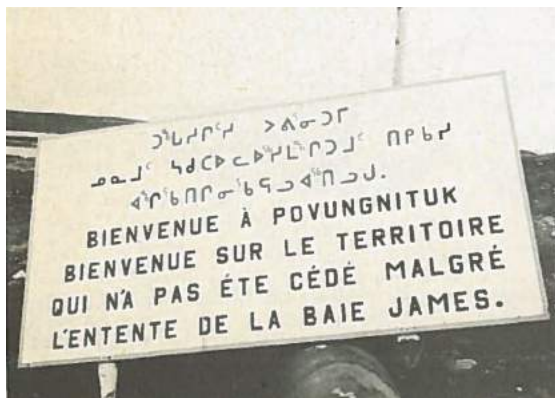


*Studying and Researching the History and Heritage of
the Dissidents' Movement among Nunavik Inuit
A Final Report*



This is a picture of a sign which “greeted” visitors arriving to Puvirnitug — the Dissidents’ birthplace and headquarters — in the 1980s. More than a year ago, I put this picture in on the cover page of my initial “project” report for the ARPE, thinking it summarized well the stakes surrounding Inuit dissidence. I thought then that this sign was a bit of folklore, only known by a few elders, and a couple of researchers who had read an ITN brochure.

Source: ITN (1983:46)

... And this is a picture I took myself, in the early days of my fieldwork. It depicts a photograph of the very same sign, hanging next to the entrance of Puvirnitug’s cooperative today. Encountering this picture, I realized dissidence is far from being forgotten in Nunavik, and that it is a rather topical subject. Juxtaposing these two pictures represents quite well how much I learnt, all along the ARPE year, about the social, economic and political relevance of dissidence today.



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Part I

Introduction

1 A note on the scope of this report

After spending nine months doing research in the delightful city of Montr al, I finally had the chance in the early days of June to board a “jet”¹ and fly to the village of Puvirnituk², in order to complete my pre-doctoral year with four weeks of field research. Having flown back from the shores of the Hudson Bay to those of the St. Lawrence, across the whole *Belle Province*, over 1600km, and through a 40 C temperature difference, now is the time to reflect of the whole — and wholesome — experience this transatlantic ARPE year has been.

This report is “final” in that I do not plan of writing subsequent ones; it does not, however, close the year, nor does it includes all final and definite results from my research. I am still in the process of analyzing and organizing all the data I collected and created since September 2018, and collaboratively writing reports, articles, and other papers. This incompleteness of the present report is, in my opinion, a positive signal on the success of the ARPE: it has led to more scientific results and opportunities than previously thought; and crucially, my research topic has proven to be interesting and insightful, not only to me, but also to the wider community of researchers in social sciences — geographers, political scientists and historians of the indigenous Arctic, and other economists working on indigenous realities — which will lead me to communicate on these results, and have them benefit a wider community of researchers.

¹A Boeing 737, bigger and faster than the “Dash” — a Bombardier Dash-8 — which is the most common plane to travel around Nunavik.

²Puvirnituk is a village of about 1700 inhabitants, situated in Northern Nunavik, on the north-eastern shore of the Hudson Bay (Nunavik being geographically, and sometimes politically, divided between the Hudson Bay and the Ungava Coast). Puvirnituk is also known through its former name, “Povungnituk” (which is still the official name attached to the village’s Cooperative) — but the most common denomination for the village is simply “POV”, pronounced *pee-oooh-vee*.

Writing the present report, I have tried to balance accounts of my research focus and preliminary results, on the one side, and of the variety of my day-to-day activities, on the other side — for I think it is the latter variety which was the most distinctive and fulfilling feature of this year abroad. In order not to weary the charitable reader, I have tried not to repeat here too much of what I already reported in February. Therefore, an account of the everyday institutional life and friendly atmosphere in the (in)famous Strathcona building is not to be found again hereafter, nor are accounts of the courses I attended in the first Semester. As a reminder, the reader can find hereafter (p. 5) the table of contents associated with the intermediary report — the contents of which will not be developed here:

Abbreviations

- FCNQ – Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec (Northern-Quebec Cooperative Federation)
- ITN – Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini (the Dissident Inuit organization)
- JBNQA – James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
- NQIA – Northern Québec Inuit Association (which signed the JBNQA)
- POV – Abbreviation of Povungnituk, the former name of Puvirnituk

2 The year in review

2.1 A plurality of activities

The wholesomeness of the ARPE is well reflected, I think, in the wide variety of research-related activities I have engaged in — some of them closer to actual research than others, some of them more peculiar than others to the Northern American academy, but all of them a part of the greater whole which a year-long research project is. I am definitely grateful that the year embraced so many and various aspects of project-building and research-making, for I think this was the best possible way to prepare for a PhD. Having learnt by doing many do's and don'ts about the following activities, I feel way more able to cope with actually

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The table of contents for the intermediary report, providing a reminder of what has already been discussed and won't be described in-length again.

doing research on a larger time scale — even though I know I still have to learn a lot, of course. Here is a list of the activities I had the opportunity to engage in, and the details of which will be developed all along the report.

- scientific literature research
- grey literature research
- archive exploration
- interviews
- ethnographic fieldwork
- language courses
- lectures and seminars
- fieldwork planning
- funding applications
- papers' submission
- networking
- dissertations' digitalizing
- reviews-writing (and the subsequent publishing negotiations)

First section... 2nd etc

- ± chronological summary of the year - what has been done so far – and what has not - research orientations and results - what I have learnt along the process - things that'll be left out – see intermediary report: lab atmosphere.

- funding application - collaboration with EDDEC : beginning and then monthly meeting - scanning Simard - Rw 1, 2, 3, and why :

- conference application - fieldwork planning - PhD applications - reports writing - attending a seminar

2.2 A wide range of achievements

2.2.1 Research products

The research I have conducted, with my directors, is giving way to several products — all proceeding from the same research, but with various focuses. The first one is a research report, which I am in the process of writing for EDDEC Institute, which granted me funds in order to do fieldwork in Nunavik. This

report is based on my research on the history of a political but also economic movement; on my observations in a community where sharing is the norm and where the Cooperative is a hegemonic institution; and it includes insights from both scientific and more political points of view. It focuses on the collaborative (or sharing) economics in contemporary Nunavik; it aims at providing knowledge on the wider economy in indigenous communities in Canada. In this report is also an attempt at refining the definition of “sharing economics” in a more... *collaborative* way, so to say. I criticize the use of “sharing economy” as an umbrella term for any type of innovative economy activity which relies on *using* without *owning* the means of production. My research results invite researchers not to focus only on the formal aspects of economic activities in order to categorize them, but also to take into account the meaning these economic activities have for the actors implementing them, since these meanings — whether cultural, social, or political — do have an impact on practices, and ultimately do frame sharing economics.

Second research product is a paper I will present at 2018 International Geographical Union Regional Conference — Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting (IGU–CAG) at Université Laval in early August. In this paper I will focus more specifically on the history and topicality of the Dissidents’ movement. I will show the three-headed dimension of the “dissident project” (political, economic and socio-cultural), and how the three sides have been interlinked and have evolved along history — especially in regard to the wider institutional context. I hope this paper will be of some interest for geographers, for I will also show how territoriality — the relationship to the land — is at the very core of this tridimensional project. The IGU–CAG conference being titled “appreciating difference”, I hope I will contribute to a better understanding of how this Inuit movement is different but still quite similar to other self-governing project, and how the Dissidents’ movement has been truly political and should not be overlooked and/ or relegated to mere idiosyncratic cultural claims by geographers (see appendix p. 71 for the complete abstract).

Third product is another paper, which I will present end of August at the midterm conference of the European sociological association Research network on Sociology of consumption (RN05). The conference’s theme is “Consumption and

consumerism: Conceptual and empirical sociological challenges”, and I submitted a proposal which dwells on consumer activism and collaborative consumption at stake in the dissident movement. I will question the meaning of consumption choices in a dissident community where, historically, these choices have been informed by a political meaning, and embodied a resistance against what has been perceived as economic colonialism. Focusing on the ways people consume and how they make use of the Cooperative, I will also point at the contemporary conflicts of norms and the dilemma between diverging imperatives, hence the title of proposal, which has been accepted as such: “Cooperative economy and collaborative consumption in a “dissident” Inuit community: between activism and mundanity” (see appendix p. 72 for the complete abstract.) I am very happy that my proposal was accepted and that I can use my ARPE experience in geography to participate in a major European sociological conference. Since the event is hold in Copenhagen, I also hope there will be scientists who specialize on the case of Greenland and Greenlanders, and who will be able to offer interesting comparisons with Greenlandic Inuit populations and situations.

Hopefully, these papers and their subsequent discussions will provide me with a solid base for writing an article on the social, political and economic heritage of the Dissidents’ movement in Nunavik. My PhD beginning only in October, I plan on writing such an article in September and immediately begin the submission process.

2.2.2 Subsidiary achievements

Among minor processes I was able to achieve this year, I wrote three literature reviews which have been, or are to be published. Even though these were not strictly dependent on the ARPE framework, spending a year abroad and being able to manage my own research timetable gave me the opportunity to apply and actually write these reviews, which I think are an important step in the typical would-be researcher carrier.

“**DUBUISSON-QUELLIER, Sophie, *La Consommation engagée*”, *Lectures [En ligne], Les comptes rendus.*** First review is that of a small manual, the second edition of which I reviewed for French online journal *Lectures*. It deals with consumer activism in an international perspective, and therefore was of quite obvious use for me in the perspective of writing my paper for ESA conference on Consumption and consumerism. Being a manual offering a wide view on several aspects of consumer activism, it provided me with many hints closely related to my subject. I found especially enlightening the passages on cooperative movements, and the remarks which highlight the sociologically restricted space of consumer activism — often being a domain occupied by a small educated elite. The complete review can be found online following [this link](#).

“**KRUPNIK, Igor (ed.). 2016. *Early Inuit Studies: Themes and Transitions, 1850s-1980s. Smithsonian Institution*”, *History of Anthropology Newsletter [En ligne]*.** Second review I wrote, which shall be published end of August, is that of a book proceeding from a session organized at the 18th Inuit Studies Conference. It provides an insightful general chronology of the history of the field — from the constitution of a field of research called “Eskimology”, to its eventual demise and replacement by “Inuit studies”. Attentively reading this book has proven quite useful to me in order to navigate in the multidisciplinary field of Inuit studies, as well as to gain knowledge about the various and evolving relationships between mostly White scientists and their Inuit subjects and informants. Along the review, I insisted on what I think is one of the most original and relevant chapter of the book, the closing *Coda* written by French geographer Béatrice Colignon. In this reflection on the institutional and epistemological evolutions of the field of research, she cleverly points out some of the unseen dangers in a contemporary epistemological trend, that of restricting knowledge production about Inuit population on the social demands emerging from indigenous groups. Even though she highlights the obvious epistemological and ethical benefits of better inclusion of Inuit people in the research processes, she signals that no research should be based on only one univocal demand channel.

“TAMNES, Rolf, et Kristine OFFERDAL. 2017. *Geopolitics and security in the Arctic: regional dynamics in a global world*. Routledge”, *Études internationales*, 49 (1). Last review I chose to write is a bit further off my research topics, as it is concerned with current geopolitical conflicts and balances in the Arctic. One has to note, however, that it is a subject no social scientist of the Arctic can afford to ignore, for geopolitics are the one subject which is at the core of international attention whenever the Arctic comes under media attention span. Being often asked about these geopolitical stakes in all kinds of contexts, I definitely needed to know the basics about it. What is more, I chose to review this specific book for it is discussing general trends in geopolitical analyses of the Arctic, and thus gave me insights about the extent to which indigenous peoples are taken into account in these analyses — an extent which is definitely small, if not plainly nonexistent. An unexpected twist in the process of this review is that it allowed me to enter a review competition organized by *Revue Études Internationales*, in which I scored second. Therefore, I guess the time spent reading and writing the review was rationally compensated with the impact it has on my online presence as a social scientist.

On the whole, I learnt a lot through reviewing, especially about the relationship between scientific writers and editors — all of them had differing expectations, and the length, the deadline and the contents (both scientific and formal) had to be continuously negotiated through back and forth emails.

Part II

Defining a research frame

3 Choosing a research focus

(between personal interests, fundings necessities, and unavoidable serendipity)

I arrived in Montréal with a project I had built on preliminary research conducted along my Masters' dissertation, and which was concerned with the Dissidents' movement and the idea of autonomy in indigenous communities.

A rapid reminder on the Dissidents

For the unknowing reader, the Dissidents are a group of Inuit from Northern Québec who refused the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA) signed with Québec as part of a hydro-electric development plan in 1974. The Dissidents comprised the populations of two villages and a half, where the Co-operative were especially powerful, and they assembled in an organization called ITN (Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini). They failed to prevent the signing of the agreement, but they have continuously disputed its legitimacy and that of the Inuit organizations who signed it since.

I had defined three main axes for my research :

- (re)make the history of the dissidence and its actors;
- analyse and understand dissidence and autonomy as a set of ideas and practices, in recent history of Northern Québec (it is now called Nunavik);
- study the existence and contents of a dissident and indigenous identity, especially through mobilization in small communities.

Of course, this project has evolved in the course of the year. One of the factors of this mutation was the quest for fundings, which I have described in the intermediary report.

Mitacs – Globalinks I first secured a grant from Mitacs, an organization which funds French students’ research projects in Canada — which had no significant influence on my research project, since I basically re-submit the project written for the ENS in the first place³.

