Engaging Communities in Newfoundland and Labrador Journalism: A Case Study of News Coverage of Project Nujio'qonik in Port au Port.

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ABSTRACT

Engaging Communities in Newfoundland and Labrador Journalism: A Case Study of News Coverage of Project Nujio'qonik in Port au Port.

Abigail Cole

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the decline of local news is problematic for rural communities and democracy. Considering this decline, this thesis focuses on the rural community of the Port au Port Peninsula, as it faces the introduction of a massive wind farm project (Project Nujio'Qonik). This thesis explores the evolution of journalism from traditional concepts such as watchdog journalism, to engaged and community-centered journalism. This thesis seeks to answer three research questions: How do community members in Port au Port feel about journalism efforts and news reporting in the context of a news shortage? How can journalism adapt to address the loss of local news in the province to better engage communities in the face of significant developments like Project Nujio'Qonik? What perspectives on the wind farm are most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent are community voices represented?

Qualitative interviews with community members from Port au Port were used to answer the first two research questions, and a basic analysis of the voices quoted across the wind farm project's news coverage from August 2023 to August 2024 was conducted to answer the third question. This thesis finds that community members are not content with reporting efforts, due to perceived bias and not enough local news. Community members shared that they want more factual, unbiased reporting, that involves the community more in the process. They also want more local journalism physically present in the community. The analysis also found that government and corporate voices were quoted significantly more than community voices. Therefore, this thesis suggests that engaged and community-centered journalism techniques, by involving the community more in the reporting process, could work to restore community members' satisfaction with reporting.

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Introduction

Access to local news has been declining in Newfoundland and Labrador and all across Canada. According to a report by the Public Policy Forum (2018), "the number of newspaper articles … fell by almost half" between 2008 and 2018 ("Mind the Gaps" 1), which coincides with the downsizing, merging, and closure of print news outlets across the country. According to the Local News Research Project, Newfoundland and Labrador has experienced 22 newspaper closures and one new outlet opened as a result of the merger of existing outlets, between 2008 and 2023 (Lindgren and Corbett 10). Whitten writes in *The Independent* that in Newfoundland and Labrador, "local journalism is indispensable for healthy communities and a functioning democracy. And yet everywhere you turn, there seems to be less of it than ever before" (Whitten "Local Journalism"). At the same time, we know that mainstream news efforts have often neglected to understand issues and concerns facing community members in their reporting (Wenzel 2). In this context, it is increasingly important for remaining news efforts to support community needs. As the province prepares to become a hub for massive green-energy development with the construction of large wind farms across the island, small communities require trustworthy local journalism to stay informed about these projects and their impacts (Graney).

This thesis includes a case study of news coverage of the proposed Port au Port Peninsula wind farm project (Project Nujio'qonik) to examine how community members feel about journalism efforts and news reporting. Sue Robinson argues that engaged journalism, a concept that originated from the public journalism movement, is the solution to declining trust in journalism (14). Robinson's definition of engaged journalism "calls on journalism and news organizations themselves to be more immersed not only in the content they are peddling but also

in communities. Journalists in this industry transformation should be building relationships with the content itself and with the people in their communities" (14). Building upon ideas of public journalism, the concepts of engaged journalism and community-centred journalism provide a framework of how remaining journalistic efforts in Newfoundland and Labrador may better engage communities that may be vulnerable to exploitation by the energy industry.

This thesis will seek to answer the following research questions: Are community members in the Port au Port peninsula dissatisfied with journalism efforts and news reporting in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in the context of a local news shortage? And, how can journalism adapt to address the loss of local news to better engage communities in the face of significant developments like Project Nujio'qonik? These questions were answered by doing qualitative interviews with community members. Additionally, this thesis will seek to find out what perspectives on the wind farm are most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent community voices are represented. To do this, I conducted a short analysis of news articles about the wind farm project between August 2023 and August 2024 to find out what voices are most prominent in reporting. This thesis presents a trajectory of journalism, starting with the traditional journalism concepts of representative democracy and watchdog journalism to the modern concepts of engaged and community-centered journalism. After analyzing interviews and online news articles, this thesis found that both pro-wind farm and anti-wind farm participants were dissatisfied with journalism and perceived the media as biased. They wanted more fact-based journalism, more community involvement and more local journalism overall. Additionally, I found that pro-wind farm and government voices were quoted significantly more than community voices across the wind farm project’s news stories. This thesis explores the concepts of engaged journalism and community-centered journalism as ways

to improve on traditional models will contribute to understanding how journalism can adapt to address the loss of local news and better engage communities in the face of significant developments such as the Project Nujio'qonik wind farm.

The Port au Port Peninsula and Project Nujio'qonik

The Port au Port Peninsula is on Newfoundland's west coast. The town of Port au Port sits at the peninsula's isthmus with the community of Lourdes to the north and the community Cape St. George at its most western tip. According to the 2021 census, the peninsula has a population of 1467 and 384 in the town of Port au Port. It also has two strong cultural identities of French and Mi'kmaq origins. The region is the proposed site of World Energy GH2's wind-to-hydrogen project, called Project Nujio'qonik. The project's environmental impact assessment received approval from the province in April 2024 (Whitten "World Energy GH2"). According to World Energy GH2's environmental impact statement, the proposal involves the construction of a 164-turbine wind farm on the Port au Port Peninsula, which would be used to power a 0.5 gigawatt hydrogen facility ("Project Nujio'qonik").

The project has been a site of contention for community members who live on the peninsula. Some adamantly oppose the project for its potential environmental destruction, while others believe the project is needed to bring in much-needed jobs and revenue (Butler). In my reporting on the initial stages of the project, I found that some community members in Port au Port are concerned about the potential destruction of the region's unique landscape and wildlife caused by the project's required road construction (Cole). Some news reporting has also demonstrated that community members have opposing views of the project. For example, CBC Newfoundland and Labrador, interviewed community members after the federal government

gave the project a $128 million loan in February 2024 (Moore). Jasen Benwah, the chief of Benoit First Nation, expressed optimism about the project, saying “The project will be a much-needed kick-start for the people and their communities” (Moore). In the same article, community member and project protester Duran Felix shared concerns about the project. He said,

> When you consider that they decided not to do a federal environmental assessment, under which it clearly falls, this just goes to show you how willing the government is to overlook environmental concerns and the concerns of residents to further their own goals.

Therefore, reporting so far on the wind farm project has demonstrated the differing opinions among community members. This is a unique opportunity to examine community member satisfaction with news media.

The Port au Port Peninsula also lacks a local newspaper focused on issues in the region. While there used to be a local newspaper based out of Stephenville called *The Georgian*, which reported on the Port au Port region, it closed in 2014 ("Georgian, Coaster Newspapers to Cease Publication"). The proposed wind farm and its developments have been covered by major news outlets, including CBC News and Saltwire, a Canadian newspaper publishing company that publishes newspapers in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Saltwire was taken over by Postmedia in August 2024, resulting in its Newfoundland newspaper, *The Telegram*, going from daily print to only once a week, and staff layoffs as a result (Ping and Lazarenko). Cuts to newsroom staff have resulted in less N.L. content in the paper

and more national stories in their place. Some content is still shared daily on the Saltwire website, but readers must pay for an online subscription.

The wind farm project has also been covered by popular provincial radio and TV stations, including VOCM and NTV, based out of St. John's. On the West Coast, radio station Bay of Islands Radio, or Bay-FM, based out of Corner Brook has also done significant coverage of the project. Some independent news organizations have reported on the topic, including The Independent, a non-profit online news publication, and Mi'kmaq Matters podcast, which centers Indigenous voices in its coverage of the wind farm. The podcast is produced by volunteers and funded by donations. This podcast has explored how some residents feel left out of the leaders' decision to support the project, which has created division in the community (Wheeler).

Literature Review

This literature review will compare and contrast traditional journalism concepts with contemporary journalism concepts, to generate an understanding of a journalist's role in a community, why communities may lack trust in journalism, and how journalism can be improved to better serve communities. This review will demonstrate a journey of journalism theory, starting with traditional journalism and ending with community-centered journalism. By exploring traditional journalism through the concepts of representative democracy, the watchdog model, and objectivity, this review explores the central tenets of journalism, and represents what audiences have traditionally expected from journalists. This review will also explore how these concepts have evolved with critiques of journalism traditions.

Despite journalists traditionally striving for objectivity, research has found that partisans perceive the same media as biased. Indeed, this study came to a similar conclusion. As such, a post hoc analysis was conducted to find out what perspectives on the wind farm are most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent are community voices represented. To help support this, the literature review will also explore the hostile media effect to contextualize community members dissatisfied with news coverage.

Following this, the literature review explores the concept of public journalism, as the initial divergence from traditional journalism, and a first step on the trajectory towards the modern concept of community-centered journalism. The public journalism movement encouraged greater audience engagement which was then followed by the theory of engaged journalism which sought to expand upon public journalism in response to declining trust in journalism. Relational journalism and community-centered journalism are concepts that expand from engaged journalism. Relational journalism as explained by Ellis, Voakes and Bergen and community-centered journalism as explained by Wenzel, build upon engaged journalism to promote a bottoms-up approach that involves long-term community involvement and collaborative storytelling. This thesis therefore uses these theories to provide a lens through which to explore the case study of community members in Port au Port, Newfoundland and Labrador, help explain how community members feel about journalism, and provide methods for improving journalism efforts.

Traditional Journalism

To understand the traditional journalistic values and norms that were applied in particular in the West throughout much of the twentieth century, this review will examine the concepts of

representative democracy, watchdog journalism and objectivity. In this thesis, these concepts provide the foundation of 20th-century, Western journalism theory, and demonstrate the expectations audiences may have for journalists. Analysis and critique of these concepts will support this thesis' understanding of how journalism has evolved and may no longer support community needs. Understanding these concepts will also provide a framework of understanding for more modern journalism concepts that may better suit contemporary community needs.

Representative democracy refers to the understanding that "the sovereignty of the people is expressed in the electoral appointment of the representatives," and electoral representation is facilitated through "electoral mechanisms [that] ensure some measure of responsiveness to the people by representatives who speak and act in their name" (Urbinati 1). In other words, members of a community will elect someone to represent them in government to make decisions on their behalf. In a representative democracy, the journalist is traditionally understood as a "neutral observer" who "can provide news and other information about the various different sectors of the country, especially those not sufficiently spoken for by their elected representatives so that their relevant perspectives, ideas and activities are included in public discourse" (Gans 6). Journalists may also "supply news and other information for [the population], by supplying them news they need or should need" (Gans 6).

The term "watchdog journalism" describes the activities of journalists under representative democracy, including the documenting of "government, business and other public institutions in a way that exposes little-publicized or hidden activities to public scrutiny" (Bennet and Serrin 169). This process involves "asking probing questions of public officials and authorities," and in "some instances investigative reporting may point toward constructive

reforms" that "mobilize publics to take action on pressing problems" (Bennet and Serrin 169). Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentstiel say the watchdog role is one of the primary tasks of journalism, describing it as "the classic role of investigative reporting, uncovering wrongdoing" (20). However, the role is not as simple as bearing witness; rather, "routine monitoring performed by a witness bearer may lead to the watchdog investigation" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 20). Additionally, while changes in technology and the economy have created new opportunities, "they also threaten an independent watchdog press" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 220). So now, "newsrooms are shrinking, and the resources available for watchdog reporting have become even scarcer" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 221).

Some research has been conducted on how audiences feel about the watchdog role. In an analysis of data from the Pew Research Center's 2020 Election News Pathways project, Jurkowitz and Mitchell found that 73 percent of U.S. adults say, "it's important for journalists to function as watchdogs over elected officials." However, U.S. adults differed in their view of how journalists are performing the watchdog role; only 30 percent say journalists are "getting it about right." Thirty-five percent say journalists are going too far, and thirty-two percent say they're not going far enough. The research also found that both Democrats and Republicans supported the watchdog role.

A key characteristic of the watchdog role is the "relatively high regard the journalists in this group pay to their social position as a detached observer," or someone who is objective (Hanitzsch 485). Schudson writes about the norm of objectivity in American journalism, and how it is a moral standard that has evolved through journalism practices. Journalists who work under the norm of objectivity will "separate facts from values" and will "report only the facts"

(Schudson 150). In American journalism, objectivity is achieved by fairly representing each side of a political controversy (Schudson 150). Schudson said that under this norm "the journalist's job consists of reporting something called 'news' without commenting on it, slanting it, or shaping its formulation in any way" (150).

This thesis examines local journalism in a community that is facing the introduction of a massive wind farm project. Under traditional journalism concepts, it is expected that in a democratic society, journalists act as neutral observers of government, business and public institutions. According to traditional journalism, the role of a journalist in this community should be observing and watching the development of this project on behalf of the public, as it has government support, regulation and public funds. These concepts provide a basis for what community members may expect from a journalist in their community. As Pew research shows, the watchdog role, an objective observer of the state, is considered important to many U.S. adults.

Critiques of traditional journalism

Critiques of watchdog journalism

In modern journalism scholarship, the watchdog role still holds significance, but with caveats. Ellis, Voakes and Bergen still think the watchdog role is an important role for a journalist to fill in a modern democracy. They state:

> Citizens in a modern, complex democracy cannot all monitor the conduct of government themselves, but that conduct must nonetheless be monitored - to ensure that those in power are upholding their constitutional and legal duties. The

> news media - the so-called Fourth Estate of government - perform that task on behalf of the citizen (Ellis et al. 147).

