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Tristan Pearce *Editor*

Research with Arctic Inuit Communities

Graduate Student Experiences, Lessons and Life Learnings

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Editor
Tristan Pearce
Global & International Studies, Natural Resources
and Environmental Studies
University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, BC, Canada

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Foreword

Thirty-five years ago, I was a board member of the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS), and we struggled to produce the first ethical guidelines relating to research in northern Canada. We recognised that historically scant regard had been given to the potentially damaging impact of research on communities in the Arctic. The graduate student experience had often been regarded as "training" whereby the student's experience would hone their scientific and research skills and perhaps prepare them for a career working on northern issues. If consideration was given to training participating northerners, they were rarely regarded to be full partners in research, and their role was relegated to that of informants, interpreters, or perhaps field assistants. Motives and methodologies for community-based research were not always transparent, students often had limited understanding of the cultural context in which they were working. There was an imbalance between communities in the Arctic and researchers, as knowledge flowed from north to south, enhancing the reputation of southern-based researchers but often bringing little benefit to communities.

The need for an ethically based and transparent research management process was given further impetus as northern Indigenous organisations re-asserted their rights and the primacy of their knowledge, reflecting that their research interests were not necessarily congruent with the interests or methodologies of southern researchers. Ethical codes of conduct to guide research practices and relations with communities evolved. The research conduct management regimes which have emerged are a far cry from ACUNS embryonic effort, cooperatively involving both southern institutions and northern communities with the intention that potential harm is mitigated, and host communities or regions are benefactors of research outcomes.

Today, research cannot take place without approval of university ethics boards, and the informed and formal consent of participating communities, and there is a strong expectation that communities will have central involvement in the formulation of research agendas and research design. However, as it becomes clear from this book, permissions to proceed should not be construed as facilitating an easy passage to research execution. Most graduate students are new to the North and adapting to

the realities of daily living within a culture and landscape far removed from prior urban life can be stimulating, but initially is often challenging. Equally, approaches to research formulated from within the academy are typically replete with a structured methodology, research instruments, and timelines. However, high expectations about the importance and priority of a project and expected linear progress in moving from inception to execution often come up against the distinct cultural realities and pressing issues of life in host communities.

While universities run to the rhythm of the annual academic cycle, the student has to fashion their approach to the rhythm of the land and the seasonal round and the reality that people are pre-occupied with other than their research interests. Communities are isolated, most have less than a thousand inhabitants, and often grapple with a synergy of immediate and tangible stresses which may include inadequate housing, poor infrastructure, variable economies, stressed food supply, and a concomitant range of social issues. While for researchers understanding such stresses may be pertinent to their line of inquiry, the student's research interests may well be relegated to a low priority. Equally, the human resources available in any small community regardless of location or cultural composition, are limited and skilled and able people are called on to conduct a multiplicity of tasks related to immediate issues. Consequently, while the researcher may be welcomed into the community, liaising on a research project may not be a top priority. There may be the realisation that questions the student wants to ask are not necessarily the ones that potential respondents want answered. The rigorous methodological expectations formulated from within academy are modified and may evaporate in the face of such realities. Lofty expectations are replaced with humility and structure with a high degree of flexibility, and – as unscientific as it sounds – acceptance that opportunism, serendipity and human chemistry (simply the easy-going ability to get on with people) often play more than a minor role in a successful research project.

The rewards for conducting research are conventionally measured in tangible outputs, such as a dissertation or academic papers, and while many of the contributors to this book have produced outstanding peer reviewed papers, a message they convey is that the value of their experiences transcended any reward emanating from the research itself. It made them pause, to critically consider their position and the practical nature of cooperative research in culturally different and physically isolated environments. The intricacies of building relationships with northern communities to be able to do research together are rarely a part of any formal course on research methodology but, as the authors demonstrate, they play an essential role in the research. By speaking of expectations and difficulties, of the need to keep an open mind, be flexible, adapt, and ultimately work successfully and beneficially with host communities, this volume provides a grounded perspective on the realities of working with and within northern communities. It will be an invaluable resource for students preparing to work with communities in the Arctic.

University of Victoria
Victoria, BC, Canada

Frank Duerden

Preface

Arctic research has evolved from the early accounts of Inuit culture and lifestyles made by explorers and anthropologists to a new ethnography that works together with Inuit communities, and is being led by Inuit, to address priority issues affecting Inuit and the Arctic today. University graduate students are part of this new generation of arctic research collaborations. The results of graduate student research are often disseminated in a thesis or dissertation, but their personal experiences in building relationships with Inuit, working together to design and conduct research, and how this shaped their research approach and outcomes are rarely captured. As such, there are limited resources available to new researchers that share information about the practical aspects of community-based research in the Arctic.

The goal of this book is to share and reflect upon graduate student experiences, lessons, and life learnings from research with Inuit communities. The book is intended to provide a glimpse into what it is like to do research together with Inuit and, in doing so, contribute to the development of more productive and equitable relationships between Inuit and researchers. Working together, we can help address some of the most pressing challenges facing Inuit, the Arctic, and the world today.

University of Northern British Columbia
Prince George, BC, Canada

Tristan Pearce

Acknowledgements

We as contributors would like to acknowledge the many people in the Arctic with whom we have lived and worked with, and who have added so much richness to our lives. Without their hospitality, generosity, and kindness, none of us would have would have progressed in our chosen fields as we have. It is their warmth, welcome, partnership, and friendship that made our projects possible. We also acknowledge the many other people in our lives including, supervisors, mentors, colleagues, family, and friends who have guided us, believed in us, and supported us to embark on these life journeys.

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Contributors

Alex Anaviapik Nunavut, Canada

Shelly Elverum Nunavut, Canada

Kristin Emanuelsen Oslo, Norway

David Fawcett British Columbia, Canada

Sarah Flisikowski Ontario, Canada

Ivan Koonoo Nunavut, Canada

Eric Lede Northern Territory, Australia

Ena Maktar Nunavut, Canada

Justin S. Milton Ontario, Canada

Michael Milton Ontario, Canada

Angus William Naylor Leeds, UK

Tristan Pearce British Columbia, Canada

Rowan Schindler Queensland, Australia

Jessica Smart Ontario, Canada

Candice Sudlovenick Nunavut, Canada

Enooyaq Sudlovenick Nunavut, Canada

Miguel van der Velden Noord, Aruba

Devin Waugh Ontario, Canada

Elizabeth Worden Manitoba, Canada

Part I
Qaujisaqtaq: Doing Research Together

Chapter 1
What They Didn't Teach You in University

Justin S. Milton, Alex Anaviapik, Ivan Koonoo, Michael Milton, Candice Sudlovenick, and Shelly Elverum

Abstract Inuit communities in Nunavut are accustomed to welcoming researchers who are academically prepared to work in the Arctic, but often at a loss for how to work *with* northern communities. Ikaarvik, a youth-focused program based out of Pond Inlet, Nunavut, has created a document called "ScIQ" which is intended to help researchers understand how to meaningfully engage and work smoothly with communities before, during, and after their research and addresses many of the most commonly-asked questions about working with Inuit. Additional opportunities exist for Inuit youth to educate researchers on some of the lesser-known aspects of working with their communities, and they have embraced the opportunity to help researchers understand some of the cross-cultural confusion that commonly occurs, and provide simple common-sense solutions for dealing with those uncomfortable questions that southerners often are too embarrassed to ask. Ikaarvik is here to help!

Keywords Community-based · Ikaarvik · Inuit · *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)* · Nunavut · Research-relationships

1.1 Introduction

So…. You want to work in Nunavut? Raise your hand if you feel that your academic background has thoroughly prepared you to jump right in and work with Inuit communities.

Okay… ummmm…. anyone?

Ikaarvik: Barriers to Bridges is a program that works with arctic youth to be the bridge between research and their communities. Youth identify and explore the strengths of Inuit Knowledge and the strengths of science, and how the two ways of knowing can work together to address issues of local concern. They work with their communities to identify local research priorities, and they work with researchers to address those priorities.

J. S. Milton (✉) · M. Milton
Ontario, Canada

A. Anaviapik · I. Koonoo · C. Sudlovenick · S. Elverum
Nunavut, Canada

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> Just kidding! Let's be honest, unless you have a social sciences or humanities background in cross-cultural research, you may feel unprepared at best, or terrified at worst. If there is one thing we know, it's that grad students show up in northern communities with academic credentials, a sense of purpose, enthusiasm and intentions to create something amazing…. and we also know that you are not always equipped with all the right tools to ensure that you can work as smoothly and effectively with Inuit communities as you could. Don't worry, Ikaarvik is here to help!

Ikaarvik was created in Pond Inlet, Nunavut and is administered by Ocean Wise, a non-profit organization. Ikaarvik began with the recognition that while there is a lot of research happening in the North, there is often a disconnect between research and the northern communities where it takes place. Sixty-percent of Nunavummiut are under the age of 30, and many of these youth have the passion and motivation to be the ideal bridge between their communities and research. Ikaarvik supports youth age 18–30 to help their communities play a more active role in research being conducted in their Territory and ensure that the research is of more local relevance. Researchers benefit from having local champions for their research, more robust data that incorporates Inuit knowledge, practices and values (*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*), and a better understanding of the relevance of their research in the North. From our experience, Inuit youth can be your perfect research ally and partner, and in the following chapter Ikaarvik youth and mentors will provide you with some background information on working with Inuit communities in Nunavut.

Inuit have always been open and welcoming: in Inuktitut this is called *Tunnganarniq* and is in fact one of the 8 Principles of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, or IQ, that guides life in Nunavut communities. Unfortunately, this openness and willingness to share with outsiders, and reluctance to defy *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit) have paved the way for Inuit to have been treated horribly in the form of relocations, sled-dog slaughter (to keep people in their new communities), residential school, and a bunch of other things that mean *you*, as a *Qallunaat* researcher are carrying a lot of baggage. Sure, you didn't create these issues, but it is important to understand that there is a lot of hurt and trauma that some Inuit may associate with outsiders. A key part of the concept of "Truth and Reconciliation" is hearing and understanding the truths so that we can work together to achieve the reconciliation that is needed for Inuit and *Qallunaat* to achieve true partnership for the benefit of arctic research. If you come North with an open heart, you personally can play a role in advancing this goal! We're kind of assuming that you want to change the world with your research, right? Why not start by working with us to make arctic research the best it can be?

Our goal in this first chapter is to clear up some of the misunderstandings about working with Inuit. As we mentioned above, Ikaarvik believes strongly that youth are in the perfect position to be able to allow real, meaningful conversation that can improve arctic research, and even take some steps towards reconciliation if we all work together. What do we ask of you? All you need to do is come with an open mind, humility, and willingness to learn. Your university education and training might have given you some of the tools for success, but what is really important is your humanity and ability to connect with Inuit as partners, allies, and friends.

Our plan is to share some real-world questions from researchers that we think will help you have the best possible experience in Nunavut. We recruited graduate

students, including authors of other chapters in this book, to send us questions based on their own experiences, and what they wished they had known prior to coming North. Many of the questions we received focused on the technicalities of getting community approval and working with communities during their research. We would like to direct you to ScIQ (pronounced sigh-cue), our list of recommendations for what you can do before, during, and after your research to meaningfully engagement Inuit communities. ScIQ is a concept that was created by Ikaarvik youth to describe a more functional middle ground between science and IQ. We see ScIQ as the balance between the tools, technologies and methods of science, and the knowledge, customs and values of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. We created the recommendations that follow to help researchers and northern communities find that balance, and you can find it at: https://ocean.org/wp-content/uploads/ScIq-Report-and-Recomendations-lores.pdf

We chose to focus this chapter not on *how* to conduct research in Nunavut, but instead on all those awkward cross-cultural issues and communication mishaps that tend to be uncomfortable to discuss when you are in the community. Ikaarvik is here to help you understand where things tend to go wrong, and provide you with some friendly advice on how to work around these issues. Now let me introduce your guides on this journey.

Justin Milton – Creator of the concept "Inuit are the original Arctic Scientists", exceptional philosopher of Ikaarvik and dropper of the mic
Alex Anaviapik – Tea and bannock addict with a passion for creativity and research
Ivan Koonoo – Co-founder of Ikaarvik, hunter, all-round funny guy and dad of cool kids
Michael Milton – Multi-talented guy with a heart of gold and great hair
Candice Sudlovenik – Inuk superstar, traditional-tattoo goddess and recruiter of grad student questions
Shelly Elverum – Chief Tea-Wrangler and facilitator/moderator/secretary

Now let's get to it! If you were here with us in person, this is the stuff we would tell you over tea and bannock.

1.2 Answers to Common Researcher Questions

Q: *Research with the best intentions can sometimes be quite alienating, misguided, condescending and harmful if it's out of touch with reality (white saviour complex). What are peoples' experiences with that, and how do Inuit communicate these behaviours to the researcher?*

A: Most Inuit are non-confrontational, and historically have not been able to contradict southerners. You may never hear directly if your research or methods are annoying; instead, most Inuit will show displeasure by avoiding you, disconnect-

ing during your research, not getting involved, not asking questions. Only an assertive Inuk will point it out directly to you.

We hope that as a researcher, you will recognize that you are bringing your own ideas, values and norms with you. Please remember that Inuit have had generations of experience with southerners coming up to "solve" problems that aren't actually problems, and this ended up causing more problems in the form of relocations and residential schools. Unless Inuit have actually invited you to "solve" a problem *that we* have identified, it's best not assume that (a) these are problems, and (b) we need your help to "solve" it. This is the core of the "white savior complex" that you point out in your question, and explains why many community members are not that excited about research and researchers.

While it is tempting to think that you can just learn all of this before you come up, we don't want you to feel like you have to figure this out by yourself. You can try to prepare by learning about Inuit culture in advance, but it is ultimately best to ask Inuit and watch the reactions of people around you. This will help to ensure that your research is in sync with the needs and the norms of Inuit.

Q: *How do you be respectful and understanding of personal situations, while still maintaining some structure and being able to accomplish your research/work objectives? (note – we understood this to mean… what happens when you make plans and community members don't show up)*

A: You should panic! I am just kidding. First, it is critical to understand that your research is extremely important to *you*, but it may not be as urgent to people who prioritize family, hunting, rest, etc. There are so many layers to why this is uncomfortable for both the researcher and the community members. We see the root of this as a cultural difference between the ideas of how to organize time. Scheduling is not an Inuit tradition. We tend to go with the flow and do things when it's the "right time" rather than according to an arbitrary schedule. Southerners tend to have a totally different perspective on time and have time divided it into chunks. This can lead to the blame game: researchers blaming Inuit for not showing up and Inuit blaming researchers for unreasonable timing.

We think that the solution is to make sure that you work with the community to understand how your scheduling needs fit with local realities such as seasonal activities and time of day. Your circadian rhythm turns upside down in the 24-h daylight or dark season and many Inuit wake up later and stay up later, so early morning meetings are not a great idea. Be realistic and allocate extra time to buffer delays. Flexibility is important, as is understanding that your research does not take priority over Inuit lives, especially during a short summer season when people have competing needs.

We believe that it is okay and respectful to remind community members of your plans. We think friendly reminders a week before and then the night before are okay. Planning too far in advance can be awkward and most people in communities do not carry around scheduling books or phone apps, so feel free to stop by their home or contact them by phone or online. You should also be aware that the local radio

station is the most popular form of communication in Nunavut communities so we encourage you use that as well. Ikaarvik's ScIQ recommendations contain more information about clear communication with Inuit communities, so check it out.

Q: *What is appropriate behaviour for a researcher in a dry or alcohol-restricted community?*

A: Don't drink while in Nunavut, that's the easy answer. In the south, social drinking is the norm, while in Nunavut drinking is a lot more complicated. There is a history of inter-generational trauma and related substance abuse which makes "having drinks" a lot more complex. Because of this, different communities in Nunavut have different regulations around bringing in alcohol. Some communities are "dry" which means that that no alcohol is allowed; you're not legally allowed to bring it into the community and you need to respect that. Other communities are "restricted" which means that you need to have a permit issued by the Hamlet Council. Respect that too! It is critical that you check with each community about their current by-laws and restrictions before you travel to Nunavut.

Since you may legally be able to bring alcohol to certain communities, and you decide to bring it in, don't advertise the fact. We also don't recommend sharing it with community members because you won't know who has addictions issues, or who might be banned from ordering alcohol by the AEC (alcohol education committees). There is also the possibility that if word gets around that you have alcohol, you may have people showing up at your place offering to buy it. This is not a situation that you want to put yourself in.

We think the same advice applies for marijuana. Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's a good idea to bring it up with you. Of course, if you have a prescription for medical marijuana that is different. Otherwise, if the community has a history of alcohol or drug abuse, it's just not a great idea to bring it in. Honestly, it's just not worth it.

Q: *What are the dos and don'ts about collaborating with communities and individual community members? For example, one researcher said he would never let a female student be alone with a male community member.*

A: We know that you have probably seen a lot of stuff in the media about abuse, assault and crime in Nunavut, and you may be entering our communities with a certain amount of fear about working with Inuit. While these things happen in the south, all you need to do is avoid "bad neighbourhoods." We are not going to pretend that there are not problems, and we think that you are going to see more evidence of alcohol-related problems than you would in the south, as things like this are not hidden here.

Statistics or personal experience may lead you or your team members to fear for your personal safety, so we have the following advice: trust your instincts in the same way you would at home. If you are a female, we think that it's a good idea to check with local women to ensure that the community members who you would like to work with are not a risk to be alone with. Inuit are very honest and will be upfront

with you about community members who may have a history of problematic behaviour. If you will be working with community members that have been labelled as "risky", we advise you to work with them in public places, and don't be alone with them.

S: As a non-Inuk female, I've lived in Pond Inlet for 20 years and can tell you that while the stats seem menacing, the reality is that most of the bad stuff happens within households, and does not extend to outsiders. If you're worried that you're going to be mugged or assaulted I can tell you that you're probably more likely to have this happen in a city down south. However, you should be aware that Inuit humour can involve sexual jokes and comments which may be misinterpreted as advances, and there are definite gender-divisions which mean that if you are a young woman doing work on "men's topics" like hunting, it will be noticeable. Good humour and clear boundaries are my best advice.

Q: *How long is an appropriate visit with community members and elders? When I visited for tea, I didn't want to overstay my welcome or leave too early when the conversation was flowing.*

A: Congratulations, you made us overthink this one! We then realized that this is one of those cases that boils down to two different worldviews: the southern view where there is a definite chunk of time for visiting, in which you can "overstay your welcome" and the Inuit view which does not have a similar time limit. Most Inuit are used to, and very comfortable with, unscheduled, extended visits that can go on for hours. In fact, people might even have a nap while you are there, but that doesn't mean that you are expected to leave! Do not wait for your host to indicate that it is time to go. The duration of visits in Inuit homes are determined by the visitor, not by the host.

We know that this is going to be something that you're not used to, so here is our advice. Since the social cues may not be the same as what you are used to, follow your instincts in the same way as you would in your own hometown. If the host seems disinterested or the conversation is winding down, feel free to leave. You don't need to make up an elaborate reason for leaving, or continue the conversation as you head out the door. Southerners are renowned for their ability to keep talking even as they are leaving! Just thank your host, let them know you'll follow up with them, and be on your way.

Q*: I really enjoy spending time with children and I got to know some of the children living near my B&B. Is it appropriate for a student researcher to introduce themselves to and hang around children, once they've spent some time in the community?*

A: Okay, another collision of social norms and worldviews that requires you to tread carefully. In Inuit society, children have far more freedom than you might be used to. This allows children to learn how to work together, test their bodies and learn how to problem-solve in a way that doesn't happen when they are closely monitored by adults. This means that you will often encounter unattended chil-

dren. You will be very interesting to them! They will want to know your name, what you are doing here, and if they can visit you. What should you do?

We believe that the responsibility lays with you, the researcher, to understand that while having children visit may be a cultural norm in the community, this norm doesn't necessarily extend to non-Inuit. Inuit children are extremely trusting because they have not been taught "stranger danger" like children in the south. Talking with children outdoors or in public places is totally fine, but most community members will find it creepy to see children going in to a house or room with a stranger. Even if you have been in town for a few weeks, it's not a good idea to invite children into your house, even though they may try to visit you.

There are a few things for you to consider: first, you may not be aware that there has been a brutal track record of southerners coming North and abusing Inuit children, both in residential schools and within the communities. Second, you are setting a precedent: while you may not be a risk, you are encouraging a behavior that encourages children to go with someone they don't really know. Third, you need to ensure that your reputation is not harmed. As we pointed out above, there have been so many cases of abuse in the communities and you really don't want community members being suspicious of your intentions. Feel free to visit with children outdoors, in public places, or with their families, the same as you might back in your own home. For everyone's safety, follow the same social rules regarding children as you would in southern Canada.

Q: *I have e-mailed community organizations about my proposed research a few times, but I haven't heard anything back. Should I give up and work with another community or are there other ways to connect with people at those organizations?*

A: You will be relieved to know that this is a very common question. You don't need to take it personally, people don't hate your research idea! Well, maybe they do, but it's probably something else.

First, here is some background information that you need to know. Unlike southern-based organizations, the Hamlet, HTO and Elder's Committees in small communities are sadly under-staffed and over-worked. In all likelihood, your proposal is coming to one of these organizations at the exact time as the proposals of other thousand researchers who all want an immediate answer and letter of support. This is an exaggeration, but to an organization like a Hamlet Council, you are just another request in between trying to keep sewage trucks on the road, deal with bylaw enforcement and run community programs.

How can you manage this reality while getting the answers that you need? First of all, please make sure that you have the right contact information. With high staff turnover, it is very possible that your request is sitting in an un-checked email account or on a vacant desk. You should speak with a human being and don't just send an email. A secretary or Manager will have the best idea of who you can contact, and ensure that the contact information is up-to-date. Second, ask your contact

person for what is a reasonable amount of time to wait before reaching out again. We know that you don't want to be a pest, but we also know that you need answers.

Q: *Do I need to compensate research participants for their time (during data collection/knowledge documentation) even if it is just a 5–10-minute survey? What about for results sharing if they are coming to a meeting to review the results? How can I find out how much is an appropriate amount to compensate participants?*

A: It should be universally accepted that people must be compensated for their time. In Nunavut, this is even more important to Inuit as we are dealing with food insecurity, an incredibly high cost of living and large families to support. When you consider that time spent with you as a researcher means that a community member is taking time away from their employment, care-giving, hunting or family tasks, we think you'll agree that it is fair to pay people for their time. We know that your universities are sometimes resistant to the idea of paying people, but we do feel that it's very important to not only compensate people for their time, but to pay a rate that takes in to consideration the cost of living in the North. It will be helpful for you to take a walk around our local stores to understand why it is important to pay people reasonable amounts. Your community contacts will be able to help you determine a fair rate. Organizations like Hamlets and HTOs, or the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) can also be helpful.

Q: *How can you do engaged research without asking too much of communities and northern organizations? How do you balance participation without being burdensome?*

A: We are pretty sure that this is a "southerner-over-thinking-fear-thing." It's probably because you're worried that you don't understand enough about Inuit culture, so you fear saying or doing the wrong things. Our advice for dealing with this is to be the opposite of what Inuit have come to dread in researchers: individuals who are perceived as selfish, self-absorbed, inconsiderate, treat Inuit like they are dumb, and are viewed as judgmental "white saviors" who take and give nothing in return. Create real relationships within the community. While Inuit may be non-confrontational, we are very open and honest with friends. Friends are eager to help out when they know you and they understand your needs and your goals. When you have established relationships within a community, you then have a core group of people that you can check in with to make sure that everything is running smoothly and that you are not a burden upon the community.

Q: *How can I involve Inuit in writing proposals, planning projects, doing data collection/knowledge documentation, data analysis, verifying results, sharing results, writing papers, presenting at conferences, and evaluating a project?*

A: This question is pretty easy to answer, and it all comes down to whether it is *your* research or *our* research. To be blunt, we have had enough experience with researchers who just view Inuit as bear monitors and skidoo drivers, or view us as a tool to get funding and publications by throwing around our names as

co-authors or co-researchers. But since you asked the right questions about involving Inuit in all stages of the research, we will assume that you genuinely want to partner with us, not just use us to make your work easier, so we'll tell you the answer. *Time* – it takes time to establish the relationships necessary to determine who the best community members are to be part of the research team. Not every Inuk is interested in, or has the time to commit to research. It is important that we have the right team of people, and this can take time. The next chunk of time will be spent determining what skills are already held by the team members, and what research, analysis and reporting skills are needed. Please keep in mind that English is a second language for many Inuit, and that our education system in Nunavut is definitely not on par with schools in southern Canada. Youth can be an exceptionally important part of the team, and mentoring them will ensure that you are helping to build research capacity in Nunavut communities. The biggest investment of your time will be in mentoring and supporting your Inuit partners during the different stages of research. If you really want to work with us, it is going to take time, but trust us that it will be worth it!

We hope that we have tackled some of your most burning questions and that this is the first of many open, honest conversations that you will be inspired to have with Inuit over the course of your career. If you take care to invest time, energy and authenticity in your relationships with the people and the communities of Nunavut, the payback in terms of your research, and the quality of your experience in the Arctic, will be greater than you ever could have imagined.

Reference

Pedersen, C., Otokiak, M., Koonoo, I., Milton, J., Maktar, E., Anaviapik, A., Milton, M., Porter, G., Scott, A., Newman, C., & Porter, C. (2020). ScIQ: An invitation and recommendations to combine science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit for meaningful engagement of Inuit communities in research. *Arctic Science, 6*(3), 326–339.

Chapter 2
Atauttikkut: Combining Home and Research

Enooyaq Sudlovenick

Abstract My experience as an Inuk graduate student working in my hometown has taught me many lessons. It is not as simple as being Indigenous to be able to do good research in the Arctic. There are also risks taken when we decide to work in the same place that we grew up. In this chapter, I discuss doing marine mammal research in my home community of Iqaluit, Nunavut and reflect on what it is like to conduct fieldwork in the Arctic as an Inuk researcher.

