"WHAT I'M SAYING IS THE FOCUS SHOULD BE ON THINGS THAT
MATTER TO PEOPLE": INUIT PERSPECTIVES ON WILDLIFE RESEARCH
IN NUNATSIAVUT

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Abstract

Effective and responsible research conduct is a necessary part of the research process in the North, especially in an Indigenous context. While significant positive steps have been taken by Indigenous organizations and governments, the Tri-Council, and university research offices across Canada to provide guidelines for conducting ethically sound research in collaboration with Indigenous peoples, there is still a need to explore the requirements of effective and respectful research and management, specifically in the area of wildlife harvest management in the north. This study was designed to hear local Inuit voices regarding the requirements and conditions that must be met for effective, responsible, and ethical research conduct in the Nunatsiavut region of Inuit Nunangat. Interviews were conducted with research administration staff, conservation officers, local harvesters, and local elders throughout the communities of Nunatsiavut. Gaining a greater understanding of Inuit perspectives on wildlife research in this region of Inuit Nunangat and comparing this with approaches presented in published studies and guidance provided on responsible research conduct, will help both inform future researchers and the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee (NGRAC). It will help prioritize local needs and wants, provide an opportunity for local people to engage more in research, and ensure data sovereignty with local Inuit is achieved.

Keywords: Inuit, Inuit Nunangat, research conduct, Nunatsiavut, northern Labrador, NGRAC, wildlife management

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Glossary – Terminology

NG – Nunatsiavut Government

NGRAC – Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee

ITK – Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

SSHRC – Social Science and Humanities Research Committee

DFO – Department of Fisheries and Oceans

UNDRIP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

OCAP – Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession

TCPS2 – Tri-council Policy Statement

NISR – National Inuit Strategy on Research

Inuit Nunangat – Inuit homeland

Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1 <u>General Introduction</u>

Effective and responsible research conduct in the North is necessary for building

relationships with local Indigenous peoples (Hughes, 2018). Research conducted in Indigenous

communities must meet the needs and wants of local people to gain trust and maintain healthy

relations (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Youdelis et al., 2016). Climate is rapidly changing in

northern regions, and increased research is needed to understand how impacts of climate change

will affect the future environment (Descamps et al., 2017). As a result, there is a higher demand

for wildlife research in the north to monitor these changes. Local wildlife is an integral part of

Inuit culture in the North as people practice a hunting, fishing, and gathering lifestyle. Therefore,

Inuit hold valuable knowledge on wildlife and researchers should understand, respect, and

integrate such local knowledge into research practices.

1.2 <u>Inuit Nunangat</u>

Inuit Nunangat refers to Inuit homeland in northern Canada (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.).

Inuit lived in the Arctic and subarctic regions of Inuit Nunangat for generations. More than ever

before, environment-related research is increasing in demand in Inuit Nunangat due to

unprecedented changes to climate and wildlife patterns, which is resulting in changes to the

culture and way of life. Therefore, any research conducted in the North should be partnered with

local Inuit communities and have local opinions and knowledge incorporated into research

methods (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018). This study aims to identify the requirements of

effective and responsible research conduct in one of the four federally recognized regions of

Inuit Nunangat: Nunatsiavut (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). The Nunatsiavut region is in northern Labrador and is self-governed by the Nunatsiavut Government (NG). The region consists of five communities inhabited today (Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet), as well as multiple relocated settlements in more northern parts of Nunatsiavut (i.e., Hebron, OkKak, and Nutâk). Inuit have resided in the Nunatsiavut region for multiple generations, where the same culture and traditions are still practiced today (Brice-Bennett, 1977).

1.3 <u>Problem and Research Statement</u>

Understanding how wildlife research should be conducted in Indigenous communities is necessary for projects to be effective and responsible. There is existing literature for researchers to refer to before doing work in Indigenous communities (i.e., the NISR, UNDRIP, OCAP, TCPS2 Chapter 9, etc.), but few resources exist which focus on the perspectives of local Indigenous people on the ground, who actively hunt, fish, and gather on the land as a part of their cultural customs and, therefore, are intimately affected by wildlife research in their communities. The resources that exist aim to serve the people who are directly affected by research and dismantle the colonial aspect to research. They address how past research methodologies were often exploitative of the people and environment. The goal of these resources is to better understand how to work with Indigenous peoples and to teach researchers how to effectively and ethically do research in Indigenous settings.

This study aims to understand the perspectives of local people in Nunatsiavut, the Inuit region of Labrador, through interviews with hunters, elders, and NG research and conservation staff. The first paper presented in this thesis is focused on gaining an understanding of Inuit perspectives on how outside researchers should conduct themselves and their work before, during, and after a project takes place. The second paper presented here provides an

understanding of Inuit perspectives on how local governmental authorities in Nunatsiavut should govern and help direct the work with these outside researchers.

1.4 General Methodology

The two manuscripts presented in this thesis are based on a qualitative approach to data collection. This research was approved by the Grenfell Campus Research Ethics Board (GC-REB File #: 20222701). Also, the research was approved by the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee (see Appendix C for approval letter). Data for this study were collected from interviews (N=42) conducted in the five Inuit communities in Nunatsiavut (Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet) in September and October of 2022. Interview participants included NG research staff, NG conservation officers, local hunters, and local elders. The NG Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) in each community were contacted to help identify appropriate interviewees (see Appendix B for recruitment letter). The goal of the interviews was to ask participants their perspectives on wildlife research in their communities and how researchers could more effectively incorporate local needs and wants. "Wildlife research" in this study is defined as any research done in Nunatsiavut on wildlife (terrestrial and marine wildlife), but many results in this study are also applicable to other areas of research. Interview questions were left open-ended to allow for participants to give as much description to their answers as they preferred. The questions can be found in the participant informed consent form in Appendix A.

1.4.1   Interview Structure and Administration

Data were collected using interviews consisting of four open-ended questions (shown in informed consent form – Appendix A). These questions were designed to allow for participants

to provide their perspective on wildlife research conduct in Nunatsiavut in an open manner. This allowed participants to provide specific examples of research or stories in which they were involved in research. Below are the four questions asked to participants:

(1) How do you think wildlife research should be done in your community, with regards to effectiveness, responsibility, and ethicality?

(2) What should wildlife research look like before, during, and after a project takes place?

(3) What are some solutions to problems with the way research is currently being done?

(4) Do you have any specific examples in which you were involved in research?

1.4.2   Data Analysis

Data from interviews were analyzed using the NVivo software (Lumivero, 2023). Each interview was transcribed and coded using a grounded theory approach (i.e., creating codes for common themes that emerged from interviews). Any sections of the interview transcripts that were not relevant to the objective of this project were not coded for (i.e., if participants got off track). Each code was analyzed using a qualitative approach; there was no quantitative data analysis used in this study. Contributions from participants were not distinguished or analyzed based on their community, age, gender, or background. Direct quotes that clearly portrayed and succinctly captured the emerging themes were included in the body of the manuscripts to help relay participants' perspectives. Only those quotes from participants who selected the option to have their quotes used were documented in the results.

1.5 <u>Manuscript Overview</u>

The following manuscripts explore the idea of how wildlife research should look in Nunatsiavut, according to local Inuit perspectives. The first study describes Inuit perspectives on effective, responsible, and ethical research conduct in Nunatsiavut. The approach to this study is geared towards outside researchers coming into Nunatsiavut, meaning the suggestions that participants gave were geared towards research led by outside institutions or non-NG beneficiaries. The second study describes Inuit perspectives on research authorities and local governmental responsibilities regarding research conducted in Nunatsiavut. This second study was based on a more inward-looking approach, meaning the suggestions that participants gave were geared towards the NG government and other local authorities and how they could govern and guide incoming research more effectively. The author of this thesis conducted all interviews, performed all data analysis, and prepared the manuscripts contained within.

2. **Chapter 2: Effective, Responsible, & Ethical Research Conduct in Nunatsiavut**

2.1   <u>Introduction</u>

Effective and responsible research conduct is necessary for the success of research in the the North (Hughes, 2018). The North is home to various groups of Indigenous people where culture and history are important aspects of daily life. As the global climate crisis increases in severity, the north is experiencing drastic environmental changes (Descamps et al., 2017), which are spurring more research opportunities. A major concern that comes with this is research ethics in an Indigenous context. Establishing Indigenous peoples as rights holders to research conducted on Indigenous lands is important to protect the lives of local people and the ecosystem

(Zentler et al., 2019), as well as maintain respectful relations between researchers and Indigenous people (Johnston & Mason, 2020; Youdelis et al., 2016).

This chapter focuses on the perspectives of local Inuit in Nunatsiavut on what they think successful wildlife research practices should look like in their region. Nunatsiavut is an Inuit region in northern Labrador and a federally recognized region of Inuit Nunangat (Inuit homeland) by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) as shown in Figure 2.1 (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). Inuit have strong cultural connections to the land and wildlife through customary hunting practices and other land-based activities. Researchers should respect and acknowledge local Inuit by incorporating Inuit needs into the research process, especially in a wildlife context (Tomaselli et al., 2018).

Figure 2.1 – Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.)

2.1.1 Existing Literature on Indigenous Research Ethics

Understanding how to do research in an Indigenous setting prior to conducting work is important for research success. There are resources that already exist for such researchers to use as guidance. Examples of these include ITK's National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR) (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018), United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Government of Canada, 2023), the First Nations Principle of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) (The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2023), and

Chapter 9 of the Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) (Government of Canada, 2022). As well, there are local resources such the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee (NGRAC) in the Nunatsiavut region of northern Labrador (Nunatsiavut Government, 2021). These are all useful sources to provide guidance and support for researchers wishing to conduct research involving Indigenous groups. These documents, however, cover general concerns regarding research in Indigenous communities. There has been little research and few resources on the preferences of local Indigenous people and stakeholders with respect to desired approaches to research conduct on the ground (Carter, 2010). This chapter is focused on capturing some of these concerns and recommendations from the Inuit region in northern Labrador: Nunatsiavut.

2.1.2 Labrador Inuit Land Claim Region: Nunatsiavut

Nunatsiavut is known as the Labrador Inuit Land Claim region of Canada and consists of five communities of northeastern Labrador: Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet (Tourism Nunatsiavut, n.d.). This region also includes the Torngat Mountains National Park located at the most northernly part of Labrador (Figure 2.2). The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement (LILCA) was signed in 2005 (Government of Canada, 2005). Since then, the region has been referred to as Nunatsiavut. Inuit have lived along the northeastern coast of Labrador for centuries. Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik were officially established when the Moravian missionaries came to Labrador in the late 1700s (NL Heritage, 2023). Postville and Rigolet were established in later years. Nain (est. 1771) is currently the largest community of Nunatsiavut with a population of 1,125; Hopedale (est. 1782) is the legislative capital of Nunatsiavut with a population of 574; Makkovik has a population of 377, Postville 177, and Rigolet 305 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Figure 2.2 – Nunatsiavut (Tourism Nunatsiavut, n.d.)

The Labrador Inuit who call Nunatsiavut home have a rich cultural history and a strong connection to the land and wildlife. The culture of the Labrador Inuit is apparent through everyday life activities such as sustenance hunting, fishing, and gathering from the land. These are important traditional customs that Labrador Inuit practiced centuries ago and still practice today. The connection Inuit have to the land and wildlife affirms the significance and necessity of earnestly engaging with Labrador Inuit whenever research projects that are conducted in the area.