Ellis et al. describe aspects of traditional journalism, like the watchdog role and classical objectivity, as "tried and true" principles "that have made journalism such a vital component of American democracy" (138). They seek to improve upon these principles by emphasizing the importance of truth with objectivity and verification, fairness (or overcoming bias), accountability, independence, monitoring of society's most powerful institutions (the watchdog role), and consistency in newsworthiness (Ellis et al. 139). Ellis et al. say that truthful journalists "attempt to build representations of the world one fact at a time" and that "gradually the accumulation of agreed-upon, verifiable (accurate) facts leads to the creation of context" (140).

However, Ellis et al. argue that the economic demands of journalism, that lead journalists to try to produce more news in less time and maximize audience appeal, have morphed the watchdog role (63-64). They argue that the economic imperative to sensationalize has turned much journalism into gossip and that even efforts to fulfill the watchdog role by reporting on politicians, has turned into treating them like celebrities, and exposing their wrongdoings "rather than systemic problems" (Ellis et al. 64). They argue that the long-term result of gossip-style reporting is audiences becoming "alienated-spectators" of the elite in which they feel they have no connection (Ellis et al. 64). Furthermore, research shows that journalists rarely ever contact average citizens in the reporting process, which indicates journalists overwhelming influence by the exclusive elite. They state "journalists, as a whole, do not mix and mingle among the citizens they theoretically serve," thus impacting the integrity of the watchdog role (Ellis et al. 64).

While the watchdog role and investigative journalism "has been a staple of American journalism" since the early 1900s, Ellis et al., say it has "lost some of its lustre in the late 20th century," when journalism turned towards exposing personal wrongdoings rather than systemic injustices (147). Kovach and Rosenstiel say that the watchdog is a fundamental principle in journalism, as "journalists must serve as an independent monitor of power," (198). They argue that throughout the 1980s and 1990s, investigative reporting and watchdog journalism started to focus more "on risks to personal safety or consumer pocketbooks, not to citizens' freedom" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 215). Some examples of popular investigative topics are scammers, bad lifeguards and dangerous drivers (Kovach and Rosenstiel 215). They argue that some outlets in the late 1990s demonstrated "a genre of investigative reporting that ignored most of the matters typically associated with the watchdog role of the press," quoting a producer who said "our obligation is not to deliver the news. Our obligation is to do good programming," (Kovach and Rosenstiel 215). While research shows that audiences want investigative reporting, Kovach and Rosenstiel argue that technology and the economic incentive to create investigative stories that gain clicks and readership, threatens the watchdog role.

Meanwhile, modern journalism scholarship critiques and has a new understanding of the watchdog role. Wenzel highlights the pitfalls of watchdog journalism while talking about the work of the Solutions Journalism Network (SJN), an American non-profit that trains journalists to do solutions journalism (9). While journalists have traditionally acted as whistleblowers to expose wrongdoing, the SJN argues that simply reporting on a problem without addressing responses leaves out important details that society needs to know to bring about change (Wenzel 9). Wenzel argues that "shining a spotlight on social ills is only one part of a journalist's

responsibility" (162). Wenzel's solution is a combination of engaged and solutions journalism, called community-centered journalism, which will be discussed later in this thesis.

Critiques of Objectivity

Ellis et al. define objectivity as "the process of honest inquiry" (140). They say journalists should be like scientists and honestly consider if the evidence supports a hypothesis. To be objective, the journalist must present fair, unbiased information, which has "long been a hallmark of excellent journalism" (Ellis et al. 144). However, Ellis et al. argue for a new, modernized version of objectivity, that demonstrates new ways of removing bias and instead emphasizes fairness (144). For example they say that journalists must show empathy towards all subjects, include a response from someone being criticized, make sure quotes are given context, frame the story without stereotypes or assumptions and apply the golden rule: "Be sure you would feel comfortable being treated the same way you are treating your subjects for the story," (Ellis et al. 144).

As journalism evolved in the 20th century, journalists strived to accomplish objectivity in their reporting. One example of this is the rise of false equivalence in reporting. False equivalence, also called false balance, occurs when journalists try to make their reporting seem balanced by taking a shortcut by simply demonstrating "both sides" of a controversial issue. This can lead to giving equal space to extreme and marginal ideals like climate change or holocaust denial (Ellis et al. 140). The reporter then does not take responsibility for spreading these ideas "because they thought they were being objective" (Ellis et al. 140).

As journalism scholarship moved into the 21st century, critiques of objectivity led scholars to begin to introduce new forms of journalism that better engage the public and

therefore, increase public trust in journalism. In his essay "Beyond Objectivity," Jay Rosen argues objectivity is breaking down in the American press (48). Rosen critiques objectivity by defining it as a contract between journalists and their employers that says they can report the news independently, without introducing politics, but that this is contradicted by corporate ownership of news organizations that diminished journalists' independence (48). He also said objectivity is a journalistic epistemology that divides facts from values, and information from opinion (Rosen 49). However, he said journalists recognize that it's impossible to be objective, and rather strive for fairness (Rosen 49). He also critiques objectivity in practice in newsrooms for leading to false balance because it has resulted in mere routines carried out by journalists, such as quoting both sides of a political dispute, which is not objective (Rosen 49). Therefore, Rosen suggested replacing traditional journalism, and the norm of objectivity, with public journalism. While public journalism emerged in the late 20th century, it didn't stick with newsrooms and journalists. Public journalism will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis. Rosen also suggests that journalism requires a mental shift in how we understand democracy as something we have, to something we do, or "something we must create, re-invent, re-imagine" (53). Therefore he defines public journalism as "a theory and a practice that recognizes the overriding importance of improving public life" (Rosen 53). This concept is explored in greater detail in the next section.

Hostile Media Effect

Newsrooms strive to be objective, and research shows that audiences expect journalism to be objective but that audiences often perceive journalism as biased towards a certain position, which can lead to further dissatisfaction with journalism. In 1985, Vallone, Ross and Lepper reviewed television coverage of the Beirut massacre and analyzed both pro-Israeli and pro-Arab

partisans' ratings of the reporting. They found both sides perceived identical reporting as biased against their side, which Vallone, Ross and Lepper called the "hostile media phenomenon." Perloff quotes Hansen and Kim's definition of the hostile media effect, describing it as a phenomenon that occurs when "partisans perceive a neutral news report as biased against their side" (qtd. in Perloff 706). Other scholars argue that the hostile media effect only occurs among individuals "highly involved in an issue" or occurs only among "some news consumers" who "rate ostensibly neutral stories as biased against their point of view" (Perloff 706).

Perloff argues that the hostile media effect could be problematic for democracy. Under a representative democracy, journalists are supposed to act as neutral observers of the state and inform the public so they can make informed decisions about who to elect. Perloff cites Tsfati and Cohen who state that "democracy requires institutional and social trust, and these are seriously challenged when one perceives a central democratic institution such as mass media as biased, imbalanced or antagonistic" (qtd. in Perloff 724). However, if the informed public believes the media to be biased, it can reduce trust, "diminish political efficacy and precipitate antidemocratic action" (Perloff 723). Perloff argues that a paradox occurs in which the news media, which is intended to provide checks and balances on government and democratically empower citizens, can instead "elicit perceptions that lead to undemocratic outcomes" (Perloff 724). Some scholars argue for a "fairness ethos" where certain outlets are designated to provide a voice to marginal or even extreme parties, while others argue that the media should continue to strive for the tradition of objectivity and nonpartisanship (Perloff 724).

While news organizations continue to use their versions of traditional journalism practices, in journalism scholarship they're under fire. Ellis et al. argue there is a need to update

them "for a contemporary mode of journalism that also values the work of citizens" (139). These critiques of traditional journalism, and the objective watchdog press, gave rise to new approaches to journalism concepts towards the end of the 20th century. Scholars began conceptualizing how the standardized principles of journalism were potentially failing in contemporary society. The hostile media effect demonstrates how the standard of objectivity failed to support democracy and keep citizens satisfied with the press. This gave way to the concept of public journalism as scholars began recentering the public in the purpose of journalism.

Public Journalism

This section explores how the concept of public journalism emerged to address some of the criticisms detailed above. Public journalism emerged at the end of the 20th century as a way of recentering the public in journalism. As traditional journalism steered the journalism practice towards routines with goals such as objectively presenting facts and serving as a watchdog on behalf of the public, scholars felt the public and the state were becoming more and more disconnected. Public journalism in this literature review represents a step in the journey towards the modern concepts of engaged, relational and community-centered journalism.

Merritt talks about public journalism by reflecting on the state of journalism towards the end of the twentieth century and argued that "the gap between citizen and government had grown. Citizens do not trust their government to properly tend to important matters" (Merrit 3). At the time, Merritt argued the news was failing due to a growing distance between "journalists and the events and people they write about," causing the public to retreat into private concerns (Merritt xvi). However, "a community requires democracy if they are to exist in freedom and

equity," and that democracy requires three things: shared relevant information, deliberation, and shared values on which to base decisions (Merritt 7).

Merritt is deeply concerned about the state of democracy, pointing out that “our formal politics, which is only one part of the public life, is sodden and largely ineffective” (3). He points out the gap between the government and citizens has grown, which has led to further distrust in the government to “properly tend to important matters” (Merrit 3). Merrit says this is a problem, because journalism is important in a modern democracy, but declining trust in journalism resulted in the decline of the journalism business, which is its economic basis (8). He describes modern democracy as a “participatory democracy,” where “two or more people with common interests - a community - require democracy if they are to exist in freedom and equity” (8). Merritt also emphasizes that in the last half of the 20th century, a growing number of news sources have led to information overload, which he says is “spiritually debilitating” (9). In the modern age of journalism, he said citizens can become “frustrated by the crush of contextless information and the polarized presentation of issues” (Merritt 9). Therefore, modern communication and information sharing has polarized communities further, the argument went, and through journalism’s deeply embedded traditions, it lost its authority. Thus, Merritt argued it needed a fundamental change to revitalize itself.

Merritt proposes the philosophy of "public journalism," which he describes as "a conviction and a resultant attitude about the relationship between journalism and public life" (Merritt 113). Merritt argues that public journalism is not in conflict with traditional journalism, but rather it adds to those ideals an additional imperative: concern for whether citizens become engaged in public life” (142). He says, “If people are not engaged, democracy fails; and if people

are not engaged in public life, they have no need for journalists" (Merritt 142). Public journalism involved five mental shifts journalism, including: "a broader mission of helping public life go well," "being a fair-minded participant in public life," "concern with proper connections," "imagining what 'going right' would be like," and seeing people as "a public, as potential actors in arriving at democratic solutions to public problems" (Merritt 113-114).

Merritt suggests some tools, like "man-in-the-street interviews," to involve the public in reporting (121). However, not merely using these tools does not make journalism "public." Instead, their application must be purposive. For example, he suggested journalists adjust the "nut graph" of stories to demonstrate what effect the story will have on the public's lives, or adapt alternative framing that centres the community (Merritt 123). He also said news organizations could share more information about how people can get involved in civic activity, and that journalists should make themselves more available to the public (Merritt 126). However, as discussed by Rosen, even within organizations where editors were committed to the public journalism approach, public journalism was resisted in the name of traditional values, and "it [was] called a fad or gimmick by some who see any attempt to 'connect' with citizens as equivalent to a marketing approach, pandering to readers, surrendering professional judgment," (Rosen 36). Furthermore, Rosen argues that journalists insisted that they are totally objective and that they "are never actors, always observers," thus denying they influence the public, but simply reporting it as is (Rosen 36). This paradox of journalists wanting to adapt public journalism but remain objective observers hindered the public journalism movement from fully taking force.

Engaged Journalism

As digital technologies have developed, the introduction of smartphones, and constantly updated social media feeds, made attracting and maintaining loyal audiences harder than ever (Batsell 3). Batsell argues, “By the end of the decade the news industry was still grappling with economic struggles while simultaneously searching for ways to build audience loyalty in an increasingly digital landscape,” (20-21). This section will explore the concept of engaged journalism, as described by Batsell and Robinson, that emerged from this struggle to maintain audiences at the genesis of the digital age. Batsell defines engaged journalism "as the degree to which a news organization actively considers and interacts with its audience in furtherance of its journalistic and financial mission" (Batsell 7). On the other hand, later into the decade, Robinson argues for a stronger approach to engaged journalism that involves industry transformation (Robinson 14). Her version of engaged journalism is one where journalists build relationships with the content itself, by not only relaying information but committing to help the audience check facts and evaluate sources, and build relationships with people in the community (Robinson 14). In opposition to Batsell’s definition, Robinson argues for engagement that “aims to build relationships rather than simply to enhance a brand and boost audience metrics,” (Robinson 15). By journalists doing intense fact-checking and relationship building through direct journalist audience interaction, audiences build greater trust in journalism and journalists (Robinson 15).

Batsell sought to strategize how newsrooms could maintain a connection with audiences, or the public, despite the challenges of the 21st century. He discusses the public journalism movement, or as he calls it civic journalism, manifesting through in-person events with

audiences organized by news organizations (18). He says the civic journalism movement of the 1990s created a notion that journalists “had a duty to convene and enlighten members of their communities,” (Batsell 20). He describes the public journalism movement in newsrooms as “altruistic experiments,” that began to disappear in the early 2000s as resources in newsrooms were depleted (Batsell 20). Diverging from the concept of public journalism in the 1990s, Batsell’s concept of engaged journalism emerged as not only a way to better the journalism business and also improve citizen trust.

In 2015, Batsell wrote, "the last half of the twentieth century was an era of disengaged journalism, at least when it came to audience interaction" (3). Batsell highlights that now "engagement is everything" and offers an approach called "engaged journalism" (5). He also proposes guiding principles of engaged journalism including that they should "convene audiences in person" through face-to-face events, "interact with audiences at every step," "serve the 'passionate vertical,'" - meaning they serve a niche or a hyperlocal region - "empower audiences to satisfy their own curiosity" by allowing readers to find what matters to them on their platform, and "measure effectiveness and capture value" by tracking the effectiveness of their engagement initiatives (Batsell 10-11). Engaged journalism offers a basic understanding of how a journalist may engage audiences. However, alongside seeking to "build loyalty and deepen trust," it seeks to find "new revenue streams to subsidize the public-interest journalism that market forces have never supported anyway" (Batsell 5).