EDDEC Institute A second source of fundings I was able to secure — hopefully more firmly — was a Jarislowsky grant from EDDEC Institute, which funds research about collaborative and circular economy, and about sustainable development in general. I thus became a student associated with EDDEC Institute, which allowed me to get involved in the institute’s activities, and especially its monthly seminars. In every one of them, some piece of research is presented and then discussed, and the wide scope of disciplines represented around the table ensures dynamic multidisciplinary exchanges (economy, sociology, management, marketing, anthropology, etc.). These seminars helped me frame my subject further, and the funding conditions required that I analyze collaborative economy in the community I was going to work in.

Deeper analysis of the subject First part — and months — of my research consisted in literature research (reading scientific articles, grey literature and else) as well as some archive exploring and interviews. From this I gained a lot of insight about my subject, and it has been another factor in the reframing of my subject. To this I have to add the numerous discussions with different actors — first of all my research directors; but also historical actors of the Dissident movements (Qallunaat⁴ I met in Montréal), and other researchers and students I had the chance to meet along my research.

³Mitacs’ grant consisted in \$2,500 which should have covered housing expenses on the field; sadly, the Social sciences department at the ENS having not signed my application for a visa renewal on due date, it is likely that I will have to refund it through a personal loan.

⁴Qallunaat is the Inuit term for “White people”. Of course, what the term points out is wider than physical peculiarity. It represents both ethnic specificities and the specific (post)colonial regime within which Inuit/ Qallunaat relationships have been embedded in historically; Qallunaat are Quebecers and Canadians who com from outside Inuit communities. In this report, I will use this term to single out White people as seen from an Inuit perspective, and not just as “non-indigenous people”.

In the end, I decided that I would strategically focus my research on POV Cooperative (as an important economic and political institution) and its links with the Dissidence, as well as on collaborative economy within Inuit communities — and especially the dissident ones. It is from there that I was to pull the strings of the Dissidence history, the idea and practices of autonomy, and the dissident and Inuit (more than generic “indigenous”) identity I wanted to focus on — these research orientations being so wide that their exploration had to be done through a limited focus.

“Sharing Economy Lacks A Shared Definition ” and the focusing of my research “Sharing Economy lacks a shared definition” is the title of an article by Botsman (2013), which has become a common phrase. It sums up many of the debates and reflexion we had at EDDEC regarding my subject. Researching sharing economy in Nunavik requires that we (me, my directors, and other members of the institute) define what we mean by “sharing economy” is in the first place, and this object seems to be as elusive as it is widespread in today’s scientific literature. After having weighted several options, we (expectedly) opted to use the lack of definition and the gaps in current definitions as a starting point for my reflection.

Most definitions try to establish a *substantive* definition of sharing economy, and to rule in or out a certain number of economic activities. Most often, this implies taking into account a wide range of activities based on various criteria — namely, the focus on usage rather than ownership of the means of production; the use of internet platforms at the core of business models; the collective processes of decision-making; or the social impact of such activities. Such loose definitions have been criticized for being too encompassing, and lacking analytical relevancy. They often end up including activities which have very little in common, if not being radically opposed on all plans — from multinationals which business model consists in extending the domain of individualistic liberalism as far as possible (Deliveroo or Uber, to quote some of the most famous ones) to the renewed cooperative model of localized exchanges, for instance in the iconic “incredible edible” movement.

Meanwhile, semantically, most often “collaborative” or “sharing” is taken as a mere word, a pure signifier, devoid of significant meaning... and thus rather void.

Therefore, we decided to follow a promising lead by taking the “collaborative” aspect of “collaborative economy” not as a semantic given, but more seriously and literally, by looking at the social meaning of sharing relationship and collaborative economic institutions in localized communities. This heuristic development is quite typical of the qualitative and reflexive input sociologists and geographers try to bring to EDDEC research, otherwise often focused to more formalized and quantitative approaches.

My director Nicole Gombay has worked specifically on the importance of sharing within Nunavik Inuit communities, and I was able to pursue her reflections on that subject. My hypothesis was that there could be some potential political meaning embedded in various sharing practices in Inuit communities, a meaning made discernible in certain communities through the links between sharing practices and the Dissident’s movement. The results are of course complex, but I conclude that there has been, indeed, a social and cultural mobilization of economic resources and practices which serves as a support for political (and, to some extent, identity) claims.

4 Methodology

4.1 Literature review

The most significant share of my time in Montreal has consisted in reviewing existing literature on various aspects of my subject. I soon discovered that more had been written on the Dissidents’ movement than I previously thought; but memoirs, articles and other papers were scattered over a wide range of disciplines — and actually a wide range of places, since many of them do not exist under a digital form.

4.1.1 Literature on the Dissidents' movement

I have had to learn how to navigate around a multidisciplinary object — the Dissidence having been studied through law, political science, history, and to a smaller extent sociology and economy. These accounts provided insights at various level and of various interest, but, considering a comprehensive historical account of the Dissidents' movement has not been written yet, they all provide some piece of factual information that is not to be found anywhere else.

Multidisciplinary studies reveal the integrated — if not “total” — aspect of the dissidence ... and the related conflict over its isolation and marginalization Navigating this archipelago of accounts and analyses, it also appeared clearly that it is important not to forget any of these aspects; the Dissidence was indeed a “total” movement, to reclaim the famous adjective from Marcel Mauss⁵. Dissidents refused — or at least, fiercely tried to refuse — the restriction of their fight to a single aspect, and this was a core aspect of the institutional and political conflict between ITN (the Dissidents' organization, who denied the legitimacy of the JBNQA) on the one side, and the NQIA (who negotiated and signed the JBNQA) on the other side. In the dispute over legitimate representation of Northern Quebec Inuit interests, NQIA indeed tried — and succeeded, to a certain extent — to isolate ITN on several aspects, which I explain now.

- *Geographical isolation of dissident villages.* ITN was prevented from spreading its claims in villages other than the three first ones where dissidence was anchored. Even though the Dissidents recorded some tapes and sent them to other communities so that they could be broadcasted on local radios, local authorities prevented these broadcasts and debates, so as to maintain unity among communities. Thus, dissidence never got a chance to spread geographically, and remained confined to 3 villages on the Hudson Bay coast (historical and social-economic differences between the two coasts of today's Nunavik can also explain why Ungava coast villages were less likely to be receptive to the Dissidents' claims).

⁵Who, incidentally, intensely worked on Inuit populations from his Parisian armchair.

- *Social, political and economic isolation of dissident communities.* Rouland (1978) talks about of the “political consequences of geographic isolation”. The opposition between signatories and Dissidents was not a peaceful or irenic one. Dissidence tore Inuit Quebec, villages, and even families apart. There is a real trauma about the divisions and the historical fighting, which is still very present among Inuit. Each side depicted the other as the one creating division, but because Dissidents were the one saying “no”, refusing an agreement with Quebec and standing up against what had been negotiated by fellow Inuit, they are widely remembered as the disturbers and troublemakers. They were factually isolated from the rest of the country for they refused to sign the large agreement and to take part in the top-down resource distribution which ensued, as well as in the whole new corporative administration which emerged from the Agreement.
- *Separating politics from economic aspects of dissident lives.* One of the core aspect of the fight is directly related to the aforementioned integrated aspect of the dissidence. The Dissidents’ refusal to sign the JBNQA was based on many motives, but two features can be put forward here.
 - At the core of the Dissident project was the idea of political-economic autonomy. The dissidents were people often involved in the Cooperative movement, and the dissident villages were the villages where Cooperative were of utmost importance — quantitatively as well as symbolically. Before the hydro-electric project which would led to the JBNQA negotiation was even evoked, the Cooperative federation (FCNQ) had outlined a plan for Inuit territorial self-government in Northern Québec. Based on the cooperative economic experience, these Inuit were convinced that they could be politically autonomous and decide for themselves. This is exactly what NQIA opposed, demanding (and obtaining) in the harsh debates of the 1970s that ITN be focused on political claims and separated from any economic decision, which would be the realm of the Cooperatives. Even though, in the dissident villages, there were obvious and strong links between ITN and the Cooperatives, this helped containing the rebellion.

- The land offered a symbolical and political stake to unite Inuit and fight for. A decisive point in the dissidence — maybe the only definite point on which all Dissidents unequivocally agreed — was the refusal by Inuit populations to cede their land rights. Dissidents have always claimed that this was the only non-negotiable point: the land was never to be bargained, sold, framed, or owned. The notion of land can be, and actually has been discussed from many disciplinary points of view — legally, economically, socio-culturally, philosophically, etc. I think this reflects the paramount position of the *land* (“*nuna*”) within Inuit communities: it is everything, the starting point as well as the horizon for any action. In Inuit cosmology, everything comes from the land (that is, solid earth and sea ice and shoreline waters), hence the lands’ symbolical importance. But this can also be seen from the more concrete aspect that a great deal of what people do eat and consume directly comes from the land surrounding the village. “Going to the land”, whether to hunt, fish, or camp, is an activity cherished by everyone, performed whenever possible and with family and friends. Inuit perceive the land to be the place for “real” and “authentic” life, a repository for identity — as well as the one and only means for an autonomous life⁶. Often hunters would brag about the fact that they, being true Inuit, would be able to survive on the land with nothing but their own basic tools. Thus, the JBNQA clause that extinguished Inuit territorial rights was plainly unthinkable and unbearable for the Dissidents; it was resented — and still is — as an outrageous and obviously unacceptable example of alienation.

These integrated aspects of the Dissidence are clearly highlighted by the multidisciplinary of scientific works regarding the Dissidents’ movement. The isolation of Dissident villages from the rest of Northern Quebec may have reinforced the integration within these villages — the one I did my fieldwork in, at least, is a place with a strong dissident identity which can be seen in many aspects. I gained some clues about this integrated aspect of the dissidence through literature readings, but

⁶In a not-so-elegant move, for which I ask the reader’s forgiveness, if not sympathy, I may refer here to my own works, which explain this thoroughly, and on which these reflexions are based: Pongérard (2017).

it is only on the field that I came to realize how important it was — that Dissidence was not just one restricted or even marginal aspect of the identity of dissident villages; it embodied — and to some extent, still embodies — major characteristics which are at the core of collective living and the sense of community.

The reception of the movement Even though I do not think I will have time for that in the foreseeable future, a paper on the reception of the movement would be of great interest — this was one of the aspects of my initial project I had to skip in the course of the year. It would definitely be interesting to map the networks of people who took interest in the movement — researchers, activists, social workers and the like; and to try to discern the social properties they have in common. If I may make one hypothesis about it, people who took interest in such an marginal and underrated fight are likely to have been acutely aware of the political stakes of sovereignty and self-determination behind economic and territorial claims. Several researchers who studied and accompanied the movement belonged to a small clique of French-speaking Quebecers, embodying the ideals of European humanism (some of them of direct European descent). They have projected on the Dissident fight their Quebecers' ideals, traumatized by the brutal repression of the nationalistic movement (1970 October Crisis), and fearing that the hydro-electric development project, pushed forward by the nationalist government of Robert Bourassa, may actually be a tool of colonization which would help reproduce between Quebecers and Inuit peoples the domination relationship with Canadians which these Quebecers were trying to escape from.

4.1.2 Literature on collaborative economy (at large)

There is of course a wide range of scientific and grey literature surrounding many aspects of what I call collaborative economy. For heuristic reasons, when reviewing literature I restricted it to the economic institutions alternative to the individualistic and liberal use of the market (focusing on the *social meaning* of collaborative economics only came afterwards, once aware of the gaps in existing literature.)

A large part of the literature which focuses on the institutionalized version of collaborative economics is tainted of grey. The “grey literature” category has floating boundaries, but here I include all activity reports, especially from cooperatives and their federations — the Fédération des Coopératives du Nord-Québécois, as far as my subject is concerned, is one of the main publishers. There is also quite a wide range of papers and research reports ordered by governments or institutes, which I think suits this “grey” category well. Even though they often lack the depth of analysis one would expect from a strictly scientific publication, these papers are a major source of economic facts, references, and they also represent a certain *doxa* — a discourse on collaborative economics which is used by all actors of the sector, and which it is useful to know.

4.2 Archives

Here was one of the funniest part in the early stages of the research. I had to search for archives, which is always a source of amazement, and offers more unexpected findings than disappointing voids. I am quite fortunate that corporative organizations often publish activity reports, but also many other publications — journals, magazines, and self-celebrating pamphlets — which have often been digitalized.

A note on the notion of “corporations”

An important point in vocabulary here: by “corporative”, I mean a very precise range of institutions, opinions, and discourses, that of the “Corporations” which have been created by the JBNQA. The latter Agreement planned the establishment of several of these organizations, namely, Makivik (which would be entitled to manage the funds given to the Inuit), and Kativik (a regional administration which would provide several public services: education, housing, and then police). These corporations, which are among the few major economic actors in today’s Nunavik, pride themselves on being Inuit-run and forming the early stirrings of self-government. They declare themselves representative of the Inuit in Northern Québec — and manage their capital on this basis. However, because they were direct consequences of the JBNQA, and because they depend on Quebec government for their fundings, Dissidents have always opposed their legitimacy and tried to restrict their presence and powers.

These corporative papers depict a certain history of Nunavik, and those published in the 1970s (especially *Atuaqnik*, which I had already encountered during my Masters' visit) bear the echoes of the debates surrounding the signing and implementation of JBNQA. What is striking though, is the extent to which history has been rewritten since, and often skips the whole history of the Dissidence, only to promote the idea that all Inuit united to support the negotiators of the JBNQA — the latter being, in this view be the unquestionable source for today's Inuit economic and political development⁷.

