first draft and sending it out for feedback (by people outside of the community who knew nothing of the project), many found the cinema-verité style was hard to follow. We therefore decided it was best to incorporate narration into it, with someone from Inukjuak doing the voice-over. Aphrodite Salas then reached out to a couple different people, and we settled on Johnny Kasudluak, an Inuit voice artist. In reflecting on these challenges, I see the research-creation process as needing constant collaboration and contact with the communities involved on the project. The hospitality, feedback, and suggestions from Eric Atagotaaluk (and by extension the people of Inukjuak) were invaluable in making this journalism project possible.

3.b. Imaging the Arctic through mobile journalism

I've always preferred using traditional DSLR cameras to capture images for my journalism work. They offer more flexibility to manipulate the exposure, white balance, depth of field etc. However, this trip has helped me to see otherwise: I still enjoy using DSLRs, but I also now see the advantages of mobile journalism, especially when it comes to shooting news.

Mobile journalism—which first came about in 2007—is video journalism done with only a mobile device, often an iOS device (Westlund & Quinn, 2018). Mobile journalism makes things simpler for journalists: the mobile devices are easy to use, easy to carry, and relatively cheaper than traditional camera equipment (Karhunen, 2017; Westlund & Quinn, 2018).

For shooting interviews on the fly in Inukjuak, mobile devices were much more convenient than the DSLR, as set-up took just a few seconds. It is easier to move around with smaller and lighter newsgathering devices (Karhunen, 2017). For example, on our last day in Inukjuak we still had one interview to shoot which we had not gotten the chance to do. It was with a community member who was opposed to the construction; yet finding him proved to be a challenge as he was not home when we swung by his house. We drove around town looking for him—we checked by the marina (where we were told he might be), we asked people in the town if they had seen him—but to no avail. We had less than an hour to find him before our flight. We were about to give up and just head to the airport but decided to pass by his house one last time, and by chance his car happened to be in the driveway this time. We knocked on the door and he came out to meet us; we had our man, but we didn't have much time. Considering this, we forwent the DSLR and just used a phone to film. I was instantly impressed by the quality of the image (we were using a Google Pixel) which had 1080p resolution and vivid colours. Below is an image of the shot.

Interview with Davidee, shot on a Google Pixel in Inukjuak, November 4, 2021.

The biggest advantage however was the ease of setup: within seconds we had our interview running. Had I been using the DSLR, it would have taken a couple minutes to mount the tripod, attach the microphone and get everything else in place. With the phone, all I needed was to hit record. The image stabilizer on the phone was impressive also, eliminating the need for a tripod. Here a couple field notes from that day:

Field Notes 4: I filmed a mobile journalism interview today, and another advantage of mobile journalism that I noticed is the ease of setup. Had I been with a camera and tripod, the interview may not have been able to take place, or rather it would have had to be cut short. We were in a hurry to get to the airport but absolutely needed this interview done for the story, and we spent the whole morning tracking our interviewee (Davidee). When we finally found him outside his house, it was just a matter of shoot-and-go. Setup took about one minute (finding a good location and taking out equipment), and that was it. We used a Google pixel with a frame mount, and a microphone on a stick. I was really impressed with the quality of the shot; the only criticism I have is that the depth of field is not as good as in a DSLR- the background wasn't as blurry/out of focus as I would have liked it.

Another instance of when the mobile devices came in handy was on the flight out of Inukjuak. As we were flying over the icy landscape, we realized how nice of a shot it would make. We

all took out our phones and got some aerial shots of the region, which we decided we would use either in the intro or end credits of the documentary (see timestamp 0:48 in documentary). Mobile phones are handy when it comes to light travelling: Many journalists have had their broadcast-quality cameras confiscated at airports in several countries (Westlund & Quinn, 2018)—I had my suitcase confiscated with all my drone equipment for this trip. The risks of confiscation are much smaller with a smartphone, since most people nowadays carry one (Westlund & Quinn, 2018).