More recently, Robinson has argued that engaged journalism can help solve the issue of distrust in the news media. Robinson does not agree with Batsell’s definition of engaged journalism, and argues for one that is more robust, and one that "calls on journalists and news

organizations themselves to be more immersed not only in the content they are peddling but also in communities" (Robinson 14). Robinson argues engaged journalism must involve an industry transformation where journalists build relationships with the content itself and the people in their community (Robinson 14). Robinson notes that there have been "rapid technological changes in the media system" alongside growing politically biased media, which have "sowed dissatisfaction in mainstream journalism" (xiv). Due to this, journalists have shifted their focus to "restoring the relevancy of mainstream journalism through engagement and other kinds of trust-building practices" as they seek to determine "how to build trust in mainstream information about public affairs to save journalism and, in turn, save democracy" (Robinson xiv). Furthermore, trust building must consider "the power dynamics, structural racism and systems of oppression that create inequities, constant microaggressions, and bias against people that have been typically marginalized by news media" (Robinson 3). Therefore, Robinson develops a "theory of trust building" which is as follows:

> Trust building happens through the nurturing of personal, organizational, and institutional relationships that people have with information, sources, news brands, journalists and each other during what is commonly referred to as *engagement*. For trust building to occur, journalistic engagement needs to be practiced with identity-aware caring and enacted through listening and learning (6).

Robinson presents a path for journalist engagement through trust-building. Robinson argues that trust building can help tackle distrust in news media and be useful for determining community information needs.

In a polarized public, the tradition of fact-based journalism, that has long been considered tried and true, was "failing to inform people about their shared civic life in a way that felt credible," (Robinson 159). Robinson argues her theory of trust building involves a significant paradigm shift in the profession of journalism. The theory of trust building also creates four new roles for journalists, including: relationship builder, community collaborator, conversation facilitator, and professional network builder (Robinson 160). These new roles also require new skills, including: radical transparency, power dynamic accounting, mediation, reciprocity, media literacies, community offline work, needs/assets/solution analyses, and collaborative production (Robinson 160). These new skills also require the journalist to do deep listening and learning. Robinson argues for a major shift in perspective for journalists, who usually stay distant, especially in for-profit newsrooms "spurred by competitiveness and territoriality," towards a "holistic, networked approach that privileges collaboration, information sharing, and innovation born from expansive thinking and consideration of marginalized folx," (Robinson 160). Furthermore, she argues that if journalists continue to focus on objectivity, they "would fail to highlight the much more salient and devastating reality that objectivity, even as an ideal, was keeping reporters from practicing an ethic of care that was identity-aware" (Robinson 167). Therefore, Robinson makes a series of recommendations to help journalists build trust, including:

- "Build on existing relationships and use them to expand into new groups and communities,"
- Work towards long-term trust building. Create a plan to keep the community engaged with the newsroom.

- Get uncomfortable to be creative.
- "Nuance your trust-building skill set according to the kinds of communities you want to enter."
- Follow through by actually publishing engagement results or reconnecting with people. (Robinson 169)
- "Find people within your organization who are on board with the change in protocols and try to bypass those who will throw up obstacles."
- "Provide specific examples and anecdotes to students/co-workers about how to implement strategies and techniques to trust-build,"
- "Build in more time than you think you will need to reconceptualize traditional priorities like deadlines" to understand how much time engagement work takes.
- Appreciate the importance of partnerships and networks.
- Work cross-culturally
- "Reconsider what success looks like,"
- "Make everyone responsible for engagement work,"
- Offer choices in the work by allowing journalists, students, project partners and community members multiple pathways to participate (Robinson 170).
- Keep going, "even if you fall off the work for a while during a hectic time,"

- “Think outside the box in terms of connecting within communities.” Link with community leaders, and place suggestion boxes and QR codes around neighbourhoods and libraries with specific feedback instructions. Set up tables at food pantries, farmers’ markets, and libraries, host dinner parties, and Slack or Discord channels to facilitate feedback.

- “Partner with entities whose skill sets would be useful and important to trust-building work,” such as a marketing department or a nonprofit that works with multimedia or youth organizations.

- “Communicate, communicate, communicate,”

- Constantly check yourself and the work you are doing (Robinson 171).

By taking on these tools for engagement and trust building, journalism can become more inclusive, prioritize the information needs of a community, collaborate with audiences, and hopefully, build and preserve trust between journalists and the community.

In the case of the Port au Port Peninsula, as the community faces the introduction of a new energy industry, power dynamics may become increasingly prominent and important, as community members may attempt to make their concerns heard by a billion-dollar energy company and the provincial government. Therefore, this thesis engages Robinson's trust-building framework, including nurturing relationships with community members, to examine whether it may offer a promising avenue for journalists in Newfoundland who aspire to approach the coverage of Project Nujio'qonik with greater community engagement.

Relational and Community-Centered Journalism

In 2021, Ellis, Voakes and Bergen sought to radically expand upon the concept of engaged journalism, and reconceptualize the journalist's role in communities. They proposed the concept of relational journalism as a way for journalists to be even more deeply connected with citizens, to better serve the modern democracy. On the other hand, Wenzel combined elements of engaged journalism and solutions journalism to form the concept of community-centered journalism. Under community-centered journalism, citizens become more deeply involved in the journalism process. Relational and community-centered journalism are grouped together in this section as they both focus on closing the gap between journalists and the public through empowerment and trust building,

Ellis, Voakes, and Bergen critique the concept of engaged journalism, claiming that traditional news outlets have co-opted the phrase "engagement," rather than participating in "an intellectual, emotional, and even lasting involvement" with the public (xi). Ellis et al., propose relational journalism as a way for journalists to "help citizens recognize their shared values and shared problems to deliberate in ways that bring them to shared public judgment" (80). They define relational journalism as being when:

> Journalists commit to a long-term involvement with groups of citizens and their challenges; they do what they can, starting with providing reliable background facts, to help citizens deliberate; they share the work of journalism with citizens whose own perspectives, experience and knowledge can enhance the journalism; they work with radical levels of transparency about the processes, and they work

to achieve authentic diversity in the way they choose stories to cover, sources to engage and citizens to ask for feedback (Ellis et al. 80).

Furthermore, relational journalism seeks to give citizens what Ellis et al. call the "civic capacity" to participate in democracy. They define civic capacity as "the extent to which a person or community can participate effectively in the political decision-making process" (Ellis et al. 43). The journalist, therefore, serves democracy by helping citizens understand "the strategies to solve shared problems and effective positive change" (Ellis et al. 4).

Ellis, Voakes and Bergen say relational journalism requires journalists to commit to long-term involvement with a group of citizens and their challenges. So, they set five key principles of relational journalism to help journalists achieve that. These principles include, “journalism is in itself an essential democratic practice,” “journalists and citizens are collaborators,” “journalists facilitate the work of citizens,” updating time honoured traditions, and following new paths to financial stability, (Ellis et al. 80-84). For journalists to help facilitate democracy, the authors suggest journalists include “all kinds of different citizens,” not just power-holders, and do more investigative work that also demonstrates solutions (Ellis et al. 81). They suggest involving citizens in reporting and engaging in deep listening, to bring lived experience, honest opinions and community resources, into stories.

Ellis, Voakes and Bergen propose a “refresh” of the watchdog role, where citizens play a more active role in investigations. For example, they suggest reporters with social media followers let the community know about their investigative projects and ask for tips or have meetings at community centers to come up with story and source ideas (Ellis et al. 147). Additionally, journalists must also be held accountable or be willing to answer for their work, be

able to honestly explain how the work was done and be able to own up to mistakes publicly (Ellis et al. 148). Journalists should go beyond publishing corrections by building accountability into their routine. For example, the authors suggest returning to subjects and asking them about what they thought about their work and explaining to them the decisions they made while reporting (Ellis et al. 149). They also suggest publishers announce corrections and inform readers that the story has been updated. The authors argue that there has traditionally been a hierarchy in new newsrooms to determine the newsworthiness of a story, including timeliness, prominence of people involved, potential impact, elements of conflict and emotional appeal (Ellis et al. 150). However, they suggested reordering these values. For example, timeliness can "lend itself to speed for the sake of getting it posted first without regard for accuracy, ethics or reflection" (Ellis et al. 150). They also argue that valuing conflict can lead to a distorted view of the world and can create polarization (Ellis et al. 150). Ellis, Voakes and Bergen, therefore, argue for more value to be placed on impact and geographical proximity in order for both journalism and citizenship to have a revival in the public sphere.

Andrea Wenzel also argues for more citizen involvement in journalism. Similar to Ellis, Voakes and Bergen's suggestion that accountability be part of journalists' routines and for the public to inform decision making, Wenzel argues for more back and forth interaction and involvement between journalists and community members. However, while Ellis et al. focus on fostering civic capacity to participate in democracy, Wenzel focuses more on creating storytelling networks, and communication loops between the public and journalists to foster greater trust in journalism. Wenzel also explores how journalists may build trust with communities and ways to strengthen local communication infrastructures (21). She suggests reimagining traditional journalism by connecting journalists with community organizations and

residents (Wenzel 22). To do that, she combines the concepts of engaged journalism and solutions journalism to create community-centered journalism, a form of journalism that better serves communities.

According to Wenzel, solutions journalism is a practice aimed at helping citizens comprehend how social problems can be addressed, offering a valuable means for citizens to get involved. According to Wenzel: "solutions journalism holds that a journalist's role is not only to report on problems but also to rigorously report on 'responses to social problems.'" (4). This approach is not just centred on problems but also "on responses to them" (Wenzel 34). Second, she discusses the concept of engaged journalism, which she defines as "a range of practices that aim to build relationships between journalists and the public and involve the public in the process of co-creating journalism," (Wenzel 4). Wenzel argues that when solutions and engaged journalism practices are applied in combination, it contributes "to a communication environment with greater trust between media, community members and organizations, where residents feel more connected and invested" (4). Therefore, Wenzel's model of community-centred journalism seeks to combine these methods to "respond to communities' needs and assets," "strengthen storytelling networks," "build trust," and "offer spaces for dialogue and action on community issues" (4). Wenzel sees community-centred journalism not as a "prescription for a project" but rather "an intervention process that responds to communities' needs and assets in its attempt to strengthen storytelling networks and build trust" (4).

Wenzel provides various methods of engaging and building trust with community members. She argues, "journalism that centers more explicitly on communities has greater potential for more radical change needed to build trust and strengthen storytelling network

relationships in marginalized communities" (Wenzel 127). To explain this, she describes the "Hidden Hunger project," a documentary project that started with community meetings in Sacramento County. The filmmaker, jesikah maria ross, formed an advisory group that "were involved in meetings to shape the direction of the reporting" (Wenzel 145). By engaging with residents consistently, ross was able to build trust, which allowed for more relationships to be built with vulnerable community members. Therefore, Wenzel proposes that by building trust "news organization(s) could prove that [they are] committed to fair representation and accurate coverage of the community" (145).

Wenzel also outlines various journalism projects that utilize a community-centered approach. One example she follows is a Chicago-based public media initiative called Curious City. The initiative, “uses the digital engagement platform Hearken to invite listeners to nominate questions about Chicago that they want reporters to explore,” (Wenzel 20). The digital engagement platform, Hearken, was created by Jennifer Brandel, and is used for “gathering and managing questions from the public” and is used as a way for journalists to consult the public (Wenzel 51). The producers of Curious City decided to conduct an outreach experiment in communities from which they had not received questions, namely Black and Brown communities on Chicago’s South and West Sides, testing three different outreach methods in these areas. The first was "to invite people to ask questions face-to-face," the second was to "partner with community organizations, institutions and businesses for their help in gathering questions," and the third was "a Facebook advertising campaign" (Wenzel 53). They concluded that "the most productive approach [to outreach] was a hybrid of face-to-face outreach and collaboration with partners, specifically collaborating with libraries." They found that many of the questions were "questions of accountability." (Wenzel 69). "Many residents asked questions

about issues within local governance or issues around city resources and equity," which they attributed to the region's history of "deep inequality" (Wenzel 69). This example highlights how marketing to residents may be a necessary task of journalists to "establish feedback loops and channels of two-way communication" (Wenzel 73). However, these feedback loops "must be created and matured over time, and projects must be responsive to local needs and realities that communities face" (Wenzel 74).

Wenzel provides examples of how journalists sought to involve citizens in the process of creating solutions journalism. For Resolve Philadelphia's series on prisoner reentry, staffers "collaborated with a group run by formerly incarcerated citizens to design, plan and host the program," which demonstrated that solutions journalism can look like grassroots work (Wenzel 128). Another example is a Canadian-based publication called The Discourse, which sought to produce solutions to stories that also "elevate community voices" (Wenzel 129). When they identified Scarborough as the largest underserved area, they assessed the community's information needs by asking local stakeholders a set list of questions ranging from "What do you love about your community?" to "What kind of issues are you concerned about in your community?" (Wenzel 130). The Discourse then produced "a series of solutions-focused stories about the community-nominated topics, posting progress and updates on the group's Facebook page and its newsletter" (Wenzel 130).

A 2023 Agora Journalism Center Report expands upon the idea of engaged journalism to demonstrate how journalists may adapt community-centered journalism to produce better journalism (Radcliffe 4). In this report, Radcliffe builds upon Wenzel's concept and outlines specific approaches to applying community-centered journalism in newsrooms. Radcliffe

describes the report as “an accessible but provocative resource for journalists new to the community-centered approach,” and as “a manifesto to a profession whose work is more desperately needed than ever” (Radcliffe 5).

