

OCEAN BACK: INUIT-LED GOVERNANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF FISHERIES IN  
NUNATSIAVUT

by

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Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki  
The ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.  
We are all Treaty People

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“For Inuit, it’s just as much Ocean back as it is Land back.”

- Natan Obed (Modern Treaties, Land Back & Indigenous Self-Determination Panel, April 4, 2022)

“We don’t have a lot of trees, but by God, do we have a lot of fish.”

- Anonymous participant

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# Abstract

Fisheries governance represents a key opportunity for upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. But how to fulfill these rights, and how to ensure that Indigenous Knowledges, values, and priorities guide management remains a challenge. For Inuit in Nunatsiavut, commercial fisheries have been part of life for hundreds of years, supporting social and economic wellbeing in the region. Still, the benefits from these fisheries continue to drain to the south because they are managed according to a southern management paradigm based on Western science and values and not managed according to Labrador Inuit needs. There is a need for new governance frameworks in natural resource management that uphold Inuit self-determination and support the vitality and resilience of Inuit.

The purpose of this research is to understand how commercial fisheries governance can be structured to serve the interests of Inuit in Nunatsiavut. Guided by a partnership with Inuit stakeholders in the fishing industry, the research uses an interdisciplinary approach to address this objective. First, ten years of meeting minutes from the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board were analyzed to characterize the role of the co-management board and other Nunatsiavut-based stakeholders in fisheries governance. This analysis revealed the activities in which the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board engages and how they work with other actors in the region. Next, semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the fishing industry to better understand the nature of the relationship between Labrador Inuit and the commercial fisheries. The interviews identified a complex network of values held by stakeholders that stand in contrast to the current southern paradigm for management. Then, the research turns to consider the future of the fishing industry, as imagined by Labrador Inuit. A participatory scenario planning process was undertaken to imagine the future of the fishing industry, leading to a reflection on the effectiveness of this method. Finally, a workshop for the project partners provides an opportunity to share stories and imagine desirable futures.

This dissertation provides critical insights into a mature land claim-based co-management arrangement and has implications for the future of natural resource governance in Canada. The research shows that Nunatsiavut has significant capacity to govern fisheries beyond the current management paradigm, and through the visioning project participants expressed a desire to see the industry managed according to their own values, priorities, and knowledge. Participants' vision of the future represents an understanding of sovereignty that would empower Inuit as equal partners in fisheries governance. This research advances the scholarship on fisheries co-governance and provides a window into what Inuit-led futures can look like.



## List of Abbreviations Used

CLCA	Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement
DFO	Fisheries and Oceans Canada
IPBES	International Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
LIA	Labrador Inuit Association
LISA	Labrador Inuit Settlement Area
LILCA	Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement
NGC	Nunatsiavut Group of Companies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TJFB	Torngat Joint Fisheries Board
UNDRIP	United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Problem Context

### 1.1.1 Redressing the colonial present in natural resource governance

The lands that are currently known as Canada have been the home to Indigenous Peoples for many thousands of years. Over millennia, Indigenous Peoples coexisted on the land, caring for and managing their own human and non-human relations, developing complex governance systems replete with justice systems, languages, and cultural and spiritual practices. The arrival of European settlers in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was the beginning of a complex relationship between first the French and British states and then the Canadian state, and Indigenous Peoples. Since first contact, a colonial paradigm has continued to dominate the ways we understand and manage land and water, first through commercial imperialism, and then through settler colonialism (Greer, 2019). In particular since the invention of the Canadian political state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this has meant the subjugation of Indigenous Peoples, sometimes through intentional violence, such as through the dispossession of lands and resources, and sometimes through an assumed benevolence, such as through forced assimilation (Liboiron, 2021).

Settler colonialism is a worldview that assumes access to, and seeks control over, lands, waters, and resources (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Liboiron, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In the contemporary world, the Canadian state asserts this control in part through an assumed access to objective truth through Western sciences as the only valid way of knowing/encountering the world. This worldview informs natural resource management across the country. Rather than being a historical event, colonialism is a system that continues to work to dispossess Indigenous Peoples of their lands and delegitimize their governance systems (Wolfe, 2006).

Despite unspeakable, shattering harms, Indigenous Peoples across Canada have endured, maintaining their cultures, knowledge systems, and languages, while also growing and evolving through generations (Kauanui, 2016; Settee, 2018). As time has passed, new ways of fighting for self-determination have been employed, and new tools for supporting Indigenous resurgence at regional, national, and international levels have emerged. This has presented challenges for Canada, which is now grappling with how to manage claims of nationhood or sovereignty and how to implement the rights of Indigenous Peoples (A. J. Barker, 2015; Borrows, 2019).

Natural resource governance presents a key opportunity for delivering on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. However, natural resource management and extraction have remained a site of conflict between Indigenous Peoples and settler Canada. These issues are being confronted in public spaces, including the judicial, executive, and legislative branches of government, as well as in private spaces, through Impact Benefit Agreements and other transactions. The last decade alone has borne witness to a myriad of issues related to Indigenous control over resources: protests such as the Idle No More movement or the pipeline conflict on Wet'suwet'en territory (A. J. Barker, 2015; Diabo, 2020), court cases, such as competing lawsuits by the Baffinland Iron Mine and the Nuluujaat Land Guardians in Nunavut (Tucker & McKay, 2022), and even violence including a spate of boat burning in southern Nova Scotia over the Mi'kmaw lobster fishery, (Fanning & Denny, 2022). Given the growing calls for Indigenous self-determination over natural resources in their traditional territories, there is a clear need to revisit current governance frameworks, and to ask what outcomes will uphold their rights and support Indigenous wellbeing.

Over the past few decades, collaborative management has emerged as one tool of choice for bringing Indigenous Peoples into resource governance. Across Canada, co-management

arrangements have been adopted for handling terrestrial and marine management where Indigenous People hold a right to a resource. Co-management is said to increase agency, power sharing, and trust for resource users (Berkes, 2009; Hotte, 2020; Quimby & Levine, 2018). Crucially for Indigenous Peoples, co-management has also been framed as a tool for empowerment through political self-determination (White, 2020). Co-management models are often framed as paths to reconciliation because they offer the potential for Indigenous Peoples to gain back control over their own affairs. However, these claims are often theoretical and general in nature, and there is a need to study co-management in context to better understand how co-management changes or reinforces existing power arrangements (Jentoft, 2007; Quimby & Levine, 2018). In as much as power-sharing is an explicit goal of co-management, it is important to ask whether co-management arrangements are capable of delivering empowerment for Indigenous rights holders and determine whether they are the best model for Indigenous self-determinacy (Reo et al., 2017).

Commercial fisheries are a particularly interesting facet of Indigenous co-management because beyond contributing significant economic capital, fisheries are generally recognized to contribute social, cultural, and health outcomes (Kourantidou et al., 2021a; Reid et al., 2021; Snook et al., 2018). This dissertation examines one example of fisheries governance under a co-management regime, the commercial fishing industry in Nunatsiavut, to better understand how fisheries governance fits into a broader understanding of Inuit sovereignty.

### 1.1.2 Fisheries Visioning Project

The research presented in this thesis is grounded in the Fisheries Visioning Project, which was initiated by 3 Nunatsiavut-based fisheries stakeholder<sup>1</sup> organizations: the Nunatsiavut Government (the Inuit government for Nunatsiavut), the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board (the fisheries co-management board for Nunatsiavut, hereafter TJFB), and the Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. (A longstanding cooperative that holds licences and manages processing in Nunatsiavut, hereafter Torngat Co-op). In 2018, the TJFB conducted a literature review that looked at the history of the last 200 years of commercial fisheries in northern Labrador. That review identified commercial fisheries as part of Labrador Inuit life since before first contact with Europeans in the 1760s. Long prior to contact with Europeans, Inuit in northern Labrador were reliant on fisheries, making fish and fisheries an important economic staple in the region for many hundreds of years (Kaplan, 2012). Despite its clear importance, Mills et al. (2018) found that the contemporary industry is held back by single-species management programs and short-term planning (Mills et al., 2018). In discussions with other stakeholders, the TJFB agreed that the group needed an opportunity to think more holistically about the fisheries, and to imagine what they wanted for the future of the industry. From these discussions, the Fisheries Visioning Project was created.

The Fisheries Visioning Project sought to develop consensus among industry stakeholders in Nunatsiavut about an ideal future for the industry. This future could be used as a steppingstone towards a more successful fishery for the benefit of Labrador Inuit. I was recruited in my role as a doctoral student to facilitate the visioning process. In this dissertation, I have used

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I refer to fisheries “stakeholders” when speaking directly about the people who have a financial or occupational stake in the industry. This is distinct from the term “rightsholders”, which refers to all Labrador Inuit who hold constitutional and treaty rights in fisheries. I understand fisheries stakeholders to be a subset of the wider Labrador Inuit community, and thus not wholly representative of Labrador Inuit.



this visioning process as an opportunity to think through how Labrador Inuit knowledge, cultural values, and priorities can be better taken up into fisheries governance in support of Inuit sovereignty.

