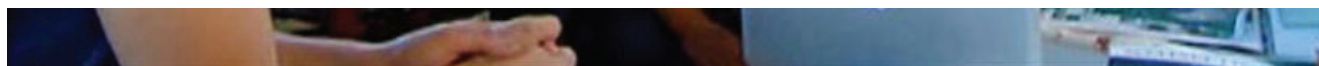


CULTURE, MEMORY AND COMMUNITY THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS

DEVELOPING AN INUIT-BASED RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



CAROL PAYNE



Royal Anthropological Institute

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Cover image: Elder Ann Meekitjuk Hanson with students Christine Tootoo, Simon DeMaio, and Usaaraq Jari Aariak. 3 January 2013. Photograph: Sara Minogue, CBC North, Iqaluit.

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In early January 2013, just outside of Iqaluit, in the Canadian Arctic territory of Nunavut, Inuk elder Ann Meekitjuk Hanson leafed through the pages of a photo album while chatting with three young Inuit students, Christine Tootoo, Simon DeMaio and Usaaraq Jari Aariak (cover image). Hanson is a revered Inuk elder in Nunavut, the territory established in 1999 as part of the largest land claims settlement in Canadian history. Known as a broadcaster, writer and legislator, she served as Nunavut's Commissioner from 2005 until 2010. Surrounded in her own home by the three youths as well as two visitors from CBC North, the local arm of the national broadcaster, Hanson studied each image carefully for familiar faces, occasions and locales. The album held about fifty-five photographic prints, mainly from the 1950s to the 1970s, depicting people and events in the area around Frobisher Bay, as Iqaluit, the capital of Nunavut, was known at the time.¹

Hanson paused over one image, a snapshot of a formal gathering (Figure 1). It focuses on a stage where four men sit at a table. Two are Inuit and two Qallunaat, as non-Inuit are known in the Inuktitut language. Behind them, someone had crafted a backdrop from two Red Ensigns, Canada's national flag during this period, with its prominent Union Jack. Several Inuit men fill the foreground, looking up towards the stage and facing away from the camera. One stands, leaning on a table, apparently addressing those

on the elevated platform. Hanson turned to her young visitors and explained,

This is one of the first meetings ... organized meetings that Inuit attended with Qallunaat who came in from Ottawa [the Canadian capital], probably to talk about issues, what kind of issues we had. That was all very exciting because everything had to be translated and we were starting to learn English at the time and so we had to translate for our people and for the government. The meetings took hours and hours because every little thing had to be translated and interpreted ... because the Qallunaat had to learn what the Inuit society was all about and we had to learn what the Qallunaat society was all about. So, that's what's happening here.

(Hanson 2013)

Then Hanson laughed to the students gathered casually around her, drawing their attention to the arrangement of the meeting room seen in the photograph: 'They are on a pedestal! When Inuit met, they were usually in a circle.'

The 2013 conversation, in which Ann Hanson participated, itself might also be seen as a meeting in which the cultural perspectives of Inuit and Qallunaat were translated and negotiated. But that recent get-together was conducted not in the form of a hierarchical lecture in an institutional space, but in the more intimate and egalitarian circle typical of Inuit gatherings. This encounter outside of Iqaluit was part of a larger research project entitled Views from the North, in which Inuit students interviewed elders in their home communities in Nunavut about archival photographs depicting those same towns and hamlets decades ago. A photographic 'returns' project, Views from the North was a collaboration between the Inuit training programme Nunavut Sivuniksavut, Library and Archives Canada and

¹ In this paper, I use terminology from the Inuktitut language following the Government of Nunavut's usage. There are many dialects of Inuktitut and some of the participants in this project from western Nunavut speak Inuinnaqtun, a distinct language. However, as the project involves various communities across Nunavut, the territorial government's usage seems appropriate here. From the Inuktitut, the word 'Inuit' translates as 'the people' and is the term preferred by the indigenous people of Nunavut. Inuk is its singular form.



Figure 1 Frobisher Bay, Northwest Territories (Iqaluit, Nunavut) Accession no. 1971-271, e004665940, National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division Archives, Library and Archives Canada.