Keywords Fieldwork · Indigenous · Inuit · *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)* · Marine biology · Nunavut

2.1 Introduction

Halooqpagiit Inuqatiikat. Before you read ahead, I need to place myself within the context of this chapter, and share my background to introduce you to my roots. Knowledge is bound to place for many Indigenous peoples. I am Inuit from Nunavut. My mother's side are Inuit from the North Baffin region, stretching from Pond Inlet, Somerset Island, and to present day Taloyoak. I am also German, through my great grandfather on my mother's side, who was a whaler and married my great grandmother. My father's side are Inuit from Inukjuaq, Nunavik. His parents were forcefully relocated from the coast of Hudson Bay to Resolute Bay, making my father the first generation of Inuit to survive the lands of the high Arctic on Cornwallis Island. My mother grew up in the outpost camp in Cresswell Bay, until she was sent to Residential School in Inuvik, NWT. My father attended residential school in Churchill, MB. My name is Enooyaq, for my mother's sister who passed, and I grew up in Pond Inlet and Iqaluit.

I have been pondering which facet of my graduate school journey to share in this chapter. I know that there are many struggles that graduate students face throughout

E. Sudlovenick (✉)
Nunavut, Canada

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the years of rigorous scientific inquiry and scrutinizing minute details of daily scientific inquiry. There are still more layered hindrances that feel like weighted blankets stacked on the backs of Indigenous graduate students. This can feel like both a privilege and a crushing weight in the same day. We can explore the journey of higher education through the feelings of isolation in leaving home and everything familiar to us, leaving our aunties and nieces and nephews, our dogs and the smell of diesel from a snowmobile. We can also sift through the feelings of exposure when we are singled out as the sole Indigenous person in our classes, or asked to represent all Indigenous peoples in the country when we sit on a committee or join a school board. These realities of postsecondary and graduate school for an Inuit student are spooned onto their already-full plates containing first-generation scholarly goals and cycle-breaking tasks.

Growing up, hunting and camping on the land were always part of my family's life. We would spend most weekends and any holidays accrued over the year at our seasonal camps starting in spring and as far into the fall as we could. We spent countless hours berry picking, hiking, and scanning the horizon for wildlife. I did not realize until I was late into high school how lucky I was to be part of a family who had the means to maintain their hunting gear, including snowmobiles and our 15 ft Lund boat. Learning these values and skills have provided me with a stable center for a sense of identity and confidence that guide me through my higher education. Throughout my undergraduate degree, I was focused on getting good grades and going to the gym. I did not have, nor want, the capacity to explore the strange compliments from professors such as "good for you for making it out" and "amazing that *you* are here". Only when I got to the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) to start a master's did I start making time to reflect on my place as an Indigenous person in research.

I had secured a master's position with a supervisor early in 2017 and started field work even before my September start date to get a head start on sample collections. I worked on a project collecting seal samples back in my home community Iqaluit, where my parents and extended family live. I had seen a number of studies teeter on failure because of inadequate sample collection and I knew being home would give me the best chance of collecting enough samples. I had been exclusively studying marine biology and the western methods for examining wildlife populations to this point. I may have been vaguely aware of research conducted by Indigenous people, but I did not understand the intricacies of Indigenous methodologies. This young newly graduated version of me was eager to start doing research and besides… if I'm Indigenous… that's Indigenous research… right? Only after I was asked a hard question while collecting samples did I fully grasp the fact that the methodologies I learned during the many summer jobs I worked in field camps across Nunavut, would not work in my home community. The experience I gained working on secluded islands studying seabirds and collecting fish on seafaring ships did not prepare me for the realities of having a research base at home! All my previous experiences collecting wildlife specimens hinged on small research camps and teams with little to no relationship building with the local communities. There is a whole different conversation to be had about these types of research camps but I will not explore them now.

2.2 Back Home

I don't recall now what the question was, but I remember it was with a hunter I knew and I was sifting through the entrails of a seal he had already butchered and distributed to his extended family. After I distractedly answered a question he had, I noticed a marked pause and stillness: "so… is it safe to eat?" This was an eye-opening moment for a still-learning student. Of course, I had answered questions before, on other projects that I was involved in, but nothing so direct and important as this. I had never been asked such a question, not for a project that I was leading and most certainly not from someone I knew and not from another researcher who would soon forget the answer I gave after getting on a plane to head south. My words had weight now as an early career researcher, and I was so lucky to have learned this on a relatively low-stakes question and not in front of a journalist or in a community meeting.

Doing research in the very same community I grew up in was a big gamble to take, especially when I had not fully learned what the consequences could be of having inappropriate methodologies. I knew that if I worked in my town, I would have a place to stay, guaranteed access to seals since I was a hunter myself and my family had the means to go hunting. I also knew that I would be trusted by most of the hunters. Iqaluit had two boat launch docks and it is easy to identify boats with their owners. "There goes Jimmy in his aluminum 25 ft boat" and "Johnny's canoe always comes back with seals, he's a good hunter that one." My parents had been launching their boats off these docks for over 20 years at this point and my brothers weren't strangers either. I was not just another temporary face that may never return to give the results of their work back, I was a local. I also had a good "insider" reputation, as Tuhiwai-Smith described in her book, Decolonizing Methodologies (1999). I was not only judged on my purpose or work, but on who my family was and on our social standing in the community. This also meant that my conduct and even my results could take away or add to my families' reputation. There is so much more on the line when you decide to conduct your research at home, and even in your homeland.

My first field season had moderate success and I returned home a few more times before coming back for the second field season. It was early April when I flew into town and it was the height of seal hunting season in Iqaluit. The sun was higher and brighter than it had been in months and the seals were pupping and basking in the inlets and on the floe edge. It's the best time of the year and the best opportunity to get seal samples. I posted on the local Facebook groups, made announcements in Inuktitut and English all over the radio and let all my friends and family know that I was back and ready to sample seals! Despite my high hopes, I only got two samples that spring. This led me into a pit of self-doubt and deep uncertainty. Maybe I was not cut out to be a researcher after all. What was I missing? Spring bled into summer and I went back south to keep writing my thesis. My supervisor laid it out clearly that I did not have enough samples for a good analysis, so we made the choice to send me home again for the fall hunt. I flew home again in late August set

on collecting more samples and getting my local knowledge holder interviews done to document *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* on seal health.

One day I was out hunting with my father and we had harvested a seal. We were waiting on shore with the rising tide for our truck and trailer to make it through the queue of trucks picking up boats. The boat next to us had two seals laid out across the back and I debated on asking the hunter, whom we knew, to sample his seals. I pondered for 10 minutes and after some coaxing from my parents I finally called out, "hey… how many seals you got? Can I sample them?" The hunter looked very uncertain. "I'll pay you $100 per seal." To my immense relief he agreed. I sampled his seals and I told him all about the project, that we were just looking at blood samples to look for antibodies, lymph nodes for finding evidence of pathogens, and tissues for contaminants. The hunter and his children were genuinely interested and I had a great time taking samples with the little ones who were eager to hold the Whirl-Pak bags open for me. This personal approach to doing research was way more effective than the disconnected call to the public I had relied on a season before. I stuck with this approach and soon relatives of the hunters I worked with were contacting me to sample their seals. I was so relieved to finally be in touch with the hunters in a research capacity. I got many questions on what parts of the seal I was taking and if this worm or that was normal. I even ran out of sample kits and had to request more! I had finally realized what I needed to do, even as an insider with an already established relationship with the hunters and being extremely familiar with the area. People want to be treated as individuals and feel valued. After all, it is their dinner we are prodding at.

When I came to the realization that there was more on the line than the success or failure of my MSc program, I was fortunate enough to have fellow Indigenous graduate students to turn to at UPEI and even now during my PhD. Reaching out to Indigenous peers was essential for the success of my program. This was where I found guidance and strength; that no matter how hard my non-Indigenous supervisor tried to support me, he could not support me in the ways that my peers did. I urge my fellow Indigenous readers to find your peers at the campus Indigenous centre or conferences. If I was ever unsure how to approach a certain part of the qualitative aspect of my research, I had people to turn to. If I had questions on Indigenous methodologies, the group of Indigenous researchers had helpful counsel. I was also very fortunate to have my mother as a guide. She almost acted as a co-supervisor throughout the whole research process, especially since she sampled most of the seals with me and gave me advice on which hunters were most likely to agree to interviews. This was probably the biggest benefit of working out of my home community, having the unending support of my family. This was tested again and again when samples were sent to my parents' house after a hunter found strange spots on seal pelts or when lung worms were identified in another hunter's catch. Working at home let me access these anomalous seals that I would likely not have been able to had I been working elsewhere.

Many other benefits of working in my home community also arose during my graduate program. A number of hunters started to ask me questions throughout the year and even after my project was over about observations of strange seals and

whales. I was getting messages through Facebook with photos hunters took of seals asking if these seals were ill or normal. I always had the professional opinion of my supervisor who was a veterinarian, but I was immensely honoured to have these questions directed to me. I know first-hand how alarming and off-putting it can be to harvest a sick-looking seal or a deformed fish. We had always assumed the worst and given it back to the sea, but maybe now I can help answer some of these questions. We need more Indigenous-led research and being knowledgeable in veterinary medicine, or sea ice, or oceanographic physics are all ways to help Inuit answer questions that are arising in the face of a changing world.

2.3 Reflections

Conducting field research as an Indigenous student has many added pressures. We are often asked to carry more. Whether it is helping to "Indigenize" our academic institutions, speaking at other universities to model Indigenous research, or holding a brave face when we are scrutinized in our home communities for being too "schooled." As an Inuk woman blessed with a strong sense of identity and a western education, it is time to straddle both worlds of knowledge. There are many opinions on the place of Indigenous knowledge within university institutions. One such opinion is that universities are a place for knowledge to exist and be preserved, which can benefit Indigenous ways of knowing in our changing world. Another is that Indigenous knowledge does not need western validation to exist and remain true. After my short time in research, I am of the belief that research needs to be ethical; research is about collective responsibility (Kovach, 2009: 36).

I have been so immensely lucky to combine my two worlds that I love, research and my attachment to the Arctic. I know that I am but a trickle preceding the flood of Indigenous researchers to come and I look forward to seeing all the different and creative ways that Indigenous knowledge and western science can work together to create better projects. *Upigivagiit.*

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Enooyaq Sudlovenick has a Bachelor of Science in Marine and Freshwater Biology and a Master of Science in Veterinary Medicine. She is currently working on a PhD at the University of Manitoba on marine mammal health and *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*.

Part II
Human First; Researcher Second

Chapter 3
Be Prepared (to Be Wrong)

Tristan Pearce

Abstract There are so many things that I wish I had understood before heading North. My experiences as a graduate student working with communities in the Canadian Arctic have helped to shape my approach to preparing new graduate students for arctic research. We travel North with the best of intentions but be prepared (to be wrong). In this chapter, I discuss some of the lessons that I have learned working with Inuit communities and offer insights to new researchers.

Keywords Cultural relativism · Fieldwork · Inuit · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Ulukhaktok

3.1 Introduction

I first visited the Arctic in the spring of 2004 when I travelled to Inuvik in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), Northwest Territories, Canada. I was a first-year master's student and newly equipped with a year of coursework and a research proposal. The purpose of my visit was to present my proposal to the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) that represents the collective Inuvialuit interest in all matters pertaining to the management of wildlife and wildlife habitat in the ISR. My proposed research sought to document climate change impacts on infrastructure and adaptation options in the ISR; I would need the IGC's endorsement to proceed. The IGC is comprised of a chair and two representatives appointed by the Hunters and Trappers Committee (HTC) in each of the six communities in the ISR. Here I was, a 24-year-old graduate student with no experience in the Arctic, sitting among seven Inuvialuit knowledge holders. I was nervous to say the least. There was no guidebook for how to do this and I didn't know what to expect. The Council listened to my research pitch, and when I finished speaking, the Chair succinctly said "there are

T. Pearce (✉)
British Columbia, Canada

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already some people doing that kind of research in the Delta." My confidence in my research proposal was at an all-time low. Others on the Council confirmed the Chair's statement and I accepted the fate of my proposal as being redundant. The Council had a break after my talk and I was approached by a member from Holman (now Ulukhaktok) who said "ever wanted to visit Holman?" I had never thought of it as I had geared my research towards the delta where the impacts of melting permafrost on infrastructure were already evident in the literature. The member said "we don't get any climate change researchers coming to our community, but we are seeing lots of changes in the land that we would like to share." Two days later, I was on an Aklak Air flight to Holman. Seventeen years later, I have an MA and a PhD based on research that was conducted with Inuit in Ulukhaktok. Over the past 10 years, I have supervised many graduate and undergraduate students to work with Inuit communities and helped to develop multiple community-driven and governed research projects. In this chapter, I share and reflect upon my own experiences working on research with arctic communities. I touch upon some key re-occurring themes and hope that they will be useful to those who are preparing to conduct research in the Arctic.

3.2 Before You Go

My second visit to Ulukhaktok was in the summer of 2004. It was a time before Internet was in the North and life in the community felt much more insular and internally connected than it does now. I arranged for a place to live for the next 2 months on the phone with a local man. I really had no idea what the housing situation was like in the community nor what maintaining a house in the Arctic would entail. I arrived to the oldest house in the community, a heritage building, that was being used to store musk-ox hides. The toilet was a honey-bucket and the sink, I was told, would soon be hooked-up to a water tank. The tank was there, the urgency to install it was not. After clearing out the musk-ox hides and opening the doors and windows to air the house, I could start to envision it as home for the next few months. That was until one morning in my second week when I received visitors at the door, two guys from a mining exploration company, they too had rented the house but did not know that it came with me. We managed. In fact, we had a less crowded house than most people in the community and I was fortunate to even have a house seeing that some community members had been waiting years to secure their own house due to a housing shortage. Times like this were difficult, if not impossible, to plan for or anticipate, but they were manageable with an open mind and some flexibility. There are other things though, that one can do to prepare themselves before they travel North.

In the age of information, you should do as much homework as you can to learn about the people and place that you are visiting, as well as what research has been done, and might be ongoing, in the community and region, prior to traveling. A good place to start is by searching the Internet, journal databases, libraries, and research institute/station and/or government online libraries for relevant information, and talking with other researchers who may have experience working with the

community and region. By building a baseline understanding of the local culture(s), livelihood activities, language, history, economy, and governance structure, you can begin to understand the best way to initiate communication with the community and do so competently. Each region in the Canadian Arctic is governed by a different land settlement agreement between the Indigenous peoples of the area and the Federal Government. It is important to be knowledgeable of the agreement that pertains to where you intend to work, and understand the governance structure in terms of where your research topic fits and how you should go about initiating communication. There will be a research protocol specific to each region and community, and it is important to identify what this protocol is early-on so that you can follow it. That said, research protocols for some places may not be clearly articulated in sources that are readily available. It is important to not be discouraged by this but to initiate communication with the community or a regional representative and learn the local protocols first-hand.

It is a good idea to identify and reach out to other researchers who may be working with the community or in the region on similar topics, to avoid redundancy, identify opportunities for mentorship and collaboration, and to be respectful. The Arctic region has become a focal point for climate change research in the past two decades, with more funding available and hence more researchers working in the Arctic. There is also a well-established arctic research community that was active before this new research wave and continues to be so. Much can be learned from the experiences of others and the opportunity to speak with an established researcher familiar with the community and/or region with whom you wish to work, should be taken.

Knowing something about how the community operates, in terms of local amenities, activities, languages and customs, will help to make the visit more enjoyable for you and for the community. This means packing clothing that is appropriate for the environment and local culture, and any medications or personal items that you might need to stay healthy and would otherwise not be able to access in the community. By coming prepared, you will live more comfortably and also demonstrate the virtue of preparedness that is valued in Inuit society. It is respectful to have some knowledge of the local language. This could be as basic as knowing what dialect(s) are spoken in the community and be able to properly pronounce key place names, such as the name of the community, and common words and phrases (e.g. hello, goodbye, thank you, you are welcome, my name is). By doing so, you will show diligence and be more confident in your early social interactions. Such preparations create space for you to engage with the community in ways that are productive for you and the community, and which will contribute to your ability to conduct the research.

3.3 When You Stumble and Fall, Remember to Get Back Up

I remember waking up one morning after a snowstorm and shoveling the front porch of the house that I was staying at. I was up early and had energy so I thought that I would keep going and shoveled the steps of the houses across the road that belonged to Elders. No one said anything but I soon learned that I had done someone else's job who had been hired to clear the snow from the stairs of Elder's houses. It might seem like a small thing, but such an act, though well intentioned, could disrupt the local balance. It was one time, but had I built an expectation that I would clear the snow from those houses all the time, what would happen when I left? How did my actions make the person whose job it was to shovel feel? In another instance when I was a master's student, I naively thought that it was okay for me to visit a woman at her house during the day when her husband was at work in the community. My intention was to explain the research to the woman and invite them to participate in an interview. When the husband arrived home for coffee break, he thought that my intentions were otherwise and let me know that I had overstayed my welcome.

These examples are intended to illustrate the uncomfortable positions that a graduate student can put themselves in when they don't adequately acknowledge one's positionality, follow social cues and/or make their intentions clear up front. This is not meant to make the research process sterile or prescriptive, rather it is aimed at creating a platform of transparency on which the student and community members can operate with greater confidence. If the student is living in the community for an extended period of time, it is inevitable that the student will participate in community activities that are outside the parameters of the research. When managed properly, these engagements can help to strengthen relationships and improve the student's knowledge and understanding of the people and place (Gallagher, 2003). This might be sharing a meal with a family, going fishing or hunting, picking berries, sewing, helping to fix equipment or participating in sports. It is a good idea to engage in community activities when invited to do so but remember that you are guest, a temporary visitor, so be mindful not to overstep and offend anyone.

To start off on the right foot, don't make promises that you can't keep. It is easy to get caught up with wanting to make a positive impact in the community that you work with and in doing so, assume that this falls within the scope of being a graduate student. It is important to manage expectations by making your intentions clear up front. This needs to happen at two levels: the student and the community. The first step is for the student to understand what they intend to accomplish by being in the community. Their priority should be to conduct the research project that the community endorsed in the ways that were agreed upon and to do so as a representative of the university. They then need to be transparent with this intention so that community members know why the student is there and what they are doing. This can be accomplished by having an information bulletin posted in the community (e.g. at the store, hamlet office, on relevant social media platforms) that introduces the student and project, dates that they will be in the community and planned

activities while in the community (e.g. conducting interviews, observing a livelihood activity). Upon arrival, the student can identify other ways of communicating their intentions such as speaking on the local radio, attending meetings and communicating a consistent message through word-of-mouth. Making intentions clear up front gives the student direction, manages expectations and helps to build trust between the student and community members.

Trust is an essential part of a productive community-researcher relationship. If you are honest and forthcoming with people about what you are doing and what you intend to do with the information you collect, people are more likely to want to be involved in the research and to share their knowledge and experiences. Building trust takes time, but it is premised on the groundwork that a student can do early in the research process to make their intentions known. Trust can be reinforced by following through with commitments made like agreeing to update community members on research progress and sharing the final results with them.

3.4 Work with a Local Research Partner

Had I been working with a local research partner from the outset of my master's, I would have likely avoided some uncomfortable clumsy situations like the ones mentioned previously. A local research partner can guide a student in cultural and local protocols, help the student build relationships and familiarity with community dynamics, and facilitate data collection (e.g. identify and contact participants, translate interviews and interpret data) (Wolfe et al., 2007; Pearce et al., 2009). Working with a local research partner can also help to build legitimacy for the project in the community as it shows a commitment to working together.

Consideration should be taken when identifying a local research partner. There is a difference between a research partner and an assistant. The word partner implies a degree of equality. I view a local research partner as an equal partner to me in the research. Equal in terms of the ability to contribute to the research but in different ways than the student. It is important to acknowledge that the student is doing a graduate degree and hence, they need to be responsible for the research, but this research might only be possible through local partnership. The motivations of a local research partner might be employment, but they bring essential knowledge and experience to the project that without which, the student might not have a graduate degree. It thus makes sense that if a student is getting paid a stipend that a local research partner should also receive equitable payment for their work (Pearce et al., 2009). I budget funds for hiring local research partners into grant applications and allocate an equal amount for a research partner as I do for graduate students during the period of data collection in the community. It is important to identify a local partner who is suitable for working on the project and with whom you are compatible. If you are conducting interviews with a particular cohort of community members (e.g. sewers, harvesters, youth), it is logical to identify a partner that is best suited for working with that cohort. My graduate research focused on Inuit subsistence

hunting. It therefore made sense to work with a partner who was knowledgeable of hunting, familiar with the key hunters in the community and was able to translate between English and Inuinnaqtun, as many of the hunters work in both languages. You can work with more than one research partner if needed to cover the characteristics that are desired for doing the research (e.g. interpreter). Good rapport between the student and research partner is highly desirable and this is why it is important for you to spend time in the community getting to know people and work with a local organization who can help identify potential partners, before entering into a commitment. The right partnership can result in productive data collection that minimizes disruptions to community members and is done in accordance to local norms while providing local employment.

3.5 Remember to Breath

In May 2005, during my master's, I returned to Ulukhaktok to conduct interviews with community members about their observations of and experiences with changing environmental conditions associated with climate change. I aimed to conduct 30 interviews over the span of 3 months and I was keen to get started. Three weeks into my visit, however, and I had yet to conduct an interview. People were busy, ice fishing, traveling on the land and generally enjoying the nice spring weather; they had little time to do an interview with me, someone they hardly knew, if at all. At that time, the only way to communicate outside the community was to use the pay phone at the hotel or mail a letter. I was feeling anxious by my lack of progress in conducting interviews so I phoned by supervisor seeking advice. My supervisor's advice was to take a deep breath, pause for a moment, and then go to the store. I wasn't sure what he meant by "go to the store" so he clarified. He said, go to the store, buy something, stand outside until someone else comes by, say hi, and see what happens. He said to keep doing this: go to the store, buy something, hang around and talk with someone, see what happens, and repeat daily. He said to call him back in a week. I did as he instructed and it didn't take long for people, mostly kids at first, to talk with me. Soon I was being invited to join activities, like fishing, picnics, hiking and other opportunities to get to know people and them me. By stopping what I was doing, focusing only on getting interviews, and taking a pause, I was able to see that I had been working against, rather than with, the rhythm of the community. A few weeks later, when the sea ice was breaking up and the snow inland was no longer suitable to travel on by snow machine, people had much more time and interest in meeting with me. Due in large part to my good fortunate of meeting an experienced research partner and interpreter, my days quickly became busy conducting interviews.

I share this story because it represents a reoccurring theme in arctic research, which is the need to be flexible. Graduate student research is often conducted during the spring and summer months, May to August, to fit within the university semester system and because it is a nice time of year to be in the Arctic. The sun is higher on

the horizon with more hours of daylight and warming temperatures. It seems like an ideal time to visit the Arctic; however, this is also a time of the year that Inuit have been eagerly anticipating after a long winter season to travel and spend time on the land.

I have come to realize that learning to be flexible is a core skill to have when conducting research in the Arctic. Life is unpredictable and when your research necessitates working with people, you have no choice but to be flexible. It is best to build extra time into a trip to the Arctic. I like to have an additional month, if feasible, added to the length of time that I think I can accomplish my research goals within to allow me to be flexible. Events, like weddings, funerals, a visiting cruise ship, or a regional craft fair, can preoccupy community members at a time when you had hoped to collect data like interviews. At times like this, one needs to be flexible and go along with the rhythm of the community. This takes time. I appreciate that there are limits to the amount of time a student can spend in a community, constrained by funding and other commitments, and this is why it is necessary for students to be flexible in their expectations. I believe that it is better to conduct fewer interviews that are conducted well, and do so at the pace of the community, than to force them. Remember, it is you who is on a timeline, not community members, so you need to build time into your research plan.

3.6 Open Your Mind

Finally, a graduate student visiting an arctic community for the first time needs to be prepared for a cross-cultural experience. Having an open mind and positioning what one sees in the Arctic within the context of the local culture is key. A student's job is to learn and the best way to do this is by listening and observing. Make yourself present in the community, engage and participate, and put yourself in situations where you can learn more about the people and place. Much of what happens in the Arctic is serendipitous and it's about being in the right place at the right time. How do you do this? Each student has a unique personality and different levels of comfort, and will approach how they participate in the community in the ways that are suitable to them but the end goal is to make oneself present and available. I like to walk, so I tend to make myself present by walking in the community, sometimes with a destination in mind and sometimes not. By walking, I create opportunities for me to say hi to people, chat, visit, and get a sense of what is happening in the community that day. Daily life in the communities with whom I work follows a schedule based on municipal work and school: morning start, coffee break, lunch, afternoon coffee, and going to the store(s). I try to follow this beat and in doing so, have come upon situations that I would otherwise not have. The first time I was invited to have lunch with an Inuit family was when I passed a man walking home for lunch break and he asked me if I had somewhere to go for lunch. I didn't, and he invited me to join him at his parent's house. I met his extended family at lunch, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews, mom and dad. I was out of my comfort zone,

sitting on the floor around a selection of country foods laid out on a cardboard square with a steaming pot of soup in the middle. It was my first time eating *quak* (fish and meat that are frozen raw) and my first time to be immersed with an Inuit family who spoke Inuinnaqtun. That one experience was the starting point for me to build relationships with the family and to build confidence in myself that I could be open-minded and feel part of this community. When I reflect on this moment, I now also realize that it was not only me who was having an open-mind, but so was the man who invited me to lunch and his family who hosted me. They opened their minds, heart, and home to me, and in doing so, more personal walls came down, making all of us more open to building relationships.

Being productive is valued in Inuit society. In my experience, Inuit are extremely welcoming people, who judge not on who someone is, but rather on what that a person does. You may feel productive in an academic sense but you need to also show productivity in practical ways that people in the community can see. If you are staying with a host family, then you can identify ways in which you can contribute to that household, beyond the fee that you are paying for your stay. This might be purchasing household items at the store, such as general food and supplies, and doing basic labor that contributes to the functioning of the household. You should be open-minded to new ways of doing things, new routines and new outlooks on living. By doing so, you will gain respect from others, including those who you didn't know were paying attention, and help build the relationships needed to conduct your research.

3.7 Reflections

There is no single correct way for how to prepare to conduct research with Inuit communities but there are some key considerations that new researchers can take. Mindful preparations including early and ongoing communication with community representatives will help make your intentions clear and partnerships possible. Flexibility and open-mindedness will support research with communities that is conducted in ways that are locally relevant and appropriate. Opportunities to use the research as a way of giving back to the community will become evident and you and your research will benefit from strengthened relationships. Ultimately, we are guests when we visit a community and we want to strive to be the best guests that we can. This takes time, and is learned through experience and listening. Mistakes are likely to be made and should be reflected upon as markers for how we can do better. There are countless opportunities to learn while being in the Arctic, and I have come to know Inuit to be gracious teachers to the open-minded student.