There are a couple disadvantages of using mobile devices that I have noticed however, with one being the depth of field, and another being the zoom. With the DSLR, you can greatly vary the optical zoom depending on your lens, whereas with the phone, you're mostly limited to digital zoom, which compromises the quality of the image by cutting down on the megapixels (Masterclass, 2020).

I also find that having a DSLR makes you seem more professional, at least in appearance. Having large camera equipment has a certain prestige to it, although this can also have its downfalls. According to Karhunen (2017), mobile journalism makes it easier to get past the gatekeepers and authorities: "Gatekeepers cannot necessarily spot the difference between a professional mobile journalist and an ordinary citizen. In some situations, a mobile journalist was allowed to film, but the big TV crews were stopped."

DSLR vs mobile journalism in Inukjuak: Interview with Tommy Palliser (left), with Virginie Ann and Aphrodite Salas to my right.

3.c. Photo Essay: "Harnessing the Power of Nature"

Presenting a story through photography communicates a different—often deeper—understanding of person, place, event, or narrative than can be expressed through written or spoken word (Shurbaji, 2014). Selecting the order of photos in the photo gallery was something that took a lot of storyboarding, as well as the help of my filmmaking mentor Francine Pelletier. A photo narrative is not a random collection of images. In a photo narrative, the storyteller is presenting a finite number of pictures around a theme or an event (Shurbaji, 2014). The challenge for me was finding a narrative arc among the roughly one thousand pictures taken. My process involved narrowing down to my best 150 photos, which I edited using Adobe Lightroom. Among these 150 photos I then looked for the best 21 with which I could tell a cohesive story.

I decided to go with the title “Harnessing the Power of Nature” for my photo essay. “Power” in this case refers to both the raw force of the Inukjuak river, as well as the power it will generate for the community (N.B. On the CTV website the photo gallery is titled “Inukjuak to leave diesel behind”).

The photos start with an introduction of the town—setting the scene—in which I used shots of community members and the town itself (Images: 1-4). Here I chose photos that are light, or that evoke a sense of joy.

1. A quiet morning after the first snowfall of the season in Inukjuak. The town is one of 14 Inuit communities in Nunavik, the northernmost region of Quebec. With a population of roughly 1,800 people, Inukjuak is the third largest community in Nunavik, which is almost the same geographic size as France.

2. An Arctic sled dog on the outskirts of town. Inukjuak is located 1,500 kilometres north of Montreal and is not accessible by road; only by boat (in summer) and plane (year-round), both very expensive options.

3. A man mounts his ATV. An everyday mode of transport that is powered by diesel in Inukjuak, it's common to see people zooming past on these vehicles.

4. A woman and a young girl pose for a picture.

The photos then give way to the darker side of the community: the dirty diesel. Eric Atagotaaluk—the president of Pituvik—is pictured next to the pipeline (Image: 5), explaining how diesel fuel is transported inland.

5. In order to move away from diesel, the community is building a clean energy hydro project, spearheaded by Eric Atagotaaluk and his team at the Pituvik Landholding corporation. Eric shows how diesel imports are transported from ships in the bay, through the metal pipes pictured here, and then on to the “tank farm.”

6. The tank farm—a collection of giant diesel reservoirs and generators—is how the people of Inukjuak currently get their electricity. Described as an eye-sore, the community hopes to phase these out eventually, only keeping the generators as a backup as they move towards more sustainable hydroelectricity through the Innavik Hydro Project.

A solemn looking Tommy Palliser (Image: 7) also voices his concerns about diesel, and the construction process. We see a quick snapshot of local fishermen, who will be impacted should the water quality of the river be affected by the facility (Image: 9). This is the part of the essay that focuses on the issue at hand: the problem of diesel.

7. Tommy Palliser, a community member and executive director of Nuvviti Development Corporation, reflects on the challenges of using diesel including constant risks of contamination, pollution and energy shortages. When the community first started exploring renewable energy projects, there was concern about hydroelectricity, especially in terms of maintaining water quality. The new project is a run-of-river project, which works with the flow of the river, not water storage — unlike a traditional dam.

8. Community Elder Abraham Kasudluak reflects on life in Inukjuak before diesel, when it was common for residents to live in igloos and tents. He says he looks forward to the completion of the hydro project, so that Inukjuak will have a steady flow of clean, reliable energy.