Carleton University. Between 2005 and 2014, about eighty Inuit youths and elders participated in the project, through dozens of photo-based conversations held across the territory of Nunavut like the one outside of Iqaluit with Ann Hanson. Although the active programme of conducting interviews has now been completed; Views from the North continues to exist on the web and solicit new conversations and identifications. As a Qallunaat researcher and principal investigator of Views from the North, I coordinated the interviews but was not physically present at them. By design, all interviews were conducted by the young researchers themselves without outside intervention and within the regenerative circle of Inuit community gatherings.

The photographs that prompted Ann Hanson's and other elders' recollections are all archival images from the collection of Library and Archives Canada, the country's federal archive, with some additional images from the collection of the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, an adjunct of the National Gallery of Canada. In identifying Inuit individuals seen in those images and in narrating community stories sparked by them, Hanson was recalibrating Southern representations within Inuit terms. In effect, this gathering and the photographs themselves constituted what Mary Louise Pratt has familiarly termed a 'contact zone' – here, between Inuit and Qallunaat, though also between generations of Inuit (Pratt 1992).

This paper introduces Views from the North as an example of a prominent theme in recent discussions of anthropology and photography: how indigenous communities use historic Western (or in this case, Southern) photographs in their own cultural consolidation. As such, it shared common concerns and general approaches with a wide range of dialogic photographic and other 'returns' projects from around the globe (Clifford 2013; Edwards 2003; Geismar and Herle 2010; Lydon 2010, 2014; Peers and Brown 2006; Poignant and Poignant 1996; Wright 2013), as well as recent theorizations of photographs as 'social objects of agency', the transhistorical malleability of photographic meaning, and photographic 'contingencies' and 'excesses' (Edwards 2012b:230; Edwards and Hart 2004; Morton and Edwards 2009; Poole 2005). However, here, I want to stress the importance of culturally specific methodologies that privilege what Jane Lydon terms 'local ways of seeing' (Lydon 2005:9). To that end, this paper's key goal is to outline the Inuit-specific methodology developed in this project. But I also explore what this project says about the complex relationship between Qallunaat and Inuit in the settler society of Canada today. As a Qallunaat researcher, I am interrogating my own position in this larger study and considering how these approaches may provide productive strategies for decolonization. In sum, this is an article about the complexities and possibilities of dialogic, transcultural and trans-generational research.

'the Qallunaat had to learn what the Inuit society was all about and we had to learn what the Qallunaat society was all about'

Inuit culture and perspectives were at the core of Views from the North and always its first concerns; however, for the purposes of this essay's discussion of methodology, I want to

narrate how I became engaged in this dialogic research programme. My involvement grew – as much research does – from a previous academic study as well as a process of intellectual and ethical self-reflection. I spent several years researching the National Film Board of Canada's Still Photography Division (NFB) for the 2013 book *The Official Picture*. The NFB, founded by John Grierson in 1939, is celebrated within Canada and well-known internationally for its cinematic productions; but between 1941 and the early 1970s, it also commissioned and maintained an archive of some 250,000 still photographs. Through their production and dissemination – largely in the press – the division aimed to foster a sense of national cohesion at home while also promoting Canada abroad (Payne 2013).

The Canadian far north is represented extensively in the NFB photographic archive with images of Inuit and of governmental intervention into Inuit life as favoured subjects. In this, NFB still photographs can be seen as part of a longer history in which the camera has served as a tool of Qallunaat visitors to the north, including explorers, missionaries, ethnographers, filmmakers and representatives of state authority, often working within a salvage paradigm (Geller 2004; King and Lidchi 1998). NFB photographs of the north, more specifically, were often intended to promote the Canadian nation and the federal government's work in the Arctic. The Arctic and Inuit peoples were particularly the focus of attention during the 1950s and 1960s, a critical period that witnessed the rapid integration of Inuit into Southern life, heightened economic interest in extracting resources from Arctic regions and increased military activity in the Arctic in response to Cold War tensions. Many of the images that the NFB made in the Arctic reflect federal Canadian campaigns (during the post-war period) to promote assimilationist,

military and economic policies in the Arctic regions and, more broadly, to employ 'the north' as a loaded signifier of Canadian national identity (Payne 2013:165–88).