Apart from online magazines, I explored the archives at Avataq, the Inuit cultural institute in Montréal. Mentioning it, I have to thank, once more, the librarians and archivists who took the time and care to welcome me, and gave me most useful advice to (at least try to) find my way among the repositories of reports, journals, manuscripts, audio recordings and other images this Nordic Ali Baba's cave comprises. Among the documents which have helped me a lot are personal accounts from people who were close to the Dissidents', or from people who recall the early days of the Cooperative movement. There also are pamphlets, edited by the FCNQ, which are manuals aimed at educating Inuit people on what a cooperative is, and that it is in everyone's interest to get involved and not to take individual advantage from the collective organization. This kind of artifact helps the researcher distancing themselves from purely cultural explanations, which see today's cooperative success in the Inuit archaic sense for sharing, or in some kind of unexplained "traditions". Economic cooperation is a social construct, and even though sharing practices have indeed a strong value among Inuit communities (especially when it comes to food), the Cooperative institution has had to be explained to — and appropriated by — the Inuit, who otherwise are also inclined to rationally pursue their own interest . . . just like any other economic actor.

It has to be noted here that archive work was also quite frustrating, in that the huge majority of documents — whether oral or written — are only in inuktitut, which, despite my efforts, I still do not know well enough to go through entire

⁷It seemed to me, while doing fieldwork, that most people in Puvirnituq tend to overlook these reports entirely, but even though the reports do not actually fuel anger or resentment, they certainly do nothing to promote reconciliation among Inuit.

documents in viable time. It is frustrating for me, but also very promising for future researchers, who will have the opportunity to listen and understand all debates and discussion and reports from various meetings which have been given to Avataq, thanks to those who took care to produce and collect such documents. It is perhaps an underrated fact that so many documents actually exist, and are becoming more and more available — especially about the Cooperative movement, as well as ITN⁸.

4.3 Fieldwork

My research also included four weeks of fieldwork in June 2018. I had the chance to get the contact of local families through my director, and thus I could live in a family home — and not in the hotel nor an all-White-people accommodation, the latter being quite common in Nunavik communities. Fieldwork was an important, rich, and enlightening experience, quite different from any fieldwork I had done so far — even though there are similarities with Greenlandic communities I worked in, the social context is very different in Canada and Québec.

As with any ethnographic fieldwork, from the very first day nothing worked as planned. I arrived in a grieving community, following a row of sudden deaths; and contrary to what I expected, none of the persons I had contacted were present or available during the first few weeks. This was at the same time a spell, and a chance to improvise and force myself to meet new people, make contacts, and get involved in the community's daily life. Trying to meet people, I got to experience the oft-

⁸To explain that so many documents have been produced and preserved, one can point at various explanations, which probably complement each other. Beyond the institutional injunction, if not legal obligation, to preserve the minutes of Cooperative boards meetings (the Cooperative being a legal entity), there probably was, for ITN meetings, a sense that what was happening had to be known and transmitted — to future generations, as well as to other communities. In this respect, audio tapes were part of an institutional propaganda, since the Dissidents resolved to inform other communities, thinking that they had no idea of what was at stake in the signing of the JBNQA — the Dissidents themselves had understood too late that their territorial rights were being traded, and thus revoked the power of attorney given to negotiators. Thus, pedagogical-and-political audio tapes were recorded and sent to other communities in order to be played on community radio. Former members of the movement insist that in many communities, orders were given not to play these tapes.

repeated ethnographer trope: the first people you meet, the most accessible people, often represent a marginal part of the local population — marginal in a statistical, as well as a social sense. They often are people who have few occupations and limited networks, and even though they of course belong to the community just as anyone else, they are not representative of the local population as a whole. These were typically the first persons I met, and with whom I spent most of my time in earlier days of fieldwork.

Gradually, I got to meet more and more other people. Decisive steps in this direction were made when I got to meet youngsters, especially young women who had both time on their hands (having no regular job nor much household duties nor desire to go out hunting for days) and thick sociability networks. Spending time with them, I got to meet more and more other people, whom I would regularly visit afterwards.

Visiting (*Pulaartuq*): a social and sociological institution

Many have written about the Inuit institution of visiting — pularuq. A lot of time and energy is devoted to these frequent visits in the village I lived in, and it is as much socially significant for local population as it is sociologically interesting for the researcher I am. On an average day, 5 or 6 different people would visit the house I lived in, while my host would make at least the same number of visits in other people's houses.

First thing to know about visits is that you do not arrange them in advance, nor do you knock on doors — which, if hosts are available, are always open. You enter through the front door, leave your shoes in the hallway, and directly step into the living-room (all houses are build on a very limited range of models, and they all comprise a closed hallway between the outside and the living-room). There, you meet the hosts (no handshakes nor hugs are expected), and sit on whatever chair or sofa is available. Then, words may be exchanged, but it is not exceptional that the visitor just silently sit for a few minutes, and then leaves. If the host does not invite the visitor to stay any longer, the latter shall be gone within a half hour.

The fact that these visits do not have to be planned and arranged, that they do not require a specific motivation, and that anyone basically expects visits at any time and from anyone when they're at home, makes it quite an easy way for the outsider researcher to discuss with people and meet them on a regular

basis. (Actually, the highest barrier to visiting and thus beginning to integrate homely social networks, for Qallunaat, seems to be their own social normative systems, which prevent such unannounced stepping-ins. I could often feel it myself in the beginning, being ill-at-ease for coming in; and I was also told that it is not frequent that Qallunaat actually visit just as I did — but the host who made it explicit it to me found it lovely that I dared visiting and that I spent such informal moments in the community. She was led to explain all this after her partner had wondered if I was “a doctor or something”, when arriving home and finding me chatting with family members on the sofa, because doctors are the only unknown Qallunaat an Inuk may expect visits from.)

These visits paved the way for interviews, since they allowed me to get to know future interviewees, and gave me time and context for explaining who I was and what I was doing in the village. They were also a most interesting opportunity to witness the actualization of social and economic networks, since I could see how people visiting the home I was in (or the people I was making visits with) would often find in these visits an opportunity to exchange goods, or information. The sharing of country foods is especially strong, and channelled through visits. It happens often that people make a visit and find a host preparing some meals, or arranging country food, and that the visitor asks for some — which is readily given. Information exchanged during visits also often regards who has which kind of food available, or is going hunting or fishing in a near future, and may be asked for food. It is also often from people paying visits at the house I was living in that I could get information about who was in town at the moment and whom I'd like to talk to; or about future collective events, which are otherwise announced on the community radio, but only in inuktitut.

Thus, this social institution, which embodies the social links and networks in the village, and gives them a symbolical and material significance (someone who is never visited being a pariah, which in part explains why people were always happy to have me visiting them and inviting me to “come back anytime”), also provided me with interesting sociological opportunities.

Being involved in a Geography department here in Montréal, as well as having produced a Masters' dissertation concerned with Visual sociology, I have tried to record and analyses some spatial features of the village — by making hand-drawn plans, giving much attention to spatial and visual aspects of my environment, and taking photographs. Of course, I was all the more prone to observe these geographical features in the beginning, since I did not know many people and had not many other things to do than wandering around and recording visual features

of my fieldwork environment. But trying to make a virtue of necessity, I did observe the spatial organization of economic and social activities and networks, and thus I was able to establish some geographical analysis which shall be relevant for my research. Indeed, a prominent spatial feature of the village is the spatial hegemony of the Cooperative, and its association with inuit-ness and the dissident movement (see below). The Cooperative spatially provides an inuit “forum” which reflects Dissidents’ ideas and history.

Fieldwork is always a “total” experience, in that one is drowned into a different environment which is to be *lived* for a few weeks. In POV, I experienced another space from the one I am used to, a completely different way of organizing time, but also other foods, other ways of circulating, and other social categorizations. My interlocutors would always and immediately categorize me a “Qallunaat”, one of the numerous White people who come to POV on a short-term basis — there are dozens of White people living in POV, and most of them are present only for about 8 months a year, and go “back south” for good after a few years, most often less than 10. Therefore, Inuit most often assumed that I was working for the hospital, the school, or some other public administration, since these are the overwhelmingly Qallunaat institutions in POV. Seeing me as a Qallunaat, Puvirnitummiut would also assume that I was, among other things, rich (White people coming North have a disposable income often incommensurably higher than that of locals), and judgmental — one of the things that I was asked most frequently was to not judge the village from appearances and not adopt the negative view Qallunaat are thought to have about Inuit communities. Often, people would thus be surprised to learn that *i*) I was French, and not from Quebec or Canada; *ii*) that I wanted to learn more about the Coop, and the Dissidents’ movement. The latter two would often *positively* surprise people, something I interpret as significant of their pride in both aspects of local history.

With this personal features and my behavior — paying frequent visits to families, hanging out with Inuit youngsters, participating in local celebrations to the point of confidently eating typical local food (the dos and don’ts of which I had been fortunate to learn in Greenland) — I probably got to be categorized in a specific subcategory of Qallunaat. But of course, this reflexivity can hardly go

further than mere hypotheses, and the way I was integrated within local networks by the actors is quite elusive. A rather easy assessment is how the little girls who were living in the same house as me were delighted to have an older man “friend” to play with, and how they would come across the village to hug and present me to their friends; a more difficult assessment is the way I was orientated within social network by my host, who would systematically take me on certain visits, but insisting that she would go alone when it came to visiting certain specific people.

Another aspect of my fieldwork was that I joined a certain number of groups on social media — namely, groups for local trading and selling on Facebook. I did it for practical reasons (being informed about what was happening in the village, being able to participate in the market and buying local foods) as well as heuristic reasons: online local markets seemed to me to be a underrated and central objects in my research, since it was quite alternative to usual formalized exchanges (here it is peer-to-peer), and maybe part of local sharing economy.

In the end, I think I plainly learnt both the pros and cons of openness on the field, as I would as much as possible accept invitations from people I met — whether to go for a walk, go on a visit, play bingo, etc. This allowed me to access some spaces and homes I did not expect to be invited in, and it definitely allowed me to witness some parts of local life which are not often made accessible to Qallunaat newcomers. However, always accepting and somehow imitating your guests presents the risk of going too far, and being associated with the cliché researchers who think they can easily integrate local culture and “go Native”, which is of course seen as disrespectful. Another risk, I guess, when accepting offers and joining activities in places which are, on so many aspects, on the edge, is the health (and potentially legal) risks involved, but I was cautious and maybe lucky enough not to get any problem.

4.4 Interviews

At the core of my research project were interviews, which I conducted both in POV, and in Montréal. In Montréal, I sought to interview people who had relevant knowledge about the Dissidents and the Cooperative movement; in POV, formal

interviews were conducted with local authorities, members of the Cooperative board, and former members of the Dissidents' movement. However, I also used a lot of informal interviews, in which I asked people about their knowledge on sharing economy in Nunavik, on their experience and knowledge of the Cooperative, and their thoughts and memories about the Dissidents' movement. These people were of course aware of my research goals and methodology, and I gave them an exemplary of a document I wrote which states all the interview conditions, and a list of contacts in case they have enquiries or complaints to make about my research — this document can be found in appendix, p. 73, .

The production of the latter document was one of the requisites from the board of ethics at the Université de Montréal (the CERAS). Some of the demands have quite startled me, and it took me several weeks to actually be able to answer all of them. It is definitely important that there is some sort of control, before research begins, about the ethics of the research projects — especially given the historical context and how indigenous populations in Canada have been hurt and exploited by research and researchers. However, it seemed to me that some of the demands from the board of ethics were somehow inadequate, or even problematic, for instance when they required that authorization and participation “by the community” be given in advance. First, this makes research protocols highly costly, since many indigenous representatives (such as the Municipality) would not give such authorization before meeting the researcher in person. Second, this requires to define who “the community” is, and who is able to grant its authorization — and this can be a highly controversial point. Concretely, I requested authorization from the Municipality, which is officially representative for the community. However, discussing a social sciences research project with a municipality raises obvious dangers of political bias in the final protocol. A municipality may for instance require that some question be not asked, or some historical episodes not investigated. To some extent, this may make any research with, or about political minorities in the communities more difficult. In my case, some people I interviewed were circumspect and suspicious at first, if not quite enraged, to see that my research and the interview protocol had been submitted to, and approved by, the municipality, since they considered themselves opponents to the municipality.

In the end, I definitely did not do as many interviews as planned, in part because interviewing someone requires to first gain their confidence and trust, and that I crucially lacked the time to do so. However, I had some good surprises, for instance when finally making an interview with a former Dissident, on my very last day in the village, as this person had so far eluded all my attempts. The little number of interviews I made may imply that the results I obtained shall be considered more suggestive and provisional than unequivocal and definitive. By all means, I made my best to make them sound.

Part III

Research results

5 The Dissidents' history and project

5.1 Dissidence: a movement to be understood in the long term

In my efforts to gather all available knowledge about the ITN movement, I was led to compile numerous facts and reflect on the history and chronology of ITN as an organization, and on the dissidence as a wider set of organizations, ideas, individual and acts. This has led me to question the common knowledge about the dissidence, which is often limited to ITN, the formal organization which opposed the JBNQA. ITN emerged in 1974, was officialized in 1976, and discreetly disappeared in the late 1980s. Restricting dissidence to its organizational expression definitely makes it no justice. One of the results I grounded is that if the dissidence is to be seriously taken as a historical object, it has to be understood on a longer time scale.