9. Fishermen are among those who will be impacted should the water quality of the river be affected. The fisherman pictured here is preparing his boat to go whale hunting in the sea.

Finally, we see the actual construction site (Image: 10). It's a wide-shot that gives us a perspective on the size of the project. The shots that follow then give us an idea of the extent of the construction, showing the tractors, equipment and workers who make it all possible. A couple of close-up shots (Images: 13, 14 & 15) take us inside the construction site to contrast the prior wide-shot.

10. Currently dry, this is where the Innuksuac river will eventually flow once the project is in operation. The 7.5-megawatt project is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 700,000 tonnes over 40 years. It's the first initiative of its kind in Quebec, created in collaboration between Inuit-led Pituvik, Innergex (a Quebec renewable energy company) and Hydro Quebec.

11. Eric Atagotaaluk keeps a watchful eye on construction, which is slated to end in 2023. Before the start of the project, several environmental assessments were carried out to make sure water quality and fish habitats would be maintained and protected.

12. Construction in the Arctic is challenging for many reasons — the colder climate makes for a shorter building season, supplies can only be transported by boat in the summer months, and building on permafrost can be difficult.

13. Inside the dam: construction workers go about their tasks, while journalism students (in yellow helmets) observe. Approximately 50-100 workers are on site during the construction period, with the entire project costing an estimated $128 million.

14. A workman measures a plank of wood before cutting it.

15. A workman looks on at the construction. Temperatures on this day were -1°C (but -9°C with the wind chill).

One thing is missing from the gallery so far, and I wanted to save it for the “climax” of the photo essay: the river in full force. Here we can see the churning waters of the Inukjuak river (Image: 16), and this raw energy is what will be converted into electricity. To help maintain this notion of the force of nature, I included the sled dog in the eye of the storm.

16. Closer to the sea, the raw power of the river is still eminent. This was taken during a snowstorm, where the winds were between 60-90 km/h. It was also the first snowstorm of the year.

17. Sitting in the path of a storm, an Arctic sled dog remains vigilant.

I included some more shots of the river in a much calmer state (Images: 18 & 19) to contrast the stormy images before and to help set the tone for the conclusion of the photo essay.

18. Even as evening approaches, the river never sleeps.

19. At the mouth of the river is where things finally calm down. From churning rapids to tranquil waters, the river has many faces.

A shot of Eric Atagotaaluk carrying out a water test also ties up any loose ends (Image: 20), directly addressing the community concerns in the earlier photos.

20. Every day, Eric Atagotaaluk tests the water downstream from the construction site. Here he checks the turbidity, temperature and pH of the water. The results of this test showed that the water quality was at normal levels.

The story I'm sharing is about the community of Inukjuak and their efforts to stop their reliance on diesel fuel: I started the photo essay with a shot of the community in the day, and therefore decided to end it with a shot of the community at night (Image: 21). The twinkling lights give us a reminder of the electricity needed to power the town, which will one day be generated by harnessing the power of the Inukjuak river.

21. The town of Inukjuak goes to sleep. The twinkling of lights fueled by diesel will one day give way to hydroelectricity, signalling a new chapter in Inukjuak — one powered by clean energy.

The order of the photos in this essay are meant to tell a story. Although most of these are the same photos I submitted to CTV for publishing, the sequence in which they are used on the CTV website differs slightly to the order I chose here. My purpose in creating this photo essay is to share a cohesive story (with rising and falling action, a climax, and a resolution), whereas for CTV they were used more in a news context. The power of photographs is that, in their silence and stillness, they propose much, and reveal nothing (British Museum Trustees, 1998). As seen with the photography of Bishop Archibald Lang Fleming in 1928, the order in which images are juxtaposed, and the captions that support them can entirely change the meaning of a photograph.