2.1.3 Wildlife Management in Nunatsiavut

There are various ongoing research projects in Nunatsiavut that involve wildlife management. Some projects include surveys on caribou, moose, and most recently, geese. The George River caribou herd has significantly declined in population since the early 2000s, but Labrador Inuit depend on the caribou as a vital food source (Dicker, 2020). Since their decline, a hunting ban was enforced on the population in 2012 (Government of NL, 2012). Ongoing aerial surveys are done on the population every two years, and in 2018, the survey estimated that the population is now slightly increasing (Government of NL, 2018). However, management practices are still needed to ensure the population remains stable.

The hunting ban on the caribou is having major effects on Labrador Inuit; it is preventing them from living the way of life they have known for millennia (Borish et al., 2022). Since the caribou hunting ban, the NG has allowed a limited number of moose quotas per community. Moose were not traditionally hunted by Inuit but serve as an effective replacement since the caribou hunting ban. Therefore, moose surveys are also ongoing to monitor the population, as aerial surveys have recently estimated the population has decreased in certain regions (Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, 2019). Furthermore, an even more recent wildlife

project in Nunatsiavut is being conducted on local geese; the project aims to understand where the Labrador "lesser" geese are coming from and going to during migration by banding and tagging local geese (Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, 2021). Geese are another vital species for Inuit to hunt and understanding their migratory routes are important for successful hunting.

Such research projects are important for monitoring the population of species that are vital to Inuit. It is important for populations of these species to remain stable for Inuit food security and to keep traditional hunting practices alive. To conduct locally relevant, responsible, and effective research in Nunatsiavut, it is important for researchers to understand these aspects of Labrador Inuit culture while they are doing their research project. Overall, it is important for researchers to consider the valuable traditional knowledge that local people hold in order to effectively protect the wildlife and environment (Brunet et al., 2016; Zentner et al., 2019).

2.1.4   Problem Statement

The Arctic is facing many environmental challenges caused by climate change, such as an increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events and disruptions to wildlife populations and patterns (Descamps et al., 2017). Environmental threats caused by climate change are becoming apparent in the North, and therefore research in the north is becoming increasingly important. With this increased research comes the concern of Indigenous data sovereignty (Zentner et al., 2019). Indigenous data sovereignty "centres on Indigenous collective rights to data about our peoples, territories, lifeways and natural resources and is supported by Indigenous peoples' inherent rights of self-determination and governance over their peoples, country and resources as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)" (Taylor & Kukutai, 2015 as cited in Water & Suina, 2019, p.

237). Researchers who conduct work in Indigenous communities are expected to do so in an ethical and responsible manner, but few on-the-ground studies have been done to determine the preferences of local residents for exactly how researchers should conduct themselves and their studies throughout the research process (e.g., Carter, 2010 & Hughes, 2018). Inuit communities in the North have a unique culture and way of life and it is important for researchers to recognize their right to research sovereignty and self-determination by conducting meaningful work that respects the needs of local people.

2.1.5 Purpose Statement

The objective of the study in this chapter is to identify Inuit preferences regarding how researchers should conduct themselves and their wildlife research studies in Nunatsiavut. It is hypothesized that ongoing research projects in the region are happening without the essential knowledge of how local Inuit want research to be conducted. The results of this project will serve as an aid for future researchers wishing to conduct work in Nunatsiavut.

2.2 <u>Methods</u>

2.2.1 Interview Structure and Administration

The study in this chapter involves identifying Inuit perspectives on wildlife management in Nunatsiavut. The method of data collection was through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were a useful method for this qualitative study as it provided participants the option to provide rich, in-depth answers (Nelson et al., 2013 as cited in Dicker, 2020, p. 4). The study used an inductive approach to identify how locals perceive wildlife research in their communities. Interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to give as little or as much information as they desired. Interviews were conducted in

the five communities of Nunatsiavut: nine in Nain, 12 in Hopedale, nine in Makkovik, seven in Postville, and five in Rigolet. There was no time limit on each interview, but each interview typically lasted between 10 – 30 minutes. Each interview was audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Participants had the opportunity to conduct interviews in English or Inuktitut. Each participant signed a consent form to participate in the interview (Appendix A). The consent form included a description of the project, the interview questions, and asked participants to indicate whether their names and/or direct quotations could be included in the resulting report. Each participant was given a $75.00 honorarium.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one or in groups of two. Each interview was conducted in a space that was preferable to the participant (i.e., their home, their workplace, or another public space such as the research centre in Nain). Target groups of people who were interviewed were NG research staff, NG conservation officers, local hunters, and local elders. Only NG beneficiaries were interviewed. The NG Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) in each community were asked to help identify people who would be appropriate and for and be interested to take part in this sort of interview (see Appendix B for the recruitment letter sent to each CLO). Interviews were conducted in September and October of 2022. Four questions were asked to interviewees:

(1) How do you think wildlife research should be done in your community, with regards to effectiveness, responsibility, and ethicality?

(2) What should wildlife research look like before, during, and after a project takes place?

(3) What are some solutions to problems with the way research is currently being done?

(4) Do you have any specific examples in which you were involved in research?

2.2.2   Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher analyzed the data using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software (Lumivero, 2023). Each interview was transcribed and coded using a grounded theory approach, which involved creating codes for common themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes were taken as the main results sections in this chapter. Any sections of the interview transcripts that were not relevant to the objective of this project were not coded (i.e., if participants got off track).

Each code was analyzed using a qualitative approach; there was no quantitative data analysis used in this study. Contributions from participants were not distinguished or analyzed based on their community, age, gender, or background. Direct quotes were used from those participants who were able to clearly portray and succinctly capture the emerging themes. Only those quotes from participants who selected the option to have their quotes used were documented in the results.

2.3   <u>Results</u>

This section of the chapter will present the results of the semi-structured interviews conducted in the Nunatsiavut communities from September to October 2022. The following sections identify themes that emerged from the interviews on how local people perceive wildlife research. The main goal of this research project was to determine what local Inuit thought about wildlife research and how they think it should be done in their community or region. To gain an understanding of these perspectives, three overarching questions were presented to participants: what should take place **before**, **during**, and **after** a research project takes place. Results

pertaining to these three phases are presented below along with the subsections that emerged from the interviews.

2.3.1 "What should happen before research begins?"

This section of the results will explain what actions researchers should take before a research project takes place. In other words, it will specify what steps a researcher should take before visiting a community, before formulating a research project, and before finalizing a research plan.

2.3.1.1 *Cultural Disconnect*

Many researchers in the North are from the South, and therefore, must gain an understanding of the people and culture of the community in which they visit. Having a prior understanding of the community and culture is necessary for building relationships, gaining trust from local people, and creating a successful research project. This idea was expressed by many participants, specifically three participants from Nain and Hopedale:

"Most times our researchers are non-Inuit too. So, there can be a gap there in understanding the community. It would be preferred if that person had a good understanding of the community and is Inuit themselves." (M. Andersen, Nain 2022)

"And just having an understanding of how to engage with people, like not everyone, and I said this more than once, not everyone likes to be put on the spot and asked questions, you know? Like straight-up without any warning. Not everyone likes to come to a meeting and have them called out for example." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

As stated by Andersen, most researchers are non-Inuit. So, gaining an understanding of the Inuit way of life before conducting a research project is of utmost importance. An example of how this could be done is to read about the Inuit culture and lifestyle, get to know community members, and learn how to respectfully engage with people. If a researcher is Inuk themselves and already understands the community and culture they are working in, it makes this step of the project much easier. As Denniston argues, having a cultural understanding can be as simple as knowing how to engage with people during community meetings. Examples of good ways to engage with community members are listen to what people have to say, respect different perspectives, and learn that celebrating culture is directly tied to wellbeing. Inuit are culturally a quiet people and therefore, speaking in public could be a barrier, which experienced researchers understand. This prior knowledge can help build trust and respect with local Inuit who hold valuable knowledge that can help with research projects.

2.3.1.2 *Background Knowledge*

A gap noted by several participants pertained to researchers' background knowledge about the communities in which they plan to conduct research. If a researcher is not familiar with the community and culture, they should do background research on it before doing their project. This would give them a sense of familiarity with the area, culture, and way of life. Two participants from Hopedale stated:

"...before they come, I'd say they needs to do a bit of homework on the place, do a bit of history research on this area of the world and that way it'll help them when they do come here." (R. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

"Before you do come here though, you need to find out a lot of your stuff before you come in, that way you don't waste time asking the questions that you should already know… You don't wanna spend 3-4 days tryna figure out this, tryna figure out that. I mean a lot of it, you should know before you come here, by researching your research before you come here, right." (R. Boase, Hopedale 2022)

The importance of doing background research on your community before visiting is evident here. Flowers and Boase indicate how gaining an understanding of the community before researchers come would help their projects be more efficient in the long run. Participants explained how they often see researchers visit communities with limited prior knowledge of the people and culture, which can be seen as disrespectful to the community. When researchers have a significant number of questions for community members on their culture, history, and way of life, it creates a disconnect and sometimes disrespect between researchers and locals. By having prior background knowledge, more time is spent for researchers to engage with the community on a more meaningful level and complete work more efficiently.

2.3.1.3 *Prior Consultation*

Another topic that was identified as important by participants was the idea that researchers need to have community contact before conducting a research project to achieve prior consultation and community approval. This theme was well-captured by two participants in Nain and Makkovik who stated:

"And then just speaking to the community beforehand, so that everyone is aware. A lot of times, what people really appreciate is being informed and then involved, right, in decisions around it." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"A key is that to engage early, involve, and have community support. Seems like once that's in place then the research is good." (T. Broomfield, Makkovik 2022)

Engaging with the community before starting research is key to a successful research project. Researchers engage with local communities in various ways but making sure it is done effectively should be the main goal. Participants emphasized that if the researcher is not from the area and has no familiarity with the community, prior consultation is necessary. Consultation should be achieved by engaging with the community weeks or months before their research project takes place. As a result, this would give researchers time to communicate with locals about their knowledge of the land and how to organize the logistics of the research project. Unfortunately, many participants agreed that such consultation is not being achieved effectively.

"That's the kind of stuff that bothers me, they make decisions without – isn't this what cooperative management and communal aspects of hunting and fishing is supposed to entail? And that's consultation with the communities and the people involved. But it just happens, and we don't hear till it's done, and then it's too late, you don't have a voice… People go all over the world talking about polar bears and about management, and they've never seen a polar bear you know. The actual true hunters who does this, we're never consulted or we're never asked to attend. So, our voice is not being heard." (D. Pottle, Rigolet 2022)

Prior consultation to decision-making about research is necessary for building trust with local communities. Here, Pottle describes their feelings towards hunters being left out during decision-making. As hunters who are connected to the land and culture see wildlife daily and understand wildlife patterns from first-hand experience, Pottle argues that they should be given more opportunities to help with decision-making. This would help build trust and create better relationships between researchers and local hunters and harvesters on-the-ground.