Dissidence is a direct product, in many dimensions, of the cooperative move-

ment, with complex ramifications from the 1950s on. The very creation of ITN is almost accidental, and results from opposition between a group of activists linked with the Cooperatives and the signatories of the JBNQA. The most well-known part of the movement, that is, the 1975-1985 decade, cannot be summarized and reduced to ITN actions; it was also a time of political debates, and a time when some communities rallied and opposed by all political and economic means the implementation of the JBNQA. Later on, the perpetual process of negotiations for Inuit self-government in Nunavik, which intermittently ran from 1983 to 2011, and was punctuated by referendums in 1987, 1991 and 2011, bears the mark of the dissidents. Not only were some dissidents physically present in these negotiations, but they also always tried to make their voice count and to direct the outcomes. Dissidence still lives today, to some extent, as a set of political ideas and ideals, and as a historical model for some Inuit activists of all ages.

5.1.1 The roots of the dissident movement

Strictly speaking, “dissidence” appeared as such a when a group of Inuit organize to oppose the signature of the JBNQA, in 1975 — the Dissidents, as they were qualified by Qallunaat observers. However, studying the movement shows how it emerged as a conjunction of historical punctual — if not accidental — context, and long-term trends among the indigenous society in Northern Quebec. Two intertwined historical determinations have to be highlighted in order to understand the roots of the dissidence; first, the Cooperative movement; second, the aspiration to self-government.

The cooperative movement This point may be one of the most documented — see Vallee (1967); Simard (1982b); Tulugak and Murdoch (2007), etc. The roots of the cooperative movement in Northern Quebec date back to 1953-1954 Winter, when a employee for the Hudson Bay Company in Povungnituk, Peter Murdoch, incited local families to focus some of their energy into sculpting, and making as valuable sculptures as possible, but also to save some of their gains. The idea for Murdoch was to give these families, burdened by perpetual and unsustainable

debts, the means to make savings, and ultimately, investments. Murdoch offered to buy their sculptures, which quality would benefit from collective emulation, and to open a collective account in which Inuit would save 5% of everything they sell to the HBC. Out of this primitive mechanisms, local families were soon able not only to reimburse their debts, but also to buy collective hunting material (namely, boats), which had for long been unconceivable.

These the basis out of which a collective economic organization was developed, from 1958 on, pushed by André Steinmann, a catholic missionary who had arrived in Povungnituk on the invitation of Murdoch. Steinmann invited the sculptors to constitute a society in 1958, and then a cooperative in 1960, which opened its general store in 1961 and began competing with the Hudson Bay Company — the latter was closely associated with Canadian settler colonialism in general, and the feud between the Cooperatives' system and the HBC is an important piece of Northern Québec's economic history. From the very start, POV cooperative had been very active, not only in developing its own scope (offering more and more goods and services to local community, extending the market for locally-produced goods) but also in propagating the cooperative model in other Nunavik communities. From the start, it was also an inuit-led organization, where Qallunaat can be employees and advisors, but the decisions are taken by the (Inuit) direction board.

In 1967, a federation of Cooperatives was created in Northern Québec — the FCNQ. It is not the necessary and irenic natural result of business development in the North and attraction for economies of scale. It followed a pan-Canadian encounter between cooperatives in Nunavik, and cooperatives which had developed in the rest of Canada — remote-controlled by the Canadian government. For cooperatives in Northern Québec, federating was a way to distance and protect themselves from what they perceived as a Qallunaat conglomerate, and to preserve their independence — thus they formed their own federation, in order not to be merged and silenced in a whole Canadian one.

The aspiration to self-government It has been highlighted, both in the existing literature (see for instance Simard (1982b)) and by some of my interviewees, that the Cooperative was one of the first form of Inuit collective organization

which was able to discuss and negotiate with Southern governments. It was also the first institution to provide a *forum* for Inuit, some space to gather and collectively debate their projects and problems. Up until the 1950s, most decisions regarding Inuit were taken by southern governments, and whatever small pieces of agency left to local people was appropriated, in each camp, by a local unelected leader. The cooperative institution brought a form of democracy to the North, and a public space. Being able to discuss and debate collective orientations, and make consensual decisions; and witnessing, through the flourishing cooperative, that they were capable of collectively running a big economic organization, the scope of which seemed ever-enlarging: there is little wonder Inuit came to think that they were perfectly able, collectively, to take up what did not have to be the White man's burden, and operate self-government⁹. In February 1971, following the yearly general assembly of the FCNQ, cooperative leaders publicly revealed their plan for a regional government, which had been discussed with, and accepted by Québec.

This declaration was (mis)interpreted by the media and Canada as a move from the Federal (which had been the level of government closest to all indigenous peoples) to the Provincial. In the context of renewed rivalry between Quebec and Ottawa (the Quiet Revolution being at its apex), the latter immediately backlashed, and helped founding the NQIA in 1971, an ethnic organization close to similar indigenous organizations across Canada, and which sought to represent Inuit people and to maintain a closer relation with Ottawa than with Québec. This division in Northern Québec had been growing for quite some time, especially along the discussions surrounding the 1970 Neville-Robitaille commission. The latter was a grand consultation of Northern Québec Inuit by two civil servants. It was set up to decide the modalities of a future transfer of social, economic and political responsibilities from Ottawa to Québec. According to Duhaime (1992), two competing points of view already emerged at that time in Northern Québec:

⁹Southern powers, for all their technological superiority, seem to have always had little legitimacy in the North — where no war between indigenous and White people ever took place, preventing even a disputable military superiority —, for there has always been an acute consciousness, among Inuit, of the inability of Qallunaat to survive on the land, or to cope with external elements, without the perpetually renewed help and resources of the Inuit.

- the Inuit closest to the cooperative movement, on the Hudson coast (and around POV), favored a transfer of powers from Ottawa to the Inuit directly — and this was the basics for the self-government project presented by FCNQ;
- but they had to face defiance from communities on the eastern Ungava coast, who rather favored a continued presence of federal agents (it would later become the NQIA position).

This is the context in which the James Bay project emerged, as Québec announced their intention to build up a massive hydro-electric complex in the North — as part of the economic development of Québec which was thought to serve a nationalistic project. Ironically, Québec was to find good allies in the NQIA, which would readily negotiate a convention (the JBNQA) in order to formalize the links between various levels of government, and financially set up land claims. On the contrary, the Cooperative leaders who had for long been close to Québec — and even to the Parti Québécois — would turn to dissidence against the spirit and the letter of the Agreement.

5.1.2 Resistance to the JBNQA: between historical necessity and punctual accident

Of course, no social-historical event can be said to be strictly determined, nor it can be purely accidental. But I think it is important here to highlight both aspects: that the dissidence is anchored in quite a long-standing history of reflection on self-government and autonomy on part of the FCNQ; and that the constitution of ITN was the result of a certain number of accidental elements which was not predetermined to happen. Holding both sides allows to put at a distance the most politicized discourses — which such topics are prone to create, as they deal with relationships between colonizer powers and indigenous peoples. The dissidence was not a random provocation from a bunch of misled angry people, as the negotiators of the CBJNQ argue; nor are they the necessary and essential representatives of an eternal Inuit resistance, as some contemporary speeches seem to reinterpret their history.

In the early 1970s, even before formal negotiations about the JBNQA began, there were important clashes between NQIA and the FCNQ — the former wanting to avoid that the latter go on pursuing their self-government and Quebec-supported project. The tension came high, and in 1971 an assembly where both organizations competed settled tumultuous debates by stating that, in order to restrain divisions among Inuit, self-government would not be actively pursued as long as the Inuit were “not ready” for it, and that the FNCQ would limit its activities to strictly economic ones — while NQIA would have the monopoly on political questions and negotiate some kind of regional government. This was a defeat for the FNCQ, which Simard attributes in part to the massive federal support given to NQIA (which symbolically empowered NQIA representatives with flights on private jets, meetings with authorities in the South, etc.), and in part to the desire of Northern Québec Inuit not to divide the society further, and to find a way to settle the debates. Thus, when Québec advanced their hydroelectric project, it is the NQIA which was in a position of negotiating in the name of all Northern Quebec Inuit — and they did so while hardly informing the people there were supposed to represent. Since the FCNQ had accepted not to directly get involved in politics, ITN was created to take over political activities.

In POV, people learnt about the contents of the James Bay negotiation once an agreement-in-principle had already been reached. The way people learnt about it is quite telling: in 1975, a newly-appointed Quebecer teacher traveled up North, to POV, and he carried with him the daily exemplary of *Le Devoir* (Quebec’s main national newspaper). In POV, a Qallunaat working for the Coop borrowed the newspaper, happy to get the freshest news at a time when national news would hardly reach Northern Quebec. This Qallunaat¹⁰ had a daily chronicle on the radio, in which he was talking about whatever subject he pleased; that evening, he decided to translate an article he had found in *Le Devoir* describing the agreement-in-principle from French to Inuktitut. Minutes after he had finished his chronicle, a group of local people called him and asked that he explain to them what this was all about, for they were stupefied to hear on their radio that NQIA was negotiating

¹⁰He told me the whole story himself, while I had only read small bits of it in the literature so far.

land rights down South — which, to them, was an absolutely inconceivable piece of bargaining. Thus they discovered that the power of attorney NQIA had made them sign some months ago (a paper which had not been translated in Inuktitut at a time hardly anyone could read English) actually allowed this; and they subsequently decided to collectively oppose the signing of the agreement by all means. Thus, it took some random circulation of a newspaper’s article in French for leaders of an Inuit Cooperative in Nunavik to discover what was being negotiated in their names, and thus to oppose it. It was the beginning of a movement which would later formalize and be known as ITN — *Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini*, which means “those who stand up on their ground”.

Some important (and intertwined) features of the subsequent movement are already present at that stage.

- It is a very *localized movement* — its extension to other communities would be a highly debated point, and in the end dissidents were beaten on that point, for NQIA succeeded in opposing the diffusion of the debate and the dissidence.
- A core element in dissidence is the *territorial question*. For the Dissidents, the most unacceptable point in the JBNQA is the fact that it formalized Quebec’s ownership of the land — the whole territory north of the 55th parallel was divided in three categories, Inuit having exclusive rights of *usage* on the first category (which represents less than 5% of the surface). This ownership of the land is unconceivable and morally wrong for the Dissidents¹¹. And it is of course unacceptable as well that usage rights on most of the land was transferred to Québec, which nowadays can decide over any development projects.
- Dissidents belong to the *cooperative movement*, and to the community which is the heart and head of it — namely, Puvirnituk. After having provided a forum for Inuit to debate their collective ends, the Cooperative would locally provide the dissidence with the people, the social networks, and the means

¹¹It is actually from this angle that I discovered the whole movement while working on “*Nuna*” for my masters’ dissertation.

— bot material and in terms of knowledge and experience — of organization which made the movement viable. As shown above, the cooperative also was a crucible in which self-determination became a topic, and this was intimately linked to the opposition between ITN and NQIA.

5.1.3 Dissidence after the JBNQA

For the subsequent history of ITN movement and the dissidence in general to be drawn, more research will be needed, especially in exploring the archives (oral and written) in inuktitut. However, a certain number of elements can already be painted in broad strokes.

The initial failure Soon after Inuit in POV discovered the James Bay negotiation and began to try alerting other communities about what was happening, a referendum took place, in which Northern Quebec Inuit could approve or reject the JBNQA. Dissidents chose to abstain from the referendum, in order to denounce what they saw as flawed process: there had been no balanced debate about the Agreement; and most Inuit, they argued, had not even been informed about what was at stake, and did not know that territorial rights were being given up — only a short and soft translated version of the agreement, without any mention of the territorial rights, had circulated before the vote. Therefore the vote was passed, and notwithstanding the Dissidents' criticism, the various signatory parties began implementing it. The dissident population has been evaluated since as the population who significantly abstained from this referendum, that is the communities of Puvirnituk and Ivujivik, and half that of Salluit.

ITN structured itself as a formal society, with the goal to dispute the JBNQA. It consisted in a board of a dozen members, with a president elected every few years. Regular meetings were organized, but the physical distance between the communities did nothing to help ITN to act efficiently. Two main complementing strategies were set up to oppose the JBNQA: disputing the legitimacy (or even legacy) of the agreement, and publicizing the Dissidents' plea. Thus they hold a press conference, announced legal action, and released a brochure about their

fate in 1981–1982; they gave testimonials in from of a federal commission; and relentlessly tried to use find the right persons, the right means, and the right angles to dispute what they saw as a flawed agreement.

There was also some on-the-ground resistance, such as in 1979, when the Dissident communities refused the setting up of Kativik School Board, a new school board which was one of the JBNQA product and would replace the previous Quebecer one. However, having no means to recruit their own teachers, they only obtained a one-year delay. In many aspects, the Dissidents' cause was condemned by their relative lack of resources — at the same time the lack of financial resources, and the lack of time to devote to the cause, while both were plentifully available for JBNQA's proponents who got to siege in the numerous boards and commission created by the agreement.

The Dissidents in subsequent self-government negotiations Rodon and Grey (2009) say that “the dissident movement is [a] legacy of the JBNQA”, and thus highlight how the Dissidents' history goes far beyond the initial opposition to the signing of the JBNQA. While their action could first seem punctual and doomed to disappear after the referendum on the signature of the JBNQA, the frustration and continued opposition which stemmed from the referendum led the dissidents to formalize their organization, and to entrench in political contestation. For the next four decades, the Dissidents were to influence many political debates in Nunavik, and especially the chief one: that of Inuit self-government (see Duhaime (1992) for a more complete account).

Rodon and Grey (2009) sum up the two positions by retracing their roots to the Neville-Robitaille commission :

“A more radical grassroots organization centered on the co-op movement and especially strong in the Hudson Bay region called for the creation of an Inuit government [it would later come ITN]. A more pragmatic group based in the Ungava region and closer to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) asked only for a continued federal presence and some administrative autonomy [this would be the “corporations” position, from the 1970s on].”