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Dr. Tristan Pearce has a PhD in Geography and a Master's of Arts in Geography/International Development from the University of Guelph. Both degrees are based on research with Inuit communities in the Canadian Arctic. He continues to do community-based research in the Arctic and elsewhere in the World. He mentors graduate students at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) where he is an Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in the Cumulative Impacts of Environmental Change.

Chapter 4
Relationship Building as a Research Method

Kristin Emanuelsen

Abstract My experiences conducting research with an Inuit community in the Canadian Arctic have taught me that building meaningful community-researcher relationships is fundamental to doing good research. I learned the importance of spending time with people to create spaces for sharing and doing so at the pace of the community. In this chapter, I talk about my first trips to the Arctic and share some of my experiences and lessons learned doing community-based research. Arctic research is fraught with challenges, but equally with opportunities, many of which can be realized through the relationships that we build with the people we work with.

Keywords Inuit · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Sewing · Ulukhaktok · Women

4.1 Introduction

Building relationships was an essential part of my research. My master's research focused on the role and importance of sewing to Inuit women and required building trust with the women I wished to work with, to create a safe space to have conversations about sewing (Emanuelsen et al., 2020). It is customary for new graduate students doing community-based research to commit hours to reading papers and books about research methods. The guidance given is often general and sometimes abstract, and while it is helpful to have this information, one can be left feeling uncertain about how to apply it in their research. I have learned that building meaningful relationships is essential to do quality research. Research is not about extracting knowledge from people, but rather working with people to design and conduct

K. Emanuelsen (✉)
Oslo, Norway

T. Pearce (ed.), *Research with Arctic Inuit Communities*, Springer Polar Sciences, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78483-6_4

research that addresses questions that are relevant and important to them and their community. I quickly learned that there is a pace for doing community-based research. I needed to adapt my expectations, spend time building relationships, and be open to doing things differently. I learned new lessons each day that I implemented the next day, and although unknowingly at first, I was soon making progress in my research.

When I started to write this chapter, I reflected on my research experiences and realized that when I was first preparing to travel to the Arctic to discuss my proposed research with the community, little of what I had read discussed how community-researcher relationships are formed. These were like no relationships I had worked to build before; I had been preparing academically and mentally for the past year to do this, but I really had no idea what it would be like to be in the community. I aspired to be a part of a community-governed research project, in which I would work together with people in the community to accomplish a common goal. This sounded great on paper, but in practice, it was more organic and personal than I had imagined.

4.2 My First Trip to the Arctic

The flight from Yellowknife to Ulukhaktok felt like the longest flight of my life. While it is only a little over two hours, it felt like I was traveling to a different world. I was riveted with fear and excitement and thought about stories I had read about the Arctic to try and deflect my emotions and be brave. When we landed and I walked into the airport, I was greeted by an Inuit man who was going to drive me to my accommodation in the community. I felt like a foreigner, especially, as a young woman from Norway. My supervisor had thankfully notified people of my arrival, and I felt very welcome during my first encounters with people; my visit would have looked very different if I was not working with someone who had experience and good rapport with the community. The purpose of the trip was for me to discuss the proposed research with community representatives and to get to know the community and them me.

I stayed in the home of an Inuit Elder. Her house was simple but beautiful, and family memories covered the walls. The living room had a window that looked over the nearby hills and a basket full of sewing materials was always beside the couch with a selection of furs and colourful threads. It was not long before I was thrown into the mix of everyday life in the community. I spent the first night sitting around the kitchen table with my host and her family eating *piffi* (dried fish) that we cut up with an *ulu* (Inuit semi-circular blade with handle) and dipped in a bowl of mysterious yellow sauce that I later learned was duck fat. My host saw my hesitation and asked me if I needed any “special meals”, but I assured her that I had no specific dietary requirements, and that I wanted to be a part of everyday life including meals. I think that this made her feel more comfortable, not needing to change the meals she prepared, and seeing that I was eager to learn and try new things. That same night, I met my host’s adult daughter, who would end up guiding me during my time

in the community. She was living at the house together with her 10-year-old daughter and we quickly bonded over our joy of cooking, sewing, and most of all, our love for family. Staying in that household made me feel instantly welcome, and invited to be part of the community and culture.

4.3 Designing Research Together

During the first week that I was in the community, I was invited to meet with the Ulukhaktok Community Corporation (UCC) who governed the project within which my research would be situated. The goal of the meeting was to introduce myself and discuss my proposed research. My proposed research questions were designed to address a community-identified research need about the role and importance of sewing to Inuit women. My research would be part of the community-governed *Nunamin Illihakvia*: Learning from the Land project. With feedback and support from the UCC, I accompanied a local *Nunamin Illihakvia* worker on some visits with Elders to talk about sewing and learn about how to conduct interviews in the community.

For people to be able to open up and share with me, I first needed to spend time with them, building rapport and trust. This was made possible by working within a community-governed project, with a local research partner and building upon the long-standing relationships of my supervisor. There is not one way to build community-researcher relationships, but I learned that starting by spending time with people, without expectation but rather for the purpose of getting to know one another, was a good start. In time, healthy and honest communication created safe spaces for sharing and the interviews I ended up doing for the research are better described as conversations than interviews.

4.4 Building Relationships

Something that I have learned about building research relationships is that it takes time. When I started to build relationships in the community on my first visit, I was unrushed and did not have the pressure of collecting data. I was there to get to know the community, and for the community to get to know me. One day could include spending time with women, learning Inuinnaqtun words and sewing, while others were spent just being around families, a part of their everyday life. After I had become accustomed to the local visiting culture, it was easier for me to talk about the research as a part of my own interests and curiosity rather than being something that I was doing for work. I will always treasure my first household visits, feeling nervous and unsure, observing women sewing intricate stiches on hides as children played nearby. These were humbling experiences and I thought to myself how lucky I was to have the opportunity to share in other people's lives and culture. I also

learned early-on that you didn't get very far by just asking questions about sewing, but rather I needed to sit down, observe and try to sew myself. The Inuit way of learning is through stories, observation and hands-on teaching, usually from immediate family members. I purchased my own sewing materials at the store and brought them with me when I went visiting. Sewing became a space for me to build relationships, learn about the culture and receive guidance on how to approach the research.

I started to attend sewing groups twice per week where I would meet with other women and sew. This was a beautiful space where women came to share, sew, learn, and teach. I shared that my grandmother used to sew and knit clothing for me when I was little and how sewing and knitting were part of my family's culture. By sharing, I felt like other women were open to sharing with me, and I slowly felt more accepted within the group. It was at sewing group that I met another wonderful young Inuit woman who later also became a research partner. She was the sewer in her family and at the time was working on a beautiful *attigi* (winter parka) when we met. I spent many evenings at her house with her family drinking tea, watching television and playing games. Their generosity astonished me and I really enjoyed spending time with them.

4.5 Learning My Role as a Researcher

I returned to Ulukhaktok for a second time in January 2019 and stayed for two months. I was immediately met by my new friend and research partner who was excited to share all the beautiful things the women had made at the sewing group. She told me about who was attending the sewing group and who she thought we should visit and talk with for the research. We started calling people and scheduling times to visit. I thought that we could surely meet with at least two or three people each day, but I was overly ambitious and failed to take-into-account that people had other things to do than talk with me. My research partner knew this and worked at a completely different pace than what I was accustomed to. There was a different way of doing work in the community and I had to learn to be more flexible, not to impose my way of doing things, and to be patient.

We were joined on visits with older community members by an Elder who was an experienced sewer and was able to translate between English and Inuinnaqtun for us. She had a gentle demeanour and a soft voice that brought out beautiful stories from the people we were visiting. People were excited to share with us and I learned how a gentle and honest approach could elicit incredibly rich stories. I learned that an interview should be more like a conversation than a list of questions. It is about letting the participant guide the conversation and asking follow-up questions when appropriate to ensure that you have covered the scope of the research questions. It also includes spending time, watching and "doing life" with people. I spent a lot of time visiting people, drinking tea and sewing before I even asked a question.

People were learning about me just as I was learning about them, and in some cases, they were testing me before they were going to share with me. I remember

sitting at the home of one lady who I was trying to get to know. I had started to sew my first pair of mitts at the sewing group as a gift for my mom. The mitts were blue with a white flower and green leaves on the top side. I had seen that other women were sewing wide stiches around the edges of their mitts, and I really wanted to learn how to do this. I was thinking that a white stich would look good as it would match the white flower. I showed my mitts to the lady who I was visiting and shared my idea for a white stich. She swiftly plucked my mitts from my hands and started fumbling in her basket of sewing materials. She emerged with a ball of bright yellow wool thread. Without pause, she started puncturing my mitts with her needle, and before I could say anything, she proceeded to stich the edges of my mitts with the yellow thread. The vision I had for my mitts was shattered. The worst part was that there was a ball of white wool thread at the top of the basket. I asked myself if she did not like me, if she was teasing me, or letting me know my place as a beginner sewer in the community. I chose not to react, smiled, and pretended to like my newly adorned mitts, even though I could feel as though others in the room found the whole thing quite humorous.

I quickly learned that reciprocity was appreciated in the community and I always brought a small gift or a sweat treat when I went visiting. We would sit and have tea, talk and sew together. These visits became the highlight of my day. Sometimes I would visit with Elders who shared stories about their ancestors, the land and their own sewing knowledge. Other times I visited younger sewers who were learning new techniques, or middle-aged women who were reclaiming their culture through sewing. A highlight for me was when we visited one of my research partner's aunts. She had not visited her auntie for a while due to some family tension and this was an opportunity to break that barrier. Over the course of the visit, she started opening up more and more, asking questions and looking at her auntie's sewing. I could see the raw excitement and joy in her eyes. It was special for me to see her reconnecting with her family though sewing.

4.6 Trying to Fit In

I soon discovered how different the local culture and norms were from my own. That is not to say that they are better or worse than mine, just different, and it took some time to get used them. Inuit norms were hard for me to grasp at first. It made me realize how quickly we are to become accustomed to our own cultural norms, when there are many more ways of knowing and doing things. I found that my Norwegian upbringing benefited me in some ways and hindered me in others. More times than not, my own cultural experiences helped me to understand the local culture, such as the importance of family, and being productive to survive in a cold climate. There were also times when I didn't understand things and got social cues wrong. I didn't think that it was polite to help myself to food in the fridge at my host's house, but soon learned that it was quite the opposite, and she expected me to do things for myself and not be waited on. "Go ahead" was the usual command if I

was unsure whether or not to do something. It was quite normal to sit with others, watch television, sew and not say a word. I was not used to this and initially tried to start small conversations to the dismay of my company.

I thought that being a woman would benefit my research as it focused on Inuit women but this was not always the case. Some women saw me as a threat as I was not married and they made it clear that their guys were off limits. I had to make my intentions evident from the start, that I had a whole life back home with family and friends that I could not wait to get back to after I had done my research. I found this helpful, as some of the women started seeing me more as someone visiting with purpose and not someone coming to live there. I decided early-on to set some boundaries for how I was interacting with people. I tried to avoid spending one-on-one time with people who I had not been in contact with before. I tried to spend time outside, walking, visiting and participating in daily community activities, like going to the store and checking mail. It meant being motivated each morning to get up and get going. One of my most memorable experiences happened because I was up early and got outside for a walk. I was walking from the house where I was staying to visit the store and as I was walking around the corner, I saw an Inuit Elder stretching a large seal skin on the snow with her granddaughter. I could not believe my eyes and I got so excited. I was watching as the Elder was instructing how to stretch the hide: where to position the hide on the snow to get enough sun to bleach it, and where on the hide to put pins to secure it to the ground. I had gotten to know the granddaughter well, so we started talking and I took some pictures. It was interesting to see how the Elder used traditional knowledge together with a modern twist. The seal skin was being pinned to the snow using a range of kitchen utensils and hand tools. It painted a beautiful picture of adaptability.

4.7 Lasting Friendships

I learned that building community-researcher relationships was not just for the purpose of the research. These relationships were lasting friendships. When I returned to the university after my second visit to the community, it felt a lot like ending the chapter of a book. I studied at a university in Australia and it took me a long time to re-adapt after my time in Ulukhaktok. When I was reading about people going to the Arctic, I was not informed of the aftershock of it all, and it took me by surprise. I remember when I flew back to Yellowknife after spending 2 months in Ulukhaktok, walking into the supermarket with all the fruits and vegetables, candies, and chocolates one could ever dream of, but not feeling satisfied. I was missing the people, the friendly faces and greetings that I met each time I walked into the store in the community.

After being back at the university for a few months, my experiences in the Arctic became slightly more distant and I started feeling the steadiness of my normal life return. It also started to get more difficult to write about the research after having been away from the community for so long. That is when my relationships with

people in the community became imperative to the quality of my writing. I spoke with friends in the community daily, and they shared photos of what was going on, like family events and completed sewing projects, which kept me feeling connected. One day in particular, I was at a beautiful beach after a long day of writing at the university, trying to soak in the sun and ocean smell. I looked at my phone and there was a video of a friend traveling by snowmobile pulling a sled across the frozen sea ice; I felt as though my heart and mind were caught between two worlds. It was difficult to relate to the photo, being in a completely different climates at opposite sides of the world, but at the same time it kept me in tune with what I was writing in my thesis. Staying connected with people and seeing pictures of everyday life were key to writing and completing my thesis. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted my planned trip back to the community, but I did disseminate my research by mailing the community and social media has allowed me to stay connected with people. I look forward with anticipation to the day that I am back at the sewing group talking about the research and what comes next in this beautiful journey.

4.8 Reflections

Building community-researcher relationships is an essential part of conducting community-based research in the Arctic. I learned that building relationships was just as important as designing a sampling strategy and interview guide. My experiences have taught me that while there are many challenges to arctic research, there are equally as many opportunities, and building meaningful relationships helped me to overcome these challenges and seize opportunities. My relationships with people in the community extend well beyond the research and continue to add richness to my life.

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Kristin Emanuelsen has a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia.

Chapter 5
I Found Something I Wasn't Looking For

Rowan Schindler

Abstract I spent six weeks in the Canadian Arctic at the peak of winter, and in that world of black and white, I learned that life is grey and never simple. It changed how I view and experience the world around me and made me re-evaluate my relationships with nature, animals, food, and my sense of purpose. In this chapter, I reflect on my six-week visit to the Arctic and the impact that community members have had on my life since.

Keywords Fieldwork · Inuit · Journalism · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Ulukhaktok

5.1 Introduction

As the plane made the jump across the infamous Northwest Passage from Tuktoyaktuk to Ulukhaktok, I marvelled at the sea ice scattered on the water below. Thousands of white flakes looked like puzzle pieces scattered across a grey and inky black table. It was strange to think I had been sitting at the beach on the Sunshine Coast, Australia, just weeks earlier; I could still remember the searing heat of the sun. Only moments after reflecting on this memory, I stepped out of the plane in Ulukhaktok and I nearly suffocated as the −30 °C wind triggered my clearly sensitive mammalian dive response; my body thought I had dived into freezing water, and I needed a few moments to consciously breathe. Every time the wind would blow in the Arctic, my body would react, and I would hold my breath. I was so very far from home and my body was clearly used to diving into ocean water which was 22 °C all-year-round. My body was in a state of shock from the −30 °C degree winds. Diving into the deep end of Ulukhaktok eventually made me realise that I had much to learn about the Arctic, its people and environment, and myself. The

R. Schindler (✉)
Queensland, Australia

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people of Ulukhaktok would go on to teach me more about life, community, and even myself than I would have ever imagined.

5.2 Learning to Be Purposeful

I spent six weeks in Ulukhaktok between January and February 2014. I traded Australian summer for Arctic winter: sunshine, board shorts and beers on the beach with extreme cold, parkas and *piffi* (dried arctic char). My role in the community was to work with the local Nunamin Illihakvia[1] project team to help document, using film, video and news reporting, project activities that focused on sharing traditional knowledge and skills for hunting and sewing among Elders and younger generation Inuit. I undertook this work as part of an Independent Study in the final year of by Bachelor of Journalism program.

It was daunting to be in the Arctic at first. As an Australian, I felt a million miles away from home and the culture I was endeavouring to connect with was vastly different to anything I had known. The first week or so was purely spent meeting people, which often meant walking straight into their homes with a packet of biscuits and tea, which they would gratefully receive, point me to a seat, and often go straight back to whatever they were doing before I had arrived. After some moments, they would ask me a question and our conversations would begin to roll. During these first communications, I learned the importance of me being forthcoming with what I was doing in the community and by doing so, showing my purpose and usefulness. Everyone I met wanted to know why I was there and what I was doing in the community. Then, they would ask about my usefulness: what did I do? How could I be useful? For the most part, I was absolutely useless too them and people of course had no reason to give me any of their time. I had to find ways around this. At first, this was not really a conscious thing, but later on, I found I almost automatically started to look for ways that I could contribute and be useful. For example, I would help a hunter carry gear, keep a lookout when out on the land, or help hold wood or tools at the tool-making workshops. Quite often some people just wanted someone to talk to and that would be my usefulness to them. I found my greatest purpose and usefulness to be my personality, which is outgoing and I guess disarming. These characteristics have put me in good stead for my career in journalism and most things in life. I encourage other student researchers to harness their personality traits that lend themselves best to building relationships and use them to establish your purpose and usefulness in a community project.

The fact I was an outsider and Australian had both pros and cons. I arrived with incredibly fresh and naive eyes, but I found the vast majority of people to be very curious about me and my own culture and this became useful. The sharing of our

[1] The Nunamin Illihakvia: learning from the land project is an Inuit governed and administered project funded by Indigenous Services Canada's Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program.

cultures eventually became a great talking point. I vividly remember people telling me how much they loved kangaroos and asked if I hunted them. After I gave a talk to local school children about Australia and Australian wildlife, I would hear the laughs of kookaburras wherever I went, as the children would mimic the sound I taught them. It is one of my fondest memories of my time in the community: wandering around the community in the pitch black, with just house and street lights to guide my way, the Aurora Borealis dancing above me and children making the cackling laugh of kookaburras alongside me. It is a memory that follows me to this day.

5.3 A Relationship that Taught Me to Be Open-Minded

Hunting, fishing and trapping are very important to Inuit in Ulukhaktok, for food, clothing, culture and income. I was very interested in learning more about the culture of subsistence as it was a key focus of the project, and used my journalist training to watch, listen and learn. I had the opportunity to join individual hunters and project groups on various hunting trips including hunting seals on the sea ice and checking fox traps. During these trips, I was able to learn from the hunters who shared stories and knowledge with me. Story telling is perhaps the most passionate of practices of the hunters I came to know.

Adam Kudlak is one of these hunters. Adam and I spent hours talking about hunting, either while we travelled between checking fox traps, watched his own video footage of arctic wildlife, made hooks and tools in his shop, fixed a snowmobile, or over tea. I was amazed at his passion for hunting, his culture and providing for his family. It is something that you can truly see in his eyes. It is the fuel for his life and something that gives him purpose. I had heard stories about Adam from my supervisor who shared his admiration for Adam's willingness to teach others and he encouraged me to introduce myself. I did so by visiting him at his house that he shares with his wife and three children. I was welcomed in and after talking about why I was in the community, the conversation soon shifted to talking about hunting. The visit ended with Adam asking me, "you want to go out hunting with me tonight?" "Of course," I answered. An hour later, in the early evening, I was dressed in all my warmest gear and sitting in a sled box being pulled behind Adam's snowmobile over sea ice. The *aliak* (sled) bounced and jolted its way between cracks and mini-mountains of jagged toothed ice. It was cold, as it always was during my time in Ulukhaktok. The −30 °C made it hard for me to breathe at the best of times. I sat huddled in the *aliak*, head down and tucked under the meagre sides of the sled box for protection. We stopped intermittently to check *agloos* (seal breathing holes) and fox traps. We stopped at the last trap for some tea and watched the Aurora dance amongst the stars. "What do you think?" Adam asked me. "Oh, incredible," I mumbled through my woollen face covering and jacket. My mouth was wide open as I craned my neck up. My eyes, through ski goggles, marvelled. This was a privilege. Adam shared stories of the Aurora Borealis and then pointed to a group of stars, Orion's Belt. "They are dogs hunting a polar bear," he said, as he told the tale of the

hunting dogs stopping the polar bear for the hunter, who followed behind. The bumpy, freezing ride back to the hamlet let the magnitude of what I'd just experienced sink in. The ride back into town was slow as Adam picked his route through the gnarled ice. I remember how I was so uncomfortably cold my knees burned from chill. I begged the lights of town to get closer and closer. The discomfort of the cold, the darkness and total alien environment imprinted itself on me, and my memory of it will remain forever. When I look back today, there are times I wish I was back there, shivering on the back of Adam's sled.

Adam's love of hunting was obvious. The pursuit of acquiring food for his family drives his life. Purpose became the keyword for me when thinking about the role of hunting in the community. In approaching hunting, I needed to put much of my personal biases to the side. As a son of a veterinarian, hunting is not something I grew up with or supported before visiting the Arctic. Community members like Adam opened my eyes to a different human relationship with the environment in which people hunted wildlife for food and protected the habitat that supports the wildlife. These relationships changed my view of my relationship with the environment and of hunting. In Ulukhaktok, hunting gives people purpose and a means to subsist. It is an immeasurable part of the community's culture.

5.4 Learning from Elders

I had the privilege to spend time with Elders who are the knowledge holders for the community and the core teachers for the Nunamin Illihakvia project that I was documenting. One Elder told me, while we both sipped on tea, that young people in Ulukhaktok must learn to "walk with one foot in the Western, modern world, and one foot in traditional culture". This message sits with me to this day as I imagine the balance between the two being more like walking a tightrope.

5.4.1 Robert Kuptana

Two Elders who welcomed me into their home and lives early in my visit were Robert and Agnes Kuptana. The couple loved to chat and were wholesome, witty, and welcoming. Over tea and food, Robert recommended that we go out and learn how to build an *igloo* (Inuit snow house). Not long after, armed with an *igluliogut* (snow knife) and a handsaw, we were on the search for the right type of snow to cut snow blocks. Robert started by cutting blocks and instructing us where to lift them. Soon he was huffing and puffing. "You don't work hard in the Arctic," he told me. "If you sweat, you freeze, then you die." He then directed us on how to cut blocks while he sat, watched and smiled. He said that he and his brother could build an igloo in a couple of hours when he was younger; ours took us two full days. During tea breaks and while sitting in the finished *igloo*, Robert shared stories of growing

up on the land and his knowledge of wildlife and the environment. I vividly remember the two polar bear stories Robert shared. One was that the trick to hunting bears was to use dogs. The dogs would encircle the bear, and while it lunged for one dog, another dog would "tickle" it from behind. This would wear it out and keep it from running or attacking the hunter while they got their aim. The other was about how you hunt a bear by yourself. "The trick to hunting a polar bear is to get naked," he said. I cracked up laughing. "No, it's true," he said. "You get naked, then you find the bear in its den. You crack the snow and get it out, or collapse the den. Then when it sees you naked, it is too embarrassed by your naked body to attack you. It becomes still." I don't know if I would ever try getting nude with a polar bear, but the stories and time that Robert shared have left a lasting mark on me. Robert is charismatic and jovial and it feels as if he was my own relative.

5.4.2 Winnie Akhiatak

Another incredible Elder that I met was Winnie Akhiatak. Winnie is a quiet, thoughtful and insightful woman, who watched over me without me knowing. I remember well when she told me that I was getting frostbite on my face due to my poor face covering. I only had a cheap balaclava type of face covering, which she said was no good. She instructed me to come see her at her house and she would fix me a proper hood on my parka. When I arrived to her house, there was a piece of fur, a teapot and fish jerky on the kitchen table. Winnie immediately took my parka and began to fasten the fur onto the rim of my hood. The fur trim is called a *puhitaq* in Inuinnaqtun and Winnie stitched the fur onto my hood with deft skill. My jacket wasn't anything flashy, an Eddie Bauer jacket with many pockets that I bought in Vancouver before I'd arrived almost exclusively for the price and the pockets to store batteries in. Winnie and I chatted and laughed as she sewed, mostly at me when I gagged trying *piffi* (dried Arctic Char). It was a totally new texture and taste for me, and Winnie giggled as I spooned mayonnaise directly into my mouth after forcing down a piece of *piffi*. To me, it was like eating extremely fishy condensed sawdust. I closed my eyes and tried to imagine I was eating a potato chip. Thinking about the taste of *piffi* still hits me today. When I tried on my parka with the new *puhitaq,* Winnie said that I looked like a true Inuk. I never knew much about why Inuit had a fur ruff on their hoods but soon learned the benefits of it when I encountered my next cold arctic wind. Instead of the wind hitting me smack on the face, the *puhitaq* created a kind of eddy of air around my face, which re-directed much of the wind over my head. I felt warmer and proud of my improved parka. My parka with its *puhitaq* is still one of my proudest possessions.

5.4.3 Harold Wright

One of the fondest relationships I developed in the community was with a gentleman named Harold Wright. There is an infinite amount I could write about Harold, an extremely intelligent, complex, and yet simple man. My supervisor introduced me to Harold and over days and days of sitting and talking, I had some amazing conversations with him about his life, his experiences and his lessons learned living with Inuit. Harold lives almost entirely on a diet of camping biscuits, butter, tea and locally harvested meat and fish. That was exclusively what I ate when I visited him. On one of the days Harold invited me for tea, he had an ulterior motive. I waved as I approached his house and he was readying his husky, Quetzalcoatl (named after the Aztec god of wind, air, and learning) and a small sled. He informed me we that we were going to go get ice. The lake where people like to get ice for drinking water is located a few kilometres from the community across an ocean bay. Harold and I walked and talked about many subjects, from politics, to religion, education, culture, and mythology. Meanwhile, Quatzequatel pulled the sled. We got to the lake and Harold handed me a hatchet. "Now, let's see how you go getting ice." I got down on my knees beside the biggest crack in the ice I could find. The crevice in the ice was probably three or four inches wide but quite deep. You could see metres and metres through the glass-like ice if there wasn't a dusting of snow on top. I chose a spot about a foot parallel to the crack, as instructed, and proceeded to impact the ice. After half a dozen good chops, a new crack appeared where I had been working the axe dislodging manageable chunks of ice. It seemed like a simple task but it was indeed complex and guided by his knowledge, without which the task would have been very difficult, if not impossible. I loaded the sled for Harold, with what could have been hundreds of litres of water. Harold gestured to Quetzalcoatl and she began pulling and bouncing as the sled slowly moved. She was a lightning bolt of energy and soon enough had the sled tugging behind her like it wasn't much work at all. Harold picked out a path down the small slope, then to the sea ice. We made our way along the coastline into the bay and home to his house. We loaded his indoor water tank with the ice, job done. I loved the purposefulness of the task, which was simply to get water. I still find myself remembering this as I turn on my water tap at home.