## 1.2 Background

This research takes place at the intersection between collaborative co-management, power dynamics in natural resource management, and Inuit self-determination. Here, I provide background on these concepts in the literature to outline how I have approached the work.

### 1.2.1 Nunatsiavut

This dissertation research takes place in Nunatsiavut, a land claim area located in northern coastal Labrador. As a self-governing Inuit land claim area, Nunatsiavut has a particular set of legal structures that dictate how fisheries governance operates. I provide an overview of how fisheries governance works in the region and provide some history of fisheries in Nunatsiavut.

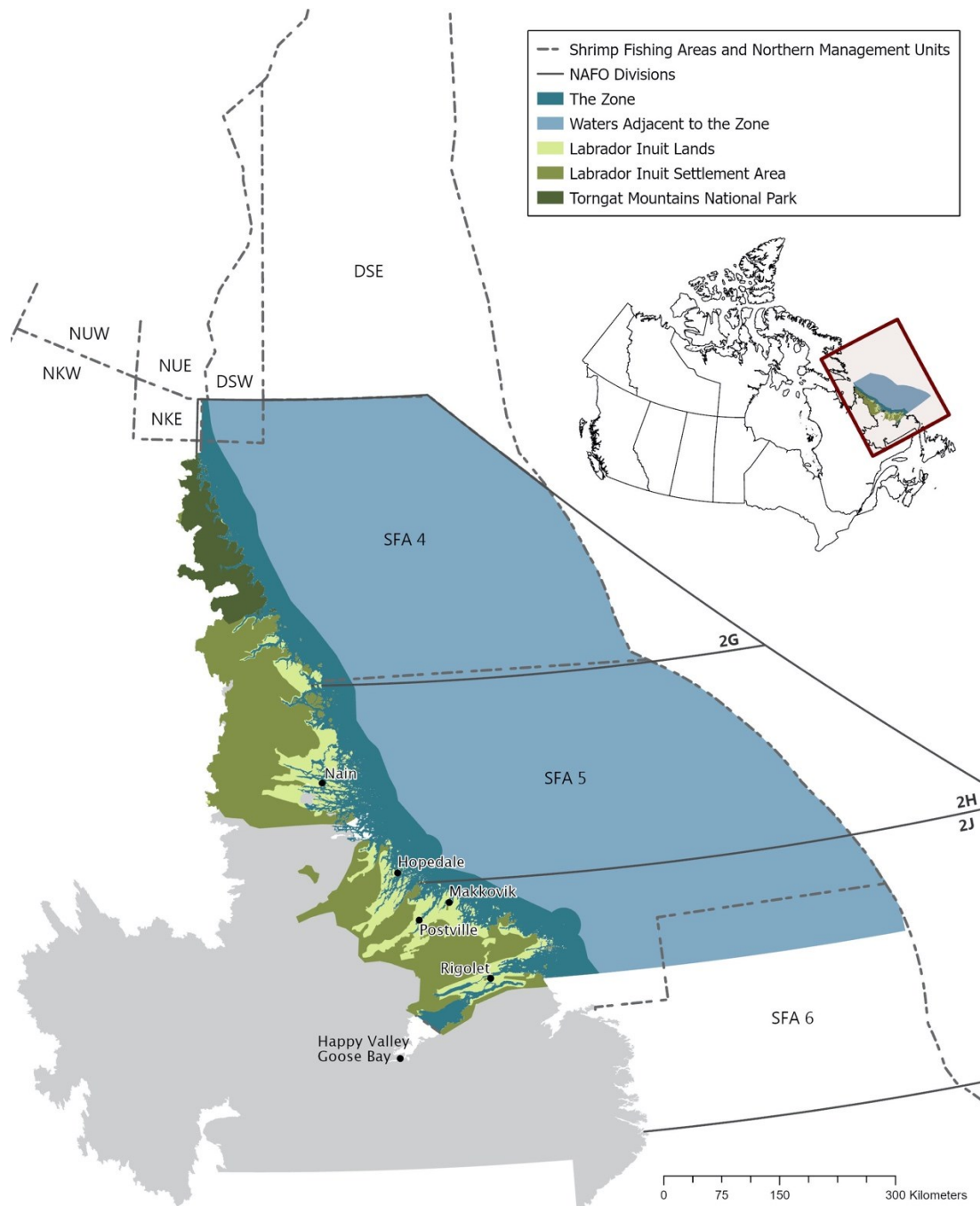


Figure 1.1: Map of Nunatsiavut and the adjacent fishing areas. The map shows all 5 communities in Nunatsiavut and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. It also depicts the Shrimp Fishing Areas and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization fishing areas adjacent to the region. Map made by Shawn Rivoire of the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat

### *1.2.1.1 Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements*

Cases settled in the Supreme Court of Canada have forced the federal and provincial governments to reconceptualize how natural resources are managed. The result has been a greater engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous representatives towards the creation of collaborative management systems. The legislation, treaty agreements, and policy frameworks that have emerged from these confrontations have shaped Indigenous-Crown relations and dictate the ways co-management is carried out across Canada. The most significant development has been the creation of Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements (CLCAs) across northern Canada. While other processes, such as environmental assessment, protected areas, and remediation measures might be described as co-management, CLCAs have a direct influence on fisheries and wildlife management in the North (Coombes et al., 2011; Snook et al., 2018; White, 2008). In this research, I have drawn a distinction between “co-management” in general and land claim-based co-management as a specific, highly formal space in which co-management happens, and so here I explain how this mode of co-management has come to be inextricable from land claim agreements in Canada.

*Calder v. British Columbia* in 1973 formalized the requirement for the Canadian judicial and executive systems to recognize that Indigenous Peoples hold rights and responsibilities to the land that pre-date colonial law (Foster et al., 2008). The federal government responded with the creation of CLCAs, which have become the primary tool for negotiating around these rights (White, 2020). In places where there is no official treaty agreement between an Indigenous collective and the federal government, there is uncertainty as to whether Aboriginal title exists. CLCAs are established as a way of achieving certainty over what rights exist for both parties. CLCAs are agreements where both parties “enter into formal agreements specifying their

respective rights, powers and obligations” to management (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, quoted in King, 2015, p. 85). Entering into a CLCA requires an extinguishment of constitutional Aboriginal title in exchange for these specific, mutually agreed upon set of rights and powers. These political arrangements between the federation and Indigenous Peoples became known broadly as “co-management” arrangements, that is, a collaborative management of lands and natural resources (Papillon, 2012).

Almost all CLCAs in Canada include legislation for the creation of some sort of formalized co-management board. Co-management boards guide planning and inform regulatory decisions, and they are made up of appointments from the Indigenous Peoples, the federal government and the provincial or territorial government. Co-management boards are most commonly concerned with wildlife management, but some are focused on land use planning, environmental assessment and permitting, and arbitration (White, 2020).

Wildlife co-management boards may have roles and responsibilities within an industry, like the commercial fishing sector, or they may focus more broadly on all wildlife management and harvesting practices. Co-management boards may further delegate responsibilities to committees focused on a single culturally significant species, such as Nunavut’s community-based narwhal management committee (Dale & Armitage, 2011). In any case, the boards set policy, make decisions, and develop regulatory recommendations, including recommendations on how licenses and quota should be distributed. Some scholars suggest that co-management boards can be considered examples of Canadian treaty federalism, that is, a meeting of three constitutionally ratified governments coming together in decision-making (Papillon & Juneau, 2015; White, 2002; Youngblood Henderson, 2019). Others, however, have pointed to the fact that CLCAs require that Indigenous Peoples extinguish their constitutionally recognized

Aboriginal rights and title in exchange for specific treaty rights granted by the Canadian state as denying an unencumbered sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples (King, 2015).

Many CLCAs consider fisheries to be an important resource for their regions. Each has a unique variety of subsistence and commercial fisheries. Nunavut, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut all hold various commercial fishing licenses that help to bring in revenues for the land claim or territorial governments. Many CLCAs include explicit consideration of the principle of adjacency when allocating fishing licences; however, land claim representatives have expressed frustration that fishing allocations adjacent to their lands are still being disproportionately fished by foreign or outside interests, taking economic benefits away from their communities (Bernauer, 2022; Snook et al., 2018).