Indeed, a photographer long affiliated with the NFB, Ted Grant, shot the 1963 photograph of the meeting that Ann Hanson described above in such vivid detail.² LAC records describe the photograph as depicting the 'Frobisher Bay, NWT, "Eskimo" Co-operative Conference', which is also known as the Frobisher Bay Co-operative Conference. The federal Canadian government promoted the development of co-operatives in the north to encourage entrepreneurship and a cash-based economy among Inuit following the collapse of the fur trade (Mitchell 1996:180–2). In my initial analyses of the NFB archive, I saw images like this example through the lens of ideological critique. It struck me that the focus on Southern bureaucracy and economic policies, as well as such symbols of nationhood or colonial heritage as the Red Ensigns, framed these images clearly and irrevocably as visualizations of authority and the enforced subjugation of indigenous peoples through assimilationist policies. Even the consistent use of observational documentary's seemingly un-staged and unobtrusive visualizing strategies reinforced for me the authority of the photographer and, by extension, the intended (Southern, Qallunaat) viewer as a detached but omniscient overseer. Further, the camera seemed to reduce the Inuit pictured to interchangeable ethnographic types, a population to be managed rather than individuals to be known. Indeed, I argued initially that the real subject of this and other governmental images of

the north dating from the 1950s and 1960s is the paternalistic authority of the nation-state. In this way, drawing on Foucauldian models, I saw the NFB's nationalist visual archive as a technology of power in which a federal model of Canadian identity was disseminated and naturalized.

However, I came to recognize a troubling paradox in such critiques of the photographic archive. Analyses like the one I have rehearsed above of the 1963 Frobisher Bay image unwittingly reinforce the very authority they ostensibly critique. This seems to occur in two intertwined ways. First, the utter fixation on authority, although framed negatively, has the unintended effect of underscoring its power. In a circular logic, ideological critique keeps returning back to the institutions of authority, emphasizing the power they wield over their subjects and in so doing rendering these individuals as passive victims. Secondly, in insisting that colonial or national authority is the only subject of discussion (as I did above), such analyses deny the possibility of alternative readings or even of seeing power as mutable (Lydon 2005:4–8; Morton and Edwards 2009; Payne 2013:180). Ideological critique remains necessary and important work, but alone it is limited and, at worst, can actually perpetuate the very attitudes it condemns.

These concerns prompted me to explore other approaches to the research of historic photographs, particularly from indigenous perspectives. I was first introduced to indigenous counter-readings of historic photographs by the Onondaga photographer and curator Jeffrey Thomas, whose own nuanced reclamations of ethnographic photography demonstrate the malleability of photographic meaning and the cultural efficacy of reclaiming Western representations of indigenous peoples (Payne and Thomas 2002; Thomas 2011). In addition, photographic 'returns' work undertaken

² This image – from the Ted Grant fonds (collection) at LAC – is not part of the NFB holdings. However, it reflects the manner of working and style of NFB images. Indeed, Grant was the most prolific contributors to the NFB Still Photography Division at this time. (Grant 1997).

collaboratively between indigenous peoples and non-indigenous researchers from around the globe also offered a particularly compelling model for opening up the interpretative space of the image while ‘decolonizing’ Western research (Geismar and Herle 2010; Lydon 2010; Peers and Brown 2006; Poignant and Poignant 1996; Wright 2013). Such collaborative community-based photographic work in part provides a platform for multivalent perspectives by emphasizing reception as a dynamic site for the making of meaning rather than grounding interpretation solely in the historic moment in which the images were shot, a context in which these subjects were marginalized. In collaborative returns projects, the historic photograph becomes a place for transhistorical, trans-generational and transcultural encounters. Those depicted in the images are no longer the disempowered subjects of colonial or nationalist authority, but instead figures re-activated by contemporary culture, memory, community and conversation.

Importantly, such collaborations need to be built on and with local indigenous perspectives, protocols and knowledge. The NFB images of Inuit that I found in the archive, for example, needed to be re-engaged in a manner that reflects the values and world-views of the Inuit they represent. In this way they can begin to counter what Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Inuit organization that coordinates Inuit responsibilities for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, terms the ‘tainted legacy’ of research in Nunavut, ‘characterized by uneven power relationships between Inuit and researchers’ (Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated 2013:3). In their 2007 guide, *Negotiating Research Relationships with Inuit Communities*, published by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI), Nickels *et al.* catalogue a number of recommended research protocols for Qallunaat

scholars in the north. They include involving Inuit in identifying locally relevant research needs and in conducting the research itself; compensating Inuit involved in research and for their own locally driven research initiatives; and returning findings and data to the north. Woven throughout the ITK and NRI publication is the suggestion that Southern research methodologies must privilege local priorities and Inuit cultural values.