I loved those days sitting with Harold and Quetzalcoatl. The dog would often jump up on my lap and look out of Harold's big window at the frozen bay. Harold's house had only two chairs, one for him and one for Quetzalcoatl. When you visited you had to take one of the chairs. Later on, my supervisor asked me which chair I sat in. "The one furthest from the front door," I said. He looked amazed. "That's Harold's seat. He never lets anyone sit in that." I think that I found a part of me in Harold. That part which longs for the kind of freedom he has and continues to live. I am in wonder of his broad knowledge and how he can do a multitude of things across an astounding range of subjects. I just never in my life expected to find someone like him on the edge of the world. He remains one of the most interesting humans I have met, someone who had a profound impact on me and my outlook on

life. On my last night in Ulukhaktok I told Harold I was leaving the next day. He seemed genuinely sad by that news. He showed me some of his prized possessions, some rifles, and we continued our easy chat. The next day I walked over to Harold's to say goodbye to him and Quetzalcoatl. I gave the dog some pats and went to shake his hand. "I'll come and see you off," he said. I wasn't prepared for that and walked back to my place to get my belongings. Harold waited outside the house that I was staying at and then said goodbye and gave me a hug farewell before I got into the taxi to the airport. He said some kind words, then turned with Quetzalcoatl and headed back to his house.

5.5 Lasting Impacts

Upon my return to Australia, many people asked me about my experience in the Arctic. A number of things were often asked that usually related to what I thought of hunting and Inuit relationships with animals and food. Many people also asked if I had culture shock. When I look back upon my time in Ulukhaktok, I reflect fondly on the sight of the family I stayed with, multiple generations sitting around a caribou on the floor of the family kitchen. The carcass of this incredible animal sitting on flattened cardboard boxes while the family were elbow deep in flesh, butchering it and portioning it out. While this may sound confronting, it became a very normal sight during my stay. The animal's life was sustaining this family, their lives, their individual health and the health of the family unit. It brought people together, nourished them and their culture.

In absolute honesty, the culture shock for me was returning to Western "civilisation". I flew into Calgary where I was picked up by my distant uncle and aunt. They took me to a supermarket to purchase our food. My aunt told me to go and choose a roast for dinner. As I stood in front of the meat section, I realised I was standing in front of a wall of meat. I had no connection to the animals and where they were raised, how they were raised, what they ate, how they lived or how they died. I stood dumbfounded, somewhat numb and confused. My aunt perceived my bewilderment and suggested a pork roast. She bent down, and scooped it up in its plastic wrapping. We exited the store and the drive home bombarded me with lights and sounds, and I can vividly remember the billboards and advertisements jumping out at me. I never imagined I would be so confronted by things I grew up with and learned to passively live with. Now these things felt threatening, aggressive and invasive.

The community of Ulukhaktok let me into their lives for a brief period of 6 weeks, but what they actually did was enter my life forever. The experiences and lessons I took away from Ulukhaktok will remain with me because they were real. They were, at times, uncomfortable and confronting, but they were always grounded in genuine human interactions based on trust and acceptance. After coming home, I realised that I never had anything to offer them and they never really wanted anything from me. I was an outsider coming into their community and they had no reason to give me any heed at all but they welcomed me, opened their doors and

shared their lives with me. I realised the knowledge and wisdom of their accumulative experiences and their invaluable traditional culture and their enduring thirst for freedom and a better future for their community flowed into me. Perhaps the strongest lessons I took away was the need for purpose in people's lives, the value of community and real human relationships, and that life is never black and white.

I sometimes feel guilty because I feel the people I spent time with in the community gave me so much and I don't know how much I was able to give them in return. I don't know how much my tales of kangaroos, kookaburras and surfing still resonate with them. I often wonder if they remember me, and sometimes I hope they don't because they have more important things to do than remind themselves of some young Australian who visited for a short while. Sometimes though, I hope there is still a young Inuk mimicking a kookaburra's laugh, because I am still telling tales of my time in Ulukhaktok.

Rowan Schindler has a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and History from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia. He currently lives in New Zealand where he works as a professional journalist.

Part III
Working Together for a Common Cause

Chapter 6
Let Your Humanity Guide You

Elizabeth Worden

Abstract Community-based arctic research is as much about being a good researcher as it is being a good person. Human relationships are the foundation of meaningful community-researcher relationships. In this chapter, I discuss my experiences during my graduate research with an arctic community and reflect on my role as a researcher working within an Indigenous culture. I talk about doing research together with people in the community and how this led to the success of my research, and to opportunities to use research as a way of giving back to the community.

Keywords Aklavik · Beluga · Fieldwork · Inuvialuit · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Traditional knowledge

6.1 Introduction

A question that has consumed the minds of many researchers at some point during their careers is how, as a researcher, can you establish yourself both as a credible and defensible scholar while also contributing to research that brings about positive change and mutual benefit to those involved? I do not profess to have a clear answer to this question, but consider it as I reflect upon my own experiences during my master's research working with community members in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, Canada.

From the beginning of my graduate program, I sought to decolonize the research process by being attuned to reducing inherent institutional power dynamics and personal cultural biases. I did so by reading critical theories and emancipatory literature identifying colonial processes in academia and research, and through conversation with Indigenous friends and scholars. Resources written by Indigenous

E. Worden (✉)
Manitoba, Canada

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authors and organizations were paramount in laying the groundwork for my future actions. In particular, I tried to follow the teachings of Margaret Kovach, a Plains Cree researcher, scholar and author who suggests that an Indigenous research process should consider three pillars: (a) the cultural knowledges that guide one's research choices; (b) the methods used in searching; and (c) a way to interpret knowledge so as to give it back in a purposeful, helpful and relevant matter" (Kovach, 2010, p. 44).

It was very important during my graduate program to be in tune with my own gut feelings and allow my morals to guide my actions and engagements with people in Aklavik. I tried to identify and adopt a research approach that was more in line with Indigenous enquiry. As a non-Indigenous person who has been trained in a western academic system, I became aware of the cultural limitations and inherent biases that I would bring to research with Indigenous peoples. I encourage readers to think critically when considering their research approach and design: just because other scholars have done it one way does not mean that it is the best option! Think of the connotation of the language used, research the origin of the methodology, read critical theory (preferably by Indigenous authors), talk to your Indigenous partners about their thoughts on these matters, and be open to finding alternate approaches to conducting research. If the end goal is to create a mutually beneficial research project between yourself and the community, you must also be willing to break the mould and co-develop new ways of doing things.

6.2 Designing Research Together

A strong starting point for any community-based research project is to collaboratively design the research with people who live in the community. This seed was planted for my project at the 2016 Beluga Summit in Inuvik: a gathering of stakeholders involved in the co-management of the Eastern Beaufort Sea beluga whale population and monitoring activities for the Tarium Niryutait Marine Protected Area in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Here, representatives from Aklavik presented their concerns regarding the community's severely depleted beluga whale harvest in recent decades. They proposed a project that would identify local Inuvialuit perspectives on why Aklavik's beluga harvest numbers have dropped so much in comparison with the other communities in the Beaufort Delta. I took this opportunity and initiated conversations with the Aklavik Hunters and Trappers Committee (AHTC). These conversations cumulated into a draft research proposal that I shared in-person at the AHTC monthly meeting in Aklavik. The committee provided additional feedback on the proposal and supported me to continue to develop the research with the community.

During this first visit to Aklavik, I made efforts to meet people in contexts other than as a "researcher." Northern communities see an influx of researchers every year, and in such small towns, people take notice of new faces. As with any small town, the more you are around and participating in the community, the more connections you will make. I was extremely lucky to have had two notable

opportunities to engage with inspiring Elders during this first visit. Two Gwich'in Elders from Fort MacPherson were staying at the same small hostel as I was and we often shared supper and conversation. They were running a life skills program for youth in Aklavik and invited me to discuss my project with the youth. It was during these impromptu opportunities that I created connections with many youth, and some of them remembered me as "that girl who presented in their class" when I returned to Aklavik months later. For a few nights, I also stayed with Annie B. Gordon, a respected Elder in Aklavik. We developed a strong connection through our shared love of stories and knitting and spent our evenings letting our conversations be guided by the flavour of the hour. The time I spent with Annie B. was personally meaningful, but at the time, I didn't realize the impact it would have on my research. She instilled in me a deep respect for her culture and the changes she had witnessed in her lifetime, and taught me the importance of listening and understanding people's stories.

I carried these initial teachings of Annie B. with me to my next visit to the community from June to August 2017. I was fortunate that my first weekend in Aklavik was the Canada Day long weekend, and it was a huge celebration for Canada's 150th year since Confederation: five days of jamborees, sporting events, a big, multi-community canoe race called "Race the Peel", a fishing derby and many feasts. It offered a unique opportunity to have fun, meet people, and take part in some of the events! I participated in a canoe race (we did not win) and sang in a talent show (I also did not win). Later in July, at the coastal camp of Shingle Point, I took part in some events known as the "Shingle Point Games." I participated in a foot race and *kipotuk* – Inuvialuit version of ring toss – and did much better. It was a day of games, events and a big cook-out where people who were camping on the coast gathered and socialized. During my time in Aklavik I went to card game nights, played video games, watched movies, biked around with youth, fished, canoed and swam with youth, cruised around town in people's trucks, camped in the Delta, helped set fish nets and cleaned fish at Shingle Point, taught a sushi-roll making workshop, and took anybody up on a dinner invitation. By putting myself out there and being an active participant in social events, I built relationships outside of my role as a researcher, and these relationships soon evolved into friendships.

6.3 Be a Person First and a Researcher Second

Relationship-building is an integral part of establishing reciprocity and cultural awareness, which in turn are foundational to mutually beneficial research. It is human nature to have more of a vested interest in the well-being of those we know and care about, and it is essential that building this connection be considered as an important part of a community-based research approach. The history of research in Indigenous communities is fraught with colonial approaches, extractive measures, and dehumanizing interactions. Even still, many positivist, empirical approaches govern research on Indigenous lands and in Indigenous communities, and a strong disconnect and mistrust can still prevail as a result of these approaches. Although

each Indigenous culture is unique and has its own protocol, relationship-building is a widely shared practice. Before and during my master's degree, I spent time with Ininew and Anishinaabeg in Manitoba, and the importance of friendships, relationships and sharing ceremony (in a lodge or on the land) were reinforced time and time again. Rushing into a research relationship with only the end goal in mind is not culturally appropriate when working with Indigenous peoples. It is the researcher's responsibility to allocate both time and funding to establish strong relationships, which can then lead to trust, friendship and respect. As several scholars working with Indigenous communities have written, one of the best things you can do as a researcher is to drink tea together (Castleden et al., 2012).

Coming back to the three pillars of Indigenous research highlighted by Cree scholar Margaret Kovach, thus far I have described approaches pertaining to the first pillar: "the cultural knowledges that guide one's research choices" (Kovach, 2010, p. 44). Arguably, relationship-building can also fall into the second pillar: "the methods used in searching", because it lends itself to an important Inuvialuit methodology of enquiry, learning through experience. This way of gaining knowledge comes from the Inuvialuit belief that a person can only truly learn about something if they actively experience it. Experiential learning is a methodology that, in my opinion, connects all pillars of Indigenous research because it is foundational to cultural awareness that will then inform the outsider (the researcher) on ways to interact with participants in respectful and engaging ways.

Collecting data is often prone to unforeseen changes and therefore synonymous with words such as arduous and stressful. However, as a researcher working with data that are narrative stories, perspectives, lived experiences and oral history, unforeseen changes often led to some of the most rewarding and fascinating moments in the project. These moments provided me with opportunities to show humility, flexibility and curiosity. As an outsider to the community, navigating the interview process alone can be daunting, so it is essential to reach out to local organizations that can provide guidance. I did this by working closely with the AHTC. Prior to conducting interviews, I was at the AHTC daily working with the resource person Michelle Gruben to discuss the interview questions and identify people to interview. Her advice not only helped me to organize my plan into tangible action, but also grounded my expectations in reality. Conversely, my presence at the AHTC allowed people to be more aware of my intentions, provide real-time input to research design so it better met their interests, and created an avenue through which they could know me professionally. I suggest to prospective researchers to not be scared of "setting up office" at the organization supporting your project (assuming they have room) rather than conducting your work from your own accommodation. As with anywhere, a communal workspace allows for ideas to flow, contributing strongly to the end goal of a mutually beneficial research project that includes the perspectives and input from many.

6.4 Let's Do It Together

I conducted interviews in the community together with two local research partners. I secured funding for their wages through the Aurora Research Institute's Research Assistant Program. The AHTC chose two individuals who both displayed a passion for the research topic and had personal experience with beluga harvesting and being on the land. One of the research partners had prior experience working with monitoring and on-the-land programs, and had a very strong skillset in organizing, coordination and communication with interview participants; she was the glue that held our interview schedules together. Without her local knowledge of who were good candidates to interview, her excellent work ethic and proactive attitude on getting things done, we would not have been able to interview an impressive 32 people during a 6-week period. She also provided context during and after interviews on the process and complexities behind the whale harvest, as her partner is one of the main hunters who still manages to harvest whales most years. My other research partner was an Elder who had not previously been employed in projects that the AHTC ran with harvesters, scientists, or other researchers. Various interview participants acknowledged the fact that he was a new face to this line of work in the community, and expressed their appreciation that we hired outside the usual pool of candidates. His enthusiasm to enter this realm of work was evident and the connection he developed with the AHTC has continued to the present day; he is still employed to work on various on-the-land programs. He was passionate about the interview process and contributed an enormous amount to prompting questions, conversations, and stories while our team and participants were talking. His experience on the land was evident in the stories he shared during the interviews, and provided essential cultural grounding and clarification to me.

While in Aklavik over the course of summer 2017, I was reflexive to community input by taking direction from interview participants, the AHTC and the local research partners. One major change to the research design occurred early in the interview process, when a research partner and I discussed that interviews were sometimes ending in a rather awkward way. Our line of questioning included the past and present beluga whale harvest in Aklavik, and thus interviews often ended on a sombre note with participants describing dramatic social and environmental changes preventing them from harvesting, with no acknowledgment of the resilient and adaptive attitudes of Inuvialuit in Aklavik. It became apparent to us that we needed to add a section to the interview guide where we asked people to share their perspective about what could be done to support a healthy beluga harvest into the future. Adding this section not only provided a more comfortable and appropriate ending to the interviews, but offered an avenue through which follow-up activities could be identified.

6.5 Making Meaning from Interview Data

Making meaning from 32 interviews ranging from 15 min to one and a half hours was no small feat. Alone in Winnipeg after the immersion of living in Aklavik, I was presented with perhaps the biggest hurdle as a researcher: confronting and minimizing my own biases as a non-Inuvialuit person, tasked with interpreting Inuvialuit knowledge. I took solace in the stories from the recordings and our notes, and while listening to participants share their knowledge and opinions, I was brought back to the moments of listening to them speak and the context of their words. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith says, "the story is both a method and meaning" in many Indigenous cultures. When used in research, stories maintain control with the storyteller and not with the researcher, which complements decolonizing ways of conducting research (Smith, 2013, p. 146). After reading extensively on making meaning from Indigenous perspectives and phone calls with the AHTC and my research partners, we agreed that narrative enquiry was the most appropriate way in which to present the results. Narrative enquiry, simply put, is making meaning through story, and is central to various Indigenous methodologies and cultures. To amplify the voices of Inuvialuit in this project, I presented the results primarily through quotes and stories from the interviews, with very little researcher dialogue in between. After completing a draft of the results and before launching into the discussion or conclusion, I returned to Aklavik to co-interpret the results.

Between June 21st to July 9th 2018, I spent time in Aklavik working with participants who had quotes featured in the results. We ran live editing sessions where I brought my laptop with the draft document and reviewed the results together. Sometimes participants were only interested in revising their own quotes and the context in which they were presented, while other people provided extensive editing and feedback, and focused on the big picture and what the results were saying as a whole. This intensive process, in retrospect, was the most critical and rewarding part of the entire research engagement with Aklavik, and I cannot emphasize enough how necessary it is for researchers to allocate time to do this. Not only did it make participants more involved in the process, but it also showed respect for their stories and the relationships we were building around them. It allowed me to ensure that my biases and shortcomings as a non-Inuvialuit researcher were minimized, and that Inuvialuit perspectives were accurately represented. Each person greeted me with more familiarity, and many expressed their approval that I was sitting with them, asking their opinion, and incorporating their changes to the document. In a world where mistrust between Indigenous peoples and research remains pervasive, steps such as this are instrumental in building trust, respect and confidence that the results are honestly and accurately represented. After all of the individual editing sessions, I then put together a presentation for an open community meeting and feast, where several locals (both involved with the project and not) attended and provided feedback in the form of questions, concerns and conversation. Only after this stage did I feel more comfortable drawing conclusions from the results.

6.6 Research as a Way of Giving Back

An important step in truly creating research that is mutually beneficial comes when the project would otherwise be considered to be complete. Once I had defended my thesis, obtained my master's degree and published a paper together with community co-authors, my benefits were obvious. Does my degree, thesis and paper benefit the community? Simpson (1999) and Nadasdy (1999) both critique the fate that generally befalls research involving Indigenous knowledge. They argue that research findings are generally stuck in theoretical and cerebral conversations on paper, "collecting dust on shelves" and infrequently result in concrete or beneficial action for the Indigenous peoples involved. This is where Margaret Kovach's third pillar of Indigenous research process comes most into play: "a way to interpret knowledge so as to give it back in a purposeful, helpful and relevant matter."

Reading perspectives from Indigenous authors and professionals on the concept of "giving back" in research left a great impression on me, but nothing provided as much of an urgency to take action as the friendships I developed with people in Aklavik. Some of things that we learned about during interviews included: Elders who missed the social interactions, sharing, and knowledge transfer surrounding the harvest; harvesters who wished they had the teams and resources to go on a hunt; and youth who were craving an environment in which they could learn about the whale harvest. I knew that this project needed to lead to something positive for Aklavik. I kept in touch with the resource person from AHTC and we updated each other on potential funding opportunities. Our journal article received media attention from various national news outlets and Michelle Gruben and I were invited to talk about the research results on the radio, and we shared about the community's interest in developing an on-the-land program to help facilitate the beluga whale harvest. After our interview, a colleague who listened to it brought a relevant funding competition to our attention. Together, we prepared and submitted an application that has now been approved for funding. From one research initiative emerges another, and this time, it is being led by Aklavik! Fostering this working relationship into the future is something we both value because it goes beyond interactions between colleagues; it has developed into a reciprocal friendship.

6.7 Reflections

In this chapter, I have tried to paint a picture of what I consider to be some of the essential parts of a mutually beneficial community-researcher experience. The path was not always easy and I questioned myself often, but when things felt complicated or confusing, I tried to bring myself back to two grounding places: what were my morals telling me and what were my mentors (supervisors, friends and Aklavik residents) telling me? By following a basic instinct to be a good person, I found it easier to navigate the realm between academic demands and Indigenous inquiry by

bringing a definitive human element into the process. The end goal was to produce a mutually beneficial and reciprocal project and to stay humble, flexible and observant.

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Elizabeth Worden has a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of Manitoba. She currently works as a Research Associate at the Centre for Earth Observation Science at the University of Manitoba and works with Inuit communities across the Arctic.

Chapter 7
The Rhythm of Community Research

Devin Waugh

Abstract My experience as a graduate student conducting research with an arctic community involved drinking many, many cups of tea. These cups of tea represented the investment of time that was required to foster relationships with community members that allowed my research to be designed and carried out in a way that served both myself and the community.

Keywords Beluga · Fieldwork · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Tuktoyaktuk · Traditional knowledge

7.1 Introduction

My research journey and engagement with the community of Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, Canada began early in the second semester of my master's program at the University of Guelph. My advisor was a strong advocate for early and regular community engagement when designing a research project. There is an expressed desire amongst arctic communities to foster more equitable partnerships in deciding how research is conducted on their lands. This includes, ensuring community concerns are being met and that benefits are shared more equitably amongst the parties involved. This was especially important in the case of my research documenting Inuvialuit traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of beluga whale in Tuktoyaktuk. TEK is often considered to be part of the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples, and therefore must be treated with appropriate respect and integrity when it is the topic of research. Early and regular communication helps foster a partnership between the community and the researcher, in the spirit of free, prior, and informed consent, in order for the research to benefit the community involved. It also allows for the opportunity for the community to contribute to the design of the research, which can often be a unilateral process on the part of outside researchers. Co-designing the research by incorporating community ideas and concerns throughout the research process is one way to contribute to improving the

D. Waugh (✉)
Ontario, Canada

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research experiences for all parties involved. In this chapter, I reflect on my experience co-designing research with an arctic community, and some of the challenges and opportunities that come along with the process.

7.2 Early and Ongoing Communication

I visited Inuvik and Tuktoyaktuk in the second semester of my studies and met with the Inuvialuit institutions and community leaders that could help guide my research and review the draft plan I had prepared. I boarded a flight in Toronto, and set off to Vancouver, Whitehorse, Old Crow, and finally Inuvik. In Inuvik, I met up with my co-advisor, a marine scientist. They helped connect me with a number of key people in the ISR who oversaw research activities and worked with researchers to secure the necessary permits and permissions to operate in the region. I presented my research ideas to members of the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) who was responsible at the regional level for reviewing and approving my research plan. We met in a small boardroom, with a table, projector, screen, and not much else. I was intimidated being only a semester into my graduate program, but the meeting went well and we had a productive conversation that allowed the IGC members to familiarize themselves with me as a researcher, and to comment on my research plan. After the meeting with the IGC in Inuvik, we drove the ice road to Tuktoyaktuk where my research would be situated. In Tuktoyaktuk, I met with the Tuktoyaktuk Hunter's and Trapper's Committee (HTC), the organization that was ultimately responsible for granting permission for my research to take place in the community. This meeting was important to discuss the draft research plan with community representatives who would ultimately oversee the research in the community.

At the meeting, data ownership was one of the HTC's primary concerns, namely that the research should remain the property of the community and the community members that I worked with. We discussed how to represent the voices of community members in my writing, and how to ensure that my thesis emphasized that the knowledge was part of Inuvialuit community heritage, and that it belonged to the community. We also discussed data protection practices, including encryption and limiting the use of the data to the agreed upon research activities.

7.3 Refining and Implementing the Research Plan

I worked over the next few months to incorporate the feedback I had received on my community visits into my research plan and reviewed these updates with community representatives. With my updated research plan approved I made plans to spend the summer in Tuktoyaktuk. During this preparation phase, I began to envision how the research would proceed and in doing so, worry about my ability to accomplish the research goals. I tried to stay positive by envisioning positive interactions with community members, people wanting to talk with me, straight forward conversations,

and enjoyable interviews throughout the summer. By the time I arrived in Tuktoyaktuk, I was intimidated by the prospect of interviewing and my positive thinking was quickly being overwhelmed by the realities of being in an unfamiliar place. I used the early days of my trip to familiarize myself with the town. I tried to get out and be visible in the community as much as possible and talk with as many people as I could. I spent a lot of my early time walking around and talking to people who were out and about, telling them about who I was and what I was doing in town. This proved to be an effective way to meet people. As I wandered around the community looking clearly out of place, people would often greet me and ask if I was looking for something. Conservations often ensued and it was a good way to get to know people and them me. I also made efforts to speak to the people who I met on my first visit to the community and this naturally led to them suggesting other people who I should speak with about beluga.

During these many conversations with community members, one Elder's name kept coming up, and several people told me that I needed to speak with Boogie Pokiak who was a key knowledge holder about beluga in the community. I first met Boogie at the July 1st Canada Day celebrations by the waterfront on a warm, bluebird day marking the beginning of the very short Tuktoyaktuk summer. I quickly learned that Canada Day was a big deal in Tuktoyaktuk, so it took me a while to find him amongst the crowd. I struck up a conversation with him, introduced myself and what I was doing in the community, and eventually expressed that I would like to interview him. I was certain that he would be interested as he is so knowledgeable about beluga and I could not think of a reason why he would not be. I was therefore taken aback when he flatly refused to participate, citing a number of reasons, namely that his knowledge of beluga was his and the community's property, and was not something to be taken lightly. I took the rejection quite personally, which led me to a fair amount of introspection. However, although I didn't get the answer I was looking for, the conversation was enlightening. He was friendly and I enjoyed talking with him and broadening my perspective about how community members viewed me and my research interests. The conversation went well enough that he agreed to chat with me again.

After the conversation, I thought to myself, "why did I take it personally"? In retrospect, there was certainly an element of naivety and entitlement on my part when I couldn't believe that he would not want to participate in my study. Within that, there were elements of positionality that I hadn't accounted for: I had not put myself in the position of the community members I was speaking with, I had not thought about how my specific project may not be a priority for everyone, and I did not consider how many research projects the community might see each year. With these reflections in mind, I began assembling a list of key knowledge holders through discussion with others in the community, including speaking with the hosts of the bed & breakfast where I was staying. I spent a substantial amount of time before I began interviewing reviewing my research plan and interview questions with Verna Pokiak, my community research partner. She provided invaluable insight and feedback into the structure of the interview and the questions we should and shouldn't be asking about beluga.