#### *1.2.1.2 Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement*

Because of the long history of colonization and marginalization, Labrador Inuit have had to fight to regain some control over their fisheries (Snook et al., 2018, 2022). Inuit politically organized in the 1950s and 1960s, and were galvanized to politically mobilize in northern Labrador by the expansion of mining projects, the presence of a military base and testing sites, the forced relocation of Inuit and closing of Hudson's Bay trading posts in Hebron, Okak, and Nutak, among other colonial activities that were rapidly changing their livelihoods and wellbeing (Evans, 2012; Rennie, 2010). The Labrador Inuit Association was formed in 1973 to act as a political representative organization in the fight to have Inuit rights recognized in the region, and in 1977 they filed a claim with the federal government of Canada for rights over their traditional lands and waters. Negotiations lasted until 1997, and the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement (LILCA) was ratified in 2005 (LILCA, 2005), making Nunatsiavut the first self-governed land claim area in Canada (White & Alcantara, 2020). The land claim area is called Nunatsiavut,

which translates from Inuttitut to *Our Beautiful Land* in English. The Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA) spans 72,520km<sup>2</sup> of land and 44,030km<sup>2</sup> of sea along the coast of northern Labrador (*Fig 1*). Under the LILCA, a registry was created for residents of Nunatsiavut, and those connected to the region. All individuals who are enrolled on the registry are known as “beneficiaries” of the land claim agreement.

### *1.2.1.3 Nunatsiavut fisheries management*

Commercial fisheries have long been important to Labrador Inuit. By the mid 1700s, Basque and Dutch whaling vessels had made contact with Labrador Inuit, and many Inuit were participating in European commercial whale hunting (Kaplan, 2012). Around the same time, Moravian missionaries entered the region and settled, and involvement in commercial fishing activities continued to grow, including commercial seal and walrus hunting, Atlantic cod, Atlantic salmon, Arctic char, and others (Mills et al., 2018). Prior to the closures, many Labrador Inuit relied on the Atlantic salmon and Northern cod fisheries for their livelihood (Mills et al., 2018). These fisheries took place over the summer months when Inuit families would travel to ancestral locations in the bays and on the islands of northern Labrador and maintain a connection to a traditional livelihood. The closures in the 1980s and 1990s, brought on by poor management by the federal government, were devastating to communities on the north coast, and caused a seismic shift in the region’s fishing industry that led to the contemporary commercial fishing industry which operates at an industrial scale using nearshore and offshore fishing vessels (Snook et al., 2022).

Today, Labrador Inuit have commercial access to five species for commercial harvest: Northern shrimp (kingupvak, *Pandalus borealis*), Snow crab (Putjotik, *Chionoecetes opilio*),

Greenland halibut (turbot; *Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*), Arctic char (iKaluk, *Salvelinus alpinus*), and Iceland scallop (Matsojak, *Chlamys islandica*). Before and after the LILCA was signed, Labrador Inuit have created governing institutions, which have been essential in allowing communities to re-enter the commercial fisheries as managers. I briefly describe each organization and their connection to the commercial fisheries. Each of these organizations has a role to play in fisheries management in the region, and the interplay between them creates the space in which co-management happens in Nunatsiavut.

Like many CLCAs, the LILCA established co-management boards for the management of natural resources – one for wildlife, and one for commercial fisheries. Under Chapter 13 of the LILCA, the TJFB is empowered to provide recommendations on all commercial fisheries for the land claim area, as concerns the “conservation” and “management” of those species. The TJFB is composed of three appointees from Nunatsiavut, two appointees from the federal government, and one from the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The board makes recommendations directly to the Minister for Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) pertaining to the conservation and management of commercial fisheries within the LISA. The TJFB is housed under the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, which operates as an arms-length institution that performs administrative duties on behalf of the board and conducts the research and policy analysis necessary for recommendations.

The LILCA also established the Nunatsiavut Government, the body responsible for the administration, development, and management of Labrador Inuit Lands (LILCA, 2005)<sup>2</sup>. The Nunatsiavut Government retains the discretion to manage commercial char and scallop fisheries.

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<sup>2</sup> The LILCA distinguishes between the LISA and Labrador Inuit Lands (see map at Figure 1). The Labrador Inuit Lands refer to a portion of the land claim area that is owned outright by Inuit, including special rights to mineral, oceans, and land use

The Nunatsiavut Government owns commercial communal licences in Northern shrimp and Snow crab, as well as some special allocations in Snow crab and Turbot (Foley, 2017). The Nunatsiavut Government is responsible for allocating quota under their commercial communal licences to individual beneficiaries to be harvested. The Nunatsiavut Government is therefore involved in determining how the benefits from the commercial fishery are distributed to beneficiaries. They use criteria to determine eligibility to participate in the fishery, including the fact that the applicant must be a beneficiary of the LILCA (Nunatsiavut Government, Dept. Lands and Natural Resources, 2021). The Nunatsiavut Government provides information and recommendations to DFO on traditional subsistence fisheries, such as salmon, trout, and rock cod.

In 1980, DFO granted the Torngat Co-op the area's first Northern shrimp licence. This was an essential first step in the formation of a commercial fishing industry along Labrador's north coast. The Torngat Co-op partners with Mersey Seafood, based out of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, to harvest their quotas in exchange for royalties. The Co-op also owns a boat to take advantage of an exploratory scallop fishery in Nain. In addition to these fisheries, the Torngat Co-op leases two processing plants from the provincial government, one in Nain that processes char and scallop, and the other in Makkovik that processes snow crab and turbot. These two facilities employ several beneficiaries as processors. The Torngat Co-op use the royalties from their shrimp licences to fund the operations of their plants, partially out of a recognition of the importance these plants have on these communities and the fisheries more broadly (Foley et al., 2017).

In addition to these groups, the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies (NGC) is the business arm of the Nunatsiavut Government, dedicated to advancing industry and bringing benefits to



Labrador Inuit (NGC, 2020). They currently hold a 50/50 share in a Northern shrimp licence, as well as Atlantic halibut and turbot allocations (NGC, 2020). They also own snow crab quota, which they give to the Nunatsiavut Government so that beneficiaries can harvest it. While NGC do not actively participate in the governance of fisheries, they are a major stakeholder in the industry and therefore contribute to the overall wellbeing of the industry.

### **1.2.2 Important concepts**

This thesis is located at the intersection between fisheries co-management, Indigenous Knowledges and approaches to management, and colonization. Therefore, to clarify the framing for my research I provide definitions for some of the most important concepts that occur throughout this manuscript.

#### *1.2.2.1 Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

Despite growing interest in including Indigenous knowledge in science and policy, many Western researchers still misunderstand Indigenous knowledge as a collection of observations and facts, rather than as a complete system inclusive of all their cultural and spatial context (Latulippe & Klenk, 2020). More than data that can be folded into a Western scientific context, Indigenous knowledges are replete with the specific cosmology(ies), ontology(ies), epistemology(ies), axiology(ies) and methodologies that make up the ways a person understands and interacts with the world (S. Wilson, 2008). Indigenous Peoples carry their own social, legal, and economic institutions that guide the way their communities and societies operate (Whyte, 2018). Deborah McGregor demonstrates that Indigenous knowledges contain their own laws,

morals and ethics that guide individual and community behaviour (D. McGregor, 2004). Each knowledge system contains within itself the capacity to govern communities.

Indigenous knowledge systems are not a monolith; each People have their own knowledge system that has evolved from their own context and make them unique. Indigenous knowledges are place-based, embedded with a specific people, culture, language, and set of relationships and responsibilities between the people and the land on which they have grown. Inuit in Nunavut use the term *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* (IQ) to refer to Inuit Knowledge. IQ is defined as encompassing “all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations” (Anonymous, 1998, quoted in Wenzel, 2004, p. 240). It is a knowledge system that includes spiritual and physical knowledge without distinction (Tester & Irniq, 2008). While Inuit in northern Labrador share much of their culture, language, and history with Inuit in Nunavut, it is important to recognize that Labrador Inuit Knowledge is unique to Nunatsiavut, embedded in a geographically, historically, and linguistically distinct region. In this dissertation, I refer to Labrador Inuit Knowledge system as its own paradigm for governance.

#### *1.2.2.2 Colonialism*

Colonialism is specific to place and time, and so definitions of the term vary across the world. Generally speaking, colonialism refers to the practice of one people seeking power and control over another people with the goal of gaining access to their land and resources. There are many types of colonialism in the literature – extractivism, internal, external, and settler colonialism among many others, each describing different methods of extraction and

exploitation, but all of them built on the concepts of elimination and access (Liboiron, 2021; Wolfe, 2006).