Today many Inuit characterize those values in terms of Inuit *Qaujimaqatuqangit*, or, as it is more familiarly known, ‘IQ’, an Inuktitut play on the acronym for intelligence quotient. As scholar Heather Igloliorte has recently argued, IQ may be defined as ‘aggregate Inuit knowledge, values, customs, and lifeways ... the governing principles of which emphasize several key distinctions from the values of capitalist liberalism’ (Igloliorte 2014:151). IQ comprises six key principles: *Pijitsirniq*, the concept of serving; *Aqjiiqatigiingniq*, the concept of consensus decision-making; *Pilimmaksarniq*, the concept of skills and knowledge acquisition; *Piliriqatigiingniq*, the concept of collaborative relationships or working together for a common purpose; *Avatimik Kamattiarniq*, the concept of environmental stewardship; and *Qanuqtuurnarniq*, the concept of being resourceful to solve problems (Arnakak 2000). Igloliorte stresses, following Elder Jaypetee Arnakak, that IQ is not a set of past practices but a ‘living technology’ (Arnakak 2000; Igloliorte 2014:151). Indeed, these guiding principles are increasingly seen as core characteristics of what it means to be Inuit and are actively applied today (Graburn 2006:146; Laugrand and Oosten 2011:136; Stevenson 2006:177). Since its establishment in 1999, for example, the Government of Nunavut has administered the territory following IQ principles (Government of Nunavut 2010).

Most Inuit communities insist that researchers – across disciplines – respect Inuit sovereignty in the Arctic and Inuit values, which are often expressed through IQ principles. This is seen, for example, in the Inuit Circumpolar Council's 2009 Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic (Inuit Circumpolar Council 2009) and in the widespread advocacy of active and ongoing community involvement in research. To date, research programmes from across several disciplines have adopted collaborative Inuit-Qallunaat protocols, producing important findings and establishing models for transcultural research. Among the growing number of collaborative-research programmes is the Inuit *siku* (sea ice) atlas. Developed as part of the International Polar Year's Inuit Sea Ice Use and Occupancy Project between 2004 and 2008, the Inuit *siku* atlas is a collaboration between Inuit elders in four communities across Nunavut and Southern geographers. Elders' traditional knowledge and way-finding techniques are combined with GPS technology to document changes in the sea ice impacted by global climate change, and their findings are made accessible through an online cybercartographic atlas (Ljubicic *et al.* 2014).

In addition, research in cultural anthropology and linguistics has also been at the fore of collaborative Inuit-Qallunaat approaches. Linguistic studies and oral-history accounts of Inuit knowledge have brought Inuit elders and teachers together with Southern researchers to foster Inuktitut-language retention (Bennett and Rowley 2004; Collignon and Therrien 2009; Dorais 2010; Laugrand and Oosten 2011). This work has been crucial to the revitalization of the Inuktitut language and has contributed to education reforms in Nunavut and other northern territorial governments. Oral-history projects undertaken through Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit and Igloolik, for example, have organized

several gatherings and published extensively since their founding in 1994 (Nunavut Arctic College 2007; Oosten and Laugrand 1999, 2000). They have actively involved elders and preserved knowledge, while centring education on the oral traditions that are integral to Inuit culture.

'We just want to see if you can name people in the pictures and if it brings back any memories.'

Views from the North, the photographic returns project in which Ann Hanson participated, strived both to reflect IQ values and disseminate them through digital recordings and the web, technologies embraced widely among Inuit today. In this, the project also drew on the examples of Inuit-Qallunaat collaborations such as those developed by Inuit communities working with linguists and environmental geographers. Finally, it also attempted to adapt recent theorizations of the photograph and approaches to photographic returns to Nunavut today.