7.4 Building Relationships by Drinking Tea, and More Tea

I did my first interview with an Elder who owned the B&B where I was staying. Despite all my preparation, as my advisor had warned me, the first interview did not go well. There was little flow and spontaneity, and I stumbled over some questions, finding it difficult to find a rhythm. The interviewee did not seem that comfortable, despite my indication that there was no obligation to answer questions he did not want to. The interviewee's unease with the questions was later confirmed by other community members that I spoke to, and some criticism was passed along to me about the process. This initial experience left me feeling a bit put out, as I did not have a lot of experience with interviews. I took some time to reflect on the interview and on my advisor's words. I had learned that if I was not at ease, it would be more difficult for the interviewee to feel at ease, and the conversation would not be natural and information would be less forthcoming. I also realized that establishing this kind of environment while interviewing was as important as asking the right questions. These lessons helped me to reframe the first interview as a learning experience rather than a failure, and to move on with the rest of the interviews, ever so slightly wiser. As I applied the lessons that I learned from the first interview and the advice from community members, the following interviews improved and there was much less friction between me and the interviewees. Rather than an interrogation, I worked hard to make the interview more like a friendly conversation. I learned that it was key to start an interview with a conversation that would flow into the interview and allow the participant to share their knowledge in terms that made sense to them. I guided the conversation into the topics that I was interested in, and used prompts and follow-up questions when appropriate. Throughout this process, I continually worked with my community research partner to reassess and modify the research process on the fly.

I kept in touch with Boogie throughout the summer, and spent more and more time with him around the town, at his house, and on the beach by a fire, drinking many, many cups of tea. I spent one of these visits watching and helping Boogie prepare a recently harvested beluga into main products of *muktuk* (blubber with skin), *mipku* (dried and smoked thin strips of meat), and *uksuk* (rendered whale oil). When I arrived, Boogie was making *muktuk* by boiling large squares of the skin and underlying blubber layer of the whale. I developed a personal connection with Boogie during these fireside chats over tea and *muktuk*, where he got to know me and my motivations for working with the community. I gained a lot of valuable insight into how researchers were perceived by the community. He described how he felt that some researchers would come to the community expecting to get whatever they needed for their research, but giving little in return. Listening to his concerns about researchers, being one myself, allowed me to reflect on my own behaviour and my positionality in ways that might not have been possible otherwise. I realized that I could easily fall into the category of researchers that Boogie was referring to, despite my best intentions. Had I really figured out what meaningful collaboration looked like? I reflected on Boogie's teachings throughout my time in

the community and let it guide the research. The personal connection and trust we fostered during these visits were invaluable to me and the research, and was possible because I had time. The 2-month period I spent in the community also seemed to give an impression to community members on its own that I had a certain level of commitment to what I was doing and how I was going about doing it. People seemed impressed that I was putting in that amount of time.

7.5 Reviewing and Returning the Data

By the end of the summer, I had conducted enough interviews to meet the research goals, and filled several notebooks with observations and reflections on what I had experienced in the community. I had also conducted an interview with Boogie towards the end of the summer, which ended up providing an immense amount of depth and detail to the data. This only happened after we had established a personal connection, and shared more cups of tea than we could remember. I spent the following semester transcribing, analysing, and writing up the data. I also made plans to return to Tuktoyaktuk to review the preliminary results of my analysis with community members. This was one of the most important aspects of my research plan, as had been discussed with the Tuktoyaktuk HTC during my pre-research visit. My intention was to review the preliminary results with people to ensure that my representation of their knowledge of beluga was accurate and appropriate. I started by presenting my findings to the community members that attended, which included approximately half of the community members I had interviewed in the summer. After my presentation, several community members expressed that the information seemed satisfactory to them. At the end of the presentation, a community member who I had interviewed first in the previous summer stood up to speak. I expected a critique or challenge, or perhaps even a rebuke to what I was doing with the data. However, I was pleasantly surprised when he said that he liked how I had included Inuvialuit values about beluga as one of the organizing topics of the research. He expressed that government and industry had dismissed the importance of beluga to Inuvialuit in the past, going as far as telling Inuvialuit hunters that the species was not as important to their communities as it had been in the past. He elaborated that research conducted in Inuvialuit territory, and about topics that are important to Inuvialuit, should include Inuvialuit values and represent Inuvialuit voices as best as possible. It sounded like he was satisfied with my representation of Inuvialuit values of beluga in my work, beyond just the ecological and harvesting aspects of the TEK. I was happy to receive this feedback from someone who I considered to be the most sceptical of my work and position as a researcher, and I was glad that I was able to contribute in a small way to enhancing the voice of Inuvialuit in the literature.

7.6 Reflections

I truly believe that the success of my research was due to the early steps I took to design the research together with the community and the ongoing feedback I received. This continual engagement fostered a better relationship with the community and led to improved outcomes for the research, both for the community and for myself. I learned that the many cups of tea I shared with many different community members were key to this process of listening, learning, sharing, and responding. Just as it would not have been possible to drink all those cups of tea in 1-week, forging tangible and intangible connections with community members required time. Despite the challenges graduate students face with tight timelines and budgets, I believe that it is possible, and in fact necessary, to put time into designing and conducting research collaboratively.

Devin Waugh has a Master of Science in Geography from the University of Guelph (2017). He currently works as researcher focusing on Indigenous Knowledge and land use.

Chapter 8
The Complexities of a Community-Governed Research Project

Angus William Naylor

Abstract My experiences as a PhD researcher working on a community-governed project in the Arctic have led me to reconsider my position of power within Arctic research. I question whether in my capacity as a geographical information systems (GIS) specialist, responsible for producing project outputs that were situated in a western worldview, if it was ever possible for me to support efficacious community-governed research in an Inuit context.

Keywords Community-governed · Fieldwork · GIS · Northwest Territories · Power · Ulukhaktok

8.1 Introduction

Community-governed projects are increasingly seen as best practice models for research in the Canadian Arctic. Such initiatives (hereafter also referred to as "community-led research projects") typically involve the transferral of substantive power surrounding decision-making, knowledge production, funding, values, and ethics from Western academic and governance contexts into community-based, Inuit-led institutions and organizations. For research to be truly community-governed, this process of devolution ought to occur across multiple (preferably all) areas of the research process, particularly those relating to project design and construction, data collection and analysis, and results dissemination.

The rewards and benefits of community-governed research in the Arctic are in many ways self-evident. However, community-governed research and wider participatory research initiatives involving the Western academy in Indigenous contexts

A. W. Naylor (✉)
Leeds, UK

T. Pearce (ed.), *Research with Arctic Inuit Communities*, Springer Polar Sciences, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78483-6_8

are not without unique challenges or contention. Some have questioned "who participates?" in such projects, and by extension the degree to which diverse communities can be adequately represented or defined (Mosurska & Ford, 2020). Others have focused more on the practicalities of community-led research: can it be a burden on communities as opposed to emancipatory? What is the role of non-Indigenous researchers in research with and in Indigenous contexts? In this chapter, I focus on the issue of power, asking whether the devolution of power in some (but not all) areas of a research project and the retaining of Western research specialists (as is frequently the case in contemporary community-governed initiatives) can reproduce inequalities and perpetuate a hierarchy of knowledge systems.

8.2 The *Tooniktoyok* Project

Tooniktoyok was a 3-year joint research initiative, funded by Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada's (CIRNAC) *Climate Change Preparedness in the North* program and led by the Hamlet of Ulukhaktok in collaboration with researchers from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and the University of Leeds. As opposed to previous community-based research projects in the community, which had often been collaborative but with researchers maintaining a majority stake, it was decided that *Tooniktoyok* would be community-governed. The Hamlet of Ulukhaktok (hereafter referred to as "the Hamlet") retained oversight over a majority of project activities, including the project budget, the setting and reviewing of aims and objectives, the hiring of project coordinators, the selection of research participants, the types of methods used for data collection, data collection itself, and the storage and relaying of data. The Hamlet was also the primary point of contact with the funding body, Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), with whom the deliverables of the project were agreed, and with whom financial and wider project activity reporting were required on a bi-annual basis. The aim of the project was to facilitate the generation, documentation, and two-way sharing of observations, experiences and knowledge of changing climatic conditions and the costs of hunting among hunters, researchers and decision-makers.

Data collection for *Tooniktoyok* spanned June 2018 to June 2020 and involved equipping ten Inuit hunters with GPS units and asking them to track their harvesting activities throughout the year, with these hunters then reporting their experiences to a local Inuit project co-ordinator bi-weekly through conversational interviews. The purpose of interviews was to collect broader contextual and numerical information relating to the productivity of hunters, their observations of environmental change, and to discuss the barriers to, and opportunities for, facilitating hunting within the community. University researchers retained roles operating in their areas of expertise where capacity was not present in the community (i.e. statistical or geospatial data analysis), or (where capacity could be increased within the project timescale) were responsible for training local project co-ordinators with new skills (e.g. interview techniques).

My position within *Tooniktoyok* was that of a research facilitator and geographical information systems (GIS) analyst, responsible for the primary outputs stipulated as part of the funding agreement with CIRNAC. This included the creation of maps that documented hunters' experiences with changing climatic conditions and a statistical analysis of socioeconomic data collected for the 2019 calendar year to understand determinants of hunting party success and the costs associated with harvesting. Between April 2018 and August 2019, I was fortunate enough to spend a total of seven-and-a-half months living and working within the community.

8.3 A Side-Note on Positionality

The production of all knowledge is a reflection of and situated within the identity of its creators (Rose, 1997). Therefore, it is important to situate the remainder of this chapter, and indeed the broader context of my work on the *Tooniktoyok* project, with my identity as a researcher. I was selected to work on *Tooniktoyok* due to my prior experience working with cartography and GIS, and my previous background in the physical sciences. While I have spent considerable time during my doctorate attempting to learn about the impacts of colonialism, the shared histories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and what it means to take an anti-colonial approach toward research (something that I would suggest is critical to any student wishing to work in Indigenous contexts), it is an important point of clarification that the situatedness of my knowledge means that I can never have true comprehension of what it means, nor how it feels, to be colonised. Nor can I ever claim to hold an Indigenous worldview or conduct research from an Indigenous paradigm. The following points of discussion, therefore, speak only to my experiences as a non-Indigenous researcher working within an Indigenous context.

8.4 Power: From Who, to Whom?

Community-governed research projects are an opportunity to redress the inherent power imbalances that often exist in much Arctic social, health, and natural sciences research. In many ways, the project developed for *Tooniktoyok* was a substantive, and in principle, effective attempt to do this. To my knowledge it represents one of the first instances of a CIRNAC-funded research project in the ISR where a community held more control over research processes, timescales, and budgets than the university researchers with whom they were collaborating. Indeed, it could also be argued that the project had made efforts to devolve power across all parts of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's (ITK) 5 Priority Areas (see ITK, 2018a, b). However, soon after my arrival in the community and the start of the project in June 2018, it became clear to me that there is very much a difference between *de facto* (on paper) and *de jure* (in practice) control in community-governed research.

With *Tooniktoyok*, in attempting to attenuate power dynamics and remove control from the academy in certain areas of the project by co-developing a community-governed study, we inadvertently created an altogether different niche manifestation of authority for ourselves as researchers that I would argue perpetuated historical inequalities. Stemming from a desire to potentially inform future food/harvesting subsidy policies, in consultation with ourselves as researchers the community had decided that Western cartographic representations of knowledge and statistical analyses of data would be the most effective at communicating the project's findings to the government. In light of the technocratic nature of these methods, however, this resulted in the ultimate power relating to the research – the generation of outputs – being reconsolidated into the hands of us as researchers due to our designation as "specialists".[1] Therefore, despite the fact that the community had *de jure* power to select what data was collected, the need to produce outputs that were "usable" by the government constrained participant power. This relegated the only true control the community had over the project to the ways through which specific datasets were collected (e.g. GPS or participatory mapping, conversational interviews as opposed to questionnaires etc.). Even then, however, while the community chose best-practice methods for collecting data where possible, such as conversational method conducted by an Inuit interviewer, the devolution, as opposed to full relinquishing of power from Western knowledge systems, served to severely hamper the intended emancipatory and capacity-building aspects of the project. This issue was compounded by the fact that the research cohort (as should have been anticipated) engaged more strongly in the participatory mapping sessions as opposed to the more empirical-data-intensive GPS tracking component of the project; the latter being the area from which the majority of the stipulated deliverables and outputs were intended to have been derived. As such, data and insights from the Indigenist methods that did not also fit the type required for the Western outputs, whilst recorded and stored by the community, became difficult to communicate to the funders. The result was that the "most impactful" outputs of the research were still processed through, and converted into deliverables with, a Western valence due to the epistemological bottleneck that we as researchers from the academy had created.

In order for community-governed projects to reach their true emancipatory (and anticolonial) potential, it is critical to relinquish and deconstruct decision-making power structures, but also the epistemological and ontological implicit power structures that can so often accompany participatory research. Prior to conducting *Tooniktoyok*, I wish had given more thought to the notion of how the data analysis, or assessment component of the research might have been democratized, de-specialized, and developed with more two-way knowledge sharing, and in a way to develop outputs (and have them approved by the federal government) that would have retained and communicated the granularity of Inuit worldviews.

[1] Data analysis and outputs remain some of the least democratized processes in the much Indigenous participatory research (David-Chavez & Gavin, 2018).

Community-governed research needs to be developed in order to not only co-produce knowledge within Indigenous contexts, but to also produce outputs that are capable of *communicating* this knowledge. The degree to which this is possible with the proliferation and ubiquitous use of technocratic methods in GIS research at present is contentious, however (Reid & Seiber, 2020). On reflection, alternative outputs and methods of analysis may have been more appropriate to communicate the narrative of *Tooniktoyok*, as opposed to the production of cartographic maps and statistical analyses. The challenge of the research being conducted as part of my PhD project, however – my doctorate being in the traditionally empirical and positivist field of Earth sciences - made this feel in some ways insurmountable in the present Arctic research climate. Many academic institutions, for instance, as mine did, still expect outputs in PhD projects to have a dominant Western valence (e.g. journal articles, theses, monographs), with their legitimacy often judged from that same paradigm, predicated on the idea of usability, impact and scientific rigour. For instance, my institution expects that students will make a conceptual, empirical, and/or methodological contribution to Western science in order for their doctorate to be awarded. Moreover, funders - if they are positioned within this paradigm (as the Canadian federal government is) - may also expect deliverables that are similarly situated. In the case of our research, a desire to inform the current context of federally or regionally administered Harvesters' Assistance Programs and other food subsidy initiatives led to the frequent discussions when meeting funders around the fact that "numbers talk" when it comes to enacting policy change. To have 'impact' in Western administrations, Western outputs are still very much seen as the gold standard.

What can be done? The easiest answer to this is that the academy and funders need to not only recognise the legitimacy, but encourage the production, of outputs with non-Western valence by Indigenous peoples when research is conducted in Indigenous contexts. This goes beyond simply paying lip service, which appears to more often than not be the primary approach. Moreover, beyond recognising its legitimacy, Indigenous research also needs to be applied in policy development. Elevating Indigenist outputs in this manner will negate the need for, or at least reduce the privileging of, Western specialists, and by extension will remove the epistemological bottleneck that is so common in community-based and community-led research involving academics.

Reducing the perceived need for outside specialists may also help address the undercurrent of power that so many southern researchers hold when assisting in community-governed research. Working on a community-governed project as an external "specialist" diminished my *explicit* research power: I could not select participants, set times for interviews or participatory mapping sessions without approval. However, simply through association with the Hamlet my status in the community was different to that of independent researchers; I was *implicitly* empowered. I went from the common trope of an ephemeral graduate student who drifts into town for 2 months and is then never seen or heard from again into the "one working with the Hamlet on the CIRNAC project," "the one who will make the maps," or in one case, "the one who will make the maps for the government!" Before

I knew it or had really considered the ethical implications of the mantle I so naively adopted, I had been allocated office space, offered the keys if I wanted to work out of hours, given access to satellite internet to complete the GIS data uploads, invited to make use of the coffee facilities, and was finding myself privy to information that, in retrospect, I should never have heard. (During my first stint in the community, myself and the other 'specialists' were even offered the currently vacant unit of the community's Senior Administrative Officer when no other accommodation was available). In my naivety as a first-time researcher in Arctic Canada, I did not think that these things were necessarily unusual at the time. It was only when a fellow research student from the U.S.A., also living in the community at the time, asked if he could come to work in the office space as a means of increasing his visibility within the community, to send emails to his supervisor, and to elevate his chances of recruiting participants for his own anthropological study that I realised the level of privilege that we had created for ourselves in the project.

None of these things would have been available had we not so carelessly left (and accepted) a niche of power for ourselves when co-developing the project. Although it could be argued that my participation and activity with the project (and subsequently the Hamlet's facilities) was an invited space – and indeed, some of the resources I was offered were necessary for the conduct of the research – I wonder how much of this "inviting" came from the privileging of my knowledge system in the construction of the research project, and, by extension, my replicating of pre-existing colonial power relationships through participatory research. Given the past context in which our funders CIRNAC, formerly Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), had historically operated in the North, I now in retrospect, find the latter a particularly troubling prospect. In co-designing the project to reduce our overall influence but remaining as the only members with the ability to produce the deliverables, myself and the other academics "researched ourselves into the research" as opposed to "researching ourselves out" (Caine et al., 2007). The decision to have a map and set of statistical analyses, and the fact that I was the sole member of the project tasked with creating them, meant that I had become the vector through which all data needed to pass through and be catered for. I had assumed the "mantle of expertise" and held the "power to shape the nature of truth" (see Reid & Sieber, 2020, p.7).

8.5 Reflections

While there appears to have been some progress in this area in recent years from a funding perspective, with regulations necessitating the inclusion of Inuit ecological knowledge in wildlife management research and management in the North, the academy seems much further behind. Doctorates still require the production of peer-reviewed journal articles, theses etc., and are therefore still entrenched within Western worldviews. Beyond non-Indigenous PhD researchers extracting ourselves from the process altogether (Aveling, 2013), this can often lead to ethical

quandaries and conundrums. These are things that should rightfully make any academic, PhD researcher or otherwise, uncomfortable.

In this chapter, I have communicated my experiences and opinions on northern research as a non-Indigenous researcher. From these experiences, it has become more apparent that, despite the frequent self-aggrandisement that can happen in Western academia – something that I myself am undoubtedly guilty of – "look at how Indigenist or community-centric our research is!", there is still a *very* long way to go.

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Angus William Naylor is a third-year PhD candidate at the Priestley International Centre for Climate, University of Leeds, United Kingdom. He holds an undergraduate degree in Geology with Physical Geography from the University of Keele and postgraduate master's degrees from University College London (UCL) (MSc Risk, Disaster and Resilience) and the University of Leeds (MA Social Research).

Part IV
Things that We Wish Someone Had Told Us

Chapter 9
It's More Than Just Research

Jessica Smart

Abstract My experiences during my first visit to the Arctic challenged my preconceptions and opened my eyes to some of the realities of arctic research. What I thought was going to be a harsh environment and challenging culture to fit into, turned out to be a magical landscape and people filled with warmth and welcome. In this chapter, I discuss some of the fears and uncertainties I had before traveling to the Arctic, navigating being a vegan in a culture whose food system centres around animals, and designing a research project with the community.

Keywords Arctic char · Consultation · Fieldwork · Northwest Territories · Ulukhaktok · Vegan

9.1 Introduction

> There is currently a massive, frozen, whole fish on the kitchen table. I guess I will be trying char tonight… if I can work up the courage. My host mom invited me to join them for dinner. She said, 'if you're studying it, you may as well know what it tastes like.' (field notes Feb 2020)

Spending time on the land, subsistence hunting and fishing, and an ethic of sharing continue to be important to Inuit in Ulukhaktok. Recently, Ulukhaktomiut have observed significant changes in Arctic char *(iqalukpik),* a valued species for subsistence and commercial fishing. My master's research was situated within a larger project that focused on understanding changes in the arctic marine ecosystems and implications for Inuit subsistence. I planned to work with community members to document their observations and knowledge of changes affecting Arctic char and how these changes were affecting their fishing activities and adaptive responses.

In February 2020, I visited Ulukhaktok to meet with project partners and to discuss my research ideas with the Olokhaktomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee (OHTC). By spending time with people in the community and local co-management

J. Smart (✉)
Ontario, Canada

T. Pearce (ed.), *Research with Arctic Inuit Communities*, Springer Polar Sciences, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-78483-6_9

bodies, I learned about specific community priorities and better understood how my research could be situated within them. As much as this trip was about meeting research goals, I also learned more about myself and my abilities as a person and researcher.

When I was preparing to visit the Arctic, I found myself searching for information that could help guide me. I was looking for some honest, personal accounts of what it is like to visit the Arctic and consult with community members about a proposed research project. I learned that these insights are often left out of academic publications and I really did not know how other researchers who work on community-based research in the Arctic had accomplished what they did. In this chapter, I write about what I was looking to read before my first visit to the Arctic. I hope that you feel a sense of comfort knowing that others who have been in your position also felt hesitant, uneasy, and out of place. I hope that reading this chapter will excite you about your upcoming travels and the opportunities that lie ahead.

9.2 Preparing to Visit the Arctic

I had a combination of feelings when preparing to travel to the Arctic: stress, excitement, apprehension and impatience. Since starting my graduate program in September 2019, I'd been looking forward to the consultation visit. I was eager to meet community members who I had heard so much about, spend time with community partners to develop the research ideas and approach, and work alongside my supervisor to learn practical research skills from him. Everything that I had done during the previous 5 months was in preparation of this visit. I spent countless hours developing my research ideas, reading papers, books and theses that were relevant to my research focus and to learn about the community's history, culture and language, including learning key Inuinnaqtun words and phrases. My supervisor had planned to accompany me on this trip but a few weeks before leaving, I discovered that I'd be travelling alone. As an introvert with strong feelings of imposter syndrome and someone who has never been to the Arctic, I questioned if this was the right thing to do. Going alone would be completely different than having my supervisor there for support and guidance. Although I was worried, my excitement overtook my nerves. To best prepare for the now solo trip, I discussed important practical details with my supervisor, past graduate students, and Inuit who I met at conferences and workshops. I share some of what I learned here.

Where was I going to stay in the community? There are a three Bed and Breakfasts (B&B) in Ulukhaktok and a small hotel. My supervisor encouraged me to stay at a B&B, so I had the opportunity to meet people and to learn about Inuit culture and way of life in the community. It was recommended that an Elder couple who hosts a B&B would be the best fit for me. Phone calls were made, and they would be expecting me when I arrived.

I was traveling to the Arctic in the winter, something I thought I would never do because my fieldwork work was planned to correspond with the summer fishing

season. I was curious about the weather and if it was really as cold as I thought… it was. The only thing that I did not bring, and I wish I had, was a pair of ski goggles. There was a two-day blizzard with the strongest winds I have ever experienced (>100 km/h), making it nearly impossible to see or even walk outside.

I was worried to make a mistake, accidentally ask culturally inappropriate questions, ask too many questions, or make a bad first impression. I tried to learn about cultural mannerisms, what a typical day in Ulukhaktok looks like, and topics to avoid. I learned about "visiting culture": that it is customary to walk into people's homes. Knock, open the door, loudly announce yourself, and if someone responds positively, walk in. I was told to not wait for someone to open the door for you. It isn't normal to walk into a stranger's home in my neighbourhood in southern Ontario, so I was hesitant to do this in an unfamiliar community. I was also reminded to remove my glove or mitt when shaking someone's hand. This was a sign of respect, another nuance that I did not know. I was especially concerned about what I was going to eat; since I am vegan.

9.3 Being Vegan in the Arctic

In the months leading up to this trip, I struggled with the decision on whether I would eat meat while in Ulukhaktok. Close friends and family who know I am vegan were all very curious to hear what I thought about consuming meat again and how I felt about it, often cautioning me that I will likely get sick. Everyone had an opinion. The debate in my head quickly turned from a moral dilemma to a practical one. I did not even consider that I would possibly get sick from eating meat… I was so focused on the idea of consuming meat again, that I did not think about what might happen to my body after eating it.

I began to research what other vegans have done as they transition back to a meat diet, what they experienced, and so on. Some recommended starting with fish and eggs and slowly making your way to red meat. The time leading up to my trip, I was extremely hesitant to go to the grocery store and buy fish or meat, cook it, and eat it. This was an extremely new concept for me. I have never purchased meat products or cooked them before (I probably would not even know how to properly prepare a meal with meat in it). Comparably, if a wooden spoon was used to stir soup with meat in it, or if a knife was used to cut a piece of meat or cheese, I would not use that same utensil without washing it first. Basically, I would avoid cross-contamination at all costs. With much consideration, I started taking fish oil pills. I took them each morning for a few months leading up to the trip to build up a tolerance to fish. Similarly, to get my body accustomed to these upcoming changes, I began to use the same spoons, knives, pans, bowls, etc. that had meat or other by-products in them when preparing my own meal.

I planned not to share with people in the community that I was vegan but rather be open-minded to learning about the local food system. I made this decision for a number of reasons. When people hear the word "vegan" they often think of a

stereotype: a person who shames meat-eaters and will try to convert them. I did not want to risk making a negative first impression on my host family or anyone else. I genuinely wanted to learn as much as possible while in the community and I worried that if someone knew I was vegan, they may censor themselves when talking about hunting or fishing, the focus of my research. In my mind, I saw begin vegan as a limitation. I was raised in a traditional Italian household where it is seen as disrespectful to reject food when offered by someone whose house you are in. I did not want anyone, particularly my host family, to feel as though they needed to adapt to my needs while I was visiting and staying in their home. I also did not want to disrespect them if I declined any meal they prepared and offered me. I did not want them to change their lifestyle or try to cook differently for me or worry if I was eating enough.

As all of these thoughts ran through my mind, I recalled why I went vegan in the first place. Growing up, I was not raised on a plant-based diet. As I mentioned, I come from an Italian family, so meat and dairy are dietary staples. However, at a young age, I decided that going vegetarian was something that I wanted to do. I loved animals as a kid and have always been an environmentalist. Later, I transitioned to a vegan lifestyle as I thought this was the most sustainable diet to have, for both animals and the environment. Contemplating eating meat again while in the Arctic forced me to question my lifestyle and why I was really doing this. I thought it was for the sustainability of it, or my perception of sustainability. But begin vegan does not necessarily mean being sustainable, and not everyone has the ability to be vegan, which I did not truly understand at the time.

9.4 Arriving in the Arctic

On the flight from Yellowknife to Ulukhaktok, I was still apprehensive. Those same questions continually ran through my mind: why am I doing this? Am I the right person for this research? Well, there was no turning back now. I think the Inuit lady seated next to me on the plane sensed my nervousness because she started talking to me. She asked who I was and why I was going to Ulukhaktok. After describing the research, she told me a few stories about her experiences with climate change. She explained that it is such an issue in the North that people are receptive to individuals coming and willing to work together. She quickly put me at ease. I was hoping she would also be coming to Ulukhaktok, but sadly she got off in Kugluktuk.