According to Radcliffe, community-centered journalism "takes a bottom-up approach" that differs from the traditional "top-down, gatekeeping, agenda-setting role of journalism" (Radcliffe 6). This new process involves more collaboration, starting by listening to community members and embracing power-sharing (Radcliffe 7). Community-centered journalism supports underserved communities by offering "a more people-centered approach focused on meeting the demonstrable needs and priorities of the communities" (Radcliffe 10). It requires community engagement and community feedback, which can only be achieved if "journalists seek to actively build trust and credibility by producing news and information that is relevant and beneficial to the daily lives of communities they are working with" (Radcliffe 11). The report expands on the concept of community-centered journalism by outlining 10 steps for journalists to adopt the approach, including: “listen to the community” by listening to people’s concerns and perspectives, “identify information needs,” “understand information flows,” “build genuine relationship” instead of simply extracting information, “collaborate” with community members in the reporting process, “be inclusive” and reflect the community’s diversity, “be constructive and solutions-oriented” by emphasizing change and making a difference, “use a variety of media” to make information sharing engaging and accessible, “stay connected” by maintaining community relationships and responding to feedback, and “don’t just show up on deadline” and maintain an ongoing commitment to the community (Radcliffe 27). By providing clear steps of achieving community-centered journalism, Radliffe’s report provides tangible means of

improvement for community journalists who may be stuck striving for objectivity but failing to serve communities' information needs.

In summary

Watchdog journalism paved the pathway towards 20th century traditional journalism, which is rooted in the principle of representative democracy that underscored journalists as impartial observers. This perspective illuminates the role of journalists in holding institutions accountable. However, the shortcomings of the traditional approaches have led to declining trust in news media and "consolidation, market failure, and a lack of sustainable business models have left many communities with news outlets that have been gutted of resources or have become news deserts" (Wenzel 6). As suggested by Radcliffe, "one way to help deliver on [creating journalism for communities] involves journalists ceding elements of their traditional gatekeeping, agenda-setting role…this means 'what we cover will be shaped directly by our communities'" (7).

Diverging from traditional journalism, public journalism spearheaded the broader mission to seek active engagement with audiences. Engaged journalism, as explained by Sue Robinson, emerged as a response to declining trust in journalism, urging journalists to interact proactively, listen, and learn from community members with identity-awareness. Relational journalism and community-centred journalism further build on these principles, promoting long-term involvement, collaborative storytelling, and a bottom-up approach. For this thesis, theories of community-centered journalism, relational journalism and engaged journalism are particularly useful for coming up with ways to improve journalism for the public. With the decline of local news across the province, there is a pressing need to explore alternative journalistic approaches

to traditional journalism, which seems to have fallen short in addressing local concerns. In the Port au Port, and across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the journalism business is failing, as evident by the convergence of news organizations and decline of overall news outlets. Wenzel argues a community-centered news intervention is needed because "consolidation, market failure and a lack of sustainable business models have left many communities with news outlets that have been gutted of resources or have become news deserts," (6). A community "with very limited local news resources" can be considered a news desert (Wenzel 122). Therefore, as Port au Port may be considered a news desert, adapting community-centered journalism could allow the news media to better serve the community's information needs, and actually survive.

The application of engaged journalism could also bridge the gap between Newfoundland and Labrador's news media and rural community members. Similarly, community-centered journalism emphasizes responsiveness to community news by offering a framework to engage vulnerable communities affected by the booming energy industry. This approach emphasizes addressing local issues, building trust, and providing space for voicing community concerns. Therefore, these concepts will guide interview questions with community members and inform solutions to the loss of local news in Newfoundland and Labrador and provide ways that remaining journalistic efforts can build trust and address local information needs.

Research Design and Method

My research questions aim to examine whether community members in Port au Port, Newfoundland and Labrador, are content with journalism efforts and news reporting, especially in the context of a news shortage. I also seek to examine and make suggestions of how

journalism can adapt to address the loss of local news in the province to better engage communities in the face of significant developments like Project Nujio'Qonik. To address these questions, I employ a case study through qualitative research design, specifically through seven semi-structured interviews with community members and stakeholders on the Port au Port Peninsula, the site of Project Nujio'Qonik.

Matthews' research paper, "Life in a News Desert," inspired this research's methodology. In his study, he conducted 19 in-depth interviews to offer "a systematic qualitative investigation of the perceived impact of a newspaper's closure on community members' everyday lives and their sense of community" (Matthews 1250). This research was useful in conceptualizing my research, as the community of Port au Port has also experienced a decline of local news coverage. Matthews describes his research as a case study, as he chose a specific community that had a recently closed newspaper to answer his research questions. A case study research design "entails detailed and intensive analysis of either a single case or (for comparative purposes) a small number of cases" (Bryman and Bell 403). A qualitative case study is an "intensive study done by a qualitative interviewing of a single case, which may be an organization, person, family or community" (Bryman and Bell 47). Therefore, this research is considered a case study as it analyzes the Port au Port Peninsula and its community members, and how they feel about the news available to them.

The seven in-depth interviews for this case study were conducted between May and October 2024, over the phone, virtually and in person. This research received ethics approval from Concordia University, and as many community members in Port au Port are Indigenous, I also received approval from the Qalipu First Nation to conduct my research. Participants

included four adult women and three adult men from the Port au Port region. All participants were given the option to remain anonymous, and only one participant chose that option. The anonymous participant will be given the classification “Participant 1.”

A snowball method was used to identify participants. Snowball sampling is a “non-probability sample in which the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people connected to the research topic and then uses them to establish contact with others” (Bryman and Bell 408). I also touched base with already established contacts, including members of the Environmental Transparency Committee, a grassroots group made up of Port au Port community members who oppose project Nujio'qonik, and the Chief of the Benoit First Nation, Jasen Benwah. One source was recruited through a Facebook post made in a Port au Port community Facebook group, who also connected me with their spouse to interview as well.

At this point, I was having trouble finding more participants, so I spoke with researcher Nick Mercer from the University of Prince Edward Island, who is also conducting research with community members in Port au Port. He had already established connections with community members and allowed me to join one of their monthly meetings to discuss my research. After this meeting, I was able to recruit two more participants whom I met in-person at a community centre in Port au Port. Jasen Benwah, the chief of the Benoit First Nation, also agreed to meet with me in person for an interview. My anonymous participant was an already established contact who agreed to meet me virtually. I stopped recruiting participants when I reached theoretical saturation, which is when "previous interviews have both formed the basis for the creation of the category and confirmed its importance. Thus, there is no longer any need to collect data in relation to that category” (Bryman and Bell 234).

Participants' background

I interviewed seven people who live on the Port au Port peninsula. Although a small community, the participants demonstrated different backgrounds, identities, and views towards the wind farm project. Four of the people I interviewed expressed more positive feelings toward the wind farm project, and three expressed more negative feelings. Additionally, four of the participants in my sample have engaged directly with journalists for interviews about the wind farm project and were able to give great insight and context about the work journalists were doing in the community and how they were doing it. Additionally, Jasen Benwah, as the Chief of the Benoit First Nation, and Gerry Labelle, as the Deputy Mayor, were able to provide great context as community leaders. While the community members expressed various opinions on the project, they all mentioned the decline of the community's population and the subsequent lack of local news. I will expand upon this in my analysis.

My first interview was with Jan Crane, who was born and raised in Port au Port East. She moved to Ontario for part of her life but has been back in the community for the last 12 years. She has positive feelings towards the wind farm project. For this analysis, I consider her pro-wind farm.

Next, I interviewed Gerry Labelle and Mercedez Quinlan, a married couple from Ontario who are newer to the community, having only lived there a few years. Labelle is Metis, and Quinlan is not Indigenous. Labelle is also the deputy mayor of Bay St. George, the community where he lives. They both participate in activities with the Benoit First Nation despite not being Mi'kmaq. They didn't express an explicit position on Project Nujio'qonik but feel optimistic

about its possibilities for the community. For the sake of this analysis, I consider both of them pro-wind farm.

I also interviewed the Chief of the Benoit First Nation, Jasen Benwah. He grew up in Port au Port, and his family has deep ties to the community and still lives there now. He is also optimistic about the wind farm and has frequently spoken to the media about his support. He is deeply involved in the community, especially the Mi'kmaq community, through activities and programs facilitated by the Benoit First Nation. He has made significant efforts to maintain the community's Indigenous heritage. For this research, I consider him pro-wind farm.

Through Nick Mercer, I connected with Marilyn Rowe and Nadine Tallack, who are both members of the Environmental Transparency Committee, a grassroots group made up of community members looking to preserve the peninsula's environment and advocate against the development of Project Nujio'qonik. Rowe is Indigenous, and Tallack has both Indigenous and French ancestry. Both women were born and raised on the peninsula. For this research, I consider both of them anti-wind farm.

The last subject chose to remain anonymous but also expressed negative feelings towards the wind farm project. I will refer to them as "participant 1," and consider them anti-wind farm.

Interviews and coding

To answer the research questions, I conducted qualitative interviews with the participants mentioned above. Qualitative interviewing is useful for "understanding people's experience, knowledge, and worldview" (Lindlof and Taylor 222). The interviews aimed to learn how community members felt about news coverage and what improvements they would like to see in

reporting. The one-on-one interviews were semi-structured, meaning there was a list of open-ended questions that prompted discussion, allowing me to gauge the participant further in their response. Semi-structured interviewing "is designed to bring out how the interviewees themselves interpret and make sense of issues and events. Therefore, it is useful for investigating [the] topic and allows for interviewees to decide how they wish to respond" (Bryman and Bell 242). I used an interview guide to ensure consistency between interviews. This is useful for cross-examining responses in my analysis but also allowed me to have leeway in how I ask the questions. The interview guide consisted of "a list of topics and questions that can be asked in different ways or different orders," allowing me to adjust how I asked questions according to the dynamics of the interview (Lindlof and Taylor 253). My working interview guide has five categories pertaining to my research question and engaged/community-centred journalism concepts as introduced by Robinson and Wenzel (Appendix). This form of interviewing is helpful for this research because it allows for a nuanced discussion of this topic, which has varied responses, and fosters a more conversational environment that lends itself to participant engagement.

The interviews averaged 55 minutes and were recorded and transcribed using Office 365. I followed the coding strategy as presented by Corbin and Strauss in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. To interpret the interviews, I used the NVivo 15 software to code them. Coding refers to the extraction of "concepts from raw data and developing them in terms of their properties and dimensions" (Corbin and Strauss, 159). Additionally, the data analysis was conducted with an inductive approach, which means I built "patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom up by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information" (Creswell & Creswell

257). To begin my research, I began with open coding, which is a "brainstorming approach to analysis," that involves opening "up the data to all potentials and possibilities contained within them" (Corbin and Strauss 160). As explained by Corbin and Strauss,

> Only after considering all possible meanings and examining the context carefully is the researcher ready to put interpretive conceptual labels on the data. Conceptualizing data not only reduces the amount of data the researcher has to work with, but at the same time provides a language for talking about the data (160).

After transcribing all my interviews, I started the coding process. I read over all the transcripts, divided answers into interview categories and identified broad themes. After adding and creating codes through each interview category, I eventually created a list of concepts of codes. I went through each section, doing a line-by-line analysis and creating codes based on the concepts, I then cross-examined interviews for similar concepts. As similar themes emerge, this validates the concepts. Through this process of analysis, I made conclusions about my research question and related responses to previous literature about engaged and community-centred journalism. As explained by Corbin and Strauss, the "entire data collection and analysis process will go on until I am satisfied that I have acquired sufficient data to describe each category/theme fully in terms of its properties and dimensions" and thus have reached conceptual saturation (197). The goal of this coding scheme is to "put together a coherent explanatory story" of if community members in Port au Port are not content with local journalism efforts and what they think could be done to improve local journalism (197).

Going back to my research questions, through this analysis, I sought to examine why community members in the Port au Port peninsula are dissatisfied with journalism efforts and news reporting in Newfoundland and Labrador, especially in the context of a local news shortage; and, how journalism can adapt to address the loss of local news to better engage communities in the face of significant developments like Project Nujio'qonik. Therefore, through this coding system, I analyzed participants' thoughts and grievances with news coverage and journalistic practices. By coding, re-reading and analyzing data I was able to paint a conceptual picture and bring understanding to the experiences of community members.

Post hoc analysis

After analyzing community member interviews, I found evidence of the hostile media effect, which is a phenomenon that occurs when "partisans perceive a neutral news report as biased against their side" (qtd. in Perloff 706). After doing the interviews, I wanted to find out if certain types of voices were quoted more often in online news articles, than others. Community members also expressed concerns about journalists not talking to the community enough. Therefore, this research will also seek to answer a third post hoc research question: what perspectives on the wind farm are most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent are community voices represented? While interviewees expressed concerns about the media only presenting views of those for or against the wind farm project, I felt it necessary to make the question about perspectives, as some may not be explicitly for or against the wind farm project.

To answer this question, I collected 114 news articles from the internet in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. During my interviews, I noted the news organizations mentioned by

interviewees, including CBC, Saltwire, VOCM, CTV, Bay FM, and The Independent. I also chose to include CBC's French-language service, Radio-Canada, as Port au Port has a significant French-speaking community.

However, my analysis has some limitations. Community members shared in the interviews that they also consumed audiovisual news, such as TV broadcasts like NTV news, a private independently-owned news station, as well as radio shows and podcasts like VOCM's *Open Line* and the *Mi'kmaq Matters* podcast. However, I did not analyze these sources due to limitations in my ability to access them. For example, VOCM's open line airs every day for two hours and will explore many different topics in one episode, and episode topics are not categorized. Due to the time it would take to analyze these sources, I chose to focus on online written articles.