The three partners for the project were the Inuit post-secondary training programme, Nunavut Sivuniksavut (NS); the federal agency, Library and Archives Canada (LAC); and Carleton University (CU). NS is the core of this research programme. Founded in 1985 by the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, Nunavut Sivuniksavut, which translates from the Inuktitut as 'the future of our land', was mandated initially to prepare Inuit youth to participate in the land-claims negotiations that would culminate in the founding of the territory in 1999. Today it is an acclaimed eight-month to two-year accredited college programme, which, in the faculty's own words, is 'dedicated to providing Inuit youth with unique cultural and academic learning experiences that will allow them to develop the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to contribute to the building of Nunavut' (Nunavut

Sivuniksavut, accessed 25 August 2016.). It offers instruction in the Inuktitut language, Inuit history and regular involvement of elders, as well as a curriculum that reflects IQ principles (Angus and Hanson 2011).

In 2001 NS faculty Murray Angus and Morley Hanson partnered with LAC to develop the collaborative-research initiative known as 'Project Naming'. Aimed at identifying Inuit in thousands of photographs from LAC's vast holdings, Project Naming initially involved NS students working with elders in their home communities in Nunavut. Over the past several years, identifications have principally been made through the LAC website set up for the project and through outreach to media across the territory of Nunavut (Greenhorn 2005; Payne 2013:181–7; Project Naming, accessed 25 August 2016). As its coordinator Beth Greenhorn has described, Project Naming has successfully identified hundreds of Inuit depicted among the LAC's photographic holdings (Greenhorn 2005).

Views from the North was initiated in 2005, with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. As noted above, it aims to extend Project Naming, with which it is also partnered, to include photo-based oral-history interviews in addition to identifications of people in the photographs. In this way, the project attempts to complement the IQ values at the core of the NS curriculum. In bringing youth and elders together, it specifically reflects *Piliriqatigiingniq*, the IQ principle of collaboration, while stressing Inuit oral and trans-generational learning. At the same time, this is a research programme that draws on transcultural settler-indigenous encounters through the reclaiming of non-Inuit image-making within Inuit communities. As with Project Naming, the active interviewing component of Views from the North from 2005–14 used photographs,

shot mainly by visiting Qallunaat during the 1950s and 1960s, as the bases for the interviews. (The project initially used only images from the NFB archive, with which I am very familiar; the pool of images was extended to include other holdings at the LAC). While there are a few known Inuit photographers from this period – most notably the Cape Dorset-based Peter Pitseolak (1902–73) – generally, photography was not a common a tool of visual expression among Inuit at the time (Pitseolak 1993; Wise 2000). Carving, clothing design and other forms of expression had long been prominent, and during the 1950s Southerners had actively promoted printmaking as well as carving among the Inuit (McMaster 2010; Mitchell 1996); but photographic equipment – although available at times through Hudson's Bay posts – was neither as accessible nor as widely encouraged. Today, in contrast, cameras and camera-equipped mobile phones are ubiquitous among Inuit in the north. Views from the North also posts photographs made by participating students themselves. Like Project Naming and Nunavut Sivuniksavut's curriculum, it also merges Inuit approaches with the wired world familiar to the young students participating.

The methodology for Views from the North is purposefully straightforward: young Inuit students listen to and record elders in their home communities as they talk about photographs that depict that same community decades ago. In this way, the 'returns' take place within each tight-knit community, with specific local knowledges activating the encounters rather than a more generalized sense of Inuit culture – although Inuit have found the promotion of common cultural characteristics politically useful (Martin 2010:76). As noted above, I – and the other Qallunaat researchers involved in the research programme – do not participate in the interviews

directly. This was a purposeful choice to counter conventional Western or Southern research protocols. Consents from elders to conduct the interviews and disseminate their recollections were gathered orally on recordings in accordance with Inuit tradition and through a protocol established by Carleton University's Research Ethics office. Reflecting Edwards' discussions of the importance of the materiality of the photograph in affective engagement, students brought albums of photographic prints rather than showing images on a screen; extras were printed so that elders can keep any or all of the photographs brought to the interviews that they found meaningful (Edwards 2012b; Edwards and Hart 2004). Oral culture is also privileged as a means of intergenerational connectedness. As such, this research protocol creates a structure informed by some IQ principles, particularly the concepts of *Pilimmaksarniq* (skills and knowledge acquisition) and *Piliriqatigiingniq* (working together for a common purpose). The choice to record the interviews may seem antithetical to the characteristic fluidity of oral cultures. Yet educational efforts to revitalize the Inuktitut language and to maintain Inuit knowledge have used recording equipment that keeps elders' words at the fore and circulating within Inuit communities (Nunavut Arctic College 2007; Oosten and Laugrand 1999, 2000). Indeed, Inuit culture – from the Palme d'Or-winning Isuma filmmakers from Igloolik to educators and linguists – have effectively adapted digital technologies to Inuit culture.