2.3.1.4 *Inuit Priorities and Values*

When it comes to conducting research in the north, a question that should be considered when choosing a research topic is if it is important to local Inuit. A project that does not have local interest or support will likely not succeed, especially when trying to get participation from locals. This idea was expressed through various participants:

"I think the very first thing is whether it's even warranted, whether it's something that would benefit Inuit… So, I think the first question anyone need to consider themselves is, whether it's an Inuk researcher or a white western researcher, is whether the research is relevant to the people that live there." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

"Yup, well beforehand, I guess just to know if it's relevant for the community or not. Like why are they coming here doing the research they're doing, is it even important to the people who live here? Or is it just something they're gonna use and take away in their studies or whatever, right? So just consulting people beforehand just to see if you know, people think it's even relevant." (Anonymous 2, 2022)

Research conducted in an Inuit community must be accepted by community members. Here, participants discuss the idea that research must be relevant to the people and culture of the community researchers are working. Often, researchers will do projects on topics only relevant to their master's, Ph.D., or career, without first considering what matters to the community. Determining what Inuit priorities are is necessary for a successful project.

"…it's not being checked into or anything. All different things you can ask around the community and people would say what they would like to see checked into right." (R. Boase, Hopedale 2022)

In the example above, Boase discusses how these priorities are not being investigated. They explained how they know of various research topics that could be studied but the time and

effort are not put into it. Taking the time to understand community needs is essential to successful engagement and makes for a better research project all around.

"Well, first thing is like you're doing now to get different opinions or questions with regards of what they would like to see done… I think that's the best way to do it 'cause it seems like people, hunters, fishermen, what have you, harvesters you could call, who knows more about the land and the animals and stuff, who knows more about what the researchers do in that area." (G. Gear, Postville 2022)

"I think if the researchers are from the outside that they should come and be in the community for a while, talk to the hunters, young and old, talk to the elders, and get some idea of what people would be looking for." (J. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

"So to me, it's good that we have specific areas of research but for me I think it's more important to have areas of research that relates to what's actually happening. And sometimes that's not always obvious… research to me should be done in areas that are most used by communities and affected by communities, it doesn't mean you can't have general research going on in other things… what I'm saying is the focus should be on things that matter to people." (C. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

In the examples above, participants give insight into what exactly researchers should be doing and how to make it better from the start. They suggest how engaging with hunters and elders who know the land and environment is important to gain an understanding of what is happening in the environment in real time. These people live off the land and know valuable information that is not recorded in any literature. Furthermore, other concerns about this topic were voiced through examples of ongoing research:

"But just to know [caribou] routes or to know things that is not really a priority for Inuit, I don't think research should be done, just to maximize the amount of research that's happening. Like I think there should be a minimal amount of research and only when it's really needed... although they say it's Nunatsiavut government approved doesn't necessarily mean it's Inuit approved

because our society – there's a difference between our society and the government" (M. Andersen, Nain 2022)

"...we did a caribou hunting project this spring, but we never actually killed them, it was just trying to teach youth how to do that, and we had caribou soup that we purchased from Rankin Inlet and had it for the community, so that's relevant… But like being able to have something that's meaningful for the community, for them to enjoy to come out and want to actually come out and hear the answers." (M. Andersen, Nain 2022)

Here, Andersen describes their perspective on the caribou research that is being conducted in Nunatsiavut. Caribou are an important aspect of Inuit culture for food and other resources. Since the decline of the caribou populations in Nunatsiavut, extensive research has been done on the animals. However, Inuit have various perspectives on it, including how the research is impacting the mortality rates of the caribou, which Andersen describes here. As well, they describe the success of a recent caribou project that was relevant to the community and helped youth reconnect with a missing part of their culture.

2.3.1.5 *Community Differences*

Another factor that researchers have to consider before doing research in Nunatsiavut is that each community has a slightly different culture and way of life. There are key cultural components to Nunatsiavut, but each community has specific interests. For example, the different micro-ecosystems affect the wildlife people hunt and the resources they depend on. Therefore, the wildlife that matters to people is specific to each community. A participant from Makkovik stated:

"Especially people in communities, there's probably different birds or animals that affect Nain than Makkovik and Rigolet right, all the different communities. Lot of it is the same for sure but there are some different things." (J. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

As well, another participant voiced this concern using the example of research done on eggs after the oil spill in Postville:

"But in the fall, we would also hunt ducks and pigeons. So, I mean that was very important to the people in the community because like they wanted to know if the birds they were eating were affected by the oil spill… But in the beginning, I don't know who decided like what species were gonna be tested because they did pigeon, duck, and gull eggs. And not many people here eat pigeon eggs, very, very few…So maybe not as effective it could've been for the people of Postville, just because of the species they picked." (Anonymous 2, 2022)

This example describes how each community has specific hunting practices, and therefore, is connected to certain animals. Pigeon hunting and harvesting pigeon eggs are popular in most Nunatsiavut communities, but not so prominent in Postville. This shows how researchers should be more mindful of what matters to the community and what research would be most useful to local people.

2.3.1.6 *Outreach Method*

The outreach method that researchers use is important for engaging with local community members and helps create a successful research project. Study participants noted that the method that researchers use to contact locals makes a difference in who they reach and how many people they contact. Participants from Hopedale mentioned:

"And social media be good too I think, everybody's using it, just let them know what you're doing and all that, and any help would be great. Or the radio too, a lot of seniors uses the radio." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"They can advertise their research whether it's through posters or – most people now are using Facebook and their webpage on our local bulletin, that is very popular with getting information out." (I. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

Social media is an easy and accessible way to get information out to the community. Many researchers today use this method but there are still some people who do not use Facebook but can contribute greatly to research projects. This is where alternative methods could be used, such as the local radio or posters as mentioned above. Using an appropriate outreach method before starting a research project is important for the project's success. An example of this is below:

"And it seems like today, the best way to get stuff out is on Facebook. I misses a lot of stuff now because I don't have Facebook and I choose not to have it." (G. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

2.3.2 "What should happen during a research project?"

2.3.2.1 *Communication*

One of the most important keys to success for a research project conducted in an Inuit community is communication. Staying transparent with local people who contribute to research projects is important to keep everyone informed. Some participants from Nain captured this theme:

"But definitely staying transparent and allowing people to know that you're coming, that you're here, and that you're coming back. And to keep – I guess giving updates on the work that you're doing in the community for sure." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"It's interesting to know what they found and that kinda stuff when they're doing research and that. Yeah, it's good – be good for them to get – come into the community and talk to the people and that too, hey? To know what's going on and that." (J. Webb, Nain 2022)

Here, Denniston describes how it's important to communicate to locals with updates on the project, while Webb speaks to how that communication and transparency make them feel interested and included in the project. Both Denniston and Webb are actively involved in research. They mentioned how often, researchers do not communicate sufficiently, and they would like to see a change in that. Below Webb states:

"Yeah, they come up doing a lot of research saying they're gonna let us know what's going on, but we don't hear nothing after, not a word eh? All over the years, they keep saying that they're gonna let us know – with the research, we help them with the research – but we don't hear nothing on it after, that's something that's bad… Lots of promises but nothing becomes of it, hey?" (J. Webb, Nain 2022)

Furthermore, participants from Hopedale and Makkovik cover the same topic:

"During their time here, they need to be talking to people, communicating what they're doing and getting involved I guess as much as they can, holding meetings. And I guess keeping up to date on – social media part is good these days." (R. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

"I think first off before any researcher comes into do a job, he should come in and explain – set up a meeting, let the people know what's gonna be happening, coming in and explain what they're gonna be doing, in what areas they're gonna be doing it in." (W. Lucy, Hopedale 2022)

"Yes, and communication's always an issue, no matter what you do. And once that's settled by the researcher, their projects tend to go much better." (T. Broomfield, Makkovik 2022)

"You can hold a little information session just before, that could also really help them if they can't – not able to always take someone with them from town, at least you can have input. And always have even just an email address out there, if someone has a comment, it's no trouble just to contact them." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Participants explain how researchers need to ensure communication is sufficient with locals. Explaining what research is happening, how it will be happening, and what each person involved is expected to do is very important. As Broomfield mentioned, communication can always be an issue, but if there is some communication and transparency between researchers and locals, projects should be successful.

"I think the researchers are responsible for – they gotta contact the Nunatsiavut Government, get the permit to access and permit to research. So, I do like that, just to make sure that someone in NG always knows what exactly is going on, they can be involved and have some say." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Andersen describes how researchers should have a person to contact in each community, such as a person involved with NG. That way, the contact person can recruit other local people who could potentially collaborate on the project or contribute in some way. At least one person should always know what is happening.

2.3.2.2 *Community Visitation and Engagement*

Like suggestions regarding the importance of ongoing communication, participants also attributed importance to researchers needing to take the time to visit and engage with

communities. Getting to know and understand the people, culture, and values takes time,

dedication, and specific skills, especially in isolated Inuit communities.

"Yeah, the researchers, like I said, needs to spend time here in the area." (R. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

"That's huge I think, relationship, one-on-one, or in groups, or however. Relationships is key." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"And during your research projects, have some involvement, continue your involvement in the community." (G. Sheppard, Postville, 2022)

"If they comes and meet and greet with the people, the people would be more open to taking part… How they're hunted here, how they're fished. Again, that's why you would need to get involved with the community and the people, to gather and get your information from the people." (B. Lucy-Boase, Hopedale 2022)

"I would like for them to come in and talk to the people, and get some idea of the people, what they would like to do some on the turrs or the ducks, stuff like that." (J. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Engaging with the community and immersing yourself in the culture allows for that

connection to be made between researchers and locals. Spending time with local people, talking

about their research interests, and taking trips on the land are all ways that researchers can be

involved. As well, participants explained the importance of walking around the community and

making their presence known to the community. Communities in Nunatsiavut are small and

isolated and therefore, word goes around quickly of who's in town and what their purpose is in

town. A participant from Postville captures this theme below:

"Come in, introduce yourself to the town, walk around, spend a few days so that people can know your face. So, when you come back to actually start the work, it's a much easier buy-in. Or

even to come back to have that first, you know, this is what I'd like to do, they already know who you are. I think that goes a long way…I think the biggest one is to make sure – to make sure the community feels a part of the research. And that aspect of it is kind of fairly important to have that." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

2.3.2.3 *Training and Education*

Something useful for researchers to keep in mind when doing research in Nunatsiavut is to provide training and educational opportunities to locals during the research process. Several participants noted that such opportunities will help give back to the community and grow capacity that locals can use in the future. For example, training locals on how to band geese, tag caribou, and sample fish, would limit the need for outside researchers to come into the community to complete work, local people could already be doing the necessary work.

"… [offering training] throughout the whole time that you're doing research, and then afterwards, is leaving something behind, not just hiring someone, but if you're able to provide them with some form of training they can use for other research opportunities that are coming up." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"Train them. I mean you got people who are – they're smart, but they're just not given the opportunity. And you got people who don't have money, they're smart by. I grew up with people like that like they're really, really smart – really smart. But they never had the opportunity." (R. Boase, Hopedale 2022)

Denniston and Boase express their thoughts on the importance of training locals. Training can be beneficial for future opportunities, not necessarily with research, but with other work experiences as well. Boase explained how in the past, they have seen people in their community who were extremely knowledgeable, smart, and eager to learn, but unfortunately just did not have opportunities for training and education. Even today, the same issue is still prominent. Where Nunatsiavut communities are so isolated people must leave their home to access basic

education and practical training programs. However, if researchers considered bringing basic training programs to each community, there could be a big difference in local employment trends. An example of a practical training opportunity that participants gave was a boating licence. Researchers are frequently seeking boat drivers and only a few people qualify for it in each community. This is because travel outside of the community is required to obtain the qualification, which not everyone gets the opportunity to do.