In the Canadian context, colonialism is generally characterized as settler colonialism. Settler colonialism distinguishes itself from other more overtly violent forms of colonialism as a “mode of colonial governmentality” (Coulthard, 2014, 15). Settler colonialism leans on tactics like paternalism and assimilation, which are upheld through the settler country’s own social and legal institutions. Patrick Wolfe (2006) describes settler colonialism as a “structure not an event” (388). What this means is that the term settler colonialism describes a mode of domination and control, rather than a historical event – when settlers invaded North America, they built social institutions intended to stay. As such, we are all implicated by the continuation of settler colonialism through the institutions (the norms, values, and rules) that shape our lives. Settler colonialism is an ongoing, systemic force that shapes the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and the Canadian state.

It is important to note that there is not universal agreement that settler colonialism is the correct framing for the Canadian context. There are concerns that the term has become all-encompassing, obfuscating the diversity of activities, identities and temporal changes that have existed on this land (Greer, 2019). Liboiron (2021) points out that the bigger the term becomes, the more immovable it appears, the more impossible it feels to be able to imagine anything different. Despite these criticisms, the term has merit and is useful for this thesis because of three main qualities of the definition. First, by refusing to separate the history of colonialism in Canada from its present, settler colonialism posits that the dispossession of lands and resources from Indigenous Peoples is an ongoing, if unfinished, project (A. Simpson, 2014a). Second, it implicates the institutional bureaucracies that uphold and perpetuate colonialism; institutions

which were set up to enable settlers to stay on this land, and that continue to justify the authority of a single governance system over Indigenous orders of governance. Finally, in framing settler colonialism as a structure, Wolfe makes it clear that this is a systemic problem, and to correct this imbalance of power will require a paradigmatic, transformative change (Coulthard, 2014).

### 1.2.2.3 Co-management

The word “co-management” is used widely and may signify different types of arrangements in different areas of the world. The term is used to refer to a broad array of governance models where government agencies and civic society come together to share responsibilities for the management of a resource (Berkes, 2003; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2013; Pinkerton, 2003). There are many types of management that include collaboration and the devolution of power, but co-management distinguishes itself by being based on formalized, often legal, relationships between parties (Armitage et al., 2010).

In general in this text, I distinguish between the terms “management” and “governance” where management refers to everyday activities for maintenance and improvements of the fisheries, and governance refers to the institutional structures that dictate how management is carried out (Jentoft, 2007). Kooiman frames co-management as a *kind of governance* that transcends everyday policy-making because it is concerned with the broader societal needs and values (Kooiman, 2003). He argues that co-management involves a diverse group of actors, working at multiple scales, towards a common goal. This also helps clarify the distinction between “governance”, “government”, and the system to be governed. Governance refers to a diverse set of organizations and the systems in which they are embedded, all of whom have

influence over the system to be governed, and government refers to a single organization with specific powers to govern and/or manage the system to be governed.

I have used this definition of co-management to frame the research in this dissertation because it fits within the Nunatsiavut context. Commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut involve a diverse group of actors, all of whom have responsibilities over some aspects of management in the region. This allows me to take a wide lens on who contributes to fisheries governance.

Several frameworks provide an analytical lens on co-management arrangements, that can help us to better understand their form, function, and capabilities. The discourse has largely evolved from studies on the normative structure of co-management regimes into a discussion on the process of co-management – that is, the operational functions, the change over time, the relationships, learning and adaptation that occurs throughout a co-managed project’s lifetime (Berkes, 2010; Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Natcher et al., 2005).

While there had been interest in democratizing decision-making for decades, scholars in the 1990s began to argue that our methods for studying and evaluating participatory management arrangements were too normative, too static, to be able to reflect the complexity of policy problems. Previous analyses of co-management had focused exclusively on the formal legal structures and assumed a level of heterogeneity in community and government that made it difficult to see how context-dependent factors, such as interpersonal relationships and agency, could affect the function of co-management (Collins & Ison, 2009).

The solution was therefore to reconceptualize co-management as a “continuous problem-solving process” (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005, p. 1), one which occurs in real world contexts. In studying the function of co-management, rather than the form, it is possible to understand how co-management arrangements adapt and change over time and how social dynamics affect the

meanings and successes of decision-making. Reconceiving of co-management as a learning process is sometimes described as adaptive co-management (Armitage et al., 2011). Adaptive co-management is a marriage of two concepts, that of adaptive management and collaborative co-management. These two concepts are woven together to describe the ways that co-management develops over time in response to changing circumstances. This is a useful concept in the Canadian context, where relationships between Indigenous and Crown governments have continually evolved through ongoing negotiations.

Carlsson & Berkes (2005) write that adaptive co-management is an ideal governance structure because it tends to be experimental, where individuals can learn through trial and error, and generate multiple solutions for complex problems. Collaborative management occurs in a tangle of complexities: of state and community, of ecosystem, of governance. It requires an iterative approach to negotiating terms, building relationships, and creative problem-solving, which means that a co-management arrangement is constantly being reinvented through feedback loops (Berkes 2009). Social learning is an integral part of adaptive co-management, characterizing co-management as a space where actors come together to learn from each other in ways that will benefit both process and outcomes (Reed et al., 2018). Dialogue and problem-solving are tools that allow a diverse group of stakeholders to integrate different knowledges and values into management decisions (Folke et al., 2005). The capacity to adapt to sudden change is essential in the face of growing uncertainty in environmental policy making. Thus, understanding and encouraging forms of decision-making that are resilient and open to learning is essential for improving environmental governance (Pahl-Wostl, 2009).

This framework also shows us how co-management can still be a place for empowerment (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005). Co-management arrangements that engage in iterative problem

solving will continuously grow and evolve over time. Community members and representatives can learn new governance skills and to grow the capacity of the community towards participating in governance.

### **1.2.3 Power and power sharing in fisheries governance**

#### *1.2.3.1 Formal power*

When governments formulate a co-management arrangement, they are creating new types of power and new processes for exercising that power through the establishment of laws, treaties, or other agreements (Quimby & Levine, 2018). Especially where co-management is maintained through a prescribed agreement, formal power is useful for understanding who has a role in governance and who has final say in decision-making.

Assessments of formal power structures allow us to better understand the ways in which legal and political systems uphold existing power dynamics. Svein Jentoft (2007) noted that co-management arrangements can manipulate or reinforce existing power structures. Arun Agrawal criticized the growing interest in Indigenous knowledge as a “solution” to management problems which characterized the use of Indigenous Knowledge as empowering for the people, without acknowledging that “significant shifts in existing power relationships are crucial for development” (Agrawal, 1995, p. 416).

Indeed, while these shifts in power are essential for co-management, they may end up solidifying existing power structures (Quimby & Levine, 2018). For example, Hayden King (2015) criticizes land claim agreements for maintaining the federal government’s ultimate authority by establishing a final veto power over decision-making in land claim areas. Harvey Feit (2005) demonstrates how co-management can be used to expand and legitimize the authority

of the Canadian state, extinguishing Indigenous governance orders (Feit, 2005). While land claims may appear to be a way of empowering Indigenous Peoples through law, that same law also strengthens the federal government's authority.

Examining how power is distributed within the formal structures of governance is a relatively simple, and largely normative, way of evaluating co-management. It is possible to tick a box, so to speak, to indicate whether power-sharing has been reached. How extensive was citizen participation? Did any single party have final veto power? If these overt powers are examined in isolation, however, we risk missing the ways that soft powers also play a role in co-management processes (Cleaver & Koning, 2015).

#### *1.2.3.2 Soft power*

While “formal” powers are established through official agreements, power is not exclusively determined by legal authority. Fisheries governance is embedded in a broader social, cultural and economic context that will affect who has power (Ostrom, 1990). While formal powers are codified through laws and agreements, the context affects how the rules are interpreted and carried out (Quimby & Levine, 2018). Other forms of power, which I have referred to as “soft” power, are much more difficult to identify and to measure but are no less important for understanding how power operates in co-management.

In practice, the dissolution of responsibilities to various stakeholder groups does not necessarily trigger a devolution of power (Papillon, 2015). Some academics, pointing to continued injustice in multi-level governance systems, have argued that by focusing too much on the formal and overt aspects of multi-level governance, theorists fail to recognize how power operates within broader socio-cultural institutions and how power dynamics can evolve over time



(Collins & Ison, 2009; Quimby & Levine, 2018). It is therefore necessary to understand co-management not just as a formal set of legal arrangements between parties, but to consider the ways that lived experience affects power sharing (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005). This has led to a branch of co-management scholarship devoted to understanding soft types of power in co-management.