During the eight years in which interviews were conducted, fellow participants and I held workshops with students each December. The workshops were timed to occur just before students return to Nunavut for a few weeks of holiday, when they would be able to speak to elders at home. The workshops were first

designed with the aid of NS student Hellin Alariaq and LAC archivist Caroline Forcier-Holloway; later Carleton University students Sheena Ellison, Spencer Stuart, Laura Schneider, Suzanne Crowdis and Clare McKenzie assisted. In the workshop sessions, we introduced NS students to the goals of the project and guided them in the use of the technology supplied. We showed them archival photographs, arranged by each community and discussed the value of talking with elders. Students learned to use the digital-recording equipment supplied; although often students preferred to record interviews with their own equipment. We also encouraged students to make their own photographs or photo-essays of their home communities, as a present-day response to the archival images. For three years of the project, Métis photographer and artist Rosalie Favell provided instruction during the workshop sessions in using the supplied digital cameras. Students also provided feedback on the protocols and helped shape the project. Finally, after returning from their interviews, several of the students participated in follow-up interviews with me and the other researchers.

Participating students had agency in the research project and in maintaining narratives about their home communities. All students who conducted interviews were paid as researchers. Their involvement was voluntary, although NS faculty periodically included the project as an assignment. Not only did they choose whether or not to participate, they also decided who to interview. For the most part, the students approached an elder well known to them: a grandparent, another relative or a neighbour. In turn, each elder was paid a researcher's stipend. Often the students worked in teams of two or three and would interview a few elders. As I have discussed elsewhere, students are often intimidated to speak with elders, at times

because there can be a language gap between the mainly Anglophone youth and many elders, who communicate principally in Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun or other dialects of Inuktitut (Payne 2011). (Although a number of the interviews – particularly in Iqaluit and in Kitikmeot, the most western region in Nunavut – were conducted in English; the conversation with Ann Hanson was one of them.) For those interviews that were conducted in an indigenous language of the region, students often brought other neighbours or family members from a middle generation to translate; these local translators were also paid as researchers. But Nunavut has seen advancements in the retention of Inuktitut over many years; as a result, a number of the students were very fluent in Inuktitut and did not need translators.

Participating students decided in one of the first workshops for the project *not* to use a script of questions. Students often feel uncomfortable querying elders; it can be seen as a sign of disrespect to pose questions (Oosten and Laugrand 1999). Instead, they usually introduce the project to the elder, ask permission and sit back and listen. Christine Tootoo, for example, opened the discussion with Ann Hanson by saying, ‘We just want to see if you can name people in the pictures and if it brings back any memories.’ (Hanson 2013). For the rest of that interview, Christine and her classmates listened quietly while Hanson spoke. But some students have continued to ask questions of the participating elders. In some situations, depending on the personal relationships established between them, this works well; in others, the elders will openly ask them to stop interrupting and listen.

While the interviews themselves provided meaningful intergenerational encounters for participating youths and elders, they also continue to reach a broader audience – particularly across Nunavut and the circumpolar

north as a whole – through the web. Recordings of elders’ responses to the photographs, digital files of the archival photographs used in the interviews, recorded follow-up interviews with students and transcripts and photographs taken by students themselves are all available on a cybercartographic site (Payne, Hayes and Ellison 2014; Taylor and Caquard 2006; Views from the North). Like the Inuit *siku* (sea ice) atlas, the Views from the North site uses Nunaliit, a technology developed by Carleton University’s Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre (Taylor 2013). An open-source framework technology, Nunaliit has been developed specifically for its accessibility. The twenty-six small hamlets and towns across Nunavut, for example, all use the Internet extensively to communicate across the territory and beyond; although ample broadband access has become an ongoing concern and frustration. The Nunaliit framework neither requires specialized equipment nor extensive broadband space. Further, its map interface is easy to manoeuvre and underscores the distinctiveness of each community involved (Taylor 2013). Finally, the site will be linked to LAC’s Project Naming web presence.