In order to collect my sample, I searched the keywords "Port au Port," "Wind Farm project," "Newfoundland and Labrador," "Project Nujio'qonik," and "World Energy" in various orders through Google News and on each new site's search database. I also collected a few sources through library news databases like Eureka and ProQuest Central, however, these methods did not yield many results. The time frame for this analysis will span from August 22, 2023, to August 22, 2024, aligning with the publication of World Energy GH2's environmental impact statement available for public comment on August 22, 2023, the approval of the environmental impact assessment in April 2024, and appeals in the months following; or one year of project planning and development.

In a spreadsheet I recorded the article title, link, news source, and publication date and categorized the sources presented in each story from first to last. The data collection sheet

includes a count of the number of voices used in the story and the types of voices used. My spreadsheet includes the columns source 1, source 2, source 3, etc. I categorized sources in the order they appear in the story and came up with a coding scheme to define each type of voice quoted: “GO” for a government official, “WE” for a World Energy official, “WES” for World Energy Stakeholder, “CM” for a Port au Port region community member, “CL” for community leader, “ICL” for Indigenous community leader, “PR” for province resident outside of Port au Port, “AG” for activist group representative, “UE” for university expert, “UR” for union representative, “EN” for Energy NL representative, “NH” for N.L. Hydro representative, and “R” for Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The purpose of these categories is to quantify the number of stories that use community voices compared to other sources and, therefore, judge how the community is represented in the news.

Local news context

Before analyzing whether or not community members are dissatisfied with journalism, I asked participants to tell me more about the community in order to have a better understanding of the community’s current size and information infrastructure. Also, asking community members to think about their cultural heritage, how the community has changed over the years and what kind of sources of information they have access to, prompted them to think deeper about their community, which might allow for deeper discussion about the role of journalism in the community and how it is potentially failing. It also aided my analysis by allowing me to understand the community better. As per Robinson and Wenzel’s theories, journalists need to have a deeper understanding of the communities they are reporting in, therefore by learning more

about them and their communities, I was able to understand what elements journalists may need to know in order to better report on the community.

Participants described Port au Port's unique heritage, namely of French and Mi'kmaq origin. Gerry Labelle, who only recently moved to the community from Ontario, noted that there are a lot of francophone people living in Port au Port. He describes the community as homogenous, as English, French and Indigenous community members participate in events together. Jasen Benwah described his upbringing in the Port au Port as purely Mi'kmaq. He also said that learning to live off the land was an essential part of his upbringing. He said that once upon a time, the main languages on the peninsula were French and Mi'kmaq, but now English has become more widespread. Participant 1 also said that the region's French and Indigenous roots are what makes it unique. "It's probably one of the only bastions of French [and] aboriginal culture," said the participant.

Some participants expressed that they felt the community had changed significantly over the past few years. The biggest change is the significant population decline - which Crane described as "astronomical." She guessed that the "community of Port au Port East, just the past 40 odd years that I've been around, has seen a reduction of more than 50 percent in the population." Participant 1, Quinlan, Row and Tallack also all mentioned the community's aging population.

Crane, Benwah and Participant 1 noted the significant decline of schools in the peninsula. Participant 1 said the community used to have four schools with hundreds of students, and Benwah said now the schools barely have enough students to remain open. The 40-kilometer-long peninsula now has only four schools. "We have classrooms that have gone from 25-30

students per class, down to less than 10 students a class," said Crane. Crane and Participant 1 say they believe the region's declining job market is the reason for the decline in younger people.

There are no longer any local newspapers in the region, but community members still have access to news through various means, including the Internet, TV and Radio. All of the participants say they mostly use the internet to access news. Crane says she goes directly to news sites like CBC, while Participant 1 said they will use Google to read stories across different sites. Quinlan and Benwah both mentioned using social media platforms like Facebook and TikTok to access news. While some mentioned listening to the radio or watching television to access news now and then, using the internet was the most common form of news access amongst all participants.

Findings

This study sought to address three research questions:

1. How do community members in Port au Port, Newfoundland and Labrador, feel about journalism efforts and news reporting in the context of a news shortage?
2. How can journalism adapt to address the loss of local news in the province to better engage communities in the face of significant developments like Project Nujio'Qonik?
3. What perspectives on the wind farm are most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent are community voices represented?

To address these questions, I conducted seven interviews with Port au Port community members. This section will present the findings of these interviews. I divided my analysis to answer my research questions. My analysis of the first research question yielded two overarching

themes: concerns about bias and the amount of local news available. Related to bias, my analysis yielded results related to underrepresentation. One of the important outcomes of the interviews was that those I spoke to felt that the news media was biased against their perspective. This was the case both for interviewees who supported the wind farm and for those who were opposed. This led me to examine the hostile media effect, which is a phenomenon that occurs when partisans perceive the same news reporting as biased against their side.

For the second research question, my research analysis yielded three overarching themes: factual reporting via balance and investigation, community-centered journalism and increasing local journalism efforts. These themes demonstrate how participants feel about journalism and demonstrate what they think journalists could be doing better. After noticing the hostile media effect in my interviews, I decided to add a third post hoc research question. As a result of participants stating a certain bias in news coverage, I wanted to find out what types of voices are quoted most often in Newfoundland and Labrador online news articles. The findings of my analysis will also be presented.

Research Question 1: How do community members feel about journalism and news reporting?

Theme 1: Bias

Overwhelmingly, participants felt that the news media presented bias. Bias is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as "a situation in which you support or oppose someone or something in an unfair way because you are influenced by your personal opinions," and "an unfair preference for one thing," (qtd. in Rodrigo-Ginés et al. 4). For instance, one anti-wind farm participant felt that the media attending a pro-wind farm rally showed its bias. While talking

about pro-wind farm rallies, they said "all of a sudden, Don Bradshaw from NTV news is there, and you know, reporting on what a wonderful thing it is and, you know, extremely biased, right?" (Participant 1 Interview).

One significant finding was that I found that those I spoke to felt that the media was biased against their perspective, which was the case both for interviewees who supported the wind farm and for those who were opposed. Participants who expressed more positive positions towards the wind farm project felt that the media gave more attention to those in opposition to the project, and those who are critical of the project, felt that the news coverage favoured corporate and government perspectives that are in favour of the project. This finding may be a result of the hostile media effect, which is when partisans perceive the same coverage as biased because it appears less favourable to their own viewpoint, or in favour of the opposing side (Hartman and Tanis 535). The hostile media effect will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis. The following sections will demonstrate how participants on either side perceive media bias.

Pro-wind farm

Labelle said he felt like reporters gave their own opinions instead of reporting the news. Regarding the wind farm project, he said that he felt the media gave too much attention to those who opposed the project. Labelle said when he reads the news, he prefers to just receive the facts, and not hear someone's opinion. He said that recently there have been more reporters "basically speaking their opinion of something rather than reporting the news. I don't like a spin on what the results should be," (Labelle Interview). For example, he said he does not like when news outlets interview protesters to cover a news topic. He gave the example of CBC

interviewing anti-wind farm protesters when covering the project. “I was chastising CBC for how they covered the windmill issue here, that they were giving so much press to the anti-side. They were very, very vocal, very loud, and they gave good press” (Labelle Interview). Labelle felt journalists reported more opinions than facts. His main gripe with reporting was that he felt like opinions outweighed facts, adding that journalists are “supposed to report the news, not your opinion.” Crane also argued that while demonstrating different opinions is important in journalism, the presentation of facts is needed. She said, “I think that's really what a lot of the world misses out on now is neutral information … then somebody can base an opinion on that. Whereas now you form an opinion, you go find the information that fits your opinion (Crane Interview).

Labelle added that he feels the statements made by anti-wind farm people “is ridiculous, it doesn’t make sense.” He also thinks sharing the perspective of anti-wind farm protesters creates a false balance. He explained that he believes most people disagree with them therefore, the media is creating a false balance, or making it seem like there are equally as many people who are against as those who are in favour of the wind farm (Labelle Interview) Furthermore, this demonstrates the what he believes to be the media's potential bias towards “loud protesters who give good press,” rather then, quiet-but factual wind farm proponents.

Benwah and Crane agree with Labelle. Benwah said he felt like the media wasn’t balanced, stating that it used to be more balanced when the company first started announcing the wind farm proposal, and that now, he feels there is more negative news surrounding the wind farm project. Crane also shared the sentiment that the wind farm’s

coverage has been focused on the "protesters' side, as opposed to the factual proposal of a new industry," explaining that she'd like to see reporting that focuses on providing information to the community, then covering the opinions of protesters.

Contributing to the media's bias towards certain perspectives, some participants felt dissatisfied with how their perspectives, and community perspectives in general, were under-represented in Project Nujio'qonik's news coverage. For example, Quinlan, who is married to Labelle, felt the CBC interviewed more people who are opposed to the wind farm than those who are not. She said,

> I find that CBC interviews more people that are opposed to the wind turbines than those [in support]. I don't know why that is, but I have done an interview, and [Labelle] has done two for CBC and we talked about our support for the wind turbine, which doesn't make a lot of people happy (Quinlan Interview).

In Quinlan's view, CBC chooses to interview those against the wind farm, indicating what she sees as the broadcaster's bias towards the anti-wind farm position.

Other participants also discussed underrepresentation, which will be discussed in greater detail later. The overall position of participants with positive attitudes towards the wind farm project was that the media, by airing the perspectives of those against the wind farm, were biased towards their position.

Anti-wind farm

Rowe, Tallack and Participant 1, who are all staunchly against the wind farm project, felt like the media was biased towards pro-wind farm perspectives, and government or corporate interests. For example, Rowe felt that journalists and news outlets are controlled by larger influences, like the government or the company. She gave the example of CBC, which is Canada's public broadcaster and is partially supported by government funds. She believes CBC is controlled by the government, so she does not trust journalists from there because "they're too controlled" (Rowe Interview). She added, "It seems that they're more for the company, and they're reluctant to do like the hard stories, the stories that won't be so popular when it comes to the John Risley's of the world, (Rowe Interview)." John Risley is the billionaire CEO behind World Energy GH2, the company in control of project Nujio'qonik.

In Rowe's view, the news media is biased towards the wind farm company, and therefore doesn't give substantial coverage to those against the project. Furthermore, Rowe believes the media are heavily influenced by the government, which she says may be why they ignore the voices of community members opposed to the wind farm project. Similarly, Participant 1 said, "anything the company puts out… [the media] will report on anything to do with the company, anything that's a positive spin on the company and what they're doing." Participant 1 said that they felt like journalists favoured pro-wind farm rallies rather than protests. They also felt that journalists have a bias towards government or corporate interests because they haven't seen enough investigation into aspects of wind farm development (Participant 1 Interview).

Within the theme of bias, my analysis yielded insights about the subtheme of under-representation. The following sections will explore other reasons why the participants felt dissatisfied with news efforts, that are a result of the media's bias.

Theme 1A: Underrepresentation of community voices

Extending from media bias, some participants felt the news left out community voices, while bolstering corporate or government voices. Participants also felt the media's bias contributed to underrepresentation of the community's perspective and community voices. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, to underrepresent means to not have enough of a particular type of person, like community members, in something or "to show or describe something as being less, smaller, or less important than it really is." For example, Labelle expressed dissatisfaction with community representation in reporting. He explained how he used to be a big newspaper reader, and that he used to feel like he could get an understanding of what was going on in his community by reading its newspaper (Labelle Interview). However, now he feels that it is hard to "really get a feel for the community because what you're reading is not by people you know, it's not written by community people," or in other words, the reporters are not from the community, limiting the community's perspective on stories about the community (Labelle Interview).

Participant 1 also said that he feels reporters refuse to come to the community, contributing to fewer community perspectives in the news. Tallack and Rowe shared an anecdote about a reporter who visited the community in 2022 when the project was first announced. They said they welcomed the reporter with open arms, giving them warm

clothes and even providing transportation during a snowstorm. They said that the reporter did not air their interviews, which disappointed them immensely.

> Of all the time and effort we put into bringing journalists to the area, as I said before, and spent time with them and actually poured out our souls … and to go back and not even air our stories… How can you trust when your stories are not getting out? (Tallack).

By not fully publishing their perspective in the final news item, they felt that their voices and perspectives were underrepresented in that reporter's story.

Interestingly, both anti- and pro- wind farm participants felt the media was biased and both sides agree that the community is underrepresented. Those against the wind farm feel the media is excluding the community's concerns, and those in favour, feel it is not portraying the community's real feelings about the wind farm.

Participants on both sides felt that the media, when covering the wind farm, presented bias towards a certain position. The media's bias also created other problems for participants, including underrepresentation. The participants feel dissatisfied with how they are represented by news coverage because they feel like their voices are underrepresented, potentially demonstrating reporters' potential bias towards the unchallenged all-powerful government, or towards the angry protesters that "give good press" (Labelle Interview). Interestingly, no matter their position toward the wind farm project, participants felt like the media was biased, demonstrating the hostile media effect, which will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis.

Theme 2: Not enough local news

Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of local reporting. As discussed previously, many communities have "news outlets that have been gutted of resources or have become news deserts" (Wenzel 6). Wenzel defines a news desert as a community "with very limited local news resources" (122). Benwah stated that while he has good access to news, "the lacking is in the local side. That's always been lacking I think." While all the participants said they can easily find provincial, national and international news, namely through the internet, they felt news and information about their own community was scarce, which they said was because of the absence of local news outlets and journalists in the community.