Another topic that participants emphasized was the importance of training youth in particular, as such training could help them to find their interests and potential career paths. Engaging with youth is an effective way to get them involved in research and inspire them to create their own projects.

"I'm glad they are hiring youth around here to give them an insight into some, maybe, future employment for the youth. I believe it goes a long way in helping them out in terms of schooling and what they wanna do after school, those aspects." (I. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"And when they does research here too they should like join up with the community as a whole, but especially the school, like maybe a partnership there somehow with life-skills or just the school in general." (B. Lucy-Boase, Hopedale 2022)

Winters explains the importance of training young adults to help them with their future career goals. They used the example of how researchers hire youth assistants to help them on the land with fieldwork. As well, Lucy-Boase explains the importance of researchers visiting local schools, specifically the life-skills class, to partner with the teachers to deliver programs to young students.

2.3.2.4 Local Participation

Many of those interviewed indicated that local participation was the most important component of good research practice. Allowing local people to engage in research that is happening on the land and with wildlife is crucial for a successful project. Local Inuit have a deep cultural connection to the land and resources. Inuit also have valuable traditional and personal knowledge of the land that can be useful to researchers.

"That should be more – researchers should be more involved with people out on the land through the seasons." (Anonymous 4, 2022)

"I think another big thing is to actually include someone from the community in your work. So like if you're here doing this stuff or you plan to come back to do other work, to hire someone locally because number 1, you're giving something back, and then number 2, you have someone that people already know so they're more likely to be engaged in your research." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"And to work with the local people here who have knowledge of the wildlife, the land. And advice, especially from the older ones." (R. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

"Definitely getting the locals involved which is good to see because I mean they can't do it without the locals. It would be impossible to do the research without having local knowledge. So, I mean that's a given that they get people from local communities to help them do their research. (A. Vincent, Hopedale 2022)

"...they needs to act on this research conducted, this is one-on-one, right to the ground level, people speaking, this is what people wants and what they're saying. So, we needs to listen to what our communities are saying." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"Obviously you need people that know where they're going in the first place, so you need local people to help them out in those regards" (I. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"Local people is the difference. Without the local people you don't have the research, 'cause you're not gonna find it out yourself." (R. Boase, Hopedale 2022)

"I think in order for it to be effective it has to have an Inuit component to it, whether that be in the structure of the survey but also Inuit participation." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

Below, participants who are directly involved with research explained how they feel about being a part of the research team:

"I know when they come – it's happening more and more now – they get involved with people here, make friends and all that, and I think that's the way to go. It should be encouraged because that makes people more comfortable to share their knowledge that they have…Because it makes you feel good when you have researchers come in and you get involved, and there's certain things that we contribute that helps them too." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"It's very fulfilling and people are asking a lot of questions. We still don't have the answers to them yet obviously because this is the first year. But I know there's a lot of interest, well obviously, goose is one of the most popular food species for the community and the whole coast." (I. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

2.3.2.5 *Local Research Leaders*

An important aspect for researchers to understand is that local participation also involves allowing local people to take the lead on projects. Local beneficiaries of Nunatsiavut understand the people, culture, and way of life. Having local people take the lead on projects, when appropriate, can be an effective way to get local support and make locals comfortable with research projects.

"I think it's a good thing, it's really a good thing for us to do our own research in Nunatsiavut… We do have the right people here who have the knowledge of research, we have people here in our own community who can do the work." (Anonymous 3, 2022)

"You're from here and you knows what goes on so that's even more effective for us – than like you said, someone else coming in? Our own people doing it is even more – That's already effectiveness there, for you doing it for our own people. And more people would be open and giving their input too I think, by their own people doing it." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"Yup, that's what I'd like to see, more locals. Beneficiaries from the Nunatsiavut communities." (B. Lucy-Boase, Hopedale 2022)

"So that's my thoughts on how research would – not be done differently, but would be more focused on us, by us. When I say us, I mean beneficiaries." (B. Andersen, Makkovik, 2022)

2.3.2.6 *Local Connection to Land*

When researchers recruit local people to work with them on a project, an important

aspect to consider is the area they are working in. For example, if fieldwork is being conducted

in an area near Hopedale to which people from Hopedale have ties, they should take people from

Hopedale in the field with them. This gives the local person the option to share any traditional or

personal knowledge they have about that area. This could include seeing wildlife patterns on a

hunting trip or general knowledge of weather patterns. Some participants expressed their concern

that this aspect is not always considered. For instance, a moose survey was conducted between

two communities, but they had only taken a local from one community, even though they

covered an area near the other community. Such improvements can make a big difference in

research success and local people's ability to contribute sufficiently.

"I'd say for Hopedale, if you're gonna be doing research on something in Hopedale, or the Hopedale area, then you should have people – and it's hard a lot of times to get the good people… say if you're doing something on Rigolet area – no good to bring me into Rigolet or bring somebody not from the area in there." (G. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

"These themes we have in our heads for hundreds of years are still there underlying. You go north of that you should probably take somebody from Hopedale. But if you're like flying in between you have to you know, you can't – it's disrespectful if you take someone from Postville if you're flying inside of Hopedale. You know, it's best to take the person that's kind of connected to the land. And it's sometimes complex for researchers to find that out, but it's only to just stop in the office and ask the question." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

2.3.2.7 Local Respect

A significant topic that some participants mentioned was that researchers should ensure they are being respectful to locals. This should be obvious, but participants explained how they have experienced researchers being disrespectful in indirect ways. For example, getting participants to do fieldwork for them and not explaining exactly how to do it, not listening to locals when they say weather conditions are not suitable for fieldwork, or using a local Inuk as a collaborator on a project just to "check off a box" (i.e., a token Inuk).

"I think for a very long time, researchers just done it for the sake of doing research, for someone's Ph.D. or – you know even for, I don't wanna say the wellbeing of the species, but without any regard to the people that actually live there." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

"I've been taken as a token Inuk before. I've seen kind of the cultural – I don't wanna say disrespect, but disregard. Parts of it – a lot of it has changed and I still think that there's aspects of it that I think researchers need to be cognizant of the area they're working in." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

"And it's in our culture too to be – we're not a pushy people, you know what I mean. We just expect – if we say something, we just expect oh this is common sense, it's logic. You know, Inuks aren't known for protests and all that stuff, we kind of go with the flow as much as we can. And I think some researchers take advantage of it." (Anonymous 1, 2022)

Participants explain their experience with being taken advantage of in research. They also explained how researchers sometimes disregard the actual lives of people and focus too much on getting their work done during their limited amount of time in the community. Furthermore, Denniston well-captured the topic of local respect in their interview:

"I mean, it's getting better, research is getting better, people coming in are more understanding and respectful of the people in the communities. But I think it's important to have some understanding of our lives here. Our culture, in particular." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"I've seen over the last winter for sure, some situations where researchers were just not willing to listen to the community when they were advised not to do their research at a certain time of year…But like things like that, don't just override people, you know?" (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"One of the big things here is we have some very knowledgeable people who can really support your research, but if you don't listen to them, then you kind of set yourself up for the next time, people not being trustworthy." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

2.3.2.8 *Inuit Knowledge*

Based on the interviews, the incorporation of Inuit knowledge into research was one of the major themes identified by participants. The value of Inuit knowledge to research methodology is an important aspect, according to locals. Inuit can provide very useful and accurate information for research. For example, information regarding ice conditions, wildlife patterns, and historical environmental changes. The theme of Inuit knowledge was shown across most interviews, where participants explained the importance of including Inuit knowledge in research as well as examples of their knowledge that could be useful.

"So, what's happening now is that traditional and the western science or research are starting to complement each other, which is only a benefit to the person who's doing their research and to

the communities who are involved too. So, it's way better now than what it used to be." (T. Broomfield, Makkovik 2022)

"I really believe that traditional knowledge or Inuit knowledge is way beyond any kind of scientific knowledge because they're the ones that would tell you the best information that would help you even get close enough or you have access to different wildlife to be able to do research on them." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"You get everybody talking exchanging stories, ideas. And I think that's one of the best ways to go." (J. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Here, participants capture the idea of traditional knowledge in research and why it is important. Traditional knowledge can be undervalued but is extremely useful in isolated Inuit communities where culture and traditions are strong. Below, various participants explain their thoughts on the value of traditional knowledge in scientific research by using specific examples:

"Even though we can't hunt caribou, we still take notice of where they are and how hard it is for them to get their food. Because a lot of times, they move down to the woods and to the outer islands where the ice didn't form on the land. So that makes it easier access for – well, no other word – poaching and all that – and for wolves and that to get them. So that is something that's changing and it all ties into climate change." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"Or like when you're hunting, you only take what you need from that. So, there's always this wildlife management that we had anyway just within our Inuit culture, so what we believe is right or wrong, it shouldn't take more than what you need, that's what I believe should be for the wildlife research." (M. Andersen, Nain 2022)

"I think for wildlife in particular, speaking to people who understand the different animals and birds and stuff for their areas that would be best for – like for, I don't know – nesting grounds for example, nesting times, calving grounds, calving times, those kinds of things, to be thoughtful of those times in season." (M. Denniston, Nain 2022)

"I know I've told people unfamiliar with the area, researchers and wildlife researchers and archaeologists, that I've told them a few things about traditional knowledge of animals and how we observe them, how we can learn about different things in nature through the animals, such as

weather, you can do weather forecasts. Some animals give out little weather notices before weather comes and things like that too, that they didn't know about." (R. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

The examples given above include valuable Inuit knowledge including the migration patterns of caribou, sustainable hunting techniques, the seasonality of nesting and calving, and weather forecasting. These are all great examples of traditional knowledge that can be used during a research project on wildlife. Local Inuit are passionate about the knowledge that they hold, and the knowledge holds significant intrinsic value. Ensuring that the knowledge is incorporated into research in some way is key to a successful and relevant project that is useful to Inuit.

2.3.3 "What should happen after research is completed?"

2.3.3.1 *Sharing Results and Data Ownership*

The main concern identified by participants with what researchers should do after a research project is to ensure they share their results with community members. Having results broadcast to local communities in some way is necessary to build trust with communities and give back the necessary information.

"I think when they're done – and like I said before, it's starting to happen more now – that Nunatsiavut needs to make sure that everything that's being researched comes back to Nunatsiavut, and just be shared between the scientists, our government, and the people that's involved." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"Involve every community in Nunatsiavut. And then compare your research and share – bring it back to the people." (B. Lucy-Boase, Hopedale 2022)

"And then when they come back to the community, have a meeting and let 'em know what went on, and then you know if there's wildlife in the area or whatever they're searching for, you know, how to protect it eh." (C. Jacque, Postville 2022)

"And after it's done, maybe contact the people that done the research for sure or helped do – helped be a part of it all, to see what it's doing. And then the general public should know or be involved, just in case they – 'oh I wasn't here at the time.' But I think that the people you pick to do projects they should be informed on what happened or what moved forward on it." (G. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

Here, participants explain the importance of sharing results and bringing the necessary data back to Nunatsiavut and the people who live there, especially those directly involved with research. Webb explains how research done in Nunatsiavut should be owned by Nunatsiavut and brought back to the government and the people involved. This is a very important aspect that few participants expressed but is very valuable to the future of research. The knowledge holders of Nunatsiavut who help contribute to research should have a say in where the data gets distributed and who should be the owner of it.