Here I suggest a selective timeline of the history of self-government negotiations

and the involvement of the Dissidents in them.

- A starting point: in 1975, the Dissidents revoke their power of attorney, dispute NQIA's legitimacy and refuse the signature of the JBNQA.
- 1978, it is the NQIA which is in charge of informing communities about the newly-signed JBNQA and organizing the elections for Makivik's Board. Dissidents (members of ITN and representatives of the FCNQ) are marginalized in the latter elections and the administrations.
- 1983, in a grand conference gathering Québec, the Corporations, and the Dissidents, the latter push Québec's Premier René Lévesque to publicly support the idea of Inuit self-government — under the condition that all Inuit work together and submit a common project.
- Following this, in 1984, a meeting is organized with both representatives of the dissidents and the corporations, where they acknowledge their reconciliation. A joint committee (the "*Ujjituijiiit*") is set up, but it does not work — the oppositions within it prevent it from any progress.
- 1987, all organizations meet again and acknowledge the impossibility to work together in a consensual committee. Therefore they decide that a referendum be organized by Québec about what structure is favored by Inuit for imagining and negotiating self-government. Two options are offered to Inuit:
 1. "the organizations' option", which suggests that the committee should comprise representatives from all major organizations and be funded by the government (this is the position defended by the NQIA, Makivik, and Kativik: the Corporations' way).
 2. "the citizen option", backed up by ITN and FCNQ, which suggests that representatives should be directly elected by all citizens, and directly funded by Inuit through a tax.

The second option, that of the Dissidents, wins the referendum with a narrow margin.

- 1989, following the referendum, a general election is organized to elect the

constitutional committee. However, contrary what referendum results suggested, all but one of the 6 representatives elected are members of the James Bay Corporations, thus calling off the Dissidents' advantage. The unique dissident representative elected resumes within a few months.

- 1991, the Constitutional Committee holds a second referendum, which essentially overturns the 1987 results: the Committee receives a mandate to negotiate self-government with Québec, and obtains that the latter funds the negotiations — which was the organizations' initial position. However, negotiations then stop for half a decade.
- 1997 — 1999, talks resume between Makivik and Québec, and a “Nunavik Commission” is set up, to work towards regional government. In this commission are members of corporations, but also members of the FCNQ close to the Dissidents. In 2001, a report is released, which somehow reconcile Corporations' and Dissidents' positions and pave the way for establishing regional government.
- 2001 — 2011, intense negotiations led to a referendum on a project for a regional government. Divisions appeared within the corporations — namely, Makivik vs. Kativik. The final project is quite rather consensual among organizations, and many of the Dissidents' points of views and claims are integrated in it. However, it is rejected (to most observers' surprise) in the 2011 referendum.

What can be seen in this chronology is a sort of ebb-and-flow dynamics in the Dissidents' ideas. In 1983, it is the Dissidents who push for René Lévesque to accept the idea of a regional government, and they succeed in bringing together all organizations within one committee — but this Ujjituijiit committee gets bogged down by rivalries and the fear of corporations to let go of their power. In 1987, it is their option which wins (even though narrowly) the referendum; two years later, once the Corporations give their all, the Dissidents fail to convert the try and lose the committee to the Corporations. In 1999, Nunavik Commission does comprise a Dissident, and their point of view is largely reflected in the final Commission's document, “Amiqqaaluta” (2001). After corporations take over the negotiation

process, and even though the final proposal in 2011 still seems to embody many of the Dissidents' claims, it is defeated in referendum.

Notwithstanding this history of dissident influence and defeats in negotiating some sort of self-government, my research also focused on highlighting the influence the Dissidents had on Northern Québec communities, beyond the strictly organizational aspect. This influence is not easy to trace, for what the Dissidents stimulated does not fit the classical lines of political organizations. ITN's board disappeared in the 1980s, but this formal aspect of the organization was not essential in the dissidence. What they stimulated was rather a set of ideas and ideals; a purely political position, that of strict opposition to the corporations'; and a certain number of individuals which took over the responsibility to fight for these ideas, and to mobilize all available means in this direction.

5.2 The dissident project

Is there no such thing as a dissident project? The most common opinion, in the scientific literature, is to point at the lack of concrete proposition from the Dissidents — they would have focused strictly on repelling the JBNQA, and failed to do so¹². Ignoring their positions inevitably led to neglecting the way they have influenced later negotiations and decisions.

However, going back to the productions made by the Dissidents themselves (cf. Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini (1983); Proulx (1982); Bulbullian (1983)), a certain number of ideological and political claims are made, and help us discern a “dissident project”, which goes beyond the Dissidents' positions at a given time.

Territoriality The opposition to the JBNQA actually was, essentially, an opposition to one of its article: the giving up of territorial rights in exchange for financial compensation. In the Dissidents' view, this was absolutely non-negotiable — and made all the more unacceptable by the irreversibility aspect. Dissidence

¹²This focusing on the lack of a project is made clear in Rouland's analysis (Rouland (1978)), and even evoked in Simard's (Simard (1982b)) — even though the latter definitely was on the Dissidents' side.

is anchored in a definite territoriality, which is put forward by many indigenous peoples around the world¹³, and which can be summed up in the idea that the land does not belong to human beings — neither individually nor collectively. As an interviewee told me: “we are only the stewards of the land”.

Autonomy A second element which was constant in the dissidents’ discourse is that the development of the North, in all its aspects (economic, social, political), had to be properly decided by Inuit. Drawing inspiration from the experience of the cooperative, Dissidents insisted that they could, and should, be economically autonomous, in order to maintain a sustainable collective life. It is to be noted here that a source of finance for ITN was the Cooperative itself: reminding of the original 5% of all payments made by the HBC to the Inuit which led to a familiarizing with the Cooperative system, a 5% tax on all expenses paid at the Cooperative was put in place to fund ITN¹⁴.

This insisting on (primarily financial) autonomy explains that Dissidents despised the fact that JBNQA set up financial transfers, rather than empowering Inuit communities. Reminiscent of the original 1950s founding of sculptors’ society, Dissidents wanted to avoid any kind of debt, and wanted a strict reciprocity in their relationship with Québec — both economically and politically, since they wanted to be recognized as political equal partners. This is one of the explanations for their 1987 proposal (the “citizens’ option”), that a committee be set up and funded by a local tax: they thought that if Québec was to fund a deciding Committee, then this committee was necessarily giving up some of its independence, and was more likely to surrender to some of Québec’s demands. This is also one the reasons of their defiance towards the Corporations and their members in general: not only this defiance and anger originated from what the Dissidents hold to be an original sin (the recognition of Québec territorial rights), but it was also fueled by the fact that Inuit employees of the Corporations were in fact paid by Federal and

¹³According to Gill (1990), as more and more indigenous groups acceded institutional and international recognition, there was a conceptual normalizing of this territoriality under the (questionable) trope of “Mother-Earth”.

¹⁴In spite of all my efforts, I could not find other proof or testimony of this other than Rouland’s 1978 paper. My guess is that this measure was quite temporary, or soon was mixed with what is taken by the Cooperative as working capital

Provincial money — and very well paid, according to Northern Québec standards. Therefore, they rapidly formed a small elite (if not a cast), which spent a lot of time away from the communities, and which was vocal about claiming Inuit rights and opposing the governments, . . . while factually depending upon them.

Authenticity The above-listed elements about autonomy can also be read through the lenses of authenticity. Dissidents want the prospective development of the North not to follow Western patterns, but to reflect the values and distinctive practices of its indigenous inhabitants. This is one way one can read the outrage provoked by the Western-style ownership of the land. Dissidents also decried the rhythm at which economic development was swamping the North through government fundings, for they estimated that Inuit were not capable to cope with it, and would soon find themselves overwhelmed by the influx of financial means.

Territory over ethnicity Notwithstanding the authenticity aspect, one decisive feature of the Dissidents' claims was the fact that they were *territorial*, as opposed to *ethnic*. The government they wanted was a regional one, which would have ruled over all inhabitants of Northern Québec, whether ethnically Inuit or not. This is a distinctive feature from the Corporations' positions, and the opposition on this point dates back to the founding of the NQIA — which was modeled on the AIQ (Association des Indiens du Québec), an *ethnic* organization defending the rights of indigenous people in Southern Québec. From the start, NQIA committed itself to defend Inuit rights and entitlements, rather than a regional government. The JBNQA reflects this, creating a status of “beneficiaries” of the JBNQA which is ethnic: to be a beneficiary, one has to be of Inuit descent or married to an Inuk, and recognized as such by an Inuit community. The corporations administer funds and public services granted to Inuit as an ethnic group. This is one of the points in which one can see the Dissidents' discreet influence on the “Amiqqaaluta” document, as explained before, since it paved the way for a *regional* government — without ethnic distinction among the governed.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to reflect on the vocabulary used to talk about dissidence. The history displayed here highlights how the movement started from a group of people — the *Dissidents* — out of their cooperative experience and ideals. They founded what may be called the *Dissidents' movement*, of which ITN was an organizational display. From there, it became a *dissident movement*, in that the ideals they pursued, and the political positions they assumed, were transmitted to the next generation, and gained some kind of autonomy — as will be shown hereunder, it is still living today, though under new forms. The whole set of ideas, networks, political positions, the very history of the Dissidents itself which is transmitted along generations, and the continued opposition to the JBNQA and what stems from it, all of this compose a whole political repertoire, as well as a spirit of defiance towards institutionalized actors negotiating with Qallunaat governments, which can be called the *dissidence*.

In that some elements have been passed to contemporary inhabitants of POV; and in that the dissidence today largely lives on the memories, and to some extent, idealization of what the Dissidents did, I think it is appropriate to talk not only about the contemporary “inheritance” from the Dissidents, but their “heritage”, which is patrimonialized and used as a historical and political reference point — the photograph on the cover page being a clear example of that.

6 The dissident heritage in today's Nunavik

6.1 Memories and interpretations of the movement in POV

At the core of the dissidence was a village, Puvirnituuq. It is the one village where, as said before, Inuit sculptors united in a society, and then in a Cooperative, and where the Cooperative was the most flourishing in the early 1970s — it still is, actually. Today, it is the only remaining village which still has not signed the JBNQA — and many Puvirnitummiut are adamant that their community will

never, ever sign it.

Many people remember well the Dissidents' movement in POV. However, this memory seems to go along certain networks; the people I met who know the most about ITN are those whose parents (or other relatives) were active members of the movement — and given the small size of the village and the inextricability of kinship networks, this applies to a large proportion of Puvirnitummiut. Another category of people who are well versed in the Dissidents' history (a category which largely matches up the former one) is that of people having important administrative roles in the Cooperative — especially board members. Among those who seem to know the less about the dissidence are many people further away from politics — not voicing strong political opinion, often not voting in local elections, etc. Some people I met would also show their tiredness with these politics, having witnessed the regular mobilizations and seemingly ineluctable failure of self-government projects for more than four decades.

Among those who have memories (direct remembrance, or acquired knowledge) of it, dissidence is associated with an image of Inuit affirmation. Many people know less about the original ideals or even the JBNQA than about the fact that the Dissidents stood up against a project guided by Québec. Sometimes this can be seen through the knowledge people have of a few names and significant acts associated with ITN, which were largely echoed in the media; for instance when a team of four travelled thousands of kilometers from POV to Québec by skidoo in order to give the Premier their proposal for self-government (see for instance Koperqualuk (2008)). It is through this element that the dissidence is also used as a historical model by certain individuals, who see it as a source of inspiration for defending a contemporary model of Inuit self-government. These people form a loose group of activists, who often find in the Cooperative and its board a space where they are introduced and socialized to politics.

However, through this “Inuit affirmation” image, there seems to be a certain shift towards an ethnic definition of Inuit people among those are most vocal about their political positions. These positions are often quite general, if not vague — even if there also are some specific claims, among which the most common is

that seal should be widely commercialized and promoted, so that Inuit could hunt it on a commercial scale, and regain some economical autonomy. Among wider claims, activists express their will to defend Inuit rights; to oppose what is seen as “Qallunaat governments” (whether from Québec or Ottawa); and sometimes to install an Inuit government, which laws would reflect the “Inuit ways” of doing things — the phrases in brackets are typical excerpts from interviews I made. A term often used is that of “Inuit traditions”, which reflects a certain shift towards an ethnic view of Inuit people (while Dissidents took great care to oppose such views). Indeed, these contemporary discourses often promote indigenous traditions, defend a certain idealization of the past, and sometimes tend to naturalize certain social and cultural traits.

Given that these discourse, while associated with the activist history of the village, often proceed from the younger generation (mainly people under 30), my hypothesis is that it reflects contemporary orientations in wider indigenous claims throughout Canada. Through a focus on indigenous peoples’ *rights* and status, and through a focus on the past, there is a strong tendency today to favoring an *essential* definition of indigenous peoples — the idea that indigeneity proceeds from the “blood”, and comprises immutable features essential to indigenous peoples’ well-being. A lot of various — in not contradictory — contents are put within this sphere — indigenous peoples being thought to be traditionally open to gender fluidity or, in the contrary, to be strictly gendered societies; ontologically close to nature; best treated through traditional medicine involving herbs and shamanic rituals; etc. Of course, no activist would go as far as to demand that indigenous people go back to pre-colonial modes of living; but this folkloric and passeist view, along with an essentializing of “who is indigenous”, is strongly echoed in artistic productions, media articles, folklore revivals, etc., and it is especially given a wide echo on the social media — which are a very significant socializing sphere for the youth I met in POV. Thus, there is little wonder this is found in today’s discourses, associated with a historical movement who stood up against a Qallunaat political project — a true piece of Inuit resistance, so to say — even though this very movement would have fought against these views. Historical moments are always remembered through today’s social lenses, and this is an example of the

reinterpretations of Inuit history by Inuit themselves.