Individuals gather power through relationships with others and through their association with certain institutions. This type of power is known as social capital, and it can build trust and familiarity among groups of people and increase their ability to govern a resource effectively (Berkes & Nayak, 2018; Jentoft, 2014). Co-management does not happen in a vacuum, and so pre-existing relationships often have an important effect on the success of the co-management project (Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2010). The bonds and linkages between individuals and organizations are not always equal, however. Co-management often forms when one group is dependent on a resource that is controlled by a second group, and there is some benefit to leveraging the connection. That dependency of one group on the other persists in co-management, leaving a power imbalance (Newman & LeDrew, 2005).

Official agreements and legislation are not the only factor that dictate the ways that individuals, organizations, and jurisdictions interact. Social expectations concerning class, gender, race, and history all play important informal roles in how governance unfolds. In a 2005 paper, Agrawal demonstrates that citizen participation in a co-management regime is dependent on the relative wealth, education level and access to government resources of the individual citizens (Agrawal, 2005). Social expectations of identity also influence outcomes. Procter argues that during the negotiations of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, neoliberal conceptions of Indigeneity – particularly an image of Labrador Inuit as “traditional” – were responsible for

limiting the ability of Labrador Inuit to benefit from mineral extraction on their lands (Procter, 2016). Co-management arrangements often fail to account for the fact that communities are not homogenous entities, and therefore have different needs and capacities (Agrawal, 2005). Equitable participation in co-management requires more than an open opportunity, it requires systemic, institutional changes. To understand how power operates within co-management, we must reconceptualize co-management as operating within a broader socio-ecological and institutional context.

#### *1.2.3.3 Systemic power*

The third and final kind of power that I use to frame this research is the power derived from a particular knowledge system. While the term “co-management” is often used to describe all models in which public, private and civic actors work together in decision-making, each example of co-management is unique, dependent on politics, history, geography and countless other contextual differences (Jentoft, 2007; Natcher et al., 2005). Indigenous-Crown co-management faces an additional challenge because actors must contend with how to meaningfully “braid” together completely unique knowledge paradigms, and they must do so in recognition of their shared colonial past and present context (Borrows et al., 2019). It is useful, therefore, to understand how knowledge systems might interact in fisheries co-management as a starting place for understanding how power is distributed between Indigenous and Western actors.

As noted in the section above, Indigenous knowledge systems are paradigms for knowing and making sense of the world that contain the ability to govern complex systems. This brings to attention a weakness within various Indigenous-Crown co-management arrangements, namely,

that even though Indigenous knowledge systems have value as governance paradigms, the default system structuring governance is a Canadian, Western knowledge system. This system dictates how decisions are made and what is valued. Fisheries management in Canada is generally managed in accordance with a Western knowledge system, which focuses on short term decision-making, siloed institutions and ecosystems, and a focus on economic success over other forms of wellbeing (Alessa et al., 2010; Barnett et al., 2017; Bernauer, 2022). How these knowledge systems interact and inform decision-making is central to the question of the extent to which power is shared equitably in fisheries governance.

In the literature, Indigenous knowledge is often characterized as a form of resistance against dominant Western paradigms. Knowledge has power, and therefore knowledge is political (D. McGregor et al., 2018). Where Indigenous communities have initiated research programs and legal battles to defend their rights, they continue to resist Western assumptions (D. McGregor et al., 2010). Where they conceive of wellbeing in terms of the holistic community of humans, plants, and animals, and push for policies that protect communal wellbeing, they challenge Western governance (Tester & Irniq, 2008). In these ways, knowledge holds power – when an Indigenous person seeks and uses Indigenous knowledge, they are engaging in a struggle for sovereignty (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

Labrador Inuit knowledge is deeply connected to seasonality and in particular the differences between ice and open water seasons for harvesting and traveling (Sawatzky et al., 2021). Commercial fisheries are interwoven with subsistence fishing and harvesting other resources and connecting with traditional homelands (Oberndorfer et al., 2017). Undoubtedly, these values and more manifest themselves in fisheries co-management in the region. It is

important that research works to identify how knowledge systems shape fisheries co-management, and how or whether that systemic power can be distributed equitably.

## 1.3 Research Focus and Objectives

### 1.3.1 Research Objectives

Fisheries governance presents an opportunity to study power and co-management in support of Labrador Inuit self-determination. By speaking with fisheries stakeholders, this thesis outlines what Labrador Inuit want for the future of their industry and uses that vision to reconceptualize fisheries co-management. I examine how co-management can be reframed as a tool for Indigenous self-determination to reflect Labrador Inuit values and priorities, to recognize the interdependence of the fisheries with social and environmental well-being in the past, present, and future of Nunatsiavut, to increase the uptake of Inuit perspectives in the co-managed decision-making process, and to exercise Inuit rights.

This work is driven by the need for new frameworks for fisheries governance that support Inuit sovereignty. I examine the role that co-management has played in Nunatsiavut's commercial fishing industry to explore whether co-management is the right tool to support Labrador Inuit sovereignty over the waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut. I investigate this issue through the specific lens of commercial fisheries governance in a CLCA. I ask:

*How can commercial fisheries be reimagined to support the vitality and resilience of Inuit knowledge, values, and priorities?*

I approach the research in the context of the Nunatsiavut commercial fishing industry through 3 objectives:

1. Describe how power sharing operates between Inuit and settler actors in practice, and evaluate the effectiveness of co-management for achieving Nunatsiavut sovereignty
2. Characterize the relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries to understand its role in Nunatsiavut sovereignty
3. Balance the importance of research outcomes with a focus on process

The research was oriented toward answering the following questions, within the context of an Indigenous fisheries co-management board:

1. In what activities does the TJFB engage, and how do those activities contribute to regional fisheries governance?
2. How is the TJFB positioned to respond to the opportunities and threats inherent in complex social-ecological systems?
3. What values and principles do Labrador Inuit harvesters and managers hold in relation to the commercial fishing industry?
4. What are the implications of those values for the way that fisheries are governed in the region?
5. What do Labrador Inuit want for the future of their industry?
6. What does that vision indicate about a Labrador Inuit conceptualization of sovereignty in fisheries?
7. Is target-seeking scenario planning a useful tool for eliciting desirable visions of the future?

### 1.3.2 Thesis Structure

This dissertation is largely comprised of manuscripts that have been written for peer-reviewed journals. Chapters 2-5 are formatted for peer-reviewed journals and are at different stages in the publication process. In this dissertation, I have edited these manuscripts so that they relate directly to the research objectives and avoid unnecessary repetition of background information. The research is built around the Fisheries Visioning Project, and as such it starts by trying to understand the present fisheries management regime, before turning to a consideration of its future. See Figure 1.2 for an overview of the thesis structure, including how the objectives overlay on the chapters.

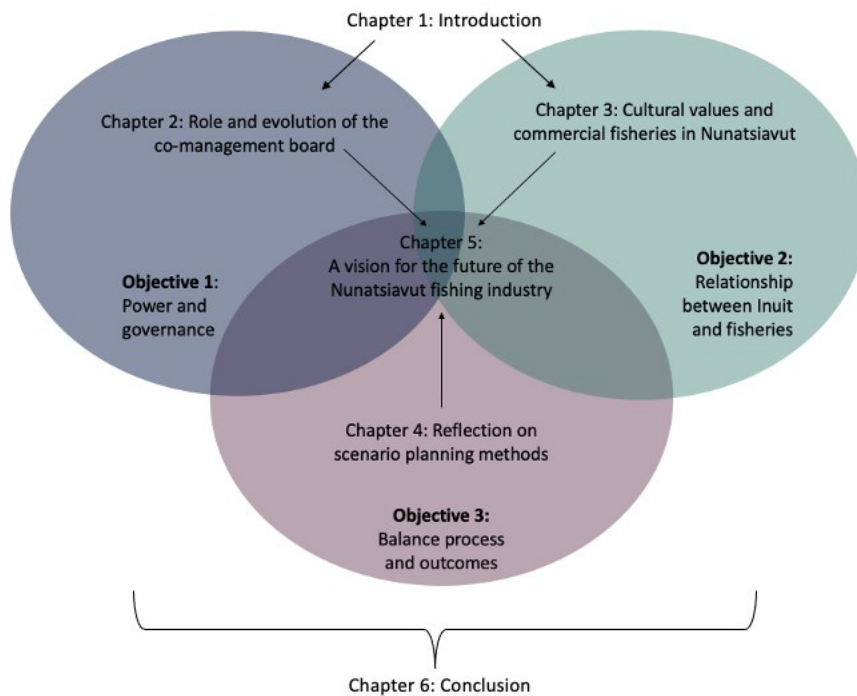


Figure 1.2: Flowchart of the structure of the dissertation. The Chapters and their topics are overlaid with the three objectives for the thesis, to show how each chapter contributes to the objectives and how they overlap.