‘it led to a lot of regular conversations that we could have had but we probably wouldn’t have had if we didn’t have the pictures’

Over the eight years of active interviewing for the project, conversations have been held across Nunavut from Kugluktuk in the far western Kitikmeot Region to Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet and other hamlets in the central Kivalliq Region on the western shores of Hudson’s Bay, to the Baffin or Qikiqtaaluk Region including Grise Fiord, the northernmost settlement in Canada, and Nunavut’s capital, Iqaluit. Elders have narrated specific local histories and figures from each

community. Through the small intimate groups in the interviews, elders are able to connect the past with the young people sitting around them. Underscoring all of their recollections is the commitment to community life and the linking of generations.

Familiarity between the students and elders (as well as with the accompanying translators in some cases) has created an intimate atmosphere in each interview. Typically they gather in one of the elders' home and sit in a loose circle. Through the participating elders' words, the scenes depicted in the photographs come to life for the young people and other community members. These gatherings demonstrate Edwards' assertion that the photograph is a 'social object' (Edwards 2006:27, 2012b:227). Elders handle the photographs – literally pointing out familiar faces and caressing their likenesses; as Edwards has shown, the material properties of each print seems to enhance their own affective engagement.

In turn, the conversations often depart from the explicit subjects of the photographs. Yet the images play important roles in breaking the ice between generations, prompting memory and focusing the discussion. As I have written elsewhere, in a 2009 conversation, student Natasha Mablick beautifully explained to me the role played by the photographs in an interview she conducted with her father in Pond Inlet, in northern Baffin Island. In Natasha's words, the photographs 'lead to a lot of regular conversations that we could have had but we probably wouldn't have had if we didn't have the pictures' (Mablick 2009; Payne 2011).

One question hangs in the air around these intergenerational conversations – a question that the students never explicitly posed yet one that remains present throughout the encounters: 'How does one *become* an Inuk?' Caught between Inuit

and Qallunaat worlds, the students all but yearn for a clear sense of cultural identity. And the elders, in turn, answer that unspoken question with vivid, engaging discussions of so-called 'traditional' Inuit life. Indeed, the portions of the interviews that turn to dog teaming, hunting skills, hand crafts and legends are consistently the most animated parts of these intergenerational encounters. In early 2006, for example, Elder Ahmie Anahanak shared hunting tips in Kugluktuk with student Tolok Havioyak; while at the same time in Iqaluit, Elder Akeshook Joamie intricately explained to two young women how to harness a dog and how dogs were used to transport food. In 2009, a Coral Harbour elder, Lizzie Putulik, gave student Faith Kakuktinniq a lesson in sewing kamiks, while student Paulette Metuq learned about traditional regional clothing in Pangnirtung and Siobhan Iksiktaaryuk and her cousin Kevin Iksiktaaryuk of Baker Lake discovered their family had had dog teams years ago. For the students, who are increasingly immersed in IQ values (through the school Nunavut Sivuniksavut and through the IQ policies implemented by the Government of Nunavut), these are the knowledges and skills that an Inuk possesses (Angus and Hanson 2011; Stevenson 2006).

But elders always returned to the task of identifying people in the images and honouring community members of the past during those moments of mentoring youths in 'traditional' Inuit culture. In turn, these identifications of past individuals have elicited deep emotion. In 2006 in Chesterfield Inlet on the west coast of Hudson Bay, a group of elders pointed out student Rebecca Sammurtok's grandfather, Victor Sammurtok, in an image. Seven years later, Leeanne Hainnu of Clyde River, on the west coast of Baffin Island, interviewed five elders who pointed out her own father as a young boy among the images. While, 400 kilometres further north in Pond



Figure 2 Bernadette Elgok and Katrina Hatogina, Kugluktuk, Nunavut. January 2012. Photographer: Katrina Hatogina.

Inlet, also in 2013, Terry Milton interviewed his grandfathers Joshua Katsak and Ikey Milton, and his grandmother, about photographs, including an image of the celebrated Inuk hunter Joseph Idlout. In 2012 in the far western community of Kugluktuk, Elder Bernadette Elgok and student Katrina Hatogina both took great delight when Bernadette recognized herself in one of the photographs, as a beautiful young woman in fox fur (Figures 2 and 3).