Furthermore, many participants stated how, for most research in general, they are not seeing results distributed back to the communities. Below are examples of what participants stated:

"I haven't seen the stuff after. I'm not seeing anything after this, I haven't seen any count on the lesser geese, and what's going on, I haven't seen a count on the moose, so I think they need to keep us more informed on what comes after their research." (A. Vincent, Hopedale 2022)

"I know like our caribou now, I know our caribou was maybe counted again probably this past year. But to what numbers, is the numbers declining, is they still declining or are they improving? Because this information is rarely shared with the communities." (W. Lucy, Hopedale 2022)

"But they come in, they do the research, and you don't hear tell of them afterwards…Yeah that's the bottom line, getting results back into the community and coming back to explain to the people." (J. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

"I think like when they do caribou counts like we didn't know hardly what they found out. It seems like more, a little bit more now when you hears on the news and stuff, but still could be like little improvement on, especially caribou and stuff like that what we all depended on one time. Like it's good to know if they're coming back or if there's any hope for us." (T. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Participants express that there is a need for researchers to share results after the research is conducted. Local Inuit have a cultural connection to wildlife and rely on it for food. Therefore, knowing what the future will entail for wildlife is crucial to cultural survival and well-being. Below, participants give suggestions on how to effectively share results with communities:

"And after, come back with the final report and have a public forum, have a public discussion in the community. Don't send the report back and ask to distribute it, 'cause that doesn't work too well, people take the report, puts it aside, and don't even read it. But if there's a public meeting or discussion on ok, here's our findings, this is what we found out last four years around the Postville area, I think that would mean a world of difference as well." (G. Sheppard, Postville 2022)

"So, I don't know if there would be a better way, maybe to just hand out a short pamphlet in people's mailboxes or something. 'Cause I think sometimes a lot of people are interested but a lot of people don't like to go to those public meetings." (Anonymous 2, 2022)

"So, I think having this stuff published afterwards would be great. Not just for the present but for the future generations to fall back on as well right." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Participants stated the importance of having both oral presentations and physical documents that people can read on their own time. Many local people in Nunatsiavut do not have easy access to reports or documents posted online and therefore, would prefer an oral

presentation explaining results in plain language, or some sort of an informal meeting in person. However, those participants who do prefer to read things online expressed the need for easier access to documents. Some participants recommended that these documents, physical or digital, can be held with NG and can be accessible to community members whenever they want to review them. Generally, documents should be accessible in-person and online to meet the needs of everyone in the community. Locals involved in research projects look forward to hearing results and it is a researcher's responsibility that these results get back to the community in some regard.

2.3.4   Future of Wildlife Research

The results of the interviews indicated how people feel about research, what researchers should be doing differently, and how they think research should proceed in the future. Many participants explained how, in general, research has gotten better over the years concerning local participation, wildlife ethicality, and respect for the culture and well-being of local people. Examples of this are shown below:

"In the past it used to be researchers come in and leave again without any local participation, but that's changing now, and it's better for local people in that sense. But I think it still needs to be worked on." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"I know in the past it was like top-down, but here we know what's going on, we don't need to listen to you, sort of thing. 'Cause all the while we knew, 'cause we lived the lifecycle, we lived the lifestyle, and pretty much in time with the different seasons, right? So it might not be academically written down, but it was what we followed as a customary practice right." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

"But in terms of researchers, in the past you know researchers kind of – I guess they're in university or something, they got something on their mind, they came down and did research. Didn't really say much about why they were here and what they were doing until after it was done." (C. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

"'So, I guess the perception of research traditionally, and what's happening now is much better. Because [in the past] they basically came and told you what they were doing, and now they're coming to look for ideas and things like that, so it's much better." (T. Broomfield, Makkovik 2022)

"It's hard but we have to get research to move forward. Sometimes we use a net for caribou and we break legs, and things like that, and it happened. But if we didn't do the research then we wouldn't have anything. So, research needs to be done, we needs more research." (Anonymous 3, 2022).

There have been significant changes in research in Nunatsiavut over the past few decades. Local people are much more accepting of research now, but improvement is still needed in some areas. Overall, the main theme that participants identified is the need for more research that is relevant to the community and incorporates local needs and suggestions.

2.4   Discussion

This aspect of the study was designed to gain an understanding of local Inuit perspectives on wildlife research in Nunatsiavut regarding how researchers should conduct their work before, during, and after a project takes place. To realize this objective, qualitative interviews were conducted in the five Nunatsiavut communities of Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet with community members who hold knowledge of wildlife and research happening in the area. The resulting information gathered from this study will benefit future researchers in Nunatsiavut to ensure the work they do is effective, responsible, and ethical, and also serves community needs and holds true to Inuit values.

2.4.1 Cultural Understanding of Nunatsiavut

One of the most important findings from this chapter is that Inuit think researchers should have a better understanding of the culture in Nunatsiavut before a research project begins. Culture is a part of everyday life in Nunatsiavut; its implementation is evident in many aspects such as sustenance hunting, language, and other customary practices. Hunting and harvesting wildlife for food and other resources is one of the most valuable aspects to Inuit culture. Therefore, it is important for researchers who do work on wildlife to understand its significance; wildlife provides food security to community and a sense of community belonging. For researchers, gaining a cultural understanding could be achieved by doing background research as well as spending time in the community and engaging with the people before any work is conducted. Ensuring that researchers have basic knowledge of the people and culture before entering a community is crucial for gaining the respect needed for successful research (Brown & Decker, 2005; Hayward et al., 2021). This should be achieved before community consultation happens; taking the time to do independent background research on an Indigenous community or place should be the first step to doing research in the North. Once that is achieved, community consultations and engagement should happen. Engaging with community helps to build a stronger connection between researchers and local people and helps researchers understand their place as an outsider (Castleden et al., 2012). As well, it helps to solidify the relevance of a research project in community and how the work can be made to meet local needs (Brown & Decker, 2005).

In this study in Nunatsiavut, the idea of having prior cultural knowledge was well-captured; participants believed strongly that prior community visitation and engagement is necessary for successful research. When engagement is not achieved, is becomes difficult for

researchers to gain community respect and trust (Castleden et al., 2012; Christensen, 2012). Participants in Nunatsiavut captured this idea by stating that when researchers have a cultural disconnect, it serves as a limitation for how well a project is received by the community. Participants expressed that researchers are often not doing enough work to prepare themselves regarding cultural knowledge before coming to a community; they explained how researchers come into a community with little prior knowledge of the culture and attempt to begin their research as soon as they arrive. Spending time in community and building trust and engagement is what matters to people in Indigenous communities (Castleden et al., 2012).

2.4.2   Engagement with Inuit Communities

In this study, participants generally gave positive reviews on ongoing wildlife research in their communities; they explained how research is beneficial to the people through learning and employment opportunities, which brings a sense of community involvement. As well, the research aims to preserve various wildlife species that could potentially be at risk. However, research was not always viewed this way by local people; past views on research were not always positive due to lack of trust and respect for community members, especially regarding wildlife (Snook et al., 2020). Participants noted that wildlife research in the past was not always ethical and methods that researchers used were potentially harmful to species; even today; some research still requires improvement regarding this. Researchers are continuously trying to improve their methodologies (i.e., the way they do their work) in community. For example, engaging with community to ask how research should be done, creating opportunities for locals, and following up on research results (Koster et al., 2012). To some extent, these factors are already being considered and implemented in community-based research, but some current

methods are not effective, as identified by local people. Examples of this include the recruitment method used, communication to locals about research, and direct benefits of research to community. Implementing Indigenous suggestions and needs of the community into research methodologies ensure that projects are more effective (Hayward et al, 2021).

Understanding these requirements for effective and ethical research in an Indigenous context is necessary for research in Indigenous communities (Carter, 2010; Hayward et al., 2021). This assertion reiterates the need for researchers to gain a more in-depth understanding of community needs and values before conducting such work, and also supports the desires expressed by Inuit in Nunatsiavut. Despite the recognized importance of Inuit voices in the design and conduct of research in Nunatsiavut, few comparable studies have been conducted across Inuit Nunangat, which signifies the need for more on-the-ground research in this area. Castleden et al. (2012) conducted a similar qualitative study with university-based researchers across Canada who have done work in Indigenous communities. The goal of the study was to assess the perspectives on community-based participatory research (CBPR), but in their case the interviews were conducted with other researchers (i.e., understanding researchers' perspectives on CBPR). The findings were interesting and aligned with the results from this study, with a main one being the need to spend time in the community and get to know the people and culture. Dismantling colonized research methodologies in Indigenous communities helps to create a positive outlook on research by local people (Castleden et al., 2012).

Furthermore, results from this study reflect those from another study by Christensen (2012), describing the importance of storytelling in research and how it can aid in decolonizing research methodology. Storytelling as an accurate way of receiving and documenting data in Indigenous contexts, especially in community-based participatory research where qualitative data

is collected (Christensen, 2012). Spending time in community, talking to local knowledge holders, and hearing culturally relevant stories is key to gaining an understanding of a community, as well as defining those local people as knowledge holders and valuable contributors to a project (Koster et al., 2012). Storytelling is a learning tool in Inuit culture and can also be an effective way for researchers to learn and dismantle colonized approaches towards research (Christensen, 2012).

Koster et al. (2012) gives a detailed review of their work done in a First Nations community on how researchers can better work in partnership with community and ensure that the needs of the people are being met. Ensuring that both parties – the researcher and community members – benefit from work being conducted is key to research success in Indigenous communities (Koster et al., 2012). Not only does it provide opportunities for the community based on their needs, but it also helps build trust and maintain relationships for future work that may be conducted. This reflects what was shown in the interview results from Nunatsiavut, where participants cared about keeping good relations with researchers and emphasized this importance to continue seeing more opportunities to engage with research. Giving back to a community where a researcher conducts work is important for short- and long-term goals of a successful project (Brown & Decker, 2005).

2.4.3   Inuit as Rights Holders of Data

Inuit in Nunatsiavut have a general understanding of the research projects that are happening in the region. It is crucial for Inuit to have this understanding, as well as the ability to make informed decisions about research. Data collected from projects should belong to the local community as they are the true rights holders of the research conducted (Walter & Suina, 2019). An overarching theme from participants in Nunatsiavut is that locals want to see a push for data

sovereignty in their region. Examples participants gave of this is that research results should be shared with communities, participants should be given regular updates on research, and both researchers and communities should own finalized data. However, participants also stated how problems can arise in instances where participants are not given updates on projects and researchers do not follow through with the sharing of data. Ensuring that research is well-communicated with Indigenous communities is necessary for building trust and future relations (Brown & Decker, 2005).

To further build on this topic, a study conducted by Walter & Suina (2019) describes how Indigenous methodologies and data sovereignty is overshadowed by Western research methodologies, especially with quantitative data research. Indigenous peoples not having the control they should have over the work being done in their region leads to ineffectiveness of research, as well as misunderstandings between researchers and local people (Koster et al., 2012). This reflects what participants on the ground in Nunatsiavut said about research in their communities, where researchers must conform their methods to meet community needs, effectively communicate with local people, and respect the rights of Indigenous people as rights holders, especially if researchers want community engagement. Not only does this help increase community participation, but it helps build community support and project relevance (Castleden et al., 2012; Koster et al., 2012).