In summary and connecting my photo essay to conciliatory journalism and reconciliation, one key point on photo essays that will remain with me is their ability to tell stories without many words. As Blewett (2017) pointed out, Indigenous stories are often best shared in video, audio,

or photo form. In keeping with the first tenet of conciliatory journalism (to critically examine and clarify tensions), I attempted to visually give an all-round description of the conflict at hand (the problem of diesel). Following Midberry & Dahmen's work on visual solutions journalism, I did not put all the focus on the problems but spent more time documenting the solutions to the conflict.

Conclusion

This research-creation thesis asked: ***How can conciliatory journalism improve climate change reporting in Indigenous communities***? My interest was to deepen conversations over various journalistic styles and how they can aid when reporting in Indigenous communities. The team and I created a short documentary titled *Inukjuak: Leading the Way to a Clean Energy Future*, as well as an article; a short video discussing Inukjuak's past; several sidebars, an interactive story map and an original photo essay of 21 photos. My engagement with this question, and travels to Inukjuak, can be summarized in the following concluding points:

a) Conciliatory journalism: veers away from focusing on a conflict/resolving a conflict as the main storytelling point, which is not the case with most climate change reporting (Bourassa, 2013). It is still important to fully explain the conflict to avoid confusion, but this approach does not make it the main point of contention. It is also important to look outside of the traditional source hierarchy when writing climate stories (Bourassa, 2013; Robie & Marbrook, 2020): to know what is acceptable/appropriate to include in an Indigenous story, consult with the community, even after finishing the fieldwork. Collaboration at every stage is essential. One of the goals with this documentary was to avoid framing the story according to Western stereotypes, and I hope that through the use of conciliatory journalism principles like clarifying tensions and creating a trusting environment (Hautakangas & Ahva, 2018), and collaboration with the members of the community (TCPS 2, 2018; Robie & Marbrook, 2020), that this has been achieved.

b) Reconciliation and journalism: it is hard to know when reconciliation is truly achieved, but by following certain guidelines (such as those outlined in McCue, 2022; TCPS 2, 2018); remaining aware of colonial biases in reporting (Callison & Young, 2021); and consulting with community members, one can maintain a mutually respectful relationship. Properly researching and building relationships before visiting, as well as

focusing on positive work and climate leadership while reporting on Inukjuak showed me how we can aim to move closer towards reconciliation through journalism.

c) Visual storytelling: different storytelling styles can be used to share stories in Indigenous communities. In this documentary, although we originally opted for a cinema verité style, we ended up inviting a narrator from the community to voice the story. I also got to experience firsthand the advantages of mobile journalism, learned the challenges of filming in the Arctic, and put together a photo essay of 21 pictures.

It was important to keep in mind how journalists will conduct themselves to maintain a clear respect for persons, and concern for welfare and justice. “Justice” especially talks about establishing relationships based on mutual trust and communication, and respect for the community’s traditions. This harks back to the tenets of conciliatory journalism, namely “creating a trusting environment”—where all parties are heard. Throughout the reporting phase and the editing phase we made sure to always consult with the community on any major decisions with regards to how we hoped to share the story.

Future work should continue to explore the link between conciliatory journalism and reconciliation, looking into how collaboration could work to produce journalism with different Indigenous communities in other parts of Canada (and the world). The intersection of conciliatory journalism and documentary filmmaking can also be explored further, especially when it comes to creating narrative story arcs within a conciliatory framework. With regards to our journalism in Inukjuak, were it financially feasible, I would have liked to follow the progress of construction through to completion—and even after its completion to see how the new hydroelectric facility is impacting the community of Inukjuak. This still may happen, since we have already been invited to return.

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Appendix

Field Notes

Mon Nov 01

- Main issues: wind and snow were crazy (50-60 kph wind gusts with a max of 90kph!!). Lenses kept getting fogged up and had to constantly wipe with cloth gloves. Also visibility was poor when snow was flying into my face, and I had to press my eye to the viewfinder to be able to actually see.
- My hands felt frozen within minutes, so shooting was limited to approx. 10-minute shoots, followed by a couple minutes of warming up in the car.
- After examining shots at the end of the day, the Canon 5D is great for pics but terrible for video. No live-AF function so I have to use MF when filming which is extremely inconvenient especially with a poor LCD display. Also the Image Stabilizer is really poor and all the shots seem shaky. Will have to use a tripod/monopod from now on.
- Using a translator: translators can make or break your interview. Because our interviewee had long answers, the translator had to summarize a lot of what he said and we lost a good bit of emotion from it. As such, we decided not to use that interviewee as our main character.