Married couple Quinlan and Labelle also mentioned that there is no physical local newspaper in the region. Labelle said he wishes there was more information about what is going on in the community. He also expressed frustration with navigating the news on the internet, as he felt he had to sift through large amounts of national and international news, before finding anything local. He said, "That's the part I'm having a problem with. How do I access that information?" (Labelle Interview). He explained that on the internet it is difficult to find community-focused news, as he has to navigate large amounts of national and international news on social media and news sites. Therefore, he believes if Port au Port had a community newspaper, it would make accessing local news and information easier.

The region used to have two local newspapers called *The Georgian* and *The Western Star*. Crane discussed these papers:

> We don't have a local newspaper anymore, which is very sad. … We actually used to have two local newspapers. We had one that was for Bay St.

> George, it only came out once a week, and then we had a daily newsprint for Western Newfoundland. And both of those are gone now (Crane Interview).

Currently, the only newspaper in circulation is Saltwire's *The Telegram*. Tallack said this paper "is not local anymore," which is somewhat true. Saltwire was taken over by the national corporation, *Postmedia,* in August 2024, resulting in its only Newfoundland and Labrador newspaper, *The Telegram*, reducing its print circulation schedule from daily to weekly; and staff layoffs as a result (Ping and Lazarenko). Cuts to newsroom staff have also resulted in less N.L. content in the paper, and more national stories in their place. The newspaper is now mostly online, but Tallack said the increase of digital news is problematic for Port au Port's aging population, who find navigating internet news overwhelming, complicating their ability to stay informed.

Rowe also discussed the loss of local newspapers."There's no *Western Star*, there's no *Georgian* anymore. I mean, it's sad. … No radio station, you know, and gone without really a fight from people." Additionally, she is dissatisfied with the lack of journalists physically in the community, stating that journalists typically only go as far as Stephenville when doing stories about the wind farm project. "They've never come out on the Port au Port peninsula to talk about it. TV has never come and heard our side of the story" (Rowe Interview).

Participant 1 also talked about being dissatisfied with the amount of local reporting. When asked if they think they have enough local news, participants said national news is readily available, especially on the internet, but that there isn't enough local news and local information sources. "When it comes to dealing with what's been going on in the area, you could look it up yourself, and you will find nothing there," (Participant 1 Interview). Related to the lack of local

newspapers and local journalists, Participant 1 said this means fewer journalists are reporting on rallies taking place on the peninsula.

Overall, participants expressed dissatisfaction with the limited amount of local news, and all had a desire for a local news outlet. All participants acknowledged that they could access provincial, national and international news easily through outlets like CBC and NTV but they miss their regional newspapers like *The Georgian* and *The Western Star*, which were sources of local news. This aligns with Wenzel's definition of a news desert, which she defines as a community with very limited local news resources (122). The only time Port au Port has news information about itself, is when provincial news outlets decide to cover it. Residents also say the news outlets that do exist are not easy to use, as internet news can come in large quantities, sometimes requires extra fees, and can be difficult for the community's aging population to navigate. It is important to note that while participants stated there was a lack of locally produced news, there is no difficulty in accessing provincial or national news outlets. Participants feel that their community is underserved in news reporting, which demonstrates their perception of the community as a news desert. Furthermore, without local newspapers focused on the region, participants say there are fewer reporters physically present on the Port au Port peninsula, reporting on the community, contributing to their overall dissatisfaction with news.

Research Question 2: How can journalists do better?

Theme 1: Factual reporting via removing bias and investigation

Removing bias

As mentioned previously, participants overwhelmingly felt like news coverage of the wind farm project was biased, resulting in a hostile media effect. Therefore, the main change participants wanted to see in reporting was more unbiased and balanced reporting.

Pro-wind farm

When asked if he trusts journalists, Labelle stated he trusts journalists who accurately represent "both sides," or journalists that are factual and balanced. He added, "I don't want every article to be editorialized, so I want articles to be real. I want them to be what the facts are and let me decide what I want to take from it (Labelle Interview)." He said he also wants balance and to be presented with the pros and the cons of the wind farm project so that he can make up his own mind.

Benwah also wanted more facts and balance in reporting. For example, he said he felt like the balance of perspectives presented in the media is disproportionate, especially surrounding the wind farm project. Benwah said, "The majority of people do want this project," and that reporting makes it seem like more people are in opposition to the project than in reality. Crane also said that when reporting on a decisive issue, journalists should be careful not to simply recount both sides of an issue but instead focus on facts; "covering more facts. Being factual, that's more important to me than getting opinions of various people" (Crane Interview).

Anti-wind farm

Similar to Benwah, Labelle and Crane, Rowe also said she wants journalists to look at both sides of the issue surrounding the wind farm project. As explained previously, Rowe believes the media favours government and corporate interests, therefore she feels that more community representation is needed. She said, "it cannot be just about what the corporate business is doing, it has to be boots on the ground and looking at how it is affecting the communities they're destroying" (Rowe Interview). Rowe also wants journalists to prioritize corporate or government interests less and do more journalism that involves "working with the people," in order to have more balanced reporting. Participant 1 echoed this statement, wanting journalists to present less bias, because he feels like some journalists "cherry-pick" quotes from interviews to fit certain perspectives. Participant 1 said journalists need to be "a lot more open-minded and a lot more broad, and to be actually neutral," and portray the people they quote.

Investigative reporting

In addition to broadcasting full interviews, Rowe, Tallack and Participant 1 said they wanted more investigative journalism. They believe that journalists will take information from the company and the government at face value, without investigating the truth, thus demonstrating their bias towards the company and government. Rowe stated "there's not enough investigative journalism anymore," expressing a desire for reporters to investigate how the wind farm project will affect communities and how it may potentially destroy them. For example, she is concerned about the explosives that will be used during construction and thinks a journalist should investigate what that would mean for the environment and water supply (Rowe Interview). Participant 1 also said journalists need to "actually take a good close look at everything" and raise questions, to be balanced. They also want the impacts of the project to be

investigated, including the green hydrogen market, how other similar projects have panned out across the world, and how a potential ammonia spill could harm the community and environment (Participant 1 Interview). Tallack agreed that investigations about the wind farm are important to bring awareness to the community because some community members feel blindsided by the project proposal, and therefore the community should know how it could affect them.

On the other hand, Labelle, who expressed more positive feelings about the project, agreed and said he thinks journalists should be watching the wind farm's development to make sure rules are being followed by the project's developers. Therefore, both pro- and anti-wind farm participants want more factual reporting, and in doing so journalists should be more balanced in their reporting, and also do more investigations into company claims. However, as explained, this research showed results of the hostile media effect, that no matter what, partisans will think the news is biased against them, therefore the solution may not be as simple as reporting more facts and being more balanced. Additionally, wanting more investigative journalism about the wind farm project exemplifies the concept of watchdog journalism, which Kovach and Rosenstiel describe as "the classic role of investigative reporting," where the journalist bears witness to the activities of business, government, or other public institutions. How these suggestions from participants to improve journalism may be implemented to satisfy both sides, will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section.

Theme 2: Community journalism

Participants shared concern about the decline of local news and expressed overwhelmingly that they want more journalism taking place in the community. "I want reporting in the community. Nujio'qonik is just a little part of what is happening in the

community," said Labelle, who also expressed that he feels like everyone, no matter their position on the wind farm project, wants their community to "grow and prosper" (Labelle Interview).

Participant 1 said they would like reporters to be more in touch with the community and "more open-minded, and, you know, familiar with the local environment, you know, people and the economy and whatnot. Other than someone that just pops by every now and then" (Participant 1 Interview). Rowe also stated that she wants more local news in the community:

> I would have, you know, [reporters] participate when there is something going on, and when I reach out to a news outlet, I would like them to get involved with the people. Even if it's not important to them, it's important to us (Rowe Interview).

To do that, participants suggested a variety of ways journalists could interact with community members and learn more information, including by going to the town community and cultural centres, going to town council meetings and going to community events. For example, Quinlan suggested a journalist go to the Benoit First Nation and the community's French centre to connect with community members. "I think that would be awesome if you did that because then we would hear people's opinions" (Crane Interview). Crane suggested that reporters attend town council meetings to collect information on the community, as community members do not have great access to them. Tallack also said that journalists should go to more community events to have more direct access to community members.

To emphasize the type of journalism they want reporters to be doing, both Rowe and Tallack repeated the phrase "boots on the ground." Rowe emphasized the importance of journalists being able to report on the community first-hand: "I'd be boots on the ground. … So if, you know, there was a story that was affecting the community, I'd be there, and I'd look at it myself," and she urged journalists to "actually come out to the communities and get the interviews from the people that are living it" (Rowe Interview). Rowe added that reporters should take the time to talk to people about issues facing the community by actually getting involved with the community. Tallack also said, "I think that the media should be coming here and actually be boots on the ground, come to us and get the people's concerns before any major projects come in." As for when the wind farm project construction began, Tallack said, "there better be boots on the ground then," watching and reporting on the company.

Participant 1, Rowe and Tallack have all done interviews with journalists about the project and have had experiences where they haven't felt accurately represented in the stories in which they were interviewed. Rowe said plainly, "when we do an interview, I think it should be broadcast," stating that the reporter should air her full interview without cutting out quotes or limiting her voice. She said reporters should "actually come out to the communities and get the interviews from people that are living it." Tallack, while also talking about how reporters should air her full interview and listen to community perspectives, said "how can you trust [journalists] when your stories are not getting out there?" Furthermore, Tallack said reporters need to have more empathy when they come into the community. "Sometimes reporters come off as cold," Tallack said, adding that journalists should go to community members first when reporting to get "their true stories and feelings" (Tallack Interview). She explained that journalists will collect

interviews from community members and will not use the full interview or quote them properly, which she described as “heartbreaking” (Tallack Interview). Therefore, she urges journalists to “preach what people say,” because “if you're going to come and do an interview, write what they say, say what they say. Don't come and try to have it where it's in a narrative for your benefit” (Tallack Interview). Tallack also said she would like to see more podcasts or radio reporting, and that news organizations should do more live interviews where words cannot be minced.

Participants want journalists to connect with community members and involve community members more directly in their reporting, by being more physically present in the community. Participants' recommendations align somewhat with Wenzel's concept of community-centered journalism, as she suggests journalists connect with community organizations, (145) and do journalism that centers more explicitly on the communities to build trust (127). An analysis of how community-centered journalism could improve journalism for community members in Port au Port will be presented in the discussion section of this thesis.

Theme 3: More local journalism

The final theme that emerged in interviews is the need for the amount of local journalism to increase. When asked if they could wave a magic wand and change local news and reporting in their community, most participants felt having a local news outlet, actually located in the community, was important. “I’d run a local radio station and newspapers, and then I would want reporters that were telling stories,” said Benwah. “If we had a newspaper around, I’m sure … we’d be seeing stories about all these things happening as things are evolving, and then, you know, messages from both sides” (Benwah Interview). He also said in an ideal world, there

would be “continual stories,” covering what is happening in the community, and covering “both sides” of the project (Benwah Interview).

Crane also said she would bring back the local newspapers. “I think it’s important, especially in a world that gets more chaotic every day. And people just don’t have access to that anymore” (Crane Interview). Rowe echoed Crane, stating, “You know, and that’s the problem. And there’s also no local newspapers in the community, so all of your journalists, I guess they’re coming from Corner Brook, St. John’s, wherever.” Tallack also said that online news has made news harder to access, and less locally oriented. So, if she could wave a magic wand, she would bring back “good old newspapers.” She also suggested a newspaper would allow for a return of “old-time techniques” and “boots on the ground” journalism (Tallack Interview). Tallack added that she would like to see more podcasts since they provide the community a chance to express themselves fully without omitting quotes.

Research Question 3: What voices were most prominent?

One prominent theme I found across interviews was that all the participants, no matter their position on the wind farm project, perceived the media as biased. Therefore, I added a post hoc research question to my analysis: what perspectives on the wind farm project were most prominent in Newfoundland and Labrador news coverage, and to what extent were community voices represented? The goal of this analysis was to collect a large sample of news stories from Newfoundland and Labrador and determine if media coverage indeed prioritized certain perspectives and whether community voices are represented in the news.

I analyzed 114 articles, and only 90 of them quoted people. Participants were concerned that community voices were underrepresented, so for this analysis I will divide my voices into

four categories (See Table 1). First is Pro-wind farm, which will include government, World Energy and World Energy Stakeholder voices, as these sources are positive about the project development. World Energy Stakeholders are individuals who will benefit from or are connected to the wind farm development. For example, Christian Bruch is the CEO of Siemens Energy, the company providing the turbines to World Energy. Another example is Ravi Sood, the executive chairman of another renewable energy company in N.L. that has the same political and market interests as World Energy, or, in other words, wants the same government rules and permissions for their projects. The second category is community voices which include community members, community leaders and indigenous community leaders. Third is experts, which are activist groups and university expert voices, who all held negative opinions about the wind farm. Fourth is other, which is province residents, union representative, energy N.L., N.L. Hydro and RCMP.

The data in this analysis therefore agrees with the participants who stated that the media predominantly showcases government and corporate voices and perspectives. Across the sample of 90 articles I analyzed between August 2022 and August 2023, Pro-Wind Farm voices made up nearly half of the people interviewed (48.8 percent), whereas community voices made up 22.9 percent of those interviewed. Additionally, university experts and activist group voices, who all had negative attitudes toward the wind farm project, represented 21.8 percent of voices quoted across the sample. These categories were not included under community voices because they were not from Port au Port. The other categories made up 6.5 percent of voices quoted (See Figure 1). This data underscores the assumption made by anti-wind farm participants that the media quoted more government and corporate voices than community members. It also may reinforce pro-wind farm participants' assumption that the media favors anti-wind farm perspectives.