Hereabove, I highlighted how knowledge about the Dissidence exists along social networks and kinship lines, and is closely associated with the cooperative. POV Cooperative seems to be the one institution in which the dissidence *as a project* still seems to be play an important role, and this is what I want to discuss next.

6.2 The Cooperatives' hegemony: a perpetuation of dissidence?

In this section, I would like to give an idea of how much the Cooperative is important un POV¹⁵, and on so many levels; and then, discuss the extent to which it can be seen as perpetuating dissidence — but also the limits to such an analysis.

6.2.1 A multifaceted dominance over the village

A striking feature of POV is the extent to which the Cooperative is geographically and socially present. Its foremost embedment is the shop — usually know as only “the Coop”; but take the institution as a whole, and it is everywhere. Most non-housing buildings are branches of the Cooperative: the four garages are operated by the FCNQ, as is the village’s only restaurant, the village’s only hotel, the village’s only tourist company, gas pump, oil reservoirs, water tanks, and so on. Locally, the Cooperative is the most important employer. Every single resident of the village is a member of the Cooperative, which means that they have a financial account at the cooperative¹⁶. This account is important, and a means of social economy, for it can work as a credit account: when a member has no liquidity, their account can be in deficit, so that they can still buy whatever they need¹⁷.

¹⁵A note on orthotypography: I have chosen to write “Cooperative” with a capital letter when it comes to the local and formal institution, to distinguish it from the generic adjective.

¹⁶Getting one’s own account, and being able to use one’s own “account number” whenever using cooperative services, is seen as a major rite of passage in a teen’s life.

¹⁷The Cooperative’s shop truly is “general”: there one can find fresh and canned and frozen food, casual as well as working clothes, all kinds of tools, toys, souvenirs, office furniture, skidoos, ammunition, and so on.

Whenever members spend money at the Cooperative, a percentage is taken from these expenditures. It is used by the Cooperative as a working capital, and also for the Cooperative's expenses (for renewing infrastructure, paying their employees, etc.). Whatever profit is left is returned to members, on two occasions: the main one is at the end of the year, before Christmas, when members (who structurally are sorts of shareholders) receive an amount in cash. Several persons told me that, many having little savings, this is an important influx at a crucial moment and helps with end-of-year expenses. The other occasion happens in June, for the anniversary of the Cooperative. A big feast happens, during which the Cooperative offers traditional food and organized a raffle which people intensely look forward to — prizes being of great value, such as skidoos, four-wheelers, etc.

Through its shop, the Cooperative is present in people's everyday lives — even for those who do not work for it. The Cooperative's building includes the only post office in the village, as well as the only ATM; it is the only institution in Puvirnituk which provides providing banking services. People often go there every single day; and in a community where there is few public space, the benches and space in front of the Cooperative counters (where people go for banking services) work as a public space where you can expect to meet and greet everyone¹⁸. The importance the Cooperative has among Puvirnitummiut can also be seen in the attendance to the Cooperative general assemblies; according to board members, about 80-90% of the population regularly attend them. The cooperative is actually responsible for so much of people's everyday lives that many attribute to the Cooperative even other events, which are not organized by it — such as the biweekly bingo, the end-of-year community celebrations, or other community parties.

The Cooperative in POV can thus be said to be *hegemonic*, in that it exerts multifaceted power over the community. It exerts economic power, for it is the most important employer, and the main node of economic activity in the village — and it has monopoly on many activities, as described earlier. It certainly has a decisive social power, for everyone attends Cooperative meetings, and the Cooperative's shop and its events are important places of sociability. It also has some political

¹⁸One has to note here that this situation has often been pointed to me as exceptional in Nunavik; even though every village has its Cooperative, in no other community it is so hegemonic.

power, which in part stems from the previous two: being a crucial local economic actor and a node of social influence, it has a power to mobilize its members and influence political choices.

A historically and socially constructed success Describing the Cooperative is a good opportunity to highlight the fact that the power it has does not come out of the blue — nor, as is sometimes suggested in interviews, does it naturally stem from an Inuit tendency to work collectively and share everything. It has been constructed along history through mobilizing inhabitants of POV, and by pedagogically insisting on the collective and individual advantages of this mode of collective organization. The latter is made clear in manuals edited by the FCNQ, which I found in archives; one of these manuals insists, along comic strips which depict maieutic dialogs, on the importance to take into account the collectivity and not to try to individualistically profit from the Cooperative. The characters drawn there make objections to the cooperative model — they want to buy from the rival store, they want more credit, they want their debts to be erased, etc., obviously depicting actual behaviors — to which other Inuit reply by rationalizing collective development: not profiting from the Cooperative is compared to an insurance, since one will be able to benefit from it when in need; and a guarantee against the profit-led and damaging behaviors of businesses who may replace the Cooperative if the latter is not successful enough. This is one of the most clear examples of how a cooperative spirit came to Inuit people: through education, vulgarization, and debate.

Adherence to the Cooperative as an institution and its ideals is also continuously aroused through collective events. I have mentioned earlier the Cooperative anniversary, which is a crucial social event. It takes place in June, not far from the solstice, and, significantly, just a few weeks before Québec national holiday (June 24th) and Canada Day (July 1st). In the first decades of the Cooperative's existence in POV, the end-of-year celebrations were also organized by the Cooperative, which set a tradition of throwing candies and small gifts from its roof. The ceremony still exists, and while it is not ran by the Cooperative anymore, many people still see it as such.

6.2.2 A contested monopoly

Even though POV has served as a sort of showcase for the cooperative movement in Nunavik, it is important to mention the various ways of resistance to the Cooperative hegemony in POV. First, because these oppositions help the researcher to distance themselves from the Cooperative’s institutional discourse, which often displays only a popular, unanimous, and unconditional success. Second, because these limits are also significative of some downsides which accompany an economic and social hegemonic position.

Commercial competition: the Northern shop. The commercial monopoly of the Coop is contested by the other shop in the village¹⁹, which is a chain store belonging to the *Northern* corporation — which took over from the age-old Hudson Bay Company²⁰. Northern shop is smaller than the Cooperative shop, but what defines is best, according to many in POV, is that it “White”, that is: operated within a “White” system (here broadly identified with commercial capitalism and non-Inuit culture: the only language spoken and written are English and French); mostly staffed by White people (the only few local people employed there are young people who do not keep their jobs for more than a few days at a time); and primarily aimed at White customers (this is not exclusive in any way, but from my observations, the ratio of White over Inuit customer is indeed hugely superior in the Northern than in the Cooperative).

For people most deeply concerned with Cooperative interests (such as certain members of the board), the Northern is seen as a foe, which the Cooperative has to resist with limited means — since the Northern is backed up by a big financial corporation. They regularly denounce the unfairness with which the Northern competes, and which can only be defeated through Inuit inventiveness and social mobilizing.

¹⁹There actually is a third one, but I hold it to be quite negligible: it is a small kiosk, only opened at night, and which does not sell a wider variety (if not quantity) of goods than what could be found in an average vending machine.

²⁰Having in mind the *fundamental* rivalry which appeared between the Cooperative and the HBC, the former being set up to oppose the abuse from the latter, one can imagine how much opposition is entrenched between the two.

However, most people in POV, even though mostly shopping at the Cooperative, still regularly shop at the Northern as well. Their justifications often goes along the following lines, which, by contrast, highlight the nature of social injunction to favor the Cooperative.

- First and foremost, they shop at the Northern when the Cooperative runs out of the items they want. This is a “force of circumstances” justification which exonerates the interviewed shopper from the stigma of betraying the Cooperative.
- Second and related justification is the fact that there are some items the Cooperative just doesn’t sell. That is, mainly, money games, which a lot of people do regularly buy. The Cooperative refusing to sell money games is part of a more general vocation of the Cooperative not to encourage any activity which might be socially destructive²¹.
- Third justification often given by Puvirnitummiut is that some items are cheaper at the Northern. From my observation, what actually happens is that the Northern regularly makes discounts, either as a temporary way of advertising itself, or because some items are running close to their expiry date. The Cooperative never does that, but these discounts only apply to a very marginal range of items. It has to be noted that people who use this justification always make it on a complaining tone, implying that the Cooperative is failing a social duty to provide affordable basic products.
- Last justification is related to the former; it is an explanation which I have witnessed, but which was not made explicit. Some people seem to adopt a kind of retorting, or punishing behavior: they would go shopping at the Northern for a few days, when the Cooperative has not been as helpful as they wished it would be (forbidding someone from a greater deficit, cutting their cable TV because of late payments, etc.). This highlights the expectations people have about the Cooperative, sometimes seen as a benefactor by people

²¹The Cooperative is the only place in town which legally sells alcohol — but only restricted amounts, and at restricted times. POV used to be a dry community, but that was overturned in a highly debated referendum a few years ago. This point is still *very* controversial in the community.

who are the least involved in its daily management.

Northern Village The Northern village, most often known as “NV”, is the name of the municipality — it only shares a seemingly coincidental name with the aforementioned Northern shop. With its elected mayor, it is the official political entity at the community level. Back in the 1960s, observers would highlight that the community council (which the NV has replaced) was an empty shell: the entity who actually took decisions on behalf of the community was the Cooperative (see Vallee (1967)). Today, there is a discreet but actual rivalry between the two entities; though they often have to work together, their representative regularly criticize each other a lot. To caricature the positions, the Cooperative sees the NV as affiliated to the JBNQA corporations, and pursuing the interests of the small elected elite rather than that of the collectivity. In regard, the NV accuses the Cooperative of looking for profit instead of its displayed disinterestedness, and affiliates itself with the original dissident movement (though not embodying a contemporary actualization of it). Though I have had no time to focus on detail on the conflicting points, it is not difficult to see how both entities find themselves competing against each other when the Cooperative owns so many of what is necessary for the community everyday life — for instance all the garages in which the NV vehicles, including snowplows, have to be maintained; or the oil reservoirs.

External business There is a less visible competition to the Cooperative, which is nonetheless very real: that of many outer businesses. Many people order goods which are delivered by airmail or the annual shipping boat. One of the most vocalized aspects of it is that people use personal mail to counter the limits set on alcohol sales, which has led to the development of a wide black market in POV.

Another external business which is said to be targeting the local market is Makivik corporation, the one created by the JBNQA, which people say it tries to spy on the Cooperative to be able to compete with it. Some interviewees were defiant towards me and reluctant to talk about their cooperative activities, until I proved I was not a secret envoy sent by Makivik.

6.2.3 Cooperative and collaborative economics

Having described the Cooperative space in POV, it is time to try to place it on a more theoretical plan. It is not easy to situate such a protean institution as the Cooperative within the usual categories of sharing or collaborative economy — all the more since the latter lack a definite definition. In my opinion, Inuit cooperatives do not correspond to any archetype.

It is not a purely capitalistic institution, nor an anti-capitalistic one.

The Cooperative described here seems to oppose some of the basics of the capitalistic system of production. The Cooperative itself is *collectively* owned by its members, who only become members when they buy a part of it; and these members all have a say in its general orientations: this is the well-known motto “one member, one vote”. In POV, the Cooperative has also disputed free competition, by appropriating any economic opportunity that was seen as seizable. This is how it found itself in a monopoly situation for so many activities. However, this institution works within a wider capitalistic frame, which is not questioned, and which is even reinforced by the fact that the main activity of the Cooperative is a shop, which works as any other supermarket. Seen from the outside (and often in the eyes of local people as well!), the Cooperative plays the role of a business like others, participating in wider economic exchanges which provide inputs and receive output — significantly, the members are sometimes depicted as “shareholders”. The Cooperative competes on the local market — even though its size and what it represents give it an indisputable advantage: all other things equal, many Puvirnitummiut tend to have a preference to use Cooperative’s services, and to support “their” business.

All transactions taking place within the Cooperative’s frame are not formalized and dematerialized such as with platform economy; but neither it is a sum of localized informal exchanges. The Cooperative is not just made of “sharing”, in a peer-to-peer sense. People in POV do share a lot, and give each other food and help, for instance. But the Cooperative is largely run like a

capitalistic business, where many exchanges are contractual. It is an economic entity which does more than allowing exchanges between its members. However, by providing space for socializing, and supporting local community in many respects (prioritizing the employment of local people, organizing parties which emulate a social sense of community, etc.) it does consolidate the basis for all other local exchanges.

There is a social economy aspect within it, even though it is not a social support institution. The Cooperative is not an institution of *social economy*, in that its primary goal is not to provide social support. It does provide some form of social-economic help; but the economic assistance it provides, such as when allowing members to run a deficit, is strictly bounded — restricted both to its members, and in volume. The idea behind the cooperative model is that one may receive in reciprocity for giving; therefore, self-responsibility is praised and valued, especially among the Cooperative’s board members, who look down on people unable to cater for their own needs.

The cooperative and the commons The cooperative model may be best understood as *commons*; the Cooperative accepts anyone as a member (non-exclusive), but it is vulnerable to predatory and individualistic behaviors (rival) — such as if too many people run their Cooperative’s account on deficit; or buy only the cheapest goods in the shop; or do not take their tasks with enough rigor (not helping to organize social events, not participating in the general assembly, etc.). The maintenance of this collective resource is only possible if enough people get involved, accept to be members of the board and perform associated tasks efficiently, etc. The board members I have met always see their activity as a service provided to the community; they highlight the constraints and downsides of it, but are rewarded by symbolic gratifications (they are well-known and respected in the community) and by the self-awareness of working for the greater good.