Participants in the research – like those involved in the founding initiative Project Naming – have engaged with the loaded and multilayered significance of names within Inuit culture. Naming is recognized as a key way in which Inuit cultural and trans-generational bonds are established. Babies are named for community elders or ancestors, and form a deep connection with the person for whom they are named (Alia 2006:24–31; Bennett and Rowley 2004:3;

Hanson 1999). At the same time, Inuit naming practices do not adhere to Western or Southern notions of fixed Cartesian identity; names can be changed with relative ease. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that colonial agencies in the north often asserted their authority and enacted acculturation by naming and renaming the peoples of the north. Catholic and Anglican missionaries, for example, christened generations of Inuit with Inuktitut-inflected versions of Biblical names; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police issued each Inuk a fixed identification number, rather than using given names, to maintain statistical data between the 1940s and 1969; and by the 1970s, following protests from Inuit about the demeaning practice of being issued numbers rather than names, Project Surname was initiated and administered by Inuk leader Abraham Okpik (Alia 2006:65–90; Greenhorn 2005; Hanson 1999; Stern 2004:157–8).



Figure 3 Woman in Furs [Bernadette Elgok]. 1966. National Film Board of Canada, Still Photography Division Archive, National Gallery of Canada. 66-5629.



Figure 4 Abe Okpik at home, Frobisher Bay, N.W.T. [Iqaluit, Nunavut], April 1964. Photographer: Charles Gimpel. MIKAN number 3607001 / accession number e002394551 Library and Archives Canada.

In fact, Abraham Okpik's was one of the faces that Ann Hanson recognized during the 2013 interview with which I opened this article (Figure 4). The album she studied included a 1964 portrait of Okpik at his home in Frobisher Bay. It is one of over eleven-thousand photographs now in LAC taken the British photographer and art dealer Charles Gimpel in the Canadian Arctic. In the casual framing of observational documentary, Okpik is seen seated in close, intimate proximity from the side, as if engaged in a conversation with

a group, including the photographer. Wearing his familiar horn-rimmed glasses and a polo shirt, he is surrounded by Inuit carvings, a painting of a walrus and contemporary furnishings. Indeed, this snapshot crystallizes how Okpik negotiated Inuit and Qallunaat cultures.

When Ann Hanson saw this portrait of Abraham Okpik in 2013, she was less concerned with pictorial strategies and props in the image; as with many of the elders interviewed in *Views from the North*, the images provided her with points of departure for cultural narratives. Here, this specific photograph prompted her to recount the history of Project Surname, which Okpik headed and from which Project Naming draws its name. In doing so, she was also able to honour Okpik's memory.

Abe Okpik is very, very famous for many, many things... This man was appointed to give family names to every Inuk, every family in all of the eastern Arctic... My people – older than me, my elders and people my age – were forever grateful to him because he did so much for the Inuit in a very honest way. He never coloured what the government said, what the government officials said when they were coming up. He always told the truth. This is what they are saying. If you don't like it, you can speak back. He taught us how to speak back if we don't like what the government says. So, we are so grateful to him.

(Hanson 2013)

Interacting with returned photographs of Inuit from a generation ago also provided Hanson with a way to 'speak back' to that history, even as it gave the youths gathered around role models in their explorations of cultural identity.

Focusing on the 'visual excesses' of the photographic representation – the visual information that seeps into the image beyond

the delimiting intents of the photographers and commissioning state authorities – Ann Hanson and the other elders and students who participated saw what had been invisible to me (Poole 2005). In images that I had initially perceived as flat, black-and-white documents of subjugation through assimilationist policies, they encountered friends, stories and connections across time. The IQ-based methodological approach adopted in *Views from the North* provides a format for the voicing of local concerns and pasts told from Inuit perspectives.

At the same time, Inuit re-readings of archival photographs and the uncontainable excesses of the photograph itself also point to ways of opening up Qallunaat historical discourse beyond singular or narrow readings of a past (Edwards 2012a). In my own experience as a Qallunaat academic, this transcultural research programme has provided a way to think of scholarship in collaborative terms. It reflects what the historian Steven High has termed ‘a fundamental shift in academic research from knowing *about* to knowing *with*’ (High 2014:9). Along the way, the elders and students who have participated in *Views from the North* urge all viewers to think about the positions of the telling history and the coexistence of different narratives and perceptions of historical consciousness.

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