Participants who were more favourable towards the wind farm project said they felt protesters were featured more in the news more prominently, however, it is unknown if they meant in comparison to government and corporate perspectives or pro-wind farm voices. On the other hand, participants against the wind farm felt the media favoured pro-wind farm voices. This analysis leans towards the anti-wind farm participants' assumption that pro-wind farm sources represented half of all voices quoted across stories. In conclusion, government officials, World Energy GH2 executives, and World Energy stakeholders are the most prominent across the news articles analyzed, while community voices make up 23 percent and therefore do not make up a majority of voices analyzed.

Table 1

Number of times each type of voice was used in N.L. online news articles about the Port au Port wind farm project and World Energy GH2.

Analysis Category	Code	1st voice	2nd voice	3rd voice	4th voice	5th voice	6th voice	Total
Pro-Wind Farm	Government Official	22	13	6	2	1	1	45
Pro-Wind Farm	World Energy Official	23	8	4	0	0	0	35
Pro-Wind Farm	World Energy Stakeholder	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Community voice	Community Member	14	5	2	2	1	1	25

Community Voice	Community Leader	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Community Voice	Indigenous Community Leader	5	3	1	2	1	0	12
Expert	Activist Group Representative	11	4	2	1	1	0	19
Expert	University Expert	4	11	3	0	0	0	18
Other	Union Representative	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other	Province Resident	3	2	0	0	0	0	5
Other	Energy N.L.	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Other	N.L. Hydro	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Other	RCMP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 1: For each type of voice coded, this chart demonstrates the number of times each type of voice was used across 90 stories. They are ordered from the first voice featured in the article to the sixth voice featured.

Figure 1

Pie chart demonstrating the proportion of different voices used across news articles.

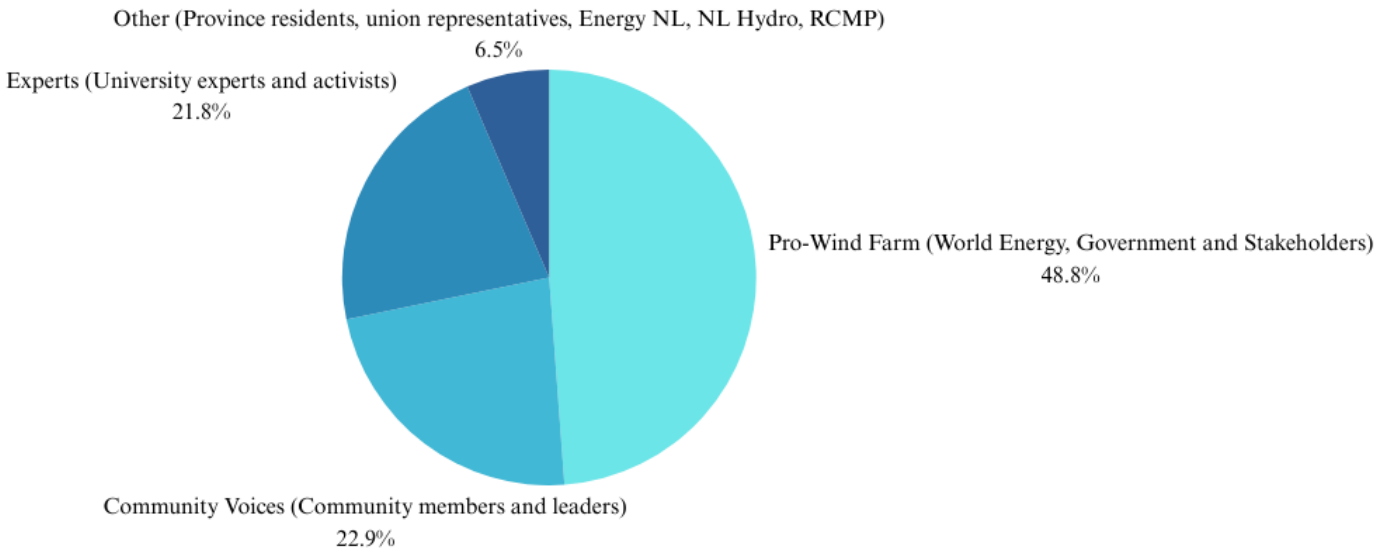

Figure 1: The categories recorded in Table 1 were divided into four themes: Pro-Wind farm, Community Voices, Experts and Other. This pie chart demonstrates how often each type of voice was used in news articles about the wind farm project between August 2023 and August 2024.

Discussion

The purpose of this thesis is to find out whether community members in Port au Port are content with journalism efforts and news reporting, and how journalism can adapt to address the loss of local news, all in the context of a massive wind farm project proposal. I also sought to find out what perspectives are the most prominent in news coverage of the wind farm project, to confirm assumptions made by participants about media bias. Pro-wind farm participants stated they felt like the media favoured anti-wind farm voices, while anti-wind farm participants stated they felt like the media favoured pro-wind farm voices; thus, resulting in the hostile media effect. This section will explore my findings by connecting them with ideas presented in literature.

I found that the seven community members I interviewed were not content with news coverage, with perceived bias overwhelmingly being the reason. Participants also felt like bias resulted in underrepresentation of the community in the news. The interviews also revealed that participants felt like there wasn't enough local news available to them as Port au Port has no local news outlets and could be considered a news desert. While this research did find many stories related to the wind farm project in Port au Port, these outlets were based outside of the community. To see journalism improve, community members said they wanted more fact-based reporting, while also removing bias and doing more investigations. They also wanted journalists more directly involved with the community and more journalists physically in the community interacting with community members, thus including them directly in the reporting process. Finally, community members said they wanted a community newspaper back in the community to have greater access to local news and information.

In my post hoc analysis I also discovered that pro-wind farm government and corporate voices represented half of the voices quoted across 90 stories about the wind farm project between August 2023 and August 2024, while community members and community leaders represent 22.9 percent, and activists and university experts made up 21 percent and other types of voices represented 6.5 percent. This data demonstrates that community voices are less represented in reporting, while government and corporate voices make up the majority. This next section will explore my findings and will connect ideas from the interviews with the concepts of public, engaged, relational and community-centred journalism to make conclusions about my research questions and create suggestions for improving local journalism in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Hostile Media Effect and Bias

The interview results yielded evidence of the hostile media effect, which occurs "when the mass media report on controversial issues, presenting both positive and negative arguments on an issue, highly involved partisans tend to perceive identical coverage as biased because it appears either less favourable toward their own viewpoint or more favourable toward the opposing side" (Hartman and Tanis 535). In Port au Port, community members interviewed for this study were divided over the proposal of the wind farm project. Participants with more positive attitudes towards the wind farm stated they felt the media favoured anti-wind farm perspectives, while those with negative attitudes towards the project said they felt the media favoured corporate or government interests in favour of the wind farm – resulting in the hostile media effect. My analysis of news content found that news reports did, in fact, quote government or corporate perspectives more than community voices or those in opposition. While some journalists may argue that this does not mean the reporting is biased because news outlets may simply report on project updates from the government and World Energy GH2, nonetheless, community members perceived identical reporting as biased. Perloff argues the hostile media effect could be problematic for democracy as it requires the public to trust democratic institutions like the news media, and if the media is perceived as biased, it can reduce trust (724). In fact, most participants stated that they do not trust the news media.

All participants felt the media was biased, which might be attributable to the hostile media effect. As argued by Ellis, Voakes, and Bergen, fairness (or overcoming bias) is a "tried and true" principle of traditional journalism, and journalists must improve upon traditional journalism principles like objectivity. In order to do that, they suggest that reporters show

empathy towards all subjects, make sure quotes are given full context, frame the story without stereotypes and use the golden rule, which is "be sure you feel comfortable being treated the same way you are treating your subjects for the story" (Ellis et al. 144).

Robinson also argues that rapid technological changes in the media system during the early 2000s, created a more politically biased media, which has created dissatisfaction in mainstream journalism (xiv). Leading up to the 2000s, Robinson says rapid changes in technology led to an "influential and growing conservative media machine," or more partisan media, that created dissatisfaction in mainstream journalism (xiv). Robinson also says that anti-institutional populism drove an anti-journalism sentiment across the world in the early 2000s (xiv). To combat biased media, Robinson, argues for her "theory of trust building" to restore trust in the media, which requires the "nurturing of personal, organizational and institutional relationships that people have with information, sources, news brands, journalists" through engagement, adding that "journalistic engagement must be practiced with identity-aware caring and enacted through listening and learning" (6). To do this, journalists must consider power dynamics, structural racism, and systems of oppression that recreate inequities (Robinson 3).

Participants also said that the media's bias they perceived, also resulted in underrepresentation of the community in reporting. The underrepresentation of community voices and lack of journalistic engagement with the community was criticized by the participants, with some stating they felt like the media was biased towards corporate and government voices and didn't accurately portray the community. This finding is in line with other research. For instance, a recent report by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that misrepresentation and underrepresentation in news media contributed to concerns

with news media, including "bias towards negative topics and framing," "divisive framing that stokes conflict," "groups treated in unbalanced manner," "voices missing from coverage," "use of harmful or limiting stereotypes" (Arguedas et al. 11).

Therefore, my research found evidence of the hostile media effect because all participants felt local media coverage of the wind farm project, no matter their opinion of it, was biased. They also felt like it underrepresented the community's perspective, which my post hoc analysis confirms. Therefore, I believe adapting more relational journalism or engaged journalism techniques, could help audiences feel more represented, therefore feel like the information is truer, and thus that the media is unbiased. Furthermore, this could restore the community's trust in journalism overall.

Improving journalism in the face of declining access

In Port au Port, there is less local news than there once was. Participants reported that they used to have two newspapers, *the Georgian* and *the Western Star,* but they no longer exist, resulting in less reporting on the area. In fact, the entire province has less local news resources after its only daily newspaper, Saltwire's *the Telegram*, was purchased by media conglomerate Postmedia, resulting in layoffs (Ping and Lazarenko). There are now fewer journalists to go to these communities, spend time with the people there and accurately report on their stories. Participants shared stories about poor engagement with reporters and not feeling like their voices were well represented in news stories.

One of Batsell's guiding principles of engaged journalism is that reporters should have more in-person, face-to-face interactions with their audiences and should service a local region (10). Doing this will mean audiences can find information that matters to them and allow

reporters to go back to the community for feedback (Batsell 11). Batsell argues this will build loyalty and deepen trust. Expanding from Batsell's concept, Robinson argues for a more robust approach that involves a transformation of the news industry (Robinson 14). Rather than simply relaying information to community members, journalists should build relationships with them, and utilize audience help to check facts (Robinson 14). Through fact checking and building better relationships with audiences, Robinson argues audiences will have more trust in journalism (15).

According to the Agora Journalism Centre Report on community-centred journalism, engaging and accessible journalism is essential (Radcliffe 27). When writing about community-centered journalism, Wenzel also argued for face-to-face outreach to community members and suggested journalists form "feedback loops and channels of two-way communication" to address community issues and form accountability (73). A feedback loop between audiences and journalists means going back to the community again (Wenzel 73). For example, that could look like going to the community to ask for questions, then also letting them know how to participate again in the future (Wenzel 70). However, these feedback loops must stay in the community and continue over time, to effectively respond to local needs (Wenzel 74).

However, if there are no news organizations in the community of Port au Port, this may be difficult. The news organizations that do remain would have to allocate funding for journalists to continuously go back to that community, learn from them, and report on them. Thus, the application of engaged and community-centered journalism techniques in what few newsrooms exist, could possibly help rebuild audience trust in journalism and perhaps audience satisfaction. In doing so, as per the theory of engaged journalism, this could also help bring more resources

into newsrooms if more people are tuning in, buying a newspaper subscription or going to a news source's website. That being said, monetary gain must not be the central goal of engaged journalism, but rather fulfilling journalism's ultimate goal to provide information to communities for an informed democracy.

Re-evaluating traditional journalism values

When asked what news organizations and journalists could change or do better, participants overwhelmingly mentioned key aspects of traditional journalism. Ellis, Voakes and Bergen outline these traditional journalism principles, including objectivity, verification, fairness, accountability, independence, the watchdog role, and consistency (139). Participants say that they want balanced and fact-based reporting, indicating an overall sentiment that contemporary journalism is neither balanced nor factual.

In 1995, Merritt critiqued journalism for contributing to a growing divide between journalists and citizens (xvi). Therefore, he calls for journalists to be more engaged with public life (Merritt 142). Merritt also says that in the last half of the 20th century, there were more news sources than ever before, which led to information overload and a public that is "frustrated by the crush of contextless information and the polarized presentation of issues" (9). Kovach and Rosenstiel argue that 20th-century journalism has adapted subjective practices in order to be perceived as balanced. They said, "balancing a story by being fair to both sides may not be fair to the truth if both sides do not, in fact, have equal weight" (Kovach and Rosenstiel 62). When a reporter offers two perspectives on a subject, an extreme viewpoint may be given equal weight. Kovach and Rosenstiel argue, "balance, if it amounts to false balance, becomes distortion … both sides can lead to political stenography, in which the press becomes a purveyor of lies or

exaggeration" (63). Some participants felt that reporting on the wind farm project resulted in a false balance and expressed a desire for journalists to focus on facts without merely presenting "both sides." Labelle explained that he felt that when journalists interviewed protesters, they were giving airtime to a niche perspective, creating a false balance. While this research does not determine if indeed the news coverage of the wind farm project is doing this, as it is not known what the majority opinion is, false balance is a well-studied media concern. This thesis argues that an updated approach to traditional journalism concepts, like objectivity, is needed to combat dissatisfaction with journalism efforts.