The co-management literature contains a fundamental tension between those who measure power sharing in co-management by examining the formal or legal structure that apportions power and responsibilities, and those who understand power sharing as manifesting in the processes of co-management, through influence and learning (Pahl-Wostl, 2009). From a normative lens, the TJFB has some formal power over fisheries governance through the LILCA, which grants them the ability to provide recommendations on fisheries management and conservation. (LILCA, 2005, 13.11.1). However, that formal power is limited by the federal minister, who has power over final decisions, and who has pressed to entrench that power through the Fisheries Act (Snook et al., 2022). But that does not preclude the possibility that the board has gained significant influence over governance in the region (White, 2020). Chapter 2 therefore examines the role of the TJFB in fisheries governance to determine how successful a co-management regime has been at redistributing power over the fisheries among Canadian and Inuit leadership. To understand the role of the Board, I reviewed the minutes from Board meetings and workshops over a 12-year period. Through inductive text analysis, I uncovered how the Board enriches fisheries governance through research and community consultation, ultimately strengthening the resilience and capacity of Nunatsiavut fisheries. The study demonstrates that mature land claim-based co-management represents an important move toward self-determination in Nunatsiavut's commercial fisheries. I also highlight challenges and barriers the Board faces that limit its potential for success. This chapter was published as a research paper in the peer-reviewed journal *Regional Environmental Change* in 2022.

Having established that Nunatsiavut fisheries had a more open and collaborative management regime than a normative inquiry would suggest, Chapter 3 widens the lens beyond the co-management board to look at the broader nexus of fisheries governance in Nunatsiavut.

Using data from semi-structured interviews with 26 Nunatsiavut-based fisheries stakeholders, I explored how participants value the commercial fishing industry and why people continue to invest in and care about fisheries in Nunatsiavut. Using a Grounded Theory approach to analysis, I identified multiple ways that the commercial fishing industry is embedded in Labrador Inuit culture. This chapter provides a window into the connections and relationships between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries. The analysis provides an alternate understanding of fisheries governance, one that is unique to Labrador Inuit, and that could help to support Inuit-led governance of commercial fisheries. This chapter was drafted as a research paper. It has been published as a research paper by the journal *Ecology & Society* in 2023.

Where Chapters 2 and 3 are oriented to provide some insight into present-day fisheries governance in Nunatsiavut, Chapters 4 and 5 look to the future of the industry. Chapter 4 is a reflection on the methods used during the Fisheries Visioning Project, to evaluate my use of Target Seeking Scenario Planning in support of imagining Inuit futures. I have tried to approach this thesis as an exercise in co-learning with project partners. Collaborative work of this nature is iterative so that all partners can learn and adjust the work as they proceed. I chose to record and reflect on how the Visioning Project methods evolved as we progressed to tether this project as much to its processes as its outcomes. Including this evaluative chapter is an opportunity for me to reflect on the methods employed during the Visioning process and share experience-based knowledge for future projects. This paper has been accepted by the *Journal of Participatory Research Methods* and is now in press.

Chapter 5 focuses on the outcomes of the Fisheries Visioning Project to think about the future of governance. The research is framed as a participatory, Target Seeking Scenario Planning process to identify ideal futures for the industry, from the perspective of its



stakeholders. Using an iterative process of interviews, culminating in a workshop, participants are guided through a process to develop a vision for the future of the fishing industry in 50 years. This chapter brings together all three objectives for the dissertation, using the future vision to discuss Labrador Inuit governance and values. It draws on the lessons learned in each of the other chapters in building a vision that is informed by the co-management structures, the values, and the evaluation. Chapter 5 has been drafted as a research paper for submission to a journal in the future.

Finally, Chapter 6 highlights key findings from the dissertation, and identifies how these findings contradict, support, or advance the current literature on Indigenous fisheries governance.

## 1.4 Research Design

### 1.4.1 Partnership driven research

Amid the growing interest in community-based and participatory research methods, it is important to position this project in terms of how, or whether, this thesis can be considered to employ participatory methods. Participatory methods are generally defined as research in which the process and the outcomes are co-created with community (Sieber et al., 2014).

In contrast, the research in this dissertation is set up as a partnership-driven process. I have chosen this phrase to describe the approach to research because I think it accounts for the more formal approach to engagement reflected in this project. Often in this dissertation I refer to visiting, non-Indigenous researchers as “researchers”, and Indigenous organizations or researchers as “partners” for the sake of grammatical clarity, but this terminology is misleading. It implies that researchers are active producers, while partners are passive, supporting characters.

In reality, both played active and supporting roles through the lifecycle of the Fisheries Visioning Project. Both are partners.

Partnership-driven research is one way of meeting the guidelines set out in the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami National Inuit Strategy on Research (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018). The Visioning Project contained within this thesis was designed to contribute to the goals of the National Inuit Strategy on Research. In particular, it supports the goals of advancing Inuit governance in research, and of ensuring Inuit access, ownership and control over data.

In line with the priority to advance Inuit governance in research, the Visioning Project was created by the partner organizations: the TJFB, the Nunatsiavut Government, and the Torngat Co-op. The partner organizations were involved in designing and executing the research at every stage. To redress the balance of power between academic visiting researchers and community, researchers must engage with Inuit throughout all stages of their research: project design, data collection, data analysis and reporting. Each phase must be carefully considered to promote ethical behaviour, authentic relationships, and trusted results. Importantly, this means that the research should be instigated by the community partners – it should be run for their benefit and according to their interests. As a visiting researcher my job was to figure out how my thesis could fit into what my research partners needed, not the other way around.

By entering a research partnership, researchers and partners are agreeing to a long-term relationship which will result in a co-production of knowledge. Knowledge co-production occurs in the midst of the scientific and social order, meaning that the results of collaborative projects are bound up with the social situation in which they develop (Armitage et al., 2011). The research questions that are developed, the expertise and capacities that both partners bring to the table, the unfolding of the research process, are created and recreated through an adaptive

process (Carter et al., 2019). Partnership-driven research refers to this process of dialogic learning between actors as the iterative production of knowledge. Through a data sharing agreement (Appendix 1), the Visioning Project also supported the need to ensure that data collected in Nunatsiavut is owned and control by Inuit.

One useful thing about partnership-driven research is that it allows space for multiple different kinds of outcomes to be made available, depending on the position and interests of the partners. I use the term “partnership” to distinguish the fact that the research is driven by our relationship – where “partner-driven” might signify that the outcomes are entirely for the community, partnership accounts for the fact that some of the outcomes of our collaboration are for my benefit. From my perspective as a student, the outcomes of this project that benefit me are the dissertation that follows, as well as the research papers, conference presentations, and networking opportunities that have arisen from this research project. For project partners, this research was an opportunity to hold space to think through and openly discuss possible futures for their industry. What is *mine* in this dissertation, that is, what I can claim ownership over, is the ways I have applied the lessons learned through the project to the theoretical literature on power, collaborative management, and sovereignty. Without grounding this project in community priorities and fitting the dissertation into their concerns, this project would have been less beneficial to us both.

#### **1.4.2 Methods and approach**

My work is informed by an anticolonial lens that acknowledges that all knowledge is situated in its context (Carlson, 2017). The dominant knowledge system shaping our institutions today is settler colonialism, which informs our scientific practices, policy-making processes, and

power dynamics (Liboiron, 2021). Indigenous knowledge systems are marginalized – undervalued, ignored, and prevented from informing Indigenous institutions. It is the obligation of researchers to disrupt this systemic power imbalance in their research (D. McGregor et al., 2010). What follows is my attempt to be accountable to this obligation.

Kim Tallbear talks about transformative research with Indigenous communities or groups as a practice of “speaking with”, rather than giving back (TallBear, 2014). By this, she means that it is necessary to do away with the border separating academic “experts” from community members. The development of new knowledge requires that research teams set aside disciplinary norms and try to conduct research with as much thought applied to the processes of research as to the outcomes (Bull, 2010; Liboiron, 2016). This means thinking about research in less linear ways: “A researcher who is willing to learn how to “stand with” a community of subjects is willing to be altered, to revise her stakes in the knowledge to be produced” (Tallbear, 2014, p. 2). In that spirit, this dissertation was designed to be iterative, with many opportunities for revision of the goals, processes, and findings of the research through conversation with partners. It was also designed to be inductive, allowing each step of the process to emerge from the one proceeding it.

Where positivism is centered around research as an objective, value-free exercise, it is ill suited to working at the intersection of Indigenous and Western knowledge, because it is essential to acknowledge one’s position and cultural framing relative to the work (Braun et al., 2014). Constructivism, on the other hand, acknowledges the presence of values in the interpretation of data, allowing the researcher to acknowledge how their personal lens affects inquiry, but constructivism rejects the notion that the motivations of research can also be value driven. This is also inappropriate for research at the interface between Indigenous and Western

paradigms because it cannot explicitly consider how power shapes the work (Cram & Mertens, 2016). Thus, a third, emerging paradigm is that of transformative research, which is based in the acknowledgement that all knowledge is socially situated, and that research is to be used as a tool for emancipation with a specific lens on power relations (Held, 2019).