2.4.4   Research Significance and Future Directions

This study was centred around the effectiveness of wildlife research in Nunatsiavut and how Inuit want to see such research conducted. Because the environment and wildlife are such integral parts of Inuit culture through hunting, harvesting, and other cultural purposes (Sawatzky et al., 2019), any research done on wildlife in the area should focus on local needs. Nunatsiavut

has a unique culture and history; traditional knowledge held by Indigenous people should be acknowledged and protected (Tomaselli et al., 2018). Wildlife research and traditional knowledge in Nunatsiavut are important for monitoring various species. The traditional knowledge that Inuit hold about wildlife is valuable to community needs, as well as relevant to research (Snook et al., 2020). Researchers in Inuit Nunangat need to centre their methodology around Inuit values for projects to have a positive influence on the community (Water & Suina, 2019) to ensure that research benefits the community as much as possible. The findings from this study in Nunatsiavut will be relevant to future researchers, as well as local residents. It will help guide future researchers wishing to do work on wildlife in Nunatsiavut by giving on-the-ground examples of how to do research effectively, responsibly, and ethically regarding local guidelines.

3.   **Chapter 3: Perspectives on Research Authorities in Nunatsiavut**

3.1   Introduction

In the North, the number of research projects are increasing. Northern regions are experiencing drastic environmental changes with climate change (Descamps et al., 2017), which is allowing for more research opportunities because of the rate of climate change. A concern that comes with this is how local authorities evaluate research applications and facilitate collaboration between outside researchers and community members, as well as to ensure projects are useful and valuable to local people. The responsibility of governments to oversee research is necessary for maintaining respect and trust from local people. Local governments should be responsible for communicating local needs to researchers, protecting local interests in research, and making research opportunities more easily accessible to people on the ground.

This chapter focuses on the perspectives of local Inuit in Nunatsiavut on how they think management practices and research involved with their local government can be improved.

Nunatsiavut is an Inuit region in northern Labrador and a federally recognized region of Inuit

Nunangat (Inuit homeland) by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) as shown in Figure 3.1 (Inuit

Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). Inuit have strong cultural connections to the land and wildlife through

customary hunting practices and other land-based activities. Given such strong connections, NG

has an important responsibility to ensure that wildlife research taking place in the region is

focused on topics of importance to Inuit and is conducted in a manner that reflects the

preferences of local people.

Figure 3.1 – Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.)

3.1.1 Labrador Inuit Land Claim Region: Nunatsiavut

Nunatsiavut is known as the Labrador Inuit Land Claim region of Canada and consists of five communities of northeastern Labrador: Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet (Tourism Nunatsiavut, n.d.). This region also includes the Torngat Mountains National Park located at the most northernly part of Labrador (Figure 3.2). The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement (LILCA) was signed in 2005 (Government of Canada, 2005). Since then, the region has been referred to as Nunatsiavut. Inuit have lived along the northeastern coast of Labrador for centuries. Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik were officially established when the Moravian missionaries came to Labrador in the late 1700s (NL Heritage, 2023). Postville and Rigolet were established in later years. Nain (est. 1771) is currently the largest community of Nunatsiavut with a population of 1,125; Hopedale (est. 1782) is the legislative capital of Nunatsiavut with a population of 574; Makkovik has a population of 377, Postville 177, and Rigolet 305 (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Figure 3.2 – Nunatsiavut (Tourism Nunatsiavut, n.d.)

The Labrador Inuit who call Nunatsiavut home have a rich cultural history and a strong connection to the land and wildlife. The culture of the Labrador Inuit is apparent through everyday life activities such as sustenance hunting, fishing, and gathering from the land. These are important traditional customs that Labrador Inuit practiced centuries ago and still practice today.

3.1.2 Nunatsiavut Government

Since the implementation of the LILCA act, the region has been self-governed by the NG. The NG is made up of various Departments and Divisions. The NGRAC is co-chaired by the Research Manager and Inuit Research Advisor and has five other members from Health, Environment, Archaeology, Policy, and Food Security. The NGRAC reviews all applications for research in the Nunatsiavut land claim region (Nunatsiavut Government, 2021). The committee helps to ensure that researchers are held responsible for ensuring the work they do in Nunatsiavut pertains to local needs and maintains healthy relations with local Inuit. It is also the NGRAC's responsibility to ensure researchers are following the conditions of their permits (i.e., community engagement, training, employment, etc.). As well, NG beneficiaries and employees of NG who wish to do research also have to apply for a permit with the NGRAC.

3.1.3 Problem Statement

The Arctic is at the forefront of climate change and therefore, there is a push for more research focused in this area (Descamps et al., 2017). With this increasing frequency of research projects comes the concern of local authorities' responsibility to Inuit in Nunatsiavut to ensure studies are conducted in a responsible and effective manner. Research conducted in the north is

helpful and meaningful to local communities and there should be responsibility held by local authorities for projects to be successful.

3.1.4 Purpose Statement

The objective of the study in this chapter is to identify perspectives of local Inuit in Nunatsiavut regarding the role of their local government's responsibility for overseeing and directing research in the region. Anecdotally, some residents in the region have noted that past research projects have happened without the approval and oversight of the NGRAC, which has raised questions and concerns for residents as to why some researchers have been ignorant to the NGRAC process. The results of this project will serve as an aid for the NGRAC wishing to collaborate with researchers, foster responsible and effective research partnerships, and create opportunities for local people.

3.2 Methods

3.2.1 Interview Structure and Administration

The study in this chapter involves identifying Labrador Inuit perspectives on management of wildlife research in Nunatsiavut. The method of data collection was through face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews were a useful method for this qualitative study as it provided participants the option to provide rich, in-depth answers (Nelson et al., 2013 as cited in Dicker, 2020, p. 4). The study used an inductive approach to identify how locals perceive wildlife research in their communities. Interview questions were open-ended to allow participants to give as little or as much information as they desired. Interviews were conducted in the five communities of Nunatsiavut: nine in Nain, 12 in Hopedale, nine in Makkovik, seven in Postville, and five in Rigolet. There was no time limit on each

interview, but each interview typically lasted between 10 – 30 minutes. Each interview was audio-recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Participants had the opportunity to conduct interviews in English or Inuktitut. Each participant signed a consent form to participate in the interview (Appendix A). The consent form included a description of the project, the interview questions, and asked participants to indicate whether their names and/or direct quotations could be included in the resulting report. Each participant was given a $75.00 honorarium.

Interviews were conducted one-on-one or in groups of two. Each interview was conducted in a space that was preferable to the participant (i.e., their home, their workplace, or another public space such as the research centre in Nain). Target groups of people who were interviewed were NG research staff, NG conservation officers, local hunters, and local elders. Only NG beneficiaries were interviewed. The NG Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) in each community were asked to help identify people who would be appropriate and for and be interested to take part in this sort of interview (see Appendix B for the recruitment letter sent to each CLO). Interviews were conducted in September and October of 2022. Four questions were asked to interviewees:

(1) How do you think wildlife research should be done in your community, with regards to effectiveness, responsibility, and ethicality?

(2) What should wildlife research look like before, during, and after a project takes place?

(3) What are some solutions to problems with the way research is currently being done?

(4) Do you have any specific examples in which you were involved in research?

3.2.2 Data Analysis

Once the interviews were completed, the researcher analyzed the data using the NVivo software (Lumivero, 2023). Each interview was transcribed and coded using a grounded theory approach, which involved creating codes for common themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes were used to create the main topic sections in the results segment of this chapter. Any sections of the interview transcripts that were not relevant to the objective of this project were not coded for (i.e., if participants got off track).

Each code was analyzed using a qualitative approach; there was no quantitative data analysis used in this study. Contributions from participants were not distinguished or analyzed based on their community, age, gender, or background. Direct quotes were used from those participants who were able to clearly portray and succinctly capture the emerging themes. Only those quotes from participants who selected the option to have their quotes used were documented in the results.

3.3 Results

This section of the chapter will present the results of the semi-structured interviews conducted in the Nunatsiavut communities from September to October 2022. The following sections use an inductive approach to identify themes that emerged from the interviews based on what interviewees described as changes that NG could make to the NGRAC's research review and approval process. The main goal of this section is to understand local people's perspectives on NG's role in research and how the research process of the NGRAC can be altered to meet local needs. Generally, participants were supportive of wildlife research but gave suggested areas

of improvement. The following sections are based on themes identified by participants during interviews.

3.3.1   Responsibility for Research Oversight

A major theme identified by participants is the importance of the NG being held responsible for research happening in Nunatsiavut. Winters captured this theme in the series of quotations below:

"...there needs to be responsibility on that end, big time I think, because if we don't hold this research accountable, this is accurate information, and what are we doing to follow up with that, the government side I mean? So, the responsibility is lacking." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"Accountability on the government side too eh. The research that's supposed to help the people is not being followed through." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

"...the whole leadership side of government needs to change. They gotta look at it with care and take it seriously. They needs to emphasize the research conducted because this is accurate, like what you're doing here one-on-one with me now is how people feel, they're telling you like I am now, what's really going on... So we needs to listen to what our communities are saying. Huge I think, that would make a difference in wildlife research, everything." (M. Winters, Hopedale 2022)

Here, Winters states the importance of research in Nunatsiavut and how research such as this project is useful and valuable to people. They argue that the NG should be more aware and take responsibility for such research projects. As well, Winters argues that many research projects are not being followed through and local people are not hearing results. This is where the NG could play a stronger role in ensuring that results come back to the communities. Furthermore, Lucy describes the same theme of the NG's responsibility to oversee research below:

"Our government is doing good, but there's a lot of places, a lot of categories that they could be doing a lot more stuff. Not only to help themselves, but to help their people because their people is gonna need a lot of help." (W. Lucy, Hopedale 2022)

"Because when those people were coming in to do their survey, they should've met with the people, and Nunatsiavut representatives, whoever from the government should've met with the people and said now, we're coming in to do the survey, it's an expensive survey, it's for your benefit… This is where Nunatsiavut government gotta step in and start putting their feet down. You know and start putting rules in and regulations and everything in place. That hasn't been done yet." (W. Lucy, Hopedale 2022).

Lucy uses the example of a recent goose survey project where the NG should have been more proactive on local hunting rules and regulations. The NG and research collaborators discouraged locals to hunt in survey areas, but Lucy argues that the NG should have taken more responsibility to more strictly enforce a no-hunting regulation. That way, local people would take it more seriously and hopefully, not hunt in such areas. As Lucy states, research takes a significant amount of time and money and having local people not cooperate can become a hindrance to the success and completion of such projects. Lucy, along with many others in Nunatsiavut, are supportive of wildlife research. Therefore, such measures should be taken so that projects can be more successful.

3.3.2   Representation and Involvement

Furthermore, many participants suggested the need for the NG to be more involved with research and have more NG beneficiaries representing research. Most research that is happening is conducted by outside organizations, resulting in researchers having to come to Nunatsiavut to

conduct work. However, participants argue that there is a need for more NG-led work and for

NG to have a voice. Below, participants capture this theme:

"I think we needs participation from Nunatsiavut. We need a voice from Nunatsiavut – I guess you could say – more, because in my opinion, and this is only my opinion, we don't hear enough from our Nunatsiavut members. The representative that's supposed to be representing us, and the wildlife, and taking care of the wildlife." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"What's lacking I find is our local government, the Nunatsiavut government, is not being involved with the local communities to go ahead and find out, ok are you happy with all the stuff that's going on with our programming? They're not running any research out of their – research is all coming in. Like I said, provincial or federal, or by university students like yourself that's doing something that's interested in this type of thing. But our government should be more proactive and be involved in it, which they're not. And if they're not, our numbers are gonna keep declining in a lot of stuff. Maybe in 10 years' time, there won't be such good char fishery or there mightn't be such a good salmon fishery. At least if they started, they'll know where to go ahead and solve the problem instead of picking it too late and it's gonna be gone." (A. Vincent, Hopedale 2022)

To further explain this theme, some participants argue that there are sufficient local

people in Nunatsiavut who can work in the field of research, but, according to some participants

at least, the NG does not acknowledge this and create opportunities for local people to take on

such projects and do their own research.