According to the participants, journalists should not only present the facts but also investigate the truth. Some had questions and concerns about the project that they feel are unanswered, while others said they felt the company provided satisfactory information, while also stating that the media bolstered misinformation by speaking with protesters. Many expressed a need for more neutral investigation into the company and the wind farm project proposal. This need for further examination into the wind farm project exemplifies the concept of watchdog journalism, which Kovach and Rosenstiel describe as "the classic role of investigative reporting," where the journalist bears witness to the activities of business, government, or other public institutions (20). The traditional journalism role of the watchdog is essential for democracy, to inform the public of potential corporate or government wrongdoing. Ellis, Voakes and Bergen call for a modernized watchdog role where citizens are more actively involved in investigations (147). They suggest reporters interact directly with the public, not only to decide what to investigate, but also to get tips on how to investigate. Robinson and Wenzel's suggestions for long-term community engagement could also support an improved watchdog

press that is more actively engaged with communities, which may more properly address its concerns.

The interview participants repeatedly suggested a loss of traditional journalism values, like balanced, fact-based reporting, and investigative watchdog journalism. Scholarship suggests that towards the end of the 20th century into the 2000s, journalism fostered a divide between audiences, and took shortcuts to be perceived as balanced (Kovach and Rosenstiel 62). Therefore, while participants said they desired a return to traditional values like objectivity, there is a need for a new modernized approach considering these shortcomings from the 2000s. Ellis, Voakes and Bergen and Wenzel suggest that increased community-engagement could close the divide, and leave audiences more satisfied with reporting efforts. Audiences might feel more well connected with the news and therefore feel it is balanced, truthful, and is investigating the truth in their best interest. Furthermore, by fulfilling these desires, better community journalism could foster greater democracy by depolarizing the public and creating trustworthy sources of information.

'Boots on the ground': Community-centered journalism as a solution

Overwhelmingly, participants wanted more journalism in the community and wished that journalists had more direct engagement with the community. I argue Wenzel's concept of community-centered journalism contributes guiding principles to improve remaining journalism efforts and could offer solutions to the community's dissatisfaction with reporting efforts. In the interviews, participants suggested that in order for reporters to better understand and report on the community, they should be physically present and actively involved in the community. Quinlan suggests reporters go to community centers to gather information from community

members, and Tallack suggests reporters go to community events. Rowe and Tallack also repeatedly used the phrase “boots on the ground” to describe what they wanted to see reporters do in the community.

While not exactly the same as these suggestions from participants, Wenzel’s recommendations reflect the participants’ desire for more community engagement. She recommends journalists connect with community organizations, conduct community meetings to shape reporting on the community, or overall just engage in more face-to-face interaction with community members. Wenzel’s concept of community-centered journalism, therefore, may speak to the community’s desire for more journalistic community engagement and journalism that speaks for the community’s needs. This may also be beneficial to Port au Port as it is a rural community with an aging population that has declining access to technology. Increased face-to-face interaction could result in improved information sharing, more satisfaction with reporting efforts and more trust in journalism overall.

Wenzel’s concept of community-centred journalism seeks to determine how journalists can build trust with communities and strengthen local communication infrastructures (Wenzel 21). Wenzel argues that journalists should combine solutions and engaged journalism techniques to build trust and better respond to communities' needs and assets (4). According to the theory of solutions journalism, “a journalist’s role is not only to report on problems but also to rigorously report on ‘responses to social problems’” (Wenzel 4). The concept of engaged journalism calls for journalistic engagement that builds trust with the community in an identity-aware way (Robinson 6). In the case of Port au Port, community members need information about the wind farm project, its developments, and how it will impact their environment and community.

Wenzel shares many methods of doing this including journalists organizing community meetings to advise the development of their journalistic projects, speaking with community members face to face, and partnering with community organizations (Wenzel, pp. 20, 63, 142).

Additionally, participants expressed an interest in radio and podcast reporting formats. Right now, there are minimal ways to access information, with all participants mainly using the internet to access news. According to the Agora Journalism Centre's report on community-centered journalism suggested news outlets should "use a variety of media," and journalists should "use a range of methods to tell stories and share information in ways that are engaging and accessible" (Radcliffe 27). Ideally, community-centered reporting would take place on multiple formats, including podcast, radio and print newspapers. Diversifying media formats may also allow for more community voices to be heard. Some participants expressed concerns that written articles cut interviews and only show specific quotes, so integrating long-form or audio formats in community-centred reporting could help increase trust in journalism. Furthermore, as a rural community, diversifying media formats could be beneficial for increasing access to news and information.

Elevating community voices to improve representation

Through an analysis of news articles, I found that government and corporate voices were the most prominent across the wind farm project's news coverage. Many participants stated dissatisfaction with community representation and felt it resulted in biased reporting. Robinson argues that in order to build trust, reporters must be inclusive, prioritize the information needs of the community and collaborate with audiences (171). These research findings indicate that perhaps not enough work is being done with community members in the reporting process, and

therefore may be the reason why there is dissatisfaction with reporting efforts. To combat this, journalists should seek to include a diverse array of community voices in their reporting.

Wenzel argues that community-centred journalism is an intervention process aimed at strengthening storytelling networks and building trust (4). Radcliffe states that a community-centred journalist must be inclusive and reflect the community's diversity (27). My analysis found that government and corporate voices were used most predominantly, while community members were quoted only 22.9 percent of the time, therefore representing a lack of diversity. In order for journalists to build trust and improve reporting, they must engage with the diverse identities of the Port au Port Peninsula. Radcliffe argues that doing so would result in "a more people-centred approach focused on meeting the demonstrable needs and priorities of the community" (10). Additionally, Wenzel suggests collaborating with community members in all steps of the reporting process as a way to "elevate community voices" (129). Wenzel's concept of community-centred journalism argues that "journalism that centers explicitly on the community has greater potential for more radical change needed to build trust and strengthen storytelling network relationships in marginalized communities" (127). Additionally, relational journalism calls for involving citizens in reporting to ensure accurate representation (Ellis et al. 81).

In the sample examined here, community members were quoted significantly less across articles examined, and that government and corporate voices were quoted the most. If every time community members open a news article about the project, they are seeing the same government and corporate voices, it makes sense they could not feel well-represented. This could also make community members feel separated from the news organizations, and make journalists feel out of

reach, or more connected to the elite. As the Port au Port faces the introduction of a massive wind farm project that is going to be massively impacting their land and community, it is important that the news reporting and sharing of information works for them. For this to happen, they have to trust it, and for them to trust it they have to feel it is unbiased and represents the community's perspective. The techniques of engaged, relational and community-centered journalism could be adapted by journalists to restore trust and make journalism work better for communities.

Self-reflection

While writing this thesis, I started working for CBC Newfoundland and Labrador's St. John's newsroom. This has given me a great perspective on how the reporting process works for journalists in the province. The landmass of this province is huge, and St. John's is hours away from the communities we often report on. I have seen some of the reporting that the participants weren't happy about being made. I have also written stories that have only government or corporate voices and with no community voices.

I have also seen colleagues at CBC acknowledge the problems presented by the participants in this research and desire a change in the workflow to connect with audiences better. My experience in the newsroom has shown me that there is still a need for quick news stories, quoting the government or companies on funding announcements or changes the government is making, because we do need to share that information with the people of the province. I also see many reporters' desire to be critical of government announcements, and get other voices on political issues. However, due to our newsroom's proximity to some communities, and the vast remoteness of Newfoundland and Labrador, that is not always easy.

I believe CBC Newfoundland and Labrador has the passion and resources to potentially further engage community members across the province. In *Community-Centered Journalism,* Wenzel shares different community-centered journalism pilot projects that would be interesting to replicate in my own newsroom. I also think there are opportunities to analyze Newfoundland and Labrador's already established information-sharing spaces - namely Facebook groups. Facebook groups are a phenomenal story-finding resource and are a great space to engage further with the public. However, currently, news outlets are banned from Meta platforms in Canada, forcing CBC to not be as present on the platform as we could be. If it is ever possible to have news back on Facebook, I think reopening CBC to the platform, engaging with discussion groups and monitoring comment sections could be a beneficial way for the newsroom to better connect with communities across the province. However, more research is needed to understand if social media engagement is effective, and how community-centered or engaged journalism techniques could be applied in that space. Furthermore, I hope someday to have the opportunity to work on a community-centred journalism pilot project in this province.

Conclusion

This research has determined that the community members interviewed for this project, on the Port au Port Peninsula in Newfoundland and Labrador, are dissatisfied with current reporting efforts. This is important as the community is experiencing the introduction of a massive wind farm project supported by the government and corporations. As Port au Port is a news desert, there are fewer journalists available to report on the wind farm project to provide checks and balances on the project's development. Community members are concerned about the environmental impact this project may have, and what the power imbalance between the

billionaire-owned corporation building the wind farm and the small-town community members, may mean for the community. This suggests there needs to be an effective way to monitor the project, provide information to community members about it, and ensure no wrongdoing by the company or government. For example, Benwah said he had made a memorandum of understanding with the company for them to involve an Indigenous overseer in the construction process and guarantee environmental protection. However, he said he hasn't heard from the company in a while and does not have confirmation they will follow through on their agreement (Benwah Interview). Traditional journalism concepts hold that under a democracy it is essential for journalists to be a watchdog and monitor government and corporate actions for wrongdoing. In Port au Port, there is limited access to a watchdog to monitor World Energy GH2, inform the public about what they are doing and make sure they are doing everything correctly. A "boots on the ground" journalist could investigate and make sure the company is following through on their agreements. This thesis suggests that community-centered journalism and engaged journalism techniques set out by Andrea Wenzel and Sue Robinson may be useful for journalists to adapt to ensure community satisfaction with their reporting.

However, this thesis does not fully explore the role of identity in Newfoundland and Labrador journalism. More research is needed to understand the role identity plays in the potential application of community engagement and local journalism in this province. Robinson suggests effective engaged journalism "must be practiced with identity-aware caring and enacted through listening and learning" (6). In the case of Port au Port, this could mean journalists take time to learn and understand the region's Indigenous heritage and history with colonialism. Interview participants highlighted the community's unique cultural background of French and Indigenous heritage, so journalists should also consider these cultural roots in order to build trust

in the community. Indigenous participants shared a connection to the land and environment, which should be taken into account while reporting on a wind farm project that could drastically change those areas. Speaking with community members and learning about their cultural backgrounds could make journalists more empathetic and aware of historical power dynamics. Additionally, Canada as a colonial state, has a long history of government and corporations not considering Indigenous connection to the land and environment, perhaps making the existence of a watchdog press all the more important. Therefore, Newfoundland and Labrador journalists should consider this aspect when reporting on the Port au Port wind farm project to gain trust with the community impacted. Further research is needed to understand how colonialism affects journalism in Port au Port and what anti-colonial journalism solutions could be adapted to improve journalism in this region.

Participants in this research shared they want more journalists directly involved with the community during the reporting process. Robinson's concept of engaged journalism and Wenzel's concept of community-centred journalism support this belief by the community. Therefore, journalists in Newfoundland and Labrador should adopt more engaged journalism and community-centered journalism principles to improve their reporting. Indeed, Port au Port has its geographical challenges as a rural community with a declining population, but during a time of increased development of massive green-energy projects across the province, accountability and a watchdog press may be more important in Newfoundland and Labrador than ever before. Local news organizations and journalists who believe in restoring democracy in rural Newfoundland and Labrador should adopt engaged and community-centred reporting techniques to better serve communities.

However, this research did not review how these journalism techniques were applied in Port au Port. Perhaps non-profit or community-funded news outlets would work, but more research is needed to understand what funding models may work best in this scenario. Furthermore, if community members were more content with journalistic efforts, it could mean a revival of local journalism in the province, as it is currently diminishing. Further research should be conducted on local journalism projects in rural regions, and funding models.

Appendix

Make sure the interviewee has signed a consent form before getting started.

Background Information:

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, your background. How did you come to live in this community? Tell me about your family and what you do for a living.

The Community

1. When I say, "your community,' or 'local' what does that mean to you?

2. Describe your community. What do you think, if anything, makes your community and its residents unique or special? How have you seen it change over time?

News:

1. Tell me about how you consume the news.

    a. Where do you go to read or hear about the news?

    b. How do you feel when you read the news?

    c. What do you hope to learn from the news?

2. When I say, "local news," what does that mean to you -- what does it make you think of?

a. Do you feel like you have access to local news in your community?

3. Which news sources offer you the best information?

4. How does word of mouth play into you knowing what's going on in the community? Are there specific people you talk to to know what's going on?

5. Are you content or dissatisfied with access to local news in your community? Why?

Project Nujio'qonik

1. Has the announcement of this wind farm project changed your community?

    a. How?

2. What questions do you have about Project Nujio'qonik?

    a. Where do you turn to for information about Project Nujio'qonik – or other significant issues that matter to you about the community?

3. How do you feel about the news coverage of Project Nujio'qonik?

4. Can you think of an example of when the news did a good job reporting on the project?

    a. Tell me more about it.

5. Can you think of an example of when the news did a bad job reporting on the project?

    a. Tell me more about it.

6. Do you feel like the news has addressed your questions and concerns regarding the wind farm project?

7. In terms of the development of the wind farm project, what role do you think a journalist should play in covering the developments of the project?

How to improve journalism:

1. Do you trust reporters and journalists? Why or why not?

2. What would you like to see news organizations/reporters do differently?

3. If you could wave a magic wand and change the local news and information in your community, what would you do?

4. There are no local newspapers in your community. What do you think journalists from other towns should do to better report on your community?

5. Are there cultural or community-specific factors that journalists should consider in their reporting?

6. What could these news organizations and journalists do to earn more of your trust?

7. What information do you think isn't being told and needs to be?

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