In this analysis, the didactical manuals described above who prescribe good behavior to the members are explicit examples of the imposition of implicit social norms, which are essential for a sustainable management of the commons. In

its *social* dimension, the Cooperative is an institution which governs *economic* collective action — as analyzed in Ostrom (2015).

6.2.4 Cooperative and dissidence today

The idea of working towards Inuit collective greater good was also at the core of the Dissidents' mobilization. There are correspondences between the dissident movement and today's Cooperative in POV; if the Dissidents have had an institutional heritage, then the Cooperative definitely embodies it.

A explicit affiliation. The continuity between ITN and the Cooperative is first very *visible*: close to the Cooperative's entrance, a huge photograph is hung, which depicts the famous "Dissident" sign which was painted to greet a representative of Québec's government in the 1980s²². The message, posted close to the airport, read "Welcome to Puvirnituk/ Welcome to the territory which has not yielded, in spite of the JBNQA" and was aimed at reminding visiting officials that the dissidence did not end with the ratifying referendum. The original sign is not in place anymore, but the photograph in the Cooperative acts as a reminder, the present tense on the sign perpetually bringing the message up to date. The huge photograph is also very visible inside the Cooperative's hotel, which is the only hotel in town, acting as a daily breakfast reminder for all officials (whether from the government or a corporation) which stay in POV overnight.

The perpetuation of a vocation Several Cooperative's board members claim this filiation between ITN and today's cooperative. These people see their role and the Cooperative's mission as a vocation to perpetuate this dissident heritage. Whenever appropriate, they remind their negotiating partners that they still are not part of the JBNQA. At the very moment when I was in POV, there was a dispute between the Cooperative, which is organizing the building of big earth-works on the behalf of the FCNQ, and Québec's department for natural resources,

²²On the cover of report, the reader may find a photograph of the original sign, which already was on the cover of my *project* report; and next to it, a picture I took in POV Cooperative, which depicts the contemporary picture of the sign, greeting all Cooperative's visitors.

which was questioning the provenance of the gravel the Cooperative wants to use. This infuriated local Cooperative's authorities, for whom it was an opportunity to remind Québec that POV has never signed the JBNQA, and subsequently would not accept that Québec direct them on the use of the land.

Some members also claim to be inspired by ITN and want to use their role and their expertise acquired through their roles in the Cooperative to question the legitimacy, if not legality, of the way the Corporations and Southern governments have a say on what happens in POV. These aspirations often stems from everyday observations of social plights in the village, which people think would be best resolved if Inuit had the means to find a solution themselves, instead of having to cope with outer laws and rules.

Another aspect in which the Cooperative's perpetuate a certain inheritance from the Dissidents' is the siege mentality it displays. Just as the Dissidents saw themselves as a minority attacked by all sides and all means, some Cooperative members see themselves as having to perpetually fight and be on the move, in order to be defeated and replaced by governmental or business corporations. This is one of the reasons why there is a dimension of permanent mobilizing in Cooperative activities; and also a reason why the Cooperative is always looking for economic opportunities and enhancement, not wanting to let any ground to other economic actors.

6.3 Collaborative economics beyond the cooperative

The painting would not be complete without a mention of other means of collaborative economics I researched, in order to establish both a benchmark to cooperative economics and a depiction of the context.

The omnipresent informal sharing economy What has already been described as the sharing economy within which the whole local society is embedded still holds true. Everyday rhythm in POV is punctuated by visits (see p. 22), which often serve sharing practices — whether sharing news, tea, food, or any

other good or service. These exchanges seem to form the very basis of social life in the village. They support a large share of activities — people spend a lot time out hunting and fishing, knowing that they will be able to share their products afterwards — and they provide the means for social valuation: there definitely is prestige in being able to share with anyone, to provide food, to be a great caterer. Implicitly, there also is a trading dimension in sharing, in that people give away food to their acquaintances, knowing that they will be able to ask these people for help later, if they need it.

Facebook This social media is of course not a local institution in itself; but it has been remarkably appropriated as such through local groups in which people exchange thoughts, remarks, and goods and services. These groups seem to serve a certain monetization of exchanged goods; country foods are sold via Facebook, while their commoditization is otherwise something of a taboo (see Gombay (2010b)) — there are people who sometimes try to denounce it, but their calls do not prevent the selling of country food to continue in POV. As in other spheres, online media seem to work as a desinhibiting platform where Inuit break some social taboos — the same goes with shaming other people, or expressing one's discontent. These online groups also allow individuals to operate mini-businesses, in a community where officially opening one presents some serious difficulties: some people cook and sell meals several days a week, obviously making profit out of it.

These groups also provide a space for sharing — that is, giving away some of the resources they have, so that more people than themselves can benefit from it. Sharing information (and in this, they play a role close to that of the community radio), and sharing goods: it is not rare that people use them to give away something they have in surplus. This sharing dimension is also reinforced by the fact that many people who use them for financial profit (whether selling meals or organizing some raffle) indicate what the money will be used for, for instance a sports' clinic for their sons. I interpret this as an attempt to imprint a social meaning to the money they ask for in exchange for their goods and services. Indeed, it may be that people trading goods or services perceive their demands to be socially more acceptable if their audience do not see it as directed to pure financial gain, and

thus rehabilitate the transaction as a gift exchange which is embedded in sharing economics.

The community freezer Disappointingly, I was not able to research the freezer as thoroughly as expected. It was closed for most of my stay, and most people I met did not use it. The community freezer is a place where people can put meat and fish that is given away to the community, in exchange for the reimbursing of their expenses. It seems to be used mostly by people who cannot obtain country food through other means, that is, people who do not go hunting or fishing, and who are not in a position to request food for free from others — often people not daring do to so because they are in a perpetual position of demanding and never offering. The freezer has its critics, for it also performs a sort of commoditization of country foods; and because it is seen by some as potentially shifting the focus away from giving food to relatives and thus emulating social networks, to giving food to people unknown (since the food is anonymously taken in the freezer) in exchange for retribution.

Conclusion, and reflections over the state of indigenous political studies

These remarks are aimed more at opening the discussion than closing it — my incoming paper will probably not end vocabulary disputes surrounding sharing/ platform/ gig/ social/ collaborative economy. However, I think my research contributes, to its limited extent, to a better understanding of political mobilization of economic resources in a small and sharing community. I do not see many of the facts I have observed as intrinsically “indigenous”; I think the political mobilization of cooperative economic institutions could be found in other small and isolated community²³. However, dissidence is anchored in, and was supported by a strong sense of territoriality which is characteristic of indigenous peoples.

²³Actually, I was surprised to see how much of the local social and economic structure resembled that which can be found in the Breton village I grew up in. The number of inhabitants in this village and in POV is very similar, as is the entanglements and narrowness of kinship networks.

Above all, I hope to bring attention of researchers on the existence of this historical political Inuit movement, as well on its contemporaneity, because I think it casts some light on overlooked aspects of indigenous peoples' political and economic history in modern Canada.

The history of Inuit political agency The dissident movement acts as a remainder that political agency among indigenous peoples in general, and Inuit populations in particular, are nothing new. Many a contemporary tale about indigenous people tend to depict these people as united and working out consensus when political decisions have to be taken. This is often implicit in scientific articles which refer to a certain community with the pronoun “them”; but it is also often explicit in the case of Inuit, depicted as favoring consensus and traditionally adverse to anger and divisiveness — see for instance J. Briggs' *Never in Anger* 1970 works, which serve to justify it. The subtext of these depictions is that indigenous people seem to have had no political agency until recent times, and still have few *internal* political agency: indigenous people would not be political subjects in themselves, but only as a passive fraction of a united group. Put to the extreme, this is one of the elements which discreetly justifies the idea that formal democracy does not fit indigenous communities — an idea deeply embedded in the everlasting claims (among White people as well as some indigenous activists) that indigenous communities are best led by “traditional leaders” or “elders”²⁴. This kind of ideas is rarely put straight into scientific literature, but frequently expressed in informal discussions, colloquiums, and above all it is part of the common knowledge serving as the basis for the work of many indigenous corporations or governmental programs.

The example of the dissident movement shows the falseness of these political tales. Inuit, just as any other society, are divided along political lines. They are able to debate and disagree — under the condition that some kind of political public space is provided. The dissident history also show how Inuit have disagreed over the best way to pursue general interest. Telling the dissident history as such

²⁴I have not researched this directly, but my observations tend to indicate that among indigenous people, this kind of reflections is often made, unsurprisingly, by people belonging to a social and political elite which claim this kind of power for themselves or their families.

requires contradicting the official political history of Nunavik — told for instance in Nungak (2017). What the Dissidents opposed was an undemocratic negotiation and signing of a treaty, that is, a process which exposes a common interest between governments and indigenous organizations. Without judging over the rightful or wrongfulness of the treaty itself, or the motivations of this or that Inuit organization, there were converging interest between Québec on the one side, and the NQIA on the other side (and some have also pointed that it was in Québec's interest to entrench divisions among Inuit people). Nonetheless, corporations and other ethnic-orientated organizations which negotiated or were born through the JBNQA present themselves today as championing indigenous interests, and claim for themselves the primacy of opposing the government in the name of Inuit communities.

Thus, the historic example of the Dissidents invite researchers — political scientists, but also geographers and sociologists — to be cautious and take into account the historicity of indigenous political agency. The common vision of politically-united indigenous communities is inaccurate; and it also political biased: it is the history told by the winners, those who succeeded in making their claims and position seem as consensual (sometimes using proximity to, or at least their common interest with, southern governments). This is of course nothing new for political scientists, often well-versed in how the national elites monopolize the definition of common interest; but the dissident movement direct researchers not to forget to apply the same scheme when reflecting on indigenous societies.

A case grounded in autonomy Apart from inviting researchers to be more cautious and take into account the historicity of indigenous political agency, dissidence also provides an interesting case of political claims grounded in the building and ideology of autonomy. They seem to offer an alternative to claims based either on ethnicity or abstract territoriality. Claims based on ethnicity are the most frequent today; indigenous people, and Inuit in Nunavik, claim recognition and rights and compensation which apply to a certain people, ethnically-defined. it would be very interesting that researchers see this as a non-necessary evolution of indigenous claims, and explore the meaning and consequences of such a focus.

My hypothesis is that it is very compatible with contemporary liberal politics in place in Québec and Canada. Recognition and status claims, as well as financial compensations, are easily governed in the symbolical realm (one just has to think about the overhyped tears of Justin Trudeau presenting excuses to indigenous people for the damage done through residential schools) and never raise the question of indigenous *sovereignty* — that is, political autonomy for the nation State. Ethnic claims are the most frequent today, and they have often been linked with a recognition of territory — most often restricted reserve land, as exposed by the landmark 1990 Oka Crisis. Dissidents went further than asking for *user primacy* over a given extent of land; they claimed that it should not belong to *anyone*, and that they should autonomously *govern* it. Thus their claim is not the same as those of many indigenous communities which only asked for a preserving of their *reserves* estate, while accepting southern (and colonial) governance. The dissident project is that of being granted sovereignty, and not depending upon Qallunaat governance *in any way*. Dissidents intended to make it happen through the cooperative model, and this is very different from today's much narrower indigenous claims.

Pursuing Corntassel's intuition To some extent, the Dissidents acted as if they had foreseen the limits of what Canadian political scientist Corntassel (2008) points out as the limits of "Contemporary Indigenous-Rights Discourse". To quote from the same article's title, Dissidents defended their right and ability to progress "Toward Sustainable Self-Determination" — this "sustainable" element being guaranteed by economic autonomy. Analyzing four decades of indigenous claims around the world and especially in Canada, Corntassel highlights how contemporary indigenous discourses and claims around the world have focused exclusively on *rights*, which has led to an implicit acceptance of individualistic approaches promoted by neoliberal states. In this context, collective existence of indigenous communities are only acknowledged in a *symbolic*, and purely nominal way, which do not put any real constraint on States. Corntassel sees it as a dead-end. Without ever mentioning Northern Québec Dissidents (which he probably never had heard of when writing his 2008 article), he suggests that indigenous peoples would achieve

more in their quest for well-being and for *real* self-determination if they start from ground-based movements. Having himself witnessed the failure of rights-based claims, Corntassel argues that a more efficient way would follow a bottom-up approach, and that indigenous people would do better by seizing for themselves *responsibilities* rather than waiting for top-down devolutions of *rights* which never question colonial powers' sovereignty.

Corntassel's article seems to perfectly echo my thoughts and reflexions on the dissident movement, and it is his intuitions that I aim to follow in my coming paper.

Part IV

By way of conclusion: experiencing Inuit studies in Québec

Having evoked numerous aspects of my research so far, I would like to conclude with an overview of what I learnt along the year.

Discovering and navigating new research fields: ge- ography and indigenous studies

Apart from a few hours in an optional course at ENS Cachan, I was not familiar with Geography as an academic discipline so far — even though I had already encountered significant share of geographical concepts and works during two years of masters in sociology and Arctic studies. In Montréal I got to learn about various sub-fields in Geography, and about their converging and opposing lines. I also had the chance to better understand where this discipline's lines cross those of sociology, economy, anthropology, and political science; and how the disciplines

can benefit from each others. To be more specific, I think my work was very much infused with sociological insights, as my frequent referring to Simard's work may have revealed. I tried to bring sociology into my research, especially through questioning the idea of Inuit "communities" which are often seen as homogeneous, and through focusing on the positions and resources traded within these communities (and their wider national context) on both material and symbolical levels. Thus I was able to study the social meaning of economic institutions and autonomy. I have also always tried to question peoples' actions and political positioning *in interaction*, and within a historically evolving context — especially the power relations between Canada, Québec, the Corporations, and ITN. My sociological training may have allowed me to adopt a wide view on the whole social processes at play in the dissident history, and may have helped me not to limit my work to a analysis of a distinct community, institution or territory.