When we landed, I felt like I had just stepped into a huge family reunion. People were at the airport greeting their loved ones, with many hugs and laughs. I had no clue where to go, where my bags were, how I would get to the house, or where the taxi would be, so I decided to stand in the corner of the airport and wait, but nothing happened. I was in the middle of contacting my supervisor on my phone when a friendly man came up to me and asked if I needed help. He told me the shuttle was leaving and I “should probably get on it.” I did not think twice and got on the shuttle

and saw my bags waiting outside for me. The driver asked where I was staying, then dropped me off in front of the house.

I recalled that it is customary to knock, open the door and announce that I was there. Even though this was *normal*, I was hesitant. I probably stood outside for 3 or 4 min until I got the courage to do so. When I finally did, I peered inside the house and saw that there was a man asleep on the couch. I tried to loudly announce myself as I was told to do, but he wouldn't wake up. I spent another few minutes loudly saying, "Hello, it's Jessica, I just arrived!" He slowly woke up and calmly told me to go upstairs. He then slipped back into his nap. I put my stuff in my designated room and sat on the bed. I started to question everything again. Why am I here? Should I have stayed at the hotel? I sat on the bed and waited… not exactly sure what I was waiting for. Then I heard the host mom downstairs, and I went to introduce myself. She was outgoing and friendly, and instantly my mind was put at ease. She gave me a tour of Ulukhaktok from their living room window. I was starting to feel excited to see how the rest of my week would turn out.

There isn't enough space in this chapter for me fully describe the role that my host mom played in enhancing my time in Ulukhaktok. She taught me about the community, fishing and hunting, sewing and Inuit customs. On my first day, she invited me to join her at "mother's cooking" at the Ulukhaktok Community Hall for young mothers and their children. Every Saturday, she purchases ingredients to make a meal large enough to feed the attending mothers and enough for each person to take some home to their families while at the same time, teaching them how to prepare the meal. She shared insights with me about the significance of researchers consulting with the community; how people feel about the increasing prevalence of salmon and their concerns; and the importance of *iqalukpik* to her and her family. She explained that although salmon have a similar look, taste, and smell compared to char, people are not as excited to catch salmon like they are with char. That same night, she made char for dinner. She said, "if you are studying it, you may as well know what it tastes like!" The dinner consisted of fried char, rice, salad, and bannock. Although I had planned to not disclose my food preferences as a vegan, in the moment I decided to be honest and tell the family that I did not normally eat meat, but that I would like to try char because I have never had the chance before. They then reminisced about a young girl from the South who stayed with them a few years ago. The host mom explained that this girl arrived at their house and then told the family that she was vegetarian. The host mom explained, "I had no idea how to cook for her because she didn't tell me this until she arrived." In that moment I was glad that I had been honest but open-minded and thankful for the meal.

9.5 Observing Fisheries Co-Management Meetings

My goals for the week were to learn, observe, listen, meet people, discuss my research and understand the community's priorities. The Ulukhaktok Char Working Group (UCWG) is a resource co-manager. The Working Group is comprised of

Ulukhaktokmiut, government, and Inuvialuit representation through the Olokhaktomiut Hunters and Trappers Committee (OHTC), Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), and Fisheries Joint Management Committee (FJMC). They are responsible for providing recommendations on fisheries monitoring, making suggestions to the Ulukhaktok Arctic Char Management Plan, assisting the development of fishery regulations, and consulting with the community of Ulukhaktok regarding their concerns related to Arctic char. Each year, the UCWG meets to discuss and provide updates on these subjects. Following their meeting, the UCWG holds a public community dinner and gathering to provide an opportunity for the community to share their concerns and priorities with the UCWG and what they want to see happen with char management and research. Here, the community makes collective decisions. I was invited to sit in and observe these meetings.

At both the UCWG and public gathering, I was encouraged to introduce myself and my research ideas. A few individuals later came up to me, including community members and avid fishers that sit on the co-management boards. These individuals expressed their concern about char and seemed pleased that research is being done to further investigate changes happening to fish and the fishery. They were curious to know more about me, often asking where I was from, how I was enjoying Ulukhaktok so far, and if I had a chance to try char yet. I felt privileged to observe and participate in the UCWG meetings and public community gathering. I learned more about Arctic char, Ulukhaktok, and co-management during this two-day gathering than during my 5 months of preparation.

9.6 Reflections

In this final section, I reflect on my week in Ulukhaktok. Though short, it left a lasting impression on me. Everything I thought before I left, I was wrong about. In the back of my mind, stereotypes people often think when they hear “Arctic”, “Inuit, or “northern community” ran through my mind. First, I assumed the weather would be unbearable. I thought it would be endlessly freezing and intolerable. Although my camera froze within minutes of being outside, the cold was manageable. Secondly, I thought each meal would consist mainly of country foods. Another assumption wrong. The host family prepared meals with traditional foods as the basis, such as *muktuk* (whale blubber) and *quak* (frozen, raw meat), and these meals were often paired with an unanticipated twist (from my perspective). For example, one night we had a char stir-fry, and usually, for lunch, the host mom would prepare *muktuk* and *quak*, which were consumed with HP or soy sauce on the side.

As a student, we are taught about the checkered history between researchers and Indigenous peoples throughout the world, not only in the Canadian Arctic. We are taught how to better engage with communities respectfully as researchers, and to be a person first and researcher second. I was nervous that people would automatically not like me because I’m a “researcher” or because I’m female. These extreme thoughts stemmed from severe imposter syndrome and a lack of confidence. Again,

I was very wrong. Everyone was genuinely kind and welcoming. They were interested in the research and each person I spoke with had something important to say about char and what it means to them. They didn't seem to care about my gender, age, or education; they accepted me for me.

A story shared by one of my peers at the university, who happens to be Inuit, left an impression on me. She explained that patience is extremely important. Inuit are very mindful speakers, so if someone pauses while talking to you, just wait. They are thinking and will speak when they are ready. Never finish someone's sentence for them, this is seen as disrespectful. Be patient and do not be offended by silence; do not mindlessly fill the silence. I was grateful to know this beforehand, because it is something that I encountered many times while in Ulukhaktok. Since returning home, I have been trying to be a better listener, to think before I respond, and answer with meaning or not say anything at all.

I was raised in a household with the typical Italian mannerisms and customs you would imagine. Unapologetically loud, food-obsessed, family-oriented, and so on. My family is definitely not soft spoken. In some ways, Italian culture is the complete opposite of Inuit culture, but in other ways, they are very similar. Every day, the family's children and grandchildren visited for lunch. The food was always ready when they arrived and there was enough for each family member to take some home. They would place the food (i.e., *muktuk*) on cardboard and eat from it. The host mom explained that they call this "Inuit china" and would chuckle every time she said it. I'd laugh too. Large pieces of meat and numerous *ulus* were placed on the china, along with small bowls of dipping sauce. Growing up, I had a very comparable experience where my whole family would visit my grandparents for dinner almost every night. Nonna would prepare an enormous meal including, pasta, salad, bread, pizza, fish, and so on, and enough for us to take home. Although I was different from everyone in Ulukhaktok, and the foods were unfamiliar, the strong sense of family and connection with food made me feel like I was at my Nonna's house.

Going into this trip, I wanted to keep as much of an open mind as possible. Since I was planning to eat whatever meals were provided, I knew that I would likely eat meat and other animal products, and this was not an easy decision. I spent quite a bit of time thinking about it before committing, but I was there to learn. Don't get me wrong, it was not simple. Within the first hour I was in the community I was offered *muktuk* jerky and I declined it because I was not bold enough to try. Looking back, I wish I had tried it.

When I first started my graduate degree, I read about the importance of pre-research consultation visits during which time researchers and community members can work together to develop a research project and workplan. I now understand how valuable such a trip can be for planning the research and growing as a researcher. As I write this chapter in February 2020, roughly 11 months into the coronavirus pandemic, I truly appreciate the opportunity I had to visit the Arctic. I'm fortunate to have a supervisor who believes in my abilities as an early career researcher and pushed me out of my comfort zone to do something that I didn't think I was capable of. I'm grateful that my excitement to travel to the Arctic and discuss the research overshadowed my feelings of imposter syndrome. Lastly, I appreciate the people of

Ulukhaktok for their hospitality, kindness and willingness to work with me. It remains unclear if I'll visit Ulukhaktok again before I graduate due to pandemic travel restrictions. Although my time in the community was short, it left a lasting impression on me, and I look forward to returning sometime in the future, even if it's not during my graduate program. A key lesson that I learned is that there are many learning possibilities when collaborating with people outside of academia, which I had previously overlooked. For me, this consultation visit was about more than just research, it was also about growing as a person.

Jessica Smart is a Master of Science student in the Natural Resources and Environmental Studies Program at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), Prince George, B.C., Canada.

Chapter 10
Balancing Research Expectations with Community Realities

David Fawcett

Abstract Research with Inuit communities can be filled with connection between people and place, meaning and adventure, but it can also be difficult at times. Navigating research funding and community-researcher relationships can be especially challenging for an early-career researcher. In this chapter, I reflect on two experiences conducting research with Inuit communities, and discuss some of the lessons I learned navigating the sometimes-turbulent gap between research expectations and on-the-ground realities.

Keywords Fieldwork · Inuit · Positionality · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Ulukhaktok

10.1 Introduction

Research with Inuit communities can sound romantic, like working for National Geographic (but with far fewer Instagram followers), and this perception is true to some extent. Doing community-based research can also be difficult, leaving even the best-intentioned researcher and community members pulling out their hair (or losing it). As you have read in previous chapters, becoming aware of some of the challenges that you are likely to encounter as an early-career researcher and learning how to balance them can be a significant part of your learning, perhaps more so than any reading, class, seminar or conference presentation you may do. The applied learning that happens when conducting research with an Inuit community, especially learning to balance the realities of a different culture, can be a hyperspace experience. Your learning may be accelerated in ways that you likely did not think possible and you may not even realize that it is occurring. That is to say, research with Inuit

D. Fawcett (✉)
British Columbia, Canada

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communities can be romantic, filled with rich learning experiences, but it is also likely to be profoundly challenging and will offer you opportunities to grow academically and personally.

An unromantic, often challenging and entirely necessary part of my own arctic research experience has been funding. If you have yet to realize, I am sorry that I have to be the one to break it to you, but arctic research is extraordinarily expensive. Booking my first $5000CDN return flight from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories, turned this concept into reality for me. Needless to say, funding is a necessity if you are going to conduct research in the Arctic, and unless you are self-funded, that will come with guidelines and expectations that may often seem in juxtaposition to community realities.

My goal in this chapter is to make this less glamorous aspect of arctic research as digestible as possible and provide whatever insights I can from my own experiences. The first experience that I discuss is from my master's research on climate change vulnerability and adaptation with hunters in Ulukhaktok. I reflect on my preparation before and experiences during my 2-month field season in the summer of 2016. The second experience is from my role as a Research Associate on a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary polar bear monitoring research project. I reflect on my experience as a social scientist working on a biology research project and the challenges I encountered trying to navigate project expectations with available funding. I finish by describing some key lessons that I learned that may be helpful to you as you work to balance research expectations with community realities.

Before I dive into these experiences, it is worth noting that my reflections are naturally incomplete and biased by my upbringing, education, position in society, personality and a variety of other factors. My memories, beliefs, and what I find important about them do not reflect all the realities I encountered, but rather my interpretation of those realities. I hope that my experiences, including my own biases and blind spots that may be obvious to some of you, but unconscious to me, can also help you to be more mindful and reflective during your arctic research journey.

10.2 Experience as a Master's Student: A Lesson in Positionality

Fishing rod, *check*, insulated rubber boots, *check*, audio recorder, *check*, duct tape, *check*, and portable printer (kind of ridiculous), but *check*. Running down my packing checklist prior to my first field season had me feeling both completely under- and over-prepared. The few hours it took to manoeuvre everything into my 55 L backpack and 80 L Action Packer was the culmination of 8 months of academic preparation and planning, and two more months of logistical preparation and planning. Ten months prior, in September 2015, I began my Master of Arts in Geography at the University of Guelph. My thesis research was designed to build and expand upon previous climate change vulnerability and adaptation research and

established research relationships with the community of Ulukhaktok (Pearce et al., 2010; Fawcett et al., 2018). Once the academic requirements were out of the way, I began planning the logistics of travel, which meant actioning my research budget. Despite reading through past research budgets for similar projects and discussing my budget at length with my supervisor, I was astounded by the cost of arctic research. I was thinking that "I'm not even in the Arctic yet," yet somehow I had already spent what felt like an exorbitant amount of money on supplies. Others questions that often came to mind were: will I be able to claim this expense? Is this really necessary? And is this a good use of money? These questions were often followed by a sense of guilt, fueled by inexperience of what is actually involved in doing good community-based research. After all, why did I need a fishing rod?

These early expenses, particularly those that I did not fully understand at the time, magnified the weight of responsibility that I felt to do things well. I worried about being able to fulfill my responsibility to the community and to my supervisory committee, and I had many doubts running through my mind. Did I have everything? Did I have enough money? Was I ever going to make it home? How much food should I bring? How much baggage am I allowed to expense? What am I going to do with 200 m of fishing line? It was during this preparation phase that I also felt a sense of shame at my own perceived inflexibility. I understood that community-based research requires flexibility and open-mindedness, which takes time, but I was second guessing my every move. When and for how long I was to visit the community was one of the decisions that challenged me the most. The summer is a very busy time in the Arctic as many people have holidays and are keen to participate in land-based activities like hunting and fishing. This can make the summer a difficult time to do research, particularly if your research involves spending time speaking with hunters who would rather be on the land, or making the necessary preparations or repairs to get back out on the land, than talking with you. I felt as though I had little choice but to go in the summer though, due to the constraints of the university semester system and research funding. Once I actually made it to Ulukhaktok in June, without half my luggage, which was left behind at the Vancouver airport, the waves of nervous anticipation that came with planning, packing and buying supplies, turned into a more constant anxiety. I felt an immense pressure to achieve the perfect sample size and number of interviews, to use my budget *exactly* as I had devised, and to strike the perfect balance between academic expectations and guidelines (including funding) and building meaningful relationships with community members. I aimed to be the perfect researcher: free from the tensions of my positionality and research expectations, and able to balance living in a vastly different culture to my own. I soon learned that I had put an impossible expectation on myself.

My difficulties navigating this chasm became ever-present when I started to participate in community life. To do the research justice, I needed to learn more about community life, particularly the role and importance of subsistence harvesting, and build relationships with the people who would contribute to the research. Relationship building was a two-way street, in which I was learning about the community and people, and community members were getting to know me.

Early-on, I found that the pressure I put on myself about how I spent research funding affected my ability to enter into what I would consider to be authentic relationships. On the one hand, I was able to pay community members to take me on the land as part of the research. On one occasion I spent the entire day travelling down Prince Albert Sound with an experienced hunter who agreed take me with him when I offered to pay him for his time and buy him gas and supplies for the day. Experiences like these are memorable and were incredibly valuable to the research in that they gave context to the things people were sharing with me about the importance of subsistence and changes in the environment during interviews. In this way, research funding allowed me to feel as if the project was able to directly contribute to the lives of the people I was doing research with by financially compensating them for sharing their time, knowledge and expertise with me. There were also opportunity costs that came with the research funding. I came to realize that the relationships I built with community members would always be in the context of my positionality as an outsider to the community and culture, and as a graduate student. My access to research money and the guidelines that needed to be followed (i.e. signatures and receipts) served as a constant reminder of my positionality. When I invited someone for coffee to talk about hunting, or just talk about life, we would make light of me being able to use research funds to pay for it. This was also a reminder that without research funding, there is no way that I would have even had the opportunity to have had these conversations, as I would not have been able to travel to the community, nor could I have expected people to give me their time without some form of compensation. That said, most of the time I wished that I could have stepped outside of my role as a graduate student researcher and build relationships with community members from a personal standpoint.

Navigating the tensions between money and community-research realities is not solely an issue for researchers. Community members formed different perceptions about me based on my position as a graduate student and the expectations that I had access to funding. Some community members had prior experience working with researchers and recognized that any relationship with a researcher would come with some quirks and formalities by which we were bound. They had a sense of humour about these formalities and by me showing a genuine interest in doing research together, it allowed for these formalities to become a minor tedium – a sense of a shared burden for all involved. “Let’s go for coffee on the university’s dime” made us all insiders on the same joke. There was also a general acknowledgement by most community members of my place as a student, and that my personal finances and research funding would be limited. Again, recognizing and embracing the ridiculousness and humour of the opportunities and constraints of doing research proved extremely beneficial to relationship-building.

Looking back at this experience now, I realize that much of my anxiety was caused by me trying to be perfect when perfectionism wasn’t possible nor preferable. Inuit in Ulukhaktok were overwhelmingly kind and generous to me, and were willing to help me with the research and my life in general regardless if they were getting paid. This showed me that my hang-up with research funding and how it could influence relationships was mostly my own and that I needed to step back and

realize that funding enabled the research to happen and it allowed people to be fairly compensated for their time. That said, funding can create power dynamics and efforts are still needed to make the distribution of research funding in the community equitable and fair.

10.3 Experience as a Research Associate: An Exercise in Adaptation

A few years after completing my master's degree, my interest and joy in community-based research in the Arctic pulled me back to it. In August 2019, I started a position as a Research Associate on a multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary research project focused on using genomics as a non-invasive method to monitor polar bears. My role in the project was vague but involved identifying opportunities to use genomics in existing community-based monitoring programs in the Western Canadian Arctic. A few months before starting, a colleague sent me the job posting and information about the project. This included the research budget, which allocated approximately $110,000CDN to the social science part of the research. This amount may seem large, but was minor within the context of the multi-million-dollar project and was intended to cover multiple trips to do the research with communities. The potential to travel and work with communities was a large part of what attracted me to this position. When I started the position in August, however, nearly 90% ($98,000CDN) of that planned research budget was no longer available because the project leads were unable to secure matching funding, which the core funding was conditional upon. Rather than 2 years and a $110,000CDN research budget, I now had 1 year and approximately $12,000CDN to complete the work.

As an early career researcher, I had never encountered a funding problem like this before. I had previously worked on Federal government-sponsored projects that recognized the flexibility and multi-year security needed to conduct meaningful community-based research. I was operating on the belief that all projects and funding agencies had the flexibility and security that I had during my master's. This polar bear project, however, was much larger and far more complex. My role was to work with six communities (five of which I had never worked with) and with a highly politicized species. Communities and co-management bodies in the region can be wary of research involving polar bear due to the species' political nature and cultural importance. Because of this, the relevant wildlife co-management boards had a keen interest in being involved in all stages of the project.

Considering the priorities of six highly diverse communities is far more complicated and necessitates a more involved pre-research consultation process than working with just one community. It would require collaborating with multiple regional and community organizations to identify their interests in order to establish relevant and achievable research objectives. Here is where I ran into a budgetary dilemma: how could I travel to co-design the research *with* communities, when doing so

would take up the entirety of the budget leaving no funds to actually do the research? I opted to start by working with the regional council that oversees wildlife issues in the region to discuss a possible plan. Even this was made difficult by the cost of traveling to present at the scheduled meetings. The process took months as council members discussed the research ideas with their respective communities and reported back the council. We eventually agreed on a research plan and although I was disappointed that I was unable to travel to meet with each community myself, I was pleased that we had a plan! Circumstance, however, was not to be outdone. Two weeks after getting approval to move forward with the research plan, the world shut down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel was disrupted and our new plan, which we had worked so long for, was put on hold. We had delayed starting research to take the time to develop the research plan in a manner that was within our research budget, and now travel was not even an option. We could not have predicted that a global pandemic would thwart our research plan. Assuming you too lived through 2020, you will know that at times it felt that whatever could go wrong, did go wrong, and this case was no different.

Several months later, as I write this, we are still left in uncertainty. Even as some precautions begin to lift, and some travel is restored, the Canadian Arctic remains locked to outside travel. The history of pandemics for Indigenous communities across Canada ensures that these may be some of the last places that travel is permitted to, and with it, the ability to do community-based research. We are left asking questions about how, and if, we can still meet some of the project objectives if granted an extension on deadlines. This is unlikely to happen as the project necessitates strong community-researcher collaboration and this is difficult, if not impossible, under the current circumstances – both COVID and lack of funding. But then again, it could be argued that the project's underlying funding structure was always at odds with the goals of completing meaningful community-based research.

10.4 What Lessons Can We Take Away from These Experiences?

> The more I know, the more I realize I know nothing. (Socrates)

What I have learned trying to find the balance between research funding and community realities is that I will always have more to learn. This tension is a natural part of being a researcher and, as such, there is no real panacea that I can offer to overcome it. Acknowledging the inevitability of these challenges and remaining curious as they arise, reflecting and responding as is appropriate and possible, may be the best way forward. If I could go back and give myself advice, I would have several suggestions on how to make the process better. Note that these may have not necessarily changed the realities that I encountered or my actions to a great extent, but they would have changed how I processed them and eased some internally

difficult experiences. Had I accomplished this, I would have likely had even more energy to put into building relationships and my research.

Be More Flexible This could have been in the timing of my fieldwork or what I saw as necessary costs of community-based research. Oftentimes because of my preconceived ideas, I was so caught up in rigid ways of perceiving the journey that I lost perspective of the journey I was on. I could have remained open to whatever arose as an opportunity to learn in different ways about community-based research.

Maintain Perspective This can be difficult, especially if funding or funding guidelines alter your project in ways that disrupt or alter the course of your research. I know that I had extreme trouble with this during the polar bear project. But if your research is going to be truly responsive to community priorities, this is necessary. For example, although it was frustrating to have the ability to proceed with the project disrupted by a drawn-out consultation process due to limited funds, and then completely disrupted by COVID, consultation is an essential part of community-based research that needs to be better accounted for in funding structures. We often emphasize the importance of community priorities in community-based research such as this, but are rarely ready to deal with the consequences that could include project delays or refocusing research on a community priority we had not intended to focus on at all. As with the polar bear project, influences beyond your reach may disrupt your goals and redirect your outcomes, but maintaining perspective and flexibility can keep you moving forward.

Stop Overstressing If you are a graduate student, this should not be something you are too concerned about. Your supervisor is meant to guide you through the entire process, and funding is a formality where they should, ideally, be helping you in some manner. Furthermore, beyond meeting the bare necessities, particularly ethical necessities, funding guidelines can be relatively fluid and malleable. It is quite likely that as long as you follow the most important guidelines (e.g. do not spend your entire research budget helping someone buy a boat), you will not have anyone hunting you down. I had several different "pots" of money to draw from during my research for my master's, some with very specific stipulations about their uses. In one instance the stress I had about overspending in one category of my budget and the implications related to funding stipulations completely dissipated when the university accounting person noted that several of my expenses could fit into multiple budget categories. If I could go through my master's again, I would relax more and stress less, knowing that each challenge is really an opportunity to learn and grow.

Lighten Up Allow yourself to fully experience what you are experiencing, not what you think you should be experiencing. Rather than resisting the tension that came with operating in a new culture, I could have embraced their normality (much like we are told to embrace our feelings). Your perspective and how you share it can make all the difference. If you can make light of the formalities that come with

academic and funding guidelines as a burden or even an opportunity, it can change the perception of you as an unknowing outsider, to a slightly less naive visitor who is open to learning and maybe even becoming a friend.

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David Fawcett has a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of Guelph (2017).

Chapter 11
Nothing Could Have Prepared Me for This

Sarah Flisikowski

Abstract My graduate research experiences working in the realm of polar bear co-management in the Canadian Arctic taught me the importance of wildlife to Inuit and the sensitivity of research about polar bear. Having no prior experience in arctic research or with polar bears, I experienced a sort of trial by fire that required me to "pivot" my research focus and approach on several occasions, but ultimately allowed me the flexibility needed to respond to Inuit research priorities.

Keywords Co-management · Flexibility · Inuit · Northwest Territories · Polar bears · Ulukhaktok

11.1 Introduction

I have been interested in the natural environment and sustainability for as long as I can remember. Reflecting on this, I know that I have become a better student and global citizen because of my involvement in environmental clubs and activities since elementary school. I initially considered my passion for environmental studies as a hobby rather than a career and despite excelling in the social sciences in high school, I was under the impression that studying natural sciences and specifically medical sciences was the most prestigious education and career path for me. As such, I entered a Bachelor of Science program at Queen's University and declared a major in Life Sciences. I was convinced that medicine was right for me, despite struggling in some of my courses and enjoying very few of them. It was not until I sat down at my local public library to study for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) for the first time that I felt a strong desire within me to reconsider my decision to pursue a degree in medicine. It was self-liberating to realize that I did not have to pursue an education and career that no longer appealed to me and felt foreign and forced. I definitely wanted to continue studying at a university and started

S. Flisikowski (✉)
Ontario, Canada

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to review several healthcare and public health-related master's programs at various Canadian universities.

On my undergraduate convocation day in May 2018, after tentatively accepting a spot in the Aging and Health master's program at Queen's, I considered the possibility of pursuing an environmental-focused program, specifically a Master's in Environmental Studies (MES). In reflecting upon my undergraduate degree and seeing how fulfilled fellow students were by their degrees, I realized that healthcare was perhaps not the most gratifying next step for me in my academic journey. Housemates of mine knew me well and had a running joke that I was in a program to which I was ill-suited, and one asked me outright why I had not considered an MES.

Conveniently, several faculty members within the School of Environmental Studies at Queen's were still taking applications for graduate students for the following academic year. I submitted an application and was paired with an Associate Professor who took me on to work on a multi-disciplinary arctic research project called BearWatch. BearWatch is a Genome Canada -funded project that seeks to develop scat-based tools to monitor polar bears and assess biotic responses to climate change and other anthropogenic environmental impacts. I would later be connected with an Associate Professor at the University of Northern British Columbia who became my co-supervisor and drove the academic development of my work.

My family and friends fully supported and encouraged my decision to pursue an MES degree. The question of what career such a degree would lead to came up often, but ultimately, I felt confident that the skills and knowledge gained during the degree could be applied to a variety jobs in the future. My parents in particular were not surprised by my interest in an MES as they had witnessed my engagement with environmental issues and outreach throughout my life. My family very much enjoys spending time outdoors and connecting with nature. My twin brothers recently completed Bachelor of Science programs at Queen's and majored in environmental science, and my Dad would have worked in forestry or wildlife conservation if his parents in Poland had not convinced him otherwise. I am so fortunate to have been supported by my family throughout the application process and the degree itself.