"We do have the right people here who have the knowledge of research, we have people here in our own community who can do the work, but we don't have the acknowledgement from the government, the government needs to acknowledge the people and researchers as a whole. Only then will we start moving ahead." (Anonymous 3, 2022)

3.3.3 Data Ownership

Allowing Inuit to be rights-holders to research data in Nunatsiavut is crucial for a successful research project. Inuit are, and should be, the owners of data collected from research conducted in their homeland. Although only some participants touched on this topic, it was an important theme to highlight:

"I think that Nunatsiavut should own it, you know? Not a researcher come in and take it away for their own purpose and we not get the results, and that makes me more comfortable in working with scientists and biologists and all that." (R. Webb, Nain 2022)

"I think any research in Nunatsiavut should come through our own government and it should come to the people. If you're gonna do research, we should have full authority I think, in how the research is done and how it's handled." (G. Flowers, Hopedale 2022)

Webb and Flowers succinctly describe this idea of data sovereignty and its importance Inuit communities in Nunatsiavut. Flowers states how the NG should have full authority over incoming research, and as Webb states, it makes them more comfortable to work with scientists once the data ownership is established. Having this trust with local people is key to successful research in the north.

3.3.4   Public Database

Following the topic of data sovereignty, participants explain how they do not know what research the NG is conducting. The NG is responsible for ensuring researchers share this information with communities in an efficient way.

"But even NG as a whole, if they're doing it in Nain, it would still be interesting for us to know, you know, what their findings are and what they're doing, and I mean every summer they go up in the park and do different research, but nobody really knows what they're doing right?" (Anonymous 2, 2022)

As an example, participants explain how a public database established by the NG would be beneficial to locals. This way, local people can access information during their leisure time on projects that have been done in Nunatsiavut. Below, Andersen states how this database can be established and why it would be beneficial:

"I don't guess the researchers always got a big budget to create their own website, but maybe if NG could be submitting the paper and have an info website, or even a branch off of NG's main site. And just here's the reports from every research that we received, here's the link to it. If you wanna read it, here it is. Or if you don't have internet, you can run down to your local conservation or your field office worker there for NG and just get a hard copy if you want to."
(B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Here, Andersen gives a very specific and useful example of how the NG could be more actively involved in research by creating their own database. This would be a helpful resource for those who are interested in learning about general research in their communities. As well, not everyone has the time to attend meetings on research but would appreciate having something to read afterwards. Participants describe this below:

"Yes, it would be good to be able to come home in the evening, now you got some spare time, didn't make that meeting last week, but now tonight I can go ahead and read at least their pamphlets or whatever they might've had." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

"I think if all other research followed the criteria what they done and sent it in after, it would make it so much easier for the people to be able to see. Facebook is a one-time thing but if it's done in book thing and left at the assembly building, people could actually go up and see it and look at it and that would be a better way to go." (A. Vincent, Hopedale 2022)

"Even for NG themselves, they do a lot of research now right? But a lot of people don't even know what NG is doing. So, if they send out little memos or you know, bulletins. So that people can know that we've been up to this, and we did this this year, you know." (Anonymous 2, 2022).

"Yeah, newsletter or something after it's all over, like after they comes do their studies and stuff and report back to our – something to read upon, what they found and what they done… Yeah like – probably would be good to, when they do their report, come – I mean have a Nunatsiavut newsletter or something on wildlife, something to read about, like how much is up or down, every time they does their survey, that would be something to look into." (T. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

Furthermore, Andersen explains how an easy contact method for each researcher would be beneficial. They suggested that contact information for each researcher would be located under their project. Or simply, a comment section for locals to ask any questions or suggest anything that could be done differently.

"And a comment section just in case, even if the researcher don't necessarily get that 'cause they're done and gone, then NG could be aware of it if something wasn't done to what the community would've hoped, kind of thing." (B. Andersen, Makkovik 2022)

3.3.5 Wildlife and Conservation

Another important topic that was briefly mentioned was the improvements needed with the NG conservation. Participants described how research led by NG can be more geared towards conservation to preserve the land, wildlife, and culture.

"More training, get the full-fledged conservation officers as opposed to just the eyes and the ears of our government. We want to – I want to see my grandchildren to be able to harvest, I'd like to see them be able to harvest geese and go out and harvest the ducks or duck eggs or char and those kinds of things. And my fear is if this keeps up, the pressure keeps on, without any additional rules, we're gonna be in big trouble." (G. Sheppard, Postville 2022)

An example that Lucy states below is how the fish counting fence in Postville could be replicated in other communities. As stated by another participant, the fish counting fence was originally owned by DFO, but once their funding ran out, NG overtook the project. The project has been managed by NG employees for the past two decades and has been a huge success in research sovereignty and independent conservation for Inuit in Nunatsiavut.

"They knows exactly how many fish went in that river. So, it would be good if the Nunatsiavut government – I mean they must have the money for those projects – to do it in each community, so that the people in each community, you knows yourself along the coast, there's only the last few years people from Hopedale been going down Nain fishing, right." (W. Lucy, Hopedale 2022)

In addition to the theme of wildlife and conservation, a participant describes how the NG wildlife conservation officers are largely involved in research and are expected to take part in such projects, even though they have their own tasks to worry about. When researchers come into town, they are asked and often feel expected to be their driver and guide on the land, help with sampling, and be aware of everyone's safety. This can have implications for the success of research projects because of the excess pressure and responsibilities put on conservation officers.

"Because the boat driver, he has the big responsibility of making sure everyone got a lifejacket, that's just an example, you gotta tell everyone where the fire extinguisher is, where the engine is, and stuff like this. And then after you get into bad weather or something like that, then you have to be more cautious and make sure that everyone is safe, nobody gets hurt, all this. He's just a driver, just a driver that's all." (Anonymous 3, 2022)

This is an example where the NG could create other positions for local people to work directly with researchers as either a driver, guide, or research assistant. This would help spread out the workload and prevent the conservation officers from being overwhelmed.

3.3.6   Future Research and Decision-making

Wildlife management should very much include local perspectives, especially in an Inuit context. Inuit are strongly connected to the land and resources and should have a voice when it comes to management practices. Below, Pottle in Rigolet describes the need for local hunters to have a voice in the decision-making process of hunting rules and regulations:

"That's the biggest feedback I hear from my friends and my fellow hunters and people who I talk to in each community is that we never know, we're never informed, and that's very, very frustrating." (D. Pottle, Rigolet 2022)

Pottle argues that local hunters should be consulted before decisions are made. Research that is done for the purpose of management and policy decisions, especially those related to wildlife management in an Inuit context, must include local perspectives. This emphasizes the importance for researchers to communicate results to ensure local voices are being heard at community meetings and information sessions.

"But I strongly believe in that this day in age that we're living, there has to be good management or we're not gonna have nothing left. There's so easy access now to be out on the land, so much modern equipment and technology, we can deplete stuff pretty fast too and that's not what I'm about. You know, I wanna give protection to the animals and the mammals what we harvest so that it's there for when we want it. But we have to have input in to too you know." (D. Pottle, Rigolet 2022)

<u>3.4 Discussion</u>

This aspect of this study was designed to gain an understanding of Inuit perspectives on how their local government can better manage and govern research that is happening in the region. This is important to help provide more opportunities for local people to be informed and engaged in such research in the region. To hear these opinions, qualitative interviews were conducted in the five Nunatsiavut communities of Nain, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, and Rigolet with community members who hold knowledge of wildlife and research happening in the area. The information gathered for this study will benefit local research review and approval bodies in Nunatsiavut by informing the guidance they provide to researchers helps ensure projects are properly conducted, serves community needs and engages with and create opportunities for local Inuit.

3.4.1   Responsibility of Local Authorities to Govern Research

An important finding from this chapter is that Inuit feel that local authorities (i.e., the Nunatsiavut Government) should have a greater awareness of research that is happening in the area. In Nunatsiavut, all researchers need to submit a research application to the NGRAC. Researchers must first contact the Inuit Research Advisor to get feedback and guidance on how their research project should play out. The NGRAC is responsible for reviewing all research in Nunatsiavut before a project goes ahead. This is to "ensure that [research] is appropriate and accountable to Nunatsiavut and its people and takes place with the full knowledge of those impacted by the research" (Nunatsiavut Government, 2021). The NGRAC application to conduct research asks questions such as the methodology of a project, how traditional knowledge will be used, and how results will be shared with communities (full list of questions can be found at https://nunatsiavutresearchcentre.com/application/). The NGRAC consists of members from

different departments within NG. They meet regularly once a month to discuss research proposals submitted to NG. One of the most important key components that the NGRAC emphasizes to new researchers in Nunatsiavut is the use of the traditional knowledge in research. This was also emphasized by study participants. Any research that is done in Nunatsiavut must incorporate traditional knowledge in some way. This can be achieved through learning from local Inuit about the environment (e.g., spending time with local Inuit on the land and water, learning stories about traditional place names, learning about traditional foods, etc.) and allowing local Inuit to participate in research and share their knowledge directly. The NGRAC requires that researchers must compensate local Inuit (i.e., provide an honorarium) who provide their time and knowledge for the purposes of a research project.

Research ethics boards in Indigenous-based jurisdictions have specific ways of reviewing and approving research; important factors considered are building relationships and meeting local needs (Kuhn et al., 2020). However, clearly stated reasons why a research project may not be approved are not always made available to researchers. Clapp et al. (2017) discuss the need for institutional review boards (IRBs) to provide more justification to researchers regarding why the proposed methods of a project must be altered or why proposals might be declined. Letters from IRBs often lack in detail to why a proposal may be declined, which could be discouraging to researchers trying to pursue a project (Clapp et al., 2017). Although IRBs are often based out of academic southern institutions, they can be compared to Indigenous research ethics boards as they use similar review processes. In both cases, researchers are sometimes left having to make substantial changes to their work, but if more insight was given to them to understand the reasoning, researchers could work better with local authorities.

The example above is one of many reviews on research ethics boards and how they can do better to meet the needs of researchers (see Cross et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2020; Milne, 2005; Strauss et al., 2021). Little guidance exists regarding how research ethics boards can better conform to meet local needs. Many study participants noted that the NGRAC did a good job of supporting local research needs, but some expressed concerns that the NGRAC is not doing enough to provide community members with knowledge on research (i.e., what research is happening, why it's being done, how it will benefit the community, etc.). Many participants were either familiar with or directly involved with research at one or multiple points in time, and even those people sometimes have questions about research, such as the results to projects they participated in, what current projects are happening, and how to get involved with research. Participants argued that NG has a responsibility to oversee research happening in their communities and recognize the hard work that researchers are putting into their projects, but it is not being acknowledged effectively. Many study participants voiced their concerns over NG not being involved enough in ongoing research, which could simply be a perception of local people and not actually a reality of NG involvement. However, it is worth noting that these are real perspectives that were shared during the interviews.