I employed a transformative research paradigm to inform the methodology and methods. A transformative paradigm focuses on participatory and dialogic methods, alongside practical, useable results (Denzin, 2010), which reflects my desire for transformative change to emerge from this research. Methods of inquiry are designed based on the questions being asked, and so mixed methods are often encouraged (Held, 2019). This allows for increased input and flexibility in research design so that research partners can continue to act as collaborators in thinking through how to approach new questions as they arise. Thus, the dissertation relies largely on qualitative methods for data collection and analysis, and occasionally looks to quantitative methods to help verify and bolster qualitative findings. While mixed methods can take on a variety of forms, this research engages with qualitative methods as the “theoretical drive”, using quantitative where needed to confirm and elaborate on those findings (Morse, 2014).

The core component of the research is a Grounded Theory methodology. Grounded Theory methodology is an inductive research methodology in which the researcher develops an understanding of data by allowing “themes” or patterns to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). It is an ideal methodology for gaining insight into social situations through the identification and description of phenomena. Using more open and responsive data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, document analysis and direct observation, I have gathered a rich data set to help answer my research questions.

**Table 1: Overview of Methods Employed in Research Chapters**

<b>Chapter Number</b>	<b>Data collected</b>	<b>Data analysis approach</b>
2	Meeting minutes from Annual Fisheries Workshops and TJFB Meetings	Mixed methods - Inductive analysis, deductive analysis
3	Semi-structured interviews	Grounded theory - Inductive thematic analysis
4	Semi-structured interviews, sorting exercise, workshop	Iterative Delphi approach – deductive analysis, inductive thematic analysis
5	Open-ended evaluation forms, direct observation	Self-reflection and engagement with Scenario Planning literature

#### *1.4.2.1 Document analysis*

The meeting minutes analyzed in Chapter 2 were provided by the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat. Two different meetings were included in this analysis: the Annual Fisheries Workshop meetings, and the TJFB meetings. A mixed methods approach was used to analyze these documents, meaning that both deductive and inductive steps were taken to understand the meetings. This approach allows for a highly structured, focused understanding of the data to emerge by first establishing a deductive framework for analysis, and following it with a more discursive analysis of the data (Hill et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2007).

#### *1.4.2.2 Modified Delphi Approach*

The Fisheries Visioning Project was constructed using a modified Delphi method. The Delphi method is a highly iterative method for developing consensus on a topic among a group of experts. The Delphi method has frequently been used for developing future scenarios (Bailey

et al., 2012; Kattirtzi & Winskel, 2020; Renzi & Freitas, 2015). A broad spectrum of tools is used under the umbrella of the “Delphi” method, and there is not one accepted path for researchers to take. It has even been suggested that it may be more appropriate to refer to “Delphi techniques” rather than a single method (Rowe & Wright, 2011). This is in part because many researchers find it helpful to approach consensus building in an inductive way – that is, allowing each step of the process to emerge from the results of the previous step. In general however, researchers elicit information from subject matter experts, starting in a very general sense, and narrowing the focus over time to identify points of consensus and disagreement (Bañuls & Turoff, 2011)

In planning for the Fisheries Visioning Project, I drew on the Delphi literature to create a data collection and analysis process that was iterative and oriented towards developing consensus among participants. I call this a “modified” Delphi approach because of one important distinction: Delphi techniques generally rely on anonymity between the participants (Bañuls & Turoff, 2011), and due to the partner-driven quality of this research, anonymity was not possible. I instead emphasized collaboration and conversation among participants through a workshop to stimulate a more open and constructive process.

### **1.4.3 Positionality**

A positionality statement is an important part of the research process in the social sciences, especially where the researcher is working in a cross-cultural context, or where the power differential between researcher and research subjects will affect the processes and outcomes of the work (Holmes, 2020). As I am working on a research project in Nunatsiavut - a region that is geographically separated from my home, with communities that are culturally,

socially, economically, and linguistically distinct from my own, and where I have been invited as a guest to conduct this work - it is essential that I am reflective on my personal motivations and perspectives, and that I plainly state my position in relation to the work and the people. We cannot eliminate the ways that our personal context and lens on the world affects our research, so instead, we must be transparent about the particular insights and blind spots we bring to the work (Thorpe, 2023).

In this positionality statement, I start with a reflection on my personal history, before positioning myself in relation to the research in this dissertation. I do this to provide some context on how I approached the research from my start on the project. No knowledge is held individually, it is grown and cultivated over generations and through culture and connection to place.

#### *1.4.3.1 Personal History*

In the broadest possible terms, I am a white, settler woman. I am second generation Canadian on my dad's side (England), and fourth generation on my mom's (Scotland). I was born in Guelph, Ontario, on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. I now reside in Mi'kma'ki and have considered Kijipuktuk/Halifax my home for the last 13 years. I am, in a very real way, a product of my upbringing. I was raised by my mother, an English teacher, and father, an ornithologist, and who both taught me curiosity and empathy, and a love for human beings and nature in equal measure.

I started my educational career in the humanities, studying 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century social and political thought, and focused in my Honours thesis on postmodern theories of "the Other", where I read that while the world itself is not inherently meaningful, it is given meaning and order by the presence of, and interaction with, other people. This statement expresses a lot of my



world view: a rebuke of positivist approaches or claim to an objective truth, the impossibility of seeing outside one's own social paradigm, and the fact that human beings are deeply indebted to one another for creating meaning in a world of chaos.

After a couple of years traveling and working, I returned to school to pursue a master's degree in Environmental and Resource Management. At the time I had dreams (according to my application letter) of moving away from more theoretical work towards practical solutions to environmental problems. I specifically wanted to work with Indigenous groups around Canada that were doing their own restoration programs in fresh water and coastal ecosystems. Along the way, however, I was distracted by the theoretical elements again when I became fascinated by questions of how and why information is valued and taken up by scientists, the public, or decision makers. My research focused on increasing the uptake of relevant information into decision making to ensure that environmental policy is grounded in science.

In the course of that work, it struck me that in Canadian governance, and in scientific research, we have a bias towards Western, positivist scientific approaches, which erases other knowledge systems, ignores significant evidence about the natural and human worlds, and reinforces colonization. This led me to a fundamental question: as our political system places more emphasis on "evidence-based decision-making", whose knowledge matters?

This is by no means an original or new thought – Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups have been writing and speaking about this issue for decades – but it was my own personal paradigm shift and is what pushed me to pursue my current PhD work. This is the intellectual and academic journey that led me to the work contained in this dissertation. I came in from this particular philosophical standpoint, but with no lived experience of Nunatsiavut fisheries, or indeed of working with Indigenous Peoples. Through the course of the past 4 years,

and through the grace of both the partner organizations who invited me to conduct this project, and of new friends who generously steered me in the right directions, I have come to understand how my personal history connects specifically to the research in this dissertation.

#### *1.4.3.1 My Research*

To me, the purpose of research is always to create practical solutions that improve the world, and so, in pursuing this PhD, I have hoped to do just that. Through the last four years of research, it has become clear to me the scale of change that is needed to create just and postcolonial systems. One thing that may emerge in the reading of this thesis is the extent to which I have struggled with what “practical” means in the face of systemic, complex problems. Can settler colonialism, which is so intrinsic in every facet and mechanism of the Canadian governance system, be changed without dismantling the system and building something completely new? On the other hand, there are Inuit being harmed today by the effects of settler colonialism – health, livelihoods, wellbeing, and cultural continuity remain at risk. Should I instead be advocating for working within the system to make smaller, less transformative but more immediate changes? While I continue to struggle personally with that question, the work that has been done in this thesis tries to follow what my research partners wanted this project to be. Ultimately, the thesis offers some entry points for fisheries managers to work with the existing fisheries governance system to make changes, because that is what my research partners needed. That is not to say that it is the only and final answer, or that all Labrador Inuit would say the same.

During the research I lived in Halifax which in many ways disconnected me from the everyday lived reality of life in Nunatsiavut. While I did my best to spend as much time as

possible in the region, spending 21 weeks to date in Nunatsiavut and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, I remain an outsider in the communities. This, in combination with the fact that I am a woman conducting research in a male-dominated fishery, affected the information participants shared, and how I interpreted the results. Community members and participants were less likely to trust me, and I was more likely to misinterpret the data. This was mitigated by the fact that the research project in this dissertation was created by and legitimized through the partner organizations. I would not have had the access to fisheries spaces, or the verification of my data, without the generosity of the partner organizations who invited me and supported me throughout this process.