In my MES program, I was able to fully immerse myself in social science topics and research methods and release myself from the tight grasp and linear mindset of the natural sciences which I had grown so accustomed to. I was always in control of which path I would take, but it took me years to realize and accept that what I had planned to do was no longer something I should or would do. Looking back, I am in awe of how seamlessly and serendipitously I transitioned to a graduate program which I had never considered prior to 2018. Little did I know that polar bears were at the forefront of arctic wildlife management politics and a lightning rod for debate.

11.2 Polar Bear as a Lightning Rod for Debate

My graduate research was designed to respond to Inuit research priorities. The original aim of my research was to identify and assess approaches for monitoring polar bear under changing climatic conditions in the Canadian Arctic, in line with the BearWatch project. Many approaches to monitoring polar bear exist but are vastly different in terms of cost, efficiency, safety, environmental impact, and cultural appropriateness. Inuit have expressed concern about the invasiveness of some monitoring approaches and my original aim responded to this concern as well as the overarching goal of BearWatch: to develop tools to non-invasively monitor polar bear subpopulations in Canada. I had envisioned conducting desk-based research supplemented by semi-structured interviews to better understand polar bear monitoring and how it relates to management decision-making.

This original aim was changed in response to feedback from the Inuvialuit Game Council (IGC) during a meeting in Whitehorse in September 2019, the beginning of my second year in the program. By this point in my program, I had completed a full literature review for my thesis and received ethics clearance from Queen's to conduct research. I was unfortunately unable to attend the IGC meeting in person due to time and budget constraints, but my supervisor attended and relayed the information to me. The IGC shared that my original aim was not a current priority and that a new aim should respond to priorities identified in the *Inuvialuit Settlement Region Polar Bear Joint Management Plan.*

In response to this feedback, discussion with my supervisors, and guidance from other researchers, my new research aim was to examine the evolution of polar bear co-management in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (ISR), with a specific focus on the role and function of Inuit Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in decision-making. I thought this was particularly interesting as co-management is constantly evolving in each region of Inuit Nunangat and capturing the progress would produce a tangible and hopefully useful output. Polar bear co-management systems have come a long way in Canada and documenting how they have evolved and considering how they might continue to evolve in the ISR was an exciting prospect. Also, I did not quite understand what role Inuit TEK played in co-management decision-making in the ISR and I was curious to find out by specifically exploring the mobilization of Inuit TEK in the management of a species with such an important role in Inuit culture.

I presented my proposed research as an academic poster at the ArcticNet Annual Scientific Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in December 2019. ArcticNet is an annual gathering of scientists, engineers, and managers in the natural, human health, and social sciences with their partners from Inuit organizations, northern communities, federal and provincial agencies and the private sector to study and discuss the impacts of climate change in the Arctic. The conference is three days long, plus a Student Day prior to the official opening plenary session. Although I had attended ArcticNet in Ottawa in 2018, this was my first time presenting a poster. I felt excited and optimistic about sharing my proposed work with those who cared to listen. Little did I know that my poster would be a hit, in more ways than one.

Posters were displayed on the first day of the conference, with the first poster session occurring that evening. Partway through the day while leaving a side meeting, I was stopped by a non-Inuit wildlife biologist working within wildlife co-management in the Arctic who recognized my name from the name tag hanging around my neck. They showed me a photo on their phone of my poster and confirmed with me that the poster was indeed mine. I felt like I was being interrogated for a crime. The individual proceeded to aggressively critique specific sentences and words on my poster and refute the cited statement in my background section that there may be tensions within some co-management bodies about the use of different knowledge systems in decision-making. I thanked the individual for taking an interest in my poster and sharing their thoughts and concerns and stressed that I was a graduate student proposing research based on recommendations made to me by an Inuit organization. I walked the fine line of defending my work yet being open to constructive criticism and accepting feedback graciously and respectfully. This incident was foreshowing of what was to come later that day.

During the first poster session, I was encouraged to have many productive conversations with students, academics and Inuit about my proposed research. My time at the poster session, however, was soon hijacked by a few individuals who challenged my interpretation of the published literature and picked apart my poster. I emphasized that I was a graduate student open to learning and receiving feedback on my poster and this somewhat softened the tone of the remaining comments I received. Despite feeling stressed inside, I maintained composure and was not upset by the critical feedback. The challenging discussions I had with passersby were informative and I knew that they were critiquing my ideas and written work, rather than me as a student or as a person. I could always default to working under the supervision of others and the fact that I was a student, eager to learn and adapt my work accordingly. Support workers of a wildlife management council in the Arctic felt that the poster implied a degree of collaboration and consent from the council which had not been granted. I would later learn through a follow-up letter from the council chairperson that the research ideas I had presented on the poster were from past conversations with the council and since several members had been replaced, I would need to consult again. Additionally, the letter said that my new research focus was no longer a priority issue for the council, nor did they think my budget would suffice. I accepted this feedback and revised my research plan.

I did not fully process or understand the aforementioned experiences until months later. Originally, I felt as if I had done something wrong, even though I had so many positive interactions with others at the conference. I was genuinely surprised, baffled, and yet oddly flattered by the interest garnered by my work. Sharing and debriefing the experiences I had at the conference with colleagues and friends allowed me to reflect and ultimately appreciate the experiences rather than resent them. I am now able to joke about the challenges, that at the time intimidated me, and appreciate them for being part of my learning journey.

Presenting my research poster completely changed my outlook on polar bear research and management. I got a glimpse of the politics involved in discussing polar bear and accepted that I was now a part of something much bigger than myself

or my project. I never could have imagined how much polar bear meant to people and this reality check came at a perfect time in my graduate program. I gained first-hand experience in navigating face-to-face critique and was shown that polar bears are a lightning rod for debate.

11.3 Changing the Course of my Research

My broad research question was: how are polar bear managed in a changing climate, and what roles do scientific knowledge and Inuit TEK play in their management? At the conference, I met Inuit from Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories who later invited me to visit their community and learn about subsistence harvesting and wildlife management. It was from the conference that I realized that I must take a mixed-methods approach to address my refined research aim that would not require collecting primary data from people involved with polar bear management, as had been proposed in the original research design. Instead, secondary data could be collected from existing sources through a systematic scoping review and complemented with first-hand observations over a three week period of an Inuit TEK sharing activity, which I was invited, by Inuit, to observe, document, and participate in. The revised approach still aligned with the goals of the BearWatch project.

First, a systematic scoping exercise of research on Inuit TEK of polar bear in the Canadian Arctic was conducted. The review and analysis of literature were conducted consistent with systematic scoping review approaches in global change literature and in the context of the Arctic. Second, an event ethnography was conducted of the *Nunamin Illihakvia* project's "Northern Forum" in Ulukhaktok, Northwest Territories, Canada. "*Nunamin Illihakvia*" means "learning from the land" in Inuinnaqtun and is the name of a project administered by the Ulukhaktok Community Corporation (UCC) with support from the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC) and arctic researcher Dr. Tristan Pearce. The goal of the Northern Forum was to involve participants from other communities in *Nunamin Illihakvia* activities and help participants develop project ideas and better understand the funding application process. The event ethnography was a unique and unexpected opportunity for me, a non-Inuit graduate researcher, to better understand TEK and its value through immersive Inuit community activities focused on TEK sharing. Participation in the Northern Forum and spending time in Ulukhaktok enhanced my ability to review the documents retained in the systematic scoping review mentioned earlier.

In Ulukhaktok, I practiced honesty, openness, patience, and respect in all communications and interactions with Inuvialuit, and was eager to learn about local cultures, languages and customs, and immerse myself in new experiences. From February 17th to March 6th 2020, I lived in the home of an Inuit elder who is an experienced sewer and fisher, and participated in cultural activities such as sewing, ice-fishing and drum dancing. During my spare time, I visited with community members, went sliding and played with children outside, watched a hockey game at the Community Arena, listened to Inuinnaqtun radio and television, shopped at the

Ulukhaktok Art Centre, Northern Store, and Holman Eskimo Co-Op, and walked around town and on the hills overlooking the community. The interactions and conversations I had during these activities helped me better understand life in the community. I enjoyed visiting Ulukhaktok immensely, and this aspect of my graduate program was the highlight for me. I felt welcome, safe, and at home during my first visit to the community and was at peace knowing I was not there for the purposes of polar bear research or management.

Unlike presenting at an academic conference, spending time in an Inuit community was not tense or intimidating. Living in Ulukhaktok under the care and supervision of trusted advisors and community members allowed me to move away from politics and focus on issues that were less contentious. Inuit elders that I had the privilege of visiting with and learning from made me feel welcome and showed genuine interest in me and my project. I felt a true sense of partnership in that people *wanted* to work with me, which was a novelty. I concluded from my experiences that arctic research can be sensitive and political, but it is not necessarily Inuit who create this environment or want it to be this way.

I had envisioned polar bear as being the "talk of the town" in Ulukhaktok, but they only came up a few times in stories and conversations with trusted community members. Inuit in Ulukhaktok have a deep respect for polar bear and show this respect by not speaking about them. A hunter across the road from where I was staying allowed me to photograph his grandson's first bear, which was memorable. The full hide was strung over his front porch and I got to see this stunning creature that I have learned so much about up close. I cherish these photos as they capture polar bears in a new way for me. I have come to deeply admire the relationship that Inuit have with polar bears and am in awe of the polar bear's magnificence and influence, both in Inuit Nunangat and around the world.

11.4 Reflections

I learned many things throughout the course of my graduate degree. Primarily, I learned that it was essential to remain respectful, adaptive, spontaneous, and resilient. I had previously thought that the projects of colleagues looked fairly straightforward, but this was a misconception. Researchers constantly encounter challenges that involve unforeseen changes to their projects, timelines, and funding sources. My own project evolved as I progressed through my degree, and it constantly evolved for the better. I never considered myself a spontaneous person but found that stepping outside of my comfort zone and accepting opportunities that challenged me allowed me to grow and improve as a scholar and as a person. Being responsive to Inuit research priorities while maintaining my research interests required pivoting but I still managed to produce a dynamic research project. I trusted my supervisors and colleagues in times of uncertainty and leaned on them for support and guidance.

I completed my MES degree in October 2020. I am thankful for the many opportunities that arose to expand my knowledge and build relationships with others. Things have a way of working themselves out, especially when you are able to roll with the punches. My degree taught me more than I was expecting to learn, and nothing could have prepared me for what I experienced.

Sarah Flisikowski completed a Masters in Environmental Studies (MES) at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario in 2020. Since completing her degree, Sarah has worked as a Research Associate in the Environmental Change Research Group at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC).

Part V
Working Across Cultures

Chapter 12
How Culture Shapes Research

Miguel van der Velden

Abstract I am from Aruba, an island in the Caribbean, and had the opportunity during my Honours degree to conduct research with the community of Ulukhaktok in the Canadian Arctic. In this chapter, I share, with examples, how my Aruban culture and journalism training influenced my experiences building relationships in the community and conducting the research.

Keywords Fieldwork · Inuit · Journalism · Northwest Territories · Research-relationships · Ulukhaktok

12.1 Introduction

I arrived in Ulukhaktok in the middle of a blizzard. I remember looking out at the white land, the white sky, the white wind and the white snow and feeling as if I were transported into a movie. After all, for a young man from Aruba, a semi-arid island in the Caribbean, used to timid seas and cacti the size of trees, the only chance I ever got to see snow in my life was through a television screen. The "White Christmas" snow that I knew from the movies could never have prepared me for the brutal, blinding blizzards of the Arctic.

My first few days in Ulukhaktok were split into two introductions. First, I had to get to know the Arctic nature and environment. I didn't know how to dress, and it was hard to shake the mistaken belief that you could not blink in −30 °C weather without your eyelids freezing shut. In those first few days, I spent more time sweating than shivering, by over-dressing in five warm layers when a parka (a word I'd never heard before for a clothing item I'd never seen) would have been enough. Second, I had to get to know the people of Ulukhaktok and their culture. All I knew of Inuit culture I had either read online or been told by my supervisor who had

M. van der Velden (✉)
Noord, Aruba

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accompanied me and a master's student on this six-week trip and it was mostly about traditional Inuit culture and not so much about today's modern Inuit culture. I was a child, socially and culturally, in this place. And yet, while I got to know the environment and the people (a big task on its own), I was expected to work too.

I got the opportunity to travel to the Arctic through the Nurturing Capacity program of Indspire, an Indigenous-led charitable organization dedicated to raising funds and delivering programs that provide Indigenous youth in Canada with the tools necessary to achieve their potential. During my time in the community, my task was to work with staff and students at Helen Kalvak *Elihakvik* (School) to document and share efforts being made at the school to negotiate an education system that is culturally and socially relevant to Inuit students. At the end of the project, the interviews, photos and other findings would be put together in a report called "School in a Modern Arctic."

12.2 My First Days in the Arctic

I was in Ulukhaktok primarily to work on the project; however, my time in Ulukhaktok ended up becoming a lot more than that. To set it all off, a discussion with the principal of Helen Kalvak School just days after my arrival made it clear that there was a severe shortage of teachers at the school. Three teachers had just left the previous month and no replacements had been found yet. My supervisor, seizing this opportunity for a closer relationship with the students who were to be the focus of the project, spontaneously offered for us to take on the role of teachers and provide a five-week Journalism course for the Grade 10 and 11 students. I remember sitting in the principal's office and staring incredulously at my supervisor, though I'm not sure he noticed. My mind was numbed by the cold and the social interactions of the first few days in the community, and I wasn't sure what I was hearing. Would I agree to do it? Of course, but that doesn't mean I thought it was any less crazy. I never pretended to have any experience as a teacher. In fact, I could count the number of times I'd stood in front of a classroom on one hand; twice during a Geography Immersion Day for high school students, and three times for a university course called "Introduction to Sustainability." Only one out of those five times had I stood in front of the class alone.

Nonetheless, within days of arriving in Ulukhaktok, I was signed up to be a substitute teacher and teaching assistant, something I had not planned for at all. This set the scene for what the rest of my time in Ulukhaktok would be like. Every day was different and brought a fresh surprise with a new and unique set of challenges. Adaptability became the highest virtue. The Arctic Journalism course, as we called it, though it was an intimidating idea to begin with, did allow me to interact with students on a daily basis and get to know them better than I otherwise would have. We also gave back to the community directly by teaching students journalism skills like interviewing, writing articles, photography and video editing, which equipped the students to become the researchers for the project.

The idea was that the Arctic Journalism course would provide the bulk of the qualitative data for the "School in a Modern Arctic" report, while interviews with the principal, teachers and teaching assistants would provide the rest of the necessary data (both qualitative and quantitative). However, the Arctic Journalism class was also an opportunity in itself to make the school more socially relevant and appropriate to its students. To achieve this, we teamed up with hunter-mentors and Elders through the *Nunamin Illihakvia*: learning from the land project, an Ulukhaktok-governed project, funded by the Climate Change and Health Adaptation Program of the federal government, that brings together young Inuit with experienced hunters, sewers and Elders, to promote the learning and use of traditional knowledge, skills and values.

Through our collaboration with *Nunamin Illihakvia*, the Arctic Journalism class (and myself, for which I was very excited for) got to go out on the land and sea ice to learn search-and-rescue skills, how to set up camp, and hunting and trapping skills. Students also got to participate in activities such as cutting ice for drinking water, bannock-making and fox-skinning. Though I have never had to cut ice for drinking water or skin a fox again, I still occasionally make bannock nearly 2 years later.

While several other students outside of the Arctic Journalism class also participated in these activities, the students in the Arctic Journalism class had the extra task of documenting and sharing these activities. Each week there was a focus on a different aspect of journalism, such as writing, photography, or film, and students were tasked with recording the week's activities with their newly developed skills.

The Arctic Journalism class moved beyond the classroom and took on a life of its own. It felt like we were always working on it as there was no divide between work and community living. Sometimes, my supervisor and I would visit the school after dinner and work into the late hours of the night. And to think, it was my second week in the community, and I was already running on fumes. Some days, it took me as much as two whole hours to get out of bed. The first time the sun came up was halfway through the trip and I wasn't taking half as many Vitamin D tablets as I should have been. I was taking between one and three in a day, only to find out from one of the high school students that he never took less than five in a day (and his were bigger tablets). Not to mention he was a born and raised in Ulukhaktok, so just imagine what an Aruban who hasn't even gotten rid of his tan would need!

12.3 Where Cultures Meet

Thanks to my multicultural upbringing and my strong belief in the shared characteristics and humanity of all people, I was not too worried about fitting into Ulukhaktok. I grew up as an ethnically and culturally mixed child, split as I was between Dutch and Venezuelan parents and growing up in neither of the countries my parents were from. I was always acutely aware of my ancestry, though it did not play a large role in my everyday life. I always knew where I came from. The dynamics of my identity

only changed when I left Latin America and the Caribbean and realized that people like me did not identify the way I did in other parts of the world, and it played a large role in my social relations throughout my life, including in Ulukhaktok.

Growing up between two cultures, with friends from many other cultures, taught me some things about what it means to be culturally appropriate. In my life I had experienced first-hand the funny mannerisms of people experiencing culture shock, and I had also read in my academic studies the different methodologies used by social scientists to "fit into" a community. In my perspective, this "fitting into" another culture tends to take two forms. On the one hand, there are those who travel to a community, soak up as much culture and knowledge as they can, and then leave without giving anything back. This seems to me no more than cultural exploitation, no matter what the soaked-up "knowledge" is used for (e.g. academic research). People who behave in this way act like ghosts, people with no culture who are able to consume so much of other people's cultures because they are "clean slates." They come to foreign nations and communities as blank canvasses, so they may draw on themselves with the cultural paints and crayons of the visited region.

On the other hand, there are those who travel to communities with the assumption that they have much to give (often in the way of funding and Western knowledge) and very little to receive. They are more well-known and despised than the previous kind of traveller, because they are more obviously toxic. They act arrogantly and are quick to dismiss local culture for all kinds of reasons and excuses.

I think that to be successful in a foreign culture and especially to be successful as a social researcher, means walking a fine line between these two behavioural extremes. To feel comfortable and accepted in Ulukhaktok, I could not come in arrogantly; I had to come in with an open heart and an open mind. But opening up my heart and mind to Ulukhaktok did not mean erasing the culture and the knowledge that I grew up with, so that I could arrive with a clean slate in the Arctic upon which I could paint a new Miguel, using Inuit colours. Rather, fitting in as a foreigner was about creating a two-way street, a *sharing* rather than a *taking* or a *giving* approach.

As social scientists it is our job, in a sense, to take. That is, we arrive in a place to understand and learn from the local culture; to take knowledge. In the last few decades, it has become very important in the field of social science to also give back to the community, and as social scientists we make sure to do so through, for example, dissemination of our research. But what about giving back at a personal level? At a human level?

To me, giving back at a human level meant the sharing of my culture with others, just as they shared their culture with me. There was no arrogance there, no assumption that my culture was more important or interesting than the local culture. Rather, there was an acknowledgement that both cultures are equal, and though locally specialized, have important lessons to teach people of other cultures. It was with this mindset that I had some of the most heartfelt exchanges of the trip. For example, one day as I was helping to clean the school gym, an instructor asked me what Aruban music was like. We spent the rest of the evening exchanging Aruban and Inuit songs as we cleaned. I also followed Inuinnaqtun language classes and

practiced short phrases with Elders. In return, I shared bits and pieces of Papiamento (the Aruban language) with *Ulukhaktomiut* kids, who relished in yelling the newly learned words at me from across the hamlet. On other occasions, I discussed with Elders the differences and similarities of colonization on Aruba as compared to Ulukhaktok. By sharing my experiences and opening myself up to experiences that aren't my own, and that I will never have, I came back from my trip not just as a professionally developed social researcher but as a personally developed human. I learned so much (and yet only scratched the surface) of what it means to be Inuit in Ulukhaktok; but I also learned so much about what it means to be human, and especially what it means to be human in a changing world.

My studies require me to consistently think about ethnicity as well as language, beliefs and other cultural markers and how these affect people's livelihoods and their abilities to adapt to social and environmental changes in their lives. Inevitably, culture and ethnicity became important, central even, to my idea of identity and what it means to be "human." In Ulukhaktok, there seemed to be a different and refreshing attitude. This was clear, perhaps, in the phrase "we all bleed the same colour," which I heard a number of people say during my time there. Identity was not so much defined through ethnicity and culture (e.g. language, beliefs) as much as it was defined by people's abilities to meet and live up to traditional values. Values such as independence, generosity, and the ability to provide (through food or money) for other people were central to this. Being a fully developed human meant being (among other things) independent, generous, and a provider for someone's family or for the community.

I learned this lesson about humanity in one specific timeslot in one specific community, and I believe that I am only starting to grasp the true meaning of it. Yet, this lesson has had a large impact on my life and the way I think about ethnicity, nationality, Indigeneity, culture, and land, and most importantly, our shared humanity as a species. This lesson wouldn't have been possible without opening myself up to people, nor would it have been possible, I think, if I had been merely a clean slate in this community, a detached observer, or an objective researcher. I can only hope that in the same way, someone's life in Ulukhaktok has slightly expanded through meeting me, and their thoughts and ideas broadened like mine have.

12.4 Combining Work and Play

The most difficult part about working in Ulukhaktok was trying to distinguish worktime from leisure time. With any other job, you would expect to have a schedule to abide by, but with community-based social research, every step you take and every word you speak outside of your bedroom is essentially a part of your job. Even if you're not interviewing anyone, there is the role of participant observation and when you're in a social setting, you are immediately a participant, even if you're filling other roles too (e.g. teacher, instructor, guide, friend, housemate).

Early-on during my time in Ulukhaktok, I wondered how I could have genuine, human connections with people if I had to constantly be analysing their words and behaviour for the research. I disliked the idea of allowing people to open up around me if it was only for the purpose of going home and analysing the information they shared afterwards, and I was disgusted with the thought of not being entirely there while interacting with someone, just because my analytical mind would be observing their every movement in the meantime, recording their every word. I wouldn't want anyone, not even a social researcher whose job it was to understand me, to act and think like that around me, so how could I bring myself to act and think like that around others?

Perhaps because of my own background, it is easy for me to imagine that I or a family member could be playing the role of the observed, rather than observer. My great-grandmother was a Wayuu/Añú woman from north-western Venezuela, and though I did not know her personally, my mother grew up in her household and during my childhood I heard many fond stories about her and saw a lot of photos. I would hate to think that the world would know her as a collection of anthropologically analysed thoughts and behaviours that could be rationalized through history and scientific thought, rather than a friend, a wife, a mother, a grandmother; someone who laughed and lived and breathed. A human.

I believe that every social researcher should imagine, before visiting a community (and continuously during their research), what it feels like to be continuously observed and scrutinised. They should imagine that their every behaviour or spoken word were written down in a journal and questioned at the end of the day, as if they were an equation to be figured out. What would that feel like? Then they should remind themselves that they are the ones holding those spotlights, and that they have a duty to act out of love, compassion, empathy, gratitude, and humility. But the question, the conundrum for every social researcher, is how to avoid analysing a person, and yet to still produce the needed outputs and answer the posed questions. I can't say I have an answer, but I do think it's a dilemma worth exploring again and again.

Another aspect of my work that I struggled with in Ulukhaktok was the fact that, as I was also documenting and recording events and activities to be shared in report and video format, I had to constantly be taking photos and recording videos. All too often I was in the middle of an act, enjoying myself, feeling like a part of the group, when I realized it was a perfect moment to snap a picture or even film what was happening. So out comes the camera or the phone, and the barrier it creates. Once I was photographing or filming, I was no longer a participant, a member of the group; I was an outsider looking in, someone observing rather than participating. "Participant observation" is what some researchers call it, but from my experience, sometimes you can't do both at the same time.

Both of these are things I struggled with throughout my trip. The important thing to remember for me, however, was that even as I struggled with these questions and my role in the community, I was conducting work that was helpful to the community, and that community members were grateful to me for it. At the end of the day, I was in Ulukhaktok to do my job, and actually doing that job gave me a social

standing in its own right, as people respected me for what I was doing. I can't say that this is an answer to my questions, but it is at the very least a comfort.

A contradictory trick that helped me through this dilemma of participant observation was to actively decide when and where I was working, and when and where I wasn't. Contradictory because, as I said, it is difficult as a community-based social researcher to distinguish worktime from leisure time. But this was simply a promise to myself and not something that reflected on the outer world, and it allowed for me to gauge my role in situations and to adapt as needed. If I was acting as a social researcher in a situation, it was my job to analyse and record behaviour. On the other hand, if I noticed that people were welcoming me into a space and/or activity as a person rather than as a social researcher, that's exactly what I was.

I enjoyed weekly drum dancing practice and did not busy myself with photos and videos. I had lunch every day with my wonderful host family and I visited Elders when they invited me. I also filmed people setting fox traps, instead of setting them myself. I held freezing cameras in freezing hands in the freezing wind when all I wanted was to warm up and I conducted interviews with people when sometimes I would have much preferred to get to know them over dinner.

12.5 Departure

On Friday, February 22nd 2019, it was time for me to board my flight back to Vancouver, and from there to the Sunshine Coast in Australia, to finish my studies. The morning started off well and blue-skied, but with a haziness in the distance that seemed fast-approaching. Throughout that morning, the weather deteriorated quickly until finally I got into the taxi to the airport and halfway there, we experienced a total white-out. The three hills Ulukhaktok are named after disappeared in the distance behind a white wind that was worse and more intense than the one I arrived in. The flight was cancelled, and I had no choice but to spend an extra weekend in Ulukhaktok.

Because of this delay I was forced to cancel plans to visit family that I hadn't seen in over a decade, so at first, I was dismayed, but the weather cleared that weekend and I had some of the most beautiful days I'd had there. I went on long walks, was invited to a lovely dinner, and got to see drum dance practice one last time. I played with the children that I had already said goodbye to, children seemingly oblivious to the fact that I was still leaving, and not there to stay. When I finally left the next Monday, on a blue and windless early afternoon, I knew I would miss this community. Like a cactus in the snow, I was not at all in a familiar environment, and yet I had felt entirely at home. I never thought, growing up in Aruba, that one day my heart would long for a bone-chillingly cold, blizzard-prone community with a frozen ocean, but what a beautiful community it is.