I also got to work within the wide area that one may call "indigenous research". I arrived in Quebec not completely illiterate in Indigenous studies, for I had previous opportunities to learn about (Arctic) indigenous peoples and the corresponding and pluridisciplinary research subfields. My previous experiences also helped me to situate myself in this field — often critically. I think there is room for researchers to question more deeply common assumptions made in the field of indigenous research, from a sociological point of view; and, as opposed to certain geographical or anthropological tendencies, to put at a further distance the discourses that are being told by interviewees and other members of studied populations. To some extent, it seems to me that certain contemporary research in geography of indigenous peoples, which would claim for itself the "critical" label, lacks a measure of criticism when it comes to discourses from minorities which are structurally dominated. That these minorities' proper voices are being minimized and undermined in today's social structures is indisputable. But that the geographer wants to oppose this social unfairness should not prevent them from applying the same critical reasoning to indigenous peoples' discourses, as to any other discourse. Complaisantly assuming that an idea is more likely to be true or authentic, or accepting and reproducing it in articles with lower levels of criticism than other discourses, is an insidious tendency. In my opinion, it is not only epistemologically flawed; it is also

grounded in a certain populism, and it often reveals the author’s bias towards the Noble Savage trope.

7 Doing research

A whole memoir could be written on my 2018 experience of the field *per se*, but it would be way beyond the scope of this report. In Nunavik, I had to learn “my place”, so to say — to learn to situate myself and do research in a foreign environment (the first language of which I did not master) while being nothing else but a researcher. This, to me, was a major difference from previous fieldwork experiences, for instance in Greenland, where I had a job to perform on top of my research — and which provided me with a good way to introduce myself and explain what I was doing there. Explaining to Inuit people in POV that was “just a researcher” (and, in people’s eyes, “one more researcher”, or “one more Qallunaat I’m tired of”, as someone said to me), trying to build trust relationships with local people requesting interviews, actually doing them, etc. — the whole process was a never-ending source of learning and knowledge.

More generally, as a researcher, I learnt to work in a stimulating context. I gradually found a balance between the many desynchronized tasks associated with research. I also enjoyed discovering how to count on the support of my directors, without depending on them too much — Nicole Gombay and Thora Herrmann have been wonderfully supportive while not pressuring, and definitely constituted an environment for learning and researching which I greatly enjoyed.

Something I also learnt along the year was to accept unexpected changes in the orientations of my work — sometimes because some research had already been done; sometimes because some research turned out to be impossible; sometimes because of funding opportunities. These moments forced me to change my plans, and improvise, while having to remain as much as possible in control of my work environment and schedule — and I am pretty sure this will prove useful while doing a PhD.

This year was also full of opportunities to reflect on my work and expectations

for the future. In several occasions, I was put outside of my comfort zone, and had to question my motivation and the very reason *why* I was doing all this. Doing research about indigenous communities as a White man is not something easy; and one thing I had to cope with was the ethical tension at play: for whom is the research done? How to be sure that the researcher does not do any harm? How to justify, in the face of interviewees, that funds are spent for you to go in the North and study their history and social-economic structures, while their history and culture has already been appropriated and commoditized only to Qallunaat gains for centuries? The epitome of these reflexions probably is the fact that I decided to put a final point to my studies of Arctic societies, and not to go on with a PhD on the subject. I am definitely glad the ARPE offered me the opportunity to try this research by myself, and to realize that this was not the context I wanted for my doctoral studies, *before* beginning them.

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Appendix

8 Ethics approval certificate from CERAS



N° de certificat
CERAS-2018-19-026-D

Comité d'éthique de la recherche en arts et en sciences

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE

Le Comité d'éthique de la recherche en arts et en sciences (CÉRAS), selon les procédures en vigueur, en vertu des documents qui lui ont été fournis, a examiné le projet de recherche suivant et conclu qu'il respecte les règles d'éthique énoncées dans la Politique sur la recherche avec des êtres humains de l'Université de Montréal.

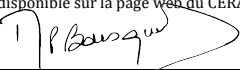
Projet	
Titre du projet	Economie collaborative et héritage contemporain du mouvement des Dissidents au Nunavik
Étudiant requérant	Julien Pongerard (20096459), étudiant visiteur de recherche, FAS - Département de géographie
Sous la direction de	Nicole Gombay, professeure agrégée, FAS - Département de géographie Thora Martina Herrmann, professeure agrégée, FAS - Département de géographie, Université de Montréal
Financement	
Organisme	Institut EDDEC et Mitacs
Programme	Bourse Jarislowsky et Bourse de recherche Mitacs Globalink - Campus France
Titre de l'octroi si différent	
Numéro d'octroi	
Chercheur principal	
No de compte	

MODALITÉS D'APPLICATION

Tout changement anticipé au protocole de recherche doit être communiqué au CÉRAS qui en évaluera l'impact au chapitre de l'éthique.

Toute interruption prématurée du projet ou tout incident grave doit être immédiatement signalé au CÉRAS.

Selon les règles universitaires en vigueur, un suivi annuel est minimalement exigé pour maintenir la validité de la présente approbation éthique, et ce, jusqu'à la fin du projet. Le questionnaire de suivi est disponible sur la page web du CÉRAS.


Marie-Pierre Bousquet, présidente
Comité d'éthique de la recherche en arts
et en sciences
Université de Montréal

31 mai 2018
Date de délivrance

1^{er} juin 2019
Date de fin de validité

s. o.
Date de suivi

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9 Accepted excerpt for IGU conference

Proposition — Conférence IGU-CAG 2018

SG11. Indigenous Peoples Working Group – Groupe de travail sur les peuples autochtones

SP4. Indigenous Peoples Life Projects : Alternatives for Living Well

Économie collaborative et héritage dissident : un projet social, économique et politique d'actualité au Nunavik ?

Cette recherche interroge l'héritage du mouvement « dissident », lancé en 1974 par des communautés Inuit du nord du Québec qui refusent la signature de l'Accord de la Baie-James et créent une association active pendant plusieurs décennies : Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini (« ceux qui se tiennent debout sur leur terre »). Au-delà du refus de céder leurs terres et d'abandonner une territorialité particulière, les Dissidents ont élaboré et tenté de mettre en œuvre un projet collectif visant à favoriser un développement autonome des Inuit du Nunavik ; j'en étudie les résonances contemporaines. Ce projet était politique (favoriser l'autonomie des Inuit), mais aussi économique et social : les Dissidents ont trouvé dans le mouvement des coopératives un support et un modèle de développement économique à promouvoir, fondé sur des pratiques de production et de distribution collaboratives, permettant la construction d'une identité sociale inuit moderne tout en perpétuant des pratiques perçues comme authentiquement inuit.

En me concentrant sur le cas d'une communauté inuit n'ayant toujours pas signé l'accord, j'interroge l'histoire et l'actualité du mouvement dissident et de ses idées, à travers une démarche ethnographique. Des institutions qui furent proches des Dissidents, comme les coopératives, semblent toujours actives et populaires. Il s'agit donc d'étudier dans quelle mesure ces institutions, de même que les pratiques économiques collaboratives, sont encore porteuses du sens d'un projet politique et social plus large pour les Inuit. Cette étude d'un projet autochtone de développement alternatif permettra de mieux comprendre la façon dont s'articulent structures économiques et dispositifs de mobilisation sociale et politique dans le Nunavik contemporain.

Détails bibliographiques

Julien PONGÉRARD

École Normale Supérieure de Paris-Saclay, Sciences sociales

Lauréat de l'agrégation en Sciences économiques et sociales (2015)

Étudiant visiteur de recherche, département de Géographie, Université de Montréal

10 Accepted excerpt for ESA conference

Paper proposal

ESA - Sociology of Consumption - 2018

Cooperative economy and collaborative consumption in a “dissident” Inuit community : between activism and mundanity.

I study contemporary collaborative consumption patterns in an Inuit community where such practices were historically loaded with a strong political meaning. In the 1970s, three Inuit communities of Northern Quebec refused to sign the James Bay agreement with the government, declaring themselves “dissident”, because they did not want to give up their land rights, and wanted to define their own development path — rather than relying on Southern subsidies. This dissidence, formalized with “Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini” organization, was anchored in the growing Cooperative movement. The latter provided a socio-political milieu in which dissident and autonomous ideas emerged, and an effective economic example of Inuit-defined development. The cooperatives, followed by other institutionalized collaborative economic institutions, became a symbol of Inuit resistance to Western capitalistic marketization. They were branded as matching “authentic” and “traditional” Inuit economic practices of resource-sharing.

Fifty years later, many Inuit still chose to sell their catches to the Cooperatives, and to buy from their retail stores rather than from other chain stores which were set up in the North. But what is left of the activist spirit in mundane uses of the Cooperatives? Has their activities been “normalized”, and are they used indifferently from other stores; or is their specific autonomous ideology still known and acknowledged by younger Inuit generations who use them every day? And how do historical and political actors of the Cooperative movement see it?

I am in the process of doing this research, which is based on archives and historical documents, as well as interviews and fieldwork – the latter will be conducted in Spring, in the last Dissident community. This will complete previous works from Simard¹, Gombay², and Martin³. It is aimed at understanding current consumption practices and ideologies in an Inuit community, and highlighting a lesser-known historical example of Inuit political agency which is reflected in specific social-economic institutions.

Biographical details

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Agrégation in Economic and Social sciences (2015)

Student and research fellow, Université de Montréal, Geography department

1. SIMARD, J.-J. 1982. *La Révolution congelée : coopération et développement au Nouveau-Québec*. PhD Thesis, U. Laval
 2. GOMBAY, N. 2010. *Making a living : Place and the commoditisation of country foods in a Nunavik community*
 3. MARTIN, T. 2003. *De la banquise au congélateur. Mondialisation et culture au Nunavik*. Presses de l'Université Laval

11 Information and consent document, given to interviewees, and approved by CERAS (2 pages)

Information and consent regarding a research projet

**Université 
de Montréal**

Sharing economy and the heritage of the Dissidents' mouvement in Nunavik

Researcher Julien Pongerard
 Visiting research student
 Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies – Geography Department
 Phone: 00 33 688 615 883
 Email: julien.pongerard@umontreal.ca.

You are invited to take part in a research project. This document explains the aim of this study, the procedures, advantages, risks and inconvenience as well as the persons to contact, if necessary.

You can ask any question you want to the researcher, for instance if there is any word or information which is not clear to you.

Presentation of the research

The main researcher is Julien Pongerard, a visiting research student from France (École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay) at Université de Montréal (Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Geography department). His directors are Nicole Gombay and Thora Martina Herrmann, professors at Université de Montréal.

This project is funded by EDDC (institut de l'environnement, du développement durable et de l'économie circulaire), an institute which funds research projects on environmental questions, sustainable development, and circular economics; and by Mitacs, an institute funding foreign students to do research in Canada.

This project has been discussed with, and approved by the Municipality and the Cooperative. The researcher can show you the research agreement and explain it if you want. The data collected will only be used in scientific papers and conferences.

Description of the study and the participation

The research is about the Dissidents' mouvement (Inuit Tungavingat Nunamini), the cooperatives, and collaborative economics in Nunavik. The aim is to see what influence the Dissidents' movement and the Cooperative have had on the society and economy of Puvirnitug; and what kind of trade and exchanges there is between Puvirniturmiut today.

Your participation to the study consists in being interviewed by the researcher. It will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour, approximately. If you agree, the interview will be recorded.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation to the research study is completely voluntary. You can put an end to your participation at any time by telling the researcher (in person, or by mail), and you do not have to give any explanation or justification. All documents concerning you will be destroyed, and this will not have any consequence for you.

**Risks and benefits**

You will personally not benefit from taking part in this study. However, you will help to better understand the economy in Inuit societies and its history. This study involves no particular risk for you, but it is possible that during the interview you remember or think about moving or unpleasant things. If so, do not hesitate to tell the researcher and take a break if you need it.

Confidentiality and results

All personal information gathered about you will be kept confidential. Only the members of the research team will have access to it, and it will only be used in scientific papers and conferences. All data collected will be kept under lock and in password-protected computers. After 7 years, they will be destroyed.

Your name will not appear in any publication or report. Any other disclosure of information (about you, or what you say during the interview) can be discussed with you if you wish to guarantee you anonymity. You can tell the researchers what information may be disclosed, and/or what information you want to be kept confidential.

Once the study is done, a summary of the results can be sent to you if you want. To receive it, you just have to give an address (postal or email) to the researcher. Results of the study will also be sent to the Municipality and the Cooperative later: both a written report, and a poster with a summary of the results.

Responsibility clause and contact persons

While agreeing to participate in this study, you do not give up any of your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors or institutions involved of their legal and professional obligations.

If you have any question about the study, or if you want to withdraw from it, you can contact the researcher:

Julien Pongerard: julien.pongerard@umontreal.ca, or 0033 688 615 883 (calls, texts, or Whatsapp).

If you have any questions about your rights or the researcher's responsibility regarding this research study, you can contact a counselor for the Ethics committee for Arts and Science at Université de Montréal (CERAS) :

Simon Hobeila, Bureau de la conduite responsable en recherche, 3333 Chemin Queen-Mary, bureau 220-2, Montréal QC H3V 1A2; simon.hobeila@umontreal.ca; 514 343-7338.

For complaints about this research, you can call the ombudsman at Université de Montréal:

(514) 343-2100, or ombudsman@umontreal.ca. The ombudsman is available between 9:00 and 17:00; accepts collect calls; and speaks French and English.