Recommendations that participants gave to how NG can better inform local people about the research that is happening is through better advertising (e.g., having a specific website for NG research, more clear and effective social media postings, sending pamphlets in the mail and announcements on the local radio), more engaging opportunities and job postings that locals would be interested in (e.g., collecting fish for sampling and participating in aerial surveys for moose and caribou), and more training opportunities offered in the communities for people to work with researchers (e.g., wilderness first aid, boat safety, helicopter safety, and training for

tagging and sampling wildlife). Another issue that was voiced by participants is how the effect of wildlife population decline is detrimental to Inuit well-being. Participants expressed that increased wildlife management is needed for food security for future generations who want to live and hunt from the land, and therefore, shows an important connection between wildlife and well-being in Nunatsiavut.

The findings in this study reflect what is shown in guidance literature. The goal of this study was to gain a more in-depth understanding to how research could be done more effectively in Indigenous communities. Suggestions participants gave to address how NG could do better included working with researchers on community engagement, communicating and sharing results of projects, providing employment and education opportunities for local people to join in and learn from research projects, and incorporating research into the K-12 school system. Examples participants gave of methods for community engagement and sharing results included community events/workshops, social media posts, an online portal to access information about research, and one-on-one sharing of information, especially with those locals previously involved in a project. Examples participants gave regarding how NG could provide more research employment opportunities is sharing job opportunities more openly with communities through social media, radio, and postings at public buildings. As well, participants gave examples of how NG should be more engaged with the K-12 school system to provide education to students on research that is happening in communities. Ensuring that NG and researchers engage youth specifically was a key suggestion stated by participants. These aspects would create better relations between outside researchers, local authorities, and local people directly involved; ensuring that local needs are met would result in more meaningful and successful

research projects in Indigenous communities (Castleden et al, 2012; Clapp et al., 2017; Koster et al., 2012).

3.4.2   Research Significance and Future Directions

This study was centred around the desires expressed by local Inuit in Nunatsiavut on how local authorities in their region can do better to recognize and address their preferences regarding how research is managed. There are many ongoing research projects in Nunatsiavut and increased communication between those groups responsible for overseeing research and local people is needed. This study will help provide insight to local authorities in Nunatsiavut and help guide future research practices. Making sure local needs are met, from both the researcher and the local authority responsible for managing research, is needed to maintain responsible, meaningful research and ensure good relations between all groups (Clapp et al., 2017). This study is important to ensure future research is successful in communities and that local management groups work with researchers as best they can to continue to meet local needs.

4.   Chapter 4: General Conclusion

The findings presented above demonstrate how Inuit perspectives on wildlife research in Nunatsiavut is important for successful research projects. Wildlife research in the North is becoming increasingly important as climate change increases in severity. Inuit who live in the North live, hunt, and harvest from the land and therefore, have valuable traditional knowledge of the land and wildlife, and researchers should understand this before conducting work in the North. Inuit in Nunatsiavut have a rich cultural history with one of the most important aspects being the connection to the wildlife, as it provides a means of food security, community culture, and a sense of belonging. Without local knowledge, wildlife research cannot be, and should not

be, conducted. The recommendations suggested in existing literature (such as the NISR, UNDRIP, OCAP, and TCPS2 Chapter 9) supports the findings in this thesis. These recommendations include ensuring community engagement, prioritizing local participation, returning results to local communities, implementing cultural knowledge into research, and ensuring Indigenous communities have the power to remain the rightful owners of data. By following these recommendations, good relations are made between local people and researchers, and projects become more meaningful to the community.

However, there are limitations to this study and considerations for future research. One limitation is that the researcher for this project was more well-known in certain communities compared to other communities where interviews were taking place. This affected some people's willingness and openness to participate. Because of this, some communities received higher participation as compared to others. If this project were to be replicated in the future, this could be prevented by the researcher having a local helper in those communities where the primary researcher is not well-known. These community helpers could work with and sit in on interviews to ensure participants are comfortable and familiar with who they are speaking with. Another limitation to this study is travel delays and cancellations due to weather. Because the researcher must travel between isolated communities by plane, weather in Nunatsiavut is often a travel barrier. Fortunately, the researcher experienced no weather delays during this study. However, if this project were to be replicated in the future, the researcher should arrive to communities well in advance to allow space for weather delays.

This project documented these perspectives and desires of local Inuit in Nunatsiavut on how they want to see research conducted in their communities. This project was necessary as it illustrated the importance of on-the-ground communication with people, especially in an

Indigenous context. The goal of this study was for local people in Nunatsiavut (NG staff, conservation officers, hunters, and elders) to tell the story of this research project. Local people in Indigenous communities do not often have their voices heard during times of decision-making. However, it is these people who are affected most by the impacts of climate change and wildlife research happening in communities.

This study and its findings will be useful for future wildlife researchers in Nunatsiavut to reference as a guide before wishing to conduct work in the region; also, it will be useful for the NGRAC and other local authorities in communities to reference when making decisions about research projects. Finally, this study will be made available for open access through MUN's online archives.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Title: Requirements for effective and responsible research conduct in Nunatsiavut: identifying Inuit perspectives on wildlife management

Researcher(s):   Veronica Flowers   Stephen Decker

        MUN Grenfell Campus   MUN Grenfell Campus

        (709) 899-4271   (709) 639-6578

        veronica.flowers25@gmail.com sdecker@grenfell.mun.ca

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Requirements for effective and responsible research conduct in Nunatsiavut: identifying Inuit perspectives on wildlife management".

This form is part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study at any time. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Veronica Flowers, if you have any questions about the study or for more information not included here before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.=

Introduction

As part of my Master's thesis, I (Veronica Flowers) am conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Decker. The study will identify the requirements that must be met for effective wildlife management in Nunatsiavut. This study will be Phase 2 of a larger project, where Phase 1 examines those requirements presented in the academic literature related to northern wildlife harvest management in Canada's north. I will be collecting primary data through interviews in this phase of the project, to determine what effective research conduct means to local people. Interviews will be conducted in the five communities of Nunatsiavut: Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet.

Purpose of study:

The objectives of this study include:

(1) To understand Inuit perspectives on wildlife research in Nunatsiavut.
(2) To develop a written master's thesis based on data collected from interviews, to serve as a resource for future researchers.
(3) To compare Nunatsiavut perspectives on wildlife research to what is presented in wildlife literature across Inuit Nunangat (Phase 1).
(4) To compare Nunatsiavut perspectives to the research requirements identified by the NG Research Advisory Committee (NGRAC).

What you will do in this study:

You are being asked to do a short semi-structured interview (30 minutes – 1 hour) with the graduate student (Veronica Flowers) to share your ideas and opinions about wildlife research in Nunatsiavut. Interviews will be based around four (4) questions (but are not limited to):

1. How do you think wildlife research should be done in Nunatsiavut, with regards to effectiveness, responsibility, and ethicality?
2. Is there anything specific you think researchers should be doing before, during, and after their research?
3. Is there anything you'd like to see done differently before, during, and after the research? If so, what do you think are some solutions to problems with the way research is currently being done?
4. Do you have any specific experiences to share with regards to wildlife research?

Participants will be offered an Inuktitut translator if English is not their primary language. The questions will specifically focus on wildlife research in Nunatsiavut. Interviews can be one-on-one or involve multiple participants, depending on what each participant desires.

Withdrawal from the study:

Your participation in the meeting and any follow-up interview is voluntary and you can choose to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to answer a question, we can skip that question. If you choose to stop participating, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or any other individual involved with this project. In the event you withdraw, all information associated with your participation would be removed wherever possible.

Possible benefits:

The study will benefit each participant as their input will be incorporated into the graduate student's research thesis. The graduate student will deliver the research findings through presentations and knowledge mobilization activities to each community of Nunatsiavut after the project is completed. The findings of the research will serve as a source for future researchers wishing to do research in Nunatsiavut, and will allow for feedback to the NGRAC application process.

Possible risks:

We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation.

Confidentiality and Storage of Data:

All information you supply will be held in confidence. Unless you provide your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication. If you choose to allow your name to appear in any report or publication, you will have the opportunity to review information you provided for accuracy.

The interviews will be audio recorded. Interview transcripts and recordings will be stored on password-protected computers and/or in locked office filing cabinets and accessible only to the PI and associated research assistants. However, the NGRAC requires that data also be shared with NG

for potential use in future projects or activities. Any future use of data will be in line with the original intent of this project. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible.

Reporting of Results:

Data collected from the project will be used to compile a research thesis and possibly conference presentations and published articles by the graduate student. Participants will be provided with results from the project once it is complete through presentations delivered in each community.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

The graduate student will deliver the research findings through presentations and knowledge mobilization activities to each community of Nunatsiavut after the research project is completed.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact myself or my supervisor.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Grenfell Campus-Research Ethics Board and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the GC-REB through the Grenfell Research Office (GCREB@grenfell.mun.ca) or by calling (709) 639-2399.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that any data collected from you up to the point of your withdrawal will be destroyed.
-

If you sign this form, you do not give up your legal rights and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

☐ I agree to participate and be audio-recorded in the interview, understanding that my participation is voluntary, and that I may end my participation at any time.

☐ I agree to the use of quotations and that my name be identified in any publications resulting from this study.

☐ I agree to the use of quotations but do not want my name to be identified in any publications resulting from this study.

A copy of this Informed Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____   _____
Signature of participant   Date

Researcher's Signature:

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that the participant fully understands what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____   _____
Signature of Principal Investigator   Date

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Veronica Flowers

1 Sitsik Road

Nain, NL

A0P 1L0

June 29, 2022

Dear Community Liaison Officer,

My name is Veronica Flowers. I am from Hopedale, and I am a graduate student at Grenfell Campus, MUN. I am completing a MA degree in Environmental Policy and my project involves identifying the requirements for effective, responsible, and ethical research in Nunatsiavut, specifically focused on wildlife management. There is currently a lack of knowledge on what wildlife research should look like in the North, and how research can improve to meet local needs. Understanding these local needs is a way for researchers to engage in meaningful research and, more importantly, to build better relationships with local communities.

I am looking to recruit local people to interview for my research. My research will ask interviewees what effective and responsible wildlife research should involve, and how can current research approaches be improved. I have a personal understanding of the importance of wildlife to Inuit in Nunatsiavut and how research involving wildlife should be done appropriately. Wildlife and natural resources are not only important to everyday activities in Nunatsiavut but are essential to Inuit culture. My research will highlight the need to understand local perspectives regarding effective and responsible research conduct. To gather this information, I plan to conduct interviews with residents in the communities of Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet.

Interviews will take place during the summer and fall of 2022. Approximately 10 people will be interviewed in each community of Nunatsiavut. **I am looking to interview people who hold traditional knowledge about the land and wildlife, specifically 3 main groups of people: 1) conservation officers, 2) local harvesters, and 3) local elders**. People who fall in one or more of these categories are eligible to participate. Participants must be at least 18 years or older. Ideally, interviews will be done in English, but can be done in Inuktitut if preferred by the participant. Interviews will take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour and participants will receive a $75.00 honorarium.

I would appreciate your assistance in identifying potential interview participants in your community who are willing to provide beneficial information for me to shape my thesis for my research project. Please feel free to contact me at **709-899-4271** or **vlilflowers@grenfell.mun.ca**. Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Veronica Flowers

M.A. Candidate, Environmental Policy

Grenfell Campus, MUN