12.6 Reflections

I first wrote this book chapter only a couple of months after returning from Ulukhaktok. I was so immersed in the Arctic lifestyle, still, that I couldn't fully imagine what it was like to have never lived in the Arctic, even if only for a few weeks. Now, nearly two years on, I think back to the days in Vancouver on my way back to Australia from Ulukhaktok. In the days between my flights to and from Vancouver, I did nothing but go on long daily walks and observe the life around me. The city was loud and impersonal and so I sought refuge more than once in Stanley Park, crouching down to watch the leaves and snow close to the ground, or sitting on rocks to look out at the ocean.

It seemed, then, that my internal clock had slowed down to a glacial pace. I stood and watched the treetops, remembering one morning walk I'd taken in Ulukhaktok when the snow was thick and I could hear nothing, nor see anything but white all around. I had been worried, then, that I'd wander off too far, to the land of the wolves, and meanwhile, the outside world sped on. In the evenings I watched nature documentaries about the Arctic. I didn't know yet that I would never be able to fully explain this research trip to anyone, but my intuition said otherwise. The conversations I'd had; the friendships I'd formed; the landscape I had both loved for its beauty and dreaded for its deathly cold and silence. It was not anything I could put into words.

My hope is that I might be able to give some advice to someone who is embarking on their first trip to the Arctic. The first thing I would say is to not have any expectations, because you'll be asked to do things you never thought you would. Secondly, forget the "enough clothes will keep you warm" myth; my hands were always cold, and I was one of the outsiders who did impressively well in the harsh environment. Thirdly, take twice as many Vitamin D tablets as you think you need, and fourthly, pace yourself. It is better to do a few things well than to race from one thing to the next feeling like a zombie! Most of all, I would say not to forget that even if you are going for work or research, you are going as a human. Connect with people at that level and you will have lovely relationships, just as you would anywhere else with an open mind and an open heart. Your research will fade one day, but the people who touched your heart and mind won't. Finally: if in doubt, ask an Elder.

Miguel van der Velden has a Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability and Journalism, and experience in international law and climate adaptation governance. He continues to work in the field of international development, especially as it pertains to small island states and Indigenous communities.

Chapter 13
Lessons that Transcend Culture and Place

Eric Lede

Abstract Working with Inuit in the Canadian Arctic and villagers in Papua New Guinea (PNG) has taught me the importance of being a human first and a researcher second. From sharing local Australian delicacies in the Arctic to brewing coffee with villagers in PNG, the human relationships that are nurtured along the way are what motivate me to do this work. I have learned crucial lessons through these experiences that have helped me to overcome even the most difficult situations that have emerged during remote fieldwork.

Keywords Fieldwork · Inuvialuit · Northwest Territories · Papua New Guinea · Paulatuk · Research relationships

13.1 Introduction

I first visited the Canadian Arctic in 2014 when I worked as a research assistant on a food security project with communities in Nunatsiavut and Nunavut. This experience inspired me to pursue my master's degree in the Arctic where I worked with the community of Paulatuk in the Northwest Territories in the western Canadian Arctic to better understand how the community was experiencing and responding to climate change risks. Upon finishing my master's degree, I took a position with in the Australian Government's Australian Volunteers Program. It took me to PNG where I worked alongside Kamilo Bogen (my counterpart, advisor, and dear friend from the Morobe province of PNG) on a community-based climate change adaptation program that involved working with ten remote island villages. One year later, I moved closer to my home in northern Australia and worked within the Indigenous carbon industry, which reduces greenhouse gases from bushfires by reintroducing traditional fire management regimes. I am now working as the Senior Climate

E. Lede (✉)
Northern Territory, Australia

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Change Officer for the City of Darwin, Australia, where I am responsible for leading the design, development, and implementation of the climate change response for the city.

I learned crucial lessons while working with Inuit in the Arctic, many which have proven to be highly transferrable to the new cultures and landscapes that I have visited since. Of these many lessons, five in particular have proven to be reliable, and sometimes critical, time and time again. Each lesson reflects my strengths and weaknesses, fortunes and mistakes, and opportunities grasped and lost. These lessons are not to be read as prescriptive, but rather as reflections on some of the experiences that have contributed to my successes and dampened my failures working across cultures and landscapes. Each lesson is inspired by those who came before me and those who walked with me; they underpin my evolving approach to life, in both personal and professional realms.

13.2 Lesson One: *Show Respect*

When I am invited into someone's house, regardless of whether that person is young or old, strong or frail, I imagine myself walking into the home of someone else's grandparents. I act in the way I that would want someone else to act if they were to walk into my grandparents' home.

During an inter-community dispute in PNG, the chief of Lamalawa village attempted to steal the project by intentionally misdirecting me and Kamilo to host it in his village instead of the neighbouring village, Bol, as had originally been agreed. To assist with this diversion, several villagers from Lamalawa spread disinformation to Bol that Kamilo and I had disrespected their leaders by saying that we did not like them and instead wanted to work with Lamalawa village[1].

Kamilo and I traveled back to Bol where we met with village leaders and reaffirmed our commitment to working with Bol and our respect for the village. We entered Bol with humility and I treated the visit with the same respect that I would hope someone would bring if they were visiting my grandparents in their homes. I reflected on my time in Paulatuk where respect for others is central to the local culture. Our visit was successful and the village leaders invited us to return and work in Bol. To avoid further conflict, we agreed to work with both villages.

I learned from these experiences that if you are working, studying, or following another mode of privilege that draws you into a community, you are likely operating within a highly personal space. You may be invited into people's homes, families, cultural and spiritual activities; places, both in the physically and socially constructed forms, that represent some of the deepest foundations of human security. Being welcomed into these places is being welcomed into the fabric of people's

[1] Such disinformation tactics occurred so commonly in the area that simply running your index finger over your upper lip communicated the message, '*they are lying*'.

lives. Within these spaces of strength and fragility, you must always show deep and genuine respect.

13.3 Lesson Two: *Be Flexible*

I initiated discussions with representatives of Paulatuk at an arctic research conference held in early December 2015. The community had previously expressed their interest in continuing work on climate change adaptation and this was my chance to follow-up. I met with the Chair of the Paulatuk Community Corporation (PCC) who invited me to visit Paulatuk six weeks later to continue the conversation. With a rapidly eroding budget and research timeline, I needed to act fast. I traveled to Paulatuk in January and worked with the PCC to develop the research project. Although it took longer than I had anticipated, time was needed to work with the PCC to develop the research in a way that benefited the community.

While Paulatuk tested my ability to be flexible, nothing could prepare me for PNG. The lack of telecommunications infrastructure exacerbated even the smallest of issues. Kamilo and I found ourselves on a remote island called Lavongai where, due to unforeseeable circumstances outside of our control, we found ourselves caught amidst a tribe war. We needed to leave the island with haste. I used the satellite phone to contact our team on the mainland to dispatch the boat that was meant to be three hours away. Their response: "we haven't seen the boat for a while but I'm sure they'll pick you up at some point." Two months earlier, we had asked the boat captain to collect us on the coming Friday, which was still three days away. Left without an alternative and with the danger (somewhat) subsided, we agreed to stay the remainder of the week and complete our program. Being flexible with our needs, coerced by our lack of alternative options, was essential.

While working in remote communities you are generally passive to external conditions and this is where your ability to be flexible will be tested. Even the most meticulous plans will be thrown out the window on the first day. This pattern seems to become more exacerbated the more remote you go. Wherever you are, wherever you go, you must always be flexible.

13.4 Lesson Three: *Remember to Laugh*

One of my most precious memories was born when my dear friends Maya March, Ray Ruben, and the late Jonah Nakimayak invited me to join them for a small get-together one evening in Paulatuk. Both Jonah and Ray had agreed to take part in the research in both advisory and participatory roles and Maya was providing incredibly generous, vital, and to this day, unreciprocated support to the research. Outside of the research, I had found myself in close friendships with all three so spending time with them together was an opportunity too good to miss.

Jonah's contagious laugh filled the room with joy throughout the evening, recounting comical stories of his outrageous life, from the long-distance sled-dog expedition he embarked upon in search of his wife-to-be, to outwitting the *little people*[2] on the enchanted sea ice. For Jonah, boundless humour was to be found in the recesses of every story. His ability to find the humour despite the hardships didn't undermine the seriousness of the issues, but rather seemed to be a healthy way to discuss and live among such issues. At one point in the evening, Jonah abruptly arrested his humor to ensure that I understood, unequivocally, that his humorous stories were told despite a harsh reality, not in the absence of one.

One night on Lavongai Island in PNG, my capacity to have a sense of humour was tested. Delayed by twelve hours due to a particularly wicked thunderstorm, we approached the village of Patiagaga by boat, arriving slightly past midnight. By the time we arrived, the community's patience had been depleted and our welcoming party, which included a carefully choreographed sing-sing[3], had been disbanded. The lack of telecommunications infrastructure on the island prevented us from relaying our message of a late arrival. By the time we arrived in the village, the storm had picked up again and we had found ourselves dropped off at the bottom of a steep and ominous hill with about one hundred kilograms of luggage (mostly food). The hill was made out of a particularly slippery clay that, when wet, prevented us from making much progress towards the village, which should have only been a fifteen-minute walk away. A one-hour slog later, we had progressed no more than fifty meters after finding ourselves sliding back two meters for every meter of progress (well, it felt like this at least). As our flashlight batteries dwindled, lightning cracked around us and heavy tropical rain slashed at our faces. With our energy levels exhausted, sliding backwards down the clay hill, we paused, looked at each other and burst out laughing, feverishly, at the sheer absurdity and hopelessness of the situation. Out of our dire situation, we had found, not just humour, but pure joy in a space that should have otherwise ravished our hopes and motivations. Two hours later, after having somehow clawed our way up the hill, we found ourselves on the outskirts of the village where a resident named Ted—who was about to have his first encounter with a foreigner—found us tangled and deflated. With both diffidence and caution, Ted kindly helped us into his home where he offered us food and shelter. We ended up spending the week with Ted and his family, constantly recounting our chance encounter over many laughs (and silently supressed tears).

Perhaps I should have learned to avoid putting myself in perilous situations, but what I have actually learned is to always have a sense of humor. By nature, working in remote places means encountering hardships and difficulties. It may seem insensitive, cruel even, to suggest that humour can be found in such circumstances. Though within these spaces, and from the people that I have met along the way, humour seems to offer a respite from a harsh reality.

[2] Little people are elusive, mischievous pranksters with superhuman strength. Varying stories of the little people have been part of the folklore of many cultures in human history.

[3] A sing-sing is a celebratory gathering of performers from a village who sing and dance to express their unique cultural identity and rituals.

13.5 Lesson Four: *Reciprocate*

I discovered the next lesson by accident one morning in Paulatuk after leaving my giant tub of Vegemite[4] on the bench. When Chris Ruben picked me up for our weekly walk across the sea ice, he inspected the curious jar and sniffed the contents. Excited by Chris' interest, I toasted up some bread and gave Chris his first humbling experience of Vegemite toast. Despite the initial reaction of disgust (a common response), Chris was elated with the toast and went on to tell others about the obscure product that dumbfoundingly took priority in my weight-constrained luggage. In the following days, when visiting people's homes, everyone kept referencing Chris' Vegemite story, which had quickly passed through town. This was a stark reminder of how quickly news, be it good or bad, passes through small communities. I eventually added Vegemite and a loaf of bread to my daily travel bag when visiting homes in Paulatuk.

I rediscovered this lesson, again by accident, while in a small village named Konomatalik on Lavongai Island in PNG. I brought a small coffee press and some ground coffee from the highlands of PNG, which, in my biased opinion, is home to some of the richest coffee in the world. I boiled up some water on the fire each morning and made a coffee for myself and anyone who was interested. People loved the coffee so much that a dozen-person line formed outside of our hut each morning to get their morning coffee experience. Some even embraced the novelty so much that they made evening events out of drinking coffee and staying up all night, filling the cosy fire-lit hut with chatter and laughter as villagers fluttered in and out throughout the night.

These experiences are less often spoken about when doing community-based research but are central to relationship building. When you visit a community, great effort is made behind the scenes to host you. We seldom see nor fully appreciate the sacrifices of time, resources, and energy that are required to support our work. Indeed, many of these sacrifices are made by those that won't directly benefit from the project. I have learned to, when I can, give back to the people with whom I am working with, no matter how small that gesture may be.

13.6 Lesson Five: *Enjoy*

If you are reading this, then you may soon be embarking along a trail on which I walk with humility and passion. The trail ahead will lead you into breathtaking, riveting, and spectacular places. You will be elevated into the highest emotional peaks, but you will also be ripped into the deepest emotional depths. While on the trail, you may find yourself absorbed into everyday community life; this is

[4] Vegemite, my quick-fix antidote to homesickness, is a thick, dark brown food spread made from leftover brewers' yeast extract and is a quintessential item in every Australian pantry.

tremendous, allow this to happen, but this can distract you from realising the opportunity and privilege that you have in being where you are. Ultimately, through your pains and joys, your hardships and prosperities, don't forget to take a step back, appreciate where you are, and realise that you will soon be reminiscing, likely with profound nostalgia, about the footprints that you have left along this beautiful trail. These nostalgic memories will likely be carved from the unexpected. For me, memories of hiking across the sea ice with Chris, laughing through the evening with Jonah, brewing coffee through the night with villagers, and slogging my way up slippery hills with Kamilo evoke some of my fondest memories. I wish that your future memories, in their spectacular uniqueness, are equally saturated with fond experiences.

Eric Lede has a Master of Arts in Human Geography from the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia based on research with the community of Paulatuk, Canada. He is currently the Senior Climate Change Officer for the City of Darwin, Australia.

Part VI
Afterword

Chapter 14
Shut Up and Listen

Ena Maktar and Shelly Elverum

Abstract This conversation was conducted, as all the best Nunavut conversations are, on the floor, over a cup of tea. The authors believe that it is important to close this book with the perspective of an Inuk who has patiently been educating a researcher for the past 18 years. Early career researchers may see themselves in this conversation, and we hope that they will also see the incredible value of creating genuine research partnerships and friendships with Inuit communities.

Keywords *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)* · Nunavut · Pond Inlet · Research-relationships

14.1 Introduction

Ena Maktar and Shelly Elverum have worked together for approximately 18 years, on a variety of community-based and community-driven projects involving *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*, youth capacity building and community engagement. One of the most important parts of their relationship, and the one you need to know about, is the teacher-student relationship, with Ena guiding Shelly through the intricacies of working with Inuit, and saving her from hitting too many walls and embarrassing herself.

Here is a summary of their conversation on March 11, 2021 in Pond Inlet, Nunavut.

E. Maktar · S. Elverum (✉)
Nunavut, Canada

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14.2 Conversation

S: So, the purpose of this afterword is to give early career researchers the kind of advice that you've been giving me over the past 15–18 years… because not everyone is going to have the benefit of their very own Ena.

E: [laughs] Mmmhmm!

S: I learned way more from you saying "shut up and listen!" than I could have learned in a university classroom. They focus on the technical aspects of researching like how to collect notes, how to think about research questions… but they can't always prepare you for stepping into someone else's world. So… let's pretend we are going back 15 years… hey, we look great!

E: I'm not sure about that! I think we're better now.

S: Agreed! There you were, young and still in high school. There I was, all shiny and new and just out of university with a Master's degree…

E: I was a troubled kid and grieving had changed me.

S: I saw something really spectacular in you. It was pretty obvious to me that you were a person with a lot to say and a lot to offer.

E: You saw it before I did. I didn't have a chance to speak up before we started working together.

S: Why?

E: We have to listen to our Elders, what younger people think doesn't matter as much. That's how we are raised. That's how it was. I felt like I couldn't really express my thoughts, but then when we started working together and it encouraged me to speak up more. It helped me to realize that I could keep going with research.

S: You seemed to very quickly figure out that "research" needed your voice, that researchers need you…

E: Yes! I grew up with my Dad billeting researchers and working with the HTO (Hunters and Trappers Organization) and narwhal researchers. I thought he had a really cool job. But I would also get really angry with *Qallunaat* outsiders taking closeup pictures of us eating our traditional food, celebrating. It made me want to cry being treated like that. My Dad would kindly but strongly explain to those *Qallunaat* that it was not okay, and I saw that you could change how outsiders treated us. I thought "whoa, my Dad has a voice to get this message across and I should start doing that and be a voice for Inuit." These two things stand out in my memory and I use them as my stepping stones for working with research. I can now say "shut up and listen!" because if you're not listening, you're never going to understand. *Qallunaat* researchers always talk so fast and talk amongst themselves and talk over top of each other. When it comes to our communities, you can't do it this way. When you're working with an Inuk or Inuit you have to stop and listen to understand.

S: 18–20-years ago I was that researcher! I came to the brand-new Nunavut Territory. I thought I knew the stuff I needed to know.

E: You thought you were more knowledgeable education-wise?

S: I knew a had a good education, and I had memories of growing up in the North, but I also knew that I didn't know "this" North. I didn't know "this" community. I have had the benefit though of working with you. There is something pretty magical about the way we work together. You're younger than me, but somehow you were able to be confident to speak up when I wasn't doing things the right way…

E: ….because I was taught that we needed to teach *Qallunaat* and help them out. Not every researcher is like you: open to learning new things. With you it was easier, and you encouraged me to be honest with you. In my own thoughts I felt like I was repaying you for helping me, by teaching you.

S: Yah, I always feel like you have my back when it comes to our work, but also like you were making sure that I wasn't a pain in the ass for the community.

E: I had grown up hearing so much bad stuff about researchers who came North and just did whatever they wanted to, treated Inuit in whatever way, just leave once they had their data, and never inform us about what they had found. I kept hearing this from other people, and I thought maybe some researchers were scared of Inuit or thinking poorly of us like we are just out there killing animals for no reason. And I thought there was a bigger story that was unsaid, and I thought that since you were living here now, you needed to learn these things and I could help you to understand. There are even times, and I never told you this…. there are even times when I was scared of you.

S: [laughs] Cool! That's a first!

E: Yah [laughs] I would be in my room thinking about our work and I would think, "okay, I've taught Shelly to shut up and listen, and she can write these things down and memorize it." I'd be sitting in my room thinking about next steps, but if I thought about too much, I'd think "*ainaa*!" [scary!] "Maybe she'll stop talking to me, maybe she won't like me or what I have to say. But from what I've learned, I needed to stay strong and be honest with you.

S: So, having the relationship, an every-day relationship not just a working relationship, allowed you to have the freedom to tell me these things?

E: Yes.

S: Half of me feels really bad because most of the students reading this won't be living in a community and have the kind of time I've had to create relationships like this.

E: But let's have hope that if they read it and want to experience themselves, they will be willing to take the time. That's what I'm hoping for and that's why I agreed to do this afterword with you.

S: I agree. I keep thinking to myself, "what's the most useful thing that we can tell the reader?" and it kept coming back to me that maybe young researchers will see themselves in my story and know that it's okay to make mistakes. You might know that you want to work in the North and work with Inuit or other Indigenous peoples, but you don't necessarily know if you're doing it right or doing it wrong. Hopefully they can learn from my mistakes! If you think back to my early years, what did I do wrong most of the time, like when I….

E: You were talking too much! When we have our meetings or chatting with people, I would notice that you would talk at the same time and I found it really rude. At first, I didn't really want to tell you because I knew you might be ashamed or embarrassed and I didn't want to put you on the spot, but if I knew the person well enough, and knew that the person wouldn't make fun of you, I would tell you right then and there.

S: [laughs] Oh yes, I have many memories of that happening!

E: In my experience, especially with Elders, when Inuit answer a question they tend to tell you a longer story to make their point….

S: …and if I jumped in and started talking too soon, I wouldn't let them get to the answer.

E: If you're talking too much and talking too soon, you're going to miss the actual answer in there.

S: I think it probably took a year or two before I was really able to understand that, when we had enough conversation to allow me to really understand this. I remember you asking me "why do white people always do that?" [talk when other people are talking] and it was a cool moment of self-reflection to realize that I do that because from a southern perspective, we interrupt or interject when another person is talking as a way to encourage them or show that we understand what they are saying. I had to step back and learn that you don't do that in Nunavut.

E: Nope!

S: I still do it though, especially when I'm excited about something.

E: [laughs] Exactly! And the other thing I remember teaching you is that each of the communities in Nunavut has its own identity and each community works differently. Pond Inlet may be one way, but it will be different from Cambridge Bay, Resolute or other remote communities in the North.

S: I remember you making that point very strongly when a mining company wanted to create an Inuit Knowledge study for 5 communities and they wanted to use the same survey for all of the communities. You said "but we are not the same!" You saw that non-Inuit were seeing Inuit as being exactly the same across Nunavut, and you used several examples to show them how different each community is. You showed me that it would be a waste of everyone's time not to make sure that the research is right for each particular community. I see now that researchers often make the mistake of assuming "these are 5 Inuit communities so we'll just ask them all the same questions."

E: If I were to go down to southern Canada and just assumed that you're all *Qallunaat* in my eyes, can I just ask you all the same questions? Would that work? Just because we are Inuit you can't say we are all the same. Each community has its own identity and needs.

S: That is a very valuable lesson for early career researchers. Okay….. what are the mistakes I still make?

E: I don't know.

S: [laughs] Yes you do!

E: Who you decide to approach for research, I think. I know that you always ask advice on the best people to work with but sometimes you make mistakes. Then I hear about from other people like "oh guess what Shelly did?"

S: When you say "approach people", do you mean what I am saying to people?

E: No, it's more like you assume that all Inuit are interested in research. You're just being yourself, but this is what happens.

S: What I understand from this is that I still don't know enough of the details of this community well enough to know who the right people are for certain projects. That's totally fair, I tend to get super excited and think that someone might be really good for a certain project, but because I don't know all the backstories or the connections, I can get it wrong.

E: Yup.

S: That's a good one, because a student coming North isn't going to know the community well enough to know who to work with.

E: Nope, they never do.

S: I really depend on you and our Ikaarvik youth to understand those connections in the community.

E: As I mentioned earlier, in Nunavut we have a history of bad researchers coming here, and a lot of time Inuit will not be very friendly to researchers because they will be thinking "oh, it's another researcher and another researcher and another researcher…" I hope Inuit will learn that researchers now are not the same as researchers then. Inuit can be afraid to open up to researchers because they just don't know.

S: Just to make it clear, what was the relationship between Inuit and researchers in the past?

E: Inuit were already scared of white people before researchers came up. Inuit thought "oh, that's a *Qallunaat* so I'd better treat them as a king or a queen or a bigger person, a higher power." Whatever the researcher wanted, or told people to do, Inuit would do; even if they didn't want to – they would just keep their mouths shut and go with what the *Qallunaat* wanted. One of the things that always comes to my mind when I think about researchers coming up in the past is that they would even do medical experiments on Inuit without asking, trading skin samples from one person to another.

S: Oh yes, the skin biopsies to test for rejection.

E: Whenever I'm asked about bad researchers, this is what stands out to me. In the past, most researchers who came up were not prepared for the cold, and Inuit would welcome them, guide them, and the women would make warm clothing for them to keep them safe. This took advantage of Inuit generosity.

S: So that the researchers didn't die?

E: And Inuit never got credit for any of this. If it wasn't for Inuit those researchers would never have got their data.

S: Care, feeding, clothing, guiding, protecting…. It's like researchers were in a bubble, being protected by Inuit, yet never crediting Inuit.

E: Even up to now, it still feels like that. We're not getting the credit. It's changing, but very slowly.

S: I think it's changing because your generation is speaking up.

E: We are speaking up because of those past experiences, because of what we heard from our family members and ancestors.

S: Let's imagine the future, then. If researchers come up with the right kind of mindset, and take the time… because that's an important point that you make, that's it's not just about taking two weeks to come up and do your research. Part of the magic between you and I is that we took the time to know each other as humans first.

E: Yes. You got Ena'd.

S: Yes, and you can't get un-Ena'd from what I can tell [laughs]. What do you hope for the future of research in Nunavut?

E: That researchers coming up are more open and friendlier to everyone, and that they are open to learning from whoever they interact with. Don't just go with the default setting of what you learned in university. Your default is not the same as what the community expects and understands. You should hire someone to make sure that your research fits with the community, and talk to the community before you make your plans for research. For example, researchers seem to love studying lemmings, and it would make sense to them to study them, and they get so proud of their research plans, until they get to the community and find out that the community doesn't care.

S: It's not only that a student researcher is proud of their plans, their supervisor thinks it's great, their funders think it's great, the Ethical Review Committee thinks it's great.

E: Yes, but you can waste a lot of time if you do this all before you get to know the community, and know what is important to the community. I know that your professors and supervisors are asking you do certain things, but it's still best to check in with the community you'll be working with first before you plan your work.

S: Right, and since we're talking about how research can be better in the future, you're making it really clear that it's best to come up and work with the community before you've set your research questions and methods. This would help you to get the advice before you've invested the time and energy on something that is not relevant to the community.

E: That's right.

S: One thing that you have really impressed upon me, in all our years of working together is, in English is called "humility". This is definitely not something we're taught in university. In fact, we get the opposite message that you're supposed to be confident, knowledgeable….

E: *Ingmini takuqutingittuq*. This is what it's called in Inuktitut. This is very important for Inuit. We don't brag. It's important that you're not trying to get attention for yourself for the things you are doing.

S: As a researcher, you should be aware that it's not acceptable to try to put yourself above other people with your skills and qualifications.

E: I know that universities are trying to teach you to be the best at what you do, but your awards and degrees don't mean anything in the Arctic. If you come in with the attitude that you're more educated or knowledgeable than the people who live here, Inuit will just brush you off and ignore you.

S: [laughs] Right? Like, “uh you have a PhD? What good does that do you if you’re hungry and cold?”

E: [laughs] You’ve been living here long enough to understand what’s really important now. Okay, I’ve now run out of time and have to pick up my son from school. We can continue another time.

S: Always.

Ena Maktar has been a bridge between Inuit communities and research since 2005. She focuses her passion for community empowerment on supporting youth research and Inuit involvement in research and decision-making, as well as being a mom to two awesome kids. In the little spare time she has left, she sews all of her children’s winter-wear: parkas, snow pants and mitts.

Shelly Elverum has almost learned how to shut up and listen. She has degrees in Anthropology and History and has been fortunate enough to be part of community teams (Ikaarvik and SmartICE) recognized with the Arctic Inspiration Prize and Governor General’s award for Innovation. She is also a Fellow of the RCGS and an Ashoka Changemaker. Most importantly, she has learned how to parent and sew from her Inuit mentors and is a mom to two amazing kids.