Tue Nov 02

- Crafting a story with Indigenous communities is much different; we didn't want to run with our ideas without going through Eric first, to make sure that he was okay with it. For example, we're hesitant about using the Resolute and dog slaughter stories as a precursor linking to the building of the dam. Do the Inuit want that story told, and if they do, is using it to foreshadow the dam something they would want? It could potentially change the entire trajectory of our story structure, but we think it's still important to have that collaboration first just to be on the safe side. This is what

conciliatory/reconciliation journalism is about. We had a long (4 hour?) team meeting tonight just discussing all of this.

- Shooting video with the 5D is really poor. Luckily I went through the footage last night, and realised how bad the image stabilizer was, so today I shot on a monopod. The shots were noticeably more stable, but the monopod was not the best (it kept slipping down). I learned from yesterday's mistakes a bit, so today's videos were more useable but I still do not recommend the 5D for video.
- Solutions journalism: it's a real challenge coming up with a climax for a solutions story that has no conflict. We're thinking of building the climax around the characters achieving their goals, rather than at the high point of the conflict. There is some conflict in the story eg. Ppl opposed to construction, but we really don't want to put so much focus on a minority opinion and give the story a false sense of balance. The other conflict we can think of is the challenge in building a hydro electric dam, or the challenges the community has faced in getting to this point (I think we'll run with the latter by talking about their dark history, although that idea is still on the rocks for now).
- Reconciliation journalism: because our main character doesn't want the story about him (he stressed the importance of the community's involvement), we're going to try to make the community our main character. We're going to show how a community's resilience landed them where they are today, and use different people to share that story. Eg. This is the story of Westeros, not Jon Snow.
- Documenting climate change: don't try to document climate change in the middle of a snowstorm.
- Shooting on a construction site: safety is paramount. Don't focus on the shot, focus on staying within safe zones and following safety guidelines.

Wed Nov 03

- Working in a community with no cell service: communication has been really difficult when trying to get in touch with places such as the airport, because I can only reach them on a landline, which can only be done when we are at the hotel and when the receptionist is around (she normally isn't). We also have to plan meetup times (eg. 3pm at Pituvik office), and subsequent locations, since we can't call each other.
- Conciliatory journalism: we had an informal meeting in the snow downpour today with Eric and Johnny to find out if they were okay with how we planned to present the story. They said they were, just not to focus the doc on the dog slaughter and Resolute stuff to much, but rather have it as background info.
- *Visual storytelling:* haven't given mobile journalism enough credit. My iPhone 12 is actually taking some great vids (will have to verify this in editing on the bigger screen), but at least the quality seems good, colours are great and it has live autofocus and a better macro lens then the canon 5D. I still prefer the GH5, but mobile phones have jumped up a notch. Also much more portable. The only complain I'd have is the poor digital zoom (gets really grainy), but otherwise the wide-angle capabilities are great.
- *Visual storytelling:* taking shots at night was a bigger challenge, had to alternate between long exposure shots for the landscape, and quick exposure to capture people zooming past me on ATVs in a matter of seconds.

Thur Nov 04

- I filmed a mobile journalism interview today, and another advantage of mobile journalism that I noticed is the ease of setup. Had I been with a camera and tripod, the interview may not have been able to take place, or rather it would have had to be cut short. We were in a hurry to get to the airport but absolutely needed this interview done for the story, and we spent the whole morning tracking our interviewee (Davide). When we finally found him outside his house, it was just a matter of shoot and go. Setup took

about one minute (finding a good location and taking out equipment), and that was it. We used a Google pixel with a frame mount, and a microphone on a stick. I was really impressed with the quality of the shot; the only criticism I would have is that depth of field is not as good as in a DSLR- the background wasn't as blurry/out of focus as I would have liked it.

Behind the scenes photos