As a white, settler researcher entering the Arctic for the first time, I have been taught that I need to talk less and listen more. My research needs to be driven by Labrador Inuit and must be tailored to suit their needs. I have attempted to achieve this through a partnership-driven research approach, as noted in 1.4.1 of this chapter. To achieve this, I designed the research methods to be as iterative as possible, to reflect the learning process and to allow for verification at regular intervals. Project partners were given opportunities to give feedback on the design throughout the data collection process. Despite the high level of iteration and learning between myself and the partner organizations, being a white settler from the south means I have very little experience with the daily lives of Labrador Inuit. This leaves me at a disadvantage for understanding context clues in my data. It also means that I do not have access to Labrador Inuit ontology or Indigenous methodologies more generally. I brought interim results back to partners and fisheries stakeholders on multiple occasions during the research process for feedback which helped contextualize the results.

I cannot act as a representative of Labrador Inuit, nor can I speak for them. What I aim to do is “stand with” my research partners by identifying mechanisms and methods that allow Labrador Inuit to name their values and priorities for themselves, and by building governance frameworks that can be driven by them. Beyond the outputs in this dissertation, other forms of output are being provided to project partners to help them with reporting, advocacy, and planning. These outputs include plain language reports of the project, policy briefing notes and artwork.

#### **1.4.4 Statement of co-authorship**

The Fisheries Visioning Project objectives were developed by the project partners. The conceptualization of this thesis was developed by me, through consultation with the project partners, based on their concepts for the Visioning Project. I designed and conducted the research, in discussion with project partners, and wrote the manuscripts. Representatives from the partner organizations and others contributed important ideas and feedback at every stage of the research. Co-authors on the research chapter papers provided comments and edits on the writing, as well as insights into the context that supported the analysis.

**Chapter 2:** Cadman, R., Snook, J. & Bailey, M. (2022). Ten years of Inuit co-management: Advancing research, resilience, and capacity in Nunatsiavut through fishery governance. *Regional Environmental Change*, 22(4), 127. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10113-022-01983-3>

**Chapter 3:** Cadman, R., Snook, J., Gilbride, J., Goudie, J., Watts, K., Dale, A. Zurba, M. and Bailey, M. (2023). Labrador Inuit resilience and resurgence: Embedding Indigenous values in commercial fisheries governance. *Ecology and Society* 28(2):11. <https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-14110-280211>

**Chapter 4:** Cadman, R., Snook, J., Broomfield, T., Goudie, J., Johnson, R., Watts, K., Dale, A., & Bailey, M. Articulating Indigenous futures: Using Target Seeking Scenario Planning in

support of Inuit-led fisheries governance. *Journal of Participatory Research Methods*,  
4(2). <https://doi.org/10.35844/001c.77450>

# Chapter 2: Advancing research, resilience, and capacity in Nunatsiavut through fisheries governance

## 2.1 Introduction

Fisheries are an important economic driver for communities across Canada. For many, fisheries are embedded in social and cultural life, connecting livelihoods with personal identity and history. Sustainable management is important to ensure fisheries can continue to exist in this way, but the fishing industry is widely acknowledged to be a complex social-ecological system, meaning management can be difficult. One possible solution for management is to include more collaborative and participatory approaches. Despite the potential of collaborative solutions, most marine fisheries in Canada are managed in a top-down manner by the federal government under the *Fisheries Act*. This has led to numerous tensions between communities and the government, notably between the Canadian federal department DFO and Indigenous Peoples. Top down approaches to fisheries have been criticized as a colonial force that shifts power away from local people, leading to the exclusion of local and Indigenous knowledge systems, inequitable and neoliberal decision-making, and increasing dependence on the state (Berkes et al., 2000; Jentoft, 2007; Quimby & Levine, 2018).

Community-based approaches have risen to prominence in fisheries governance over the last few decades as decision-makers have recognized the importance of local perspectives for managing commercial fisheries, and Indigenous Peoples have pursued their right to self-determination. Fishers have advocated for the benefits of more collaborative decision-making practices, and one way policy makers have responded is by sharing responsibilities through co-

management—a form of participatory governance. There is variety in what people include under the umbrella of “co-management”, but it is generally defined as formal arrangements between the state and community for the management of common pool resources (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005). Canada has recognized the importance of this move towards decentralized governance by including language to promote co-management in law, such as section 4.1 of the *Fisheries Act*, which enables the minister to use co-management to facilitate cooperation, communication, and participation in fisheries management and conservation (R.S.C., 1985, c. F-14). One form of co-management arrangement that is unique to Indigenous-Crown agreements has been reached through treaties, or land claim agreements.

CLCAs are a form of modern-day treaty used by Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government to negotiate rights and responsibilities on traditional territories. They are particularly used in northern Canada, where treaties were not historically negotiated. Co-management boards are generally formed through land claim agreements between Federal and Provincial (Crown) governments, and an Indigenous Peoples’ representative organization. The co-management boards created through land claim processes represent a unique kind of co-management because they are based on Indigenous rights, and they ensure greater representation of Indigenous interests in resource governance (White, 2020). Broadly speaking, co-management is seen as a tool for creating more just and equitable forms of fisheries governance (Snook, Cunsolo, & Morris, 2018), and for creating more locally relevant and well-informed outcomes (Armitage et al., 2009; Gutiérrez et al., 2011; Pomeroy & Berkes, 1997).

The TJFB is one such co-management arrangement that focuses on fisheries management in Nunatsiavut, a land claim area in northern Labrador, Canada. The TJFB was formed under the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement in 2005 and is made up of appointees from the

Nunatsiavut government, the federal and provincial governments. The TJFB conducts research and submits recommendations to the Minister of DFO concerning the conservation and management of commercial fish species in the waters within and adjacent to Nunatsiavut. Land claim-based co-management has a significant impact on how Indigenous sovereignty operates and how it will evolve into the future. This research examines how the TJFB work contributes to fisheries governance in the region, and subsequently, how co-management is placed in terms of supporting greater self-determination for Indigenous peoples in resource governance.

The TJFB plays a role at the nexus of natural resource governance, and the formal legality of the land claim agreement is an opportunity for Labrador Inuit to significantly influence decision-making. It is therefore important to understand how boards use that opportunity to their advantage to influence fisheries governance, and what opportunities may exist to enable greater self-determination for Indigenous communities from within this existing structure. To explore these questions, this research examines the TJFB's meeting minutes from 2010-2021 to define in what ways the TJFB influences fisheries governance in Nunatsiavut, and to understand their potential to affect change in the region. This paper will answer the following research questions: [1] In what activities does the TJFB engage, and how do those activities contribute to regional fisheries governance? And [2] How is the TJFB positioned to respond to the opportunities and threats inherent in complex social-ecological systems? Examining meeting minutes from over a decade of board meetings is an opportunity to understand the process of social learning that undergirds co-management. This paper illuminates some of the pathways co-management can take to support greater representation from Indigenous Peoples, what improvements can be made, and what barriers remain.



## 2.2 Methods

To understand the activities that the TJFB undertakes, this research analyzes meeting minutes from TJFB meetings and annual fisheries workshops. The meeting minutes were provided by the Torngat Secretariat and are publicly available by request. Because the data is all secondary public data, research ethics was not required for this work.

Text analysis was conducted on meeting minutes to develop an understanding of how these meetings contribute to fisheries governance in the region. In a study of the TJFB in its early years, Snook (2010) noted that the first 5 years of the TJFB's existence was characterized by the growing pains of a young organization, and that most of their work was focused on administrative tasks. In line with Berkes (2009), Snook identified that this was a period of maturation for the TJFB, and that they became more impactful over time (Snook, 2010).

This paper looks at the next period in the TJFB's history, when their activities had moved past this largely administrative "start-up" phase (Snook et al., 2018). The meeting minutes are collected from a period of 12 years, from 2010-2021, which also allowed for some reflection on how the TJFB has changed over time. Two types of meetings were analyzed. The first is the regular meeting held by board members. The second is the Annual Fisheries Workshop, a meeting that takes place once a year at which all Nunatsiavut fisheries stakeholders are invited to participate and share information. These two meetings represent the only recorded, formal spaces in which the TJFB formulates decisions, recommendations, and directs activities.

### **2.2.1 TJFB Meeting Minutes: Description of the data included**

Since the TJFB's inception in 2005, it has been meeting 3 times per year. Board meetings typically last for 2 days. For this research, the TJFB made the meeting minutes available from

March 2010 – February 2021, a total of 45 meetings. Generally, meeting minutes follow the same format over the 12-year period and are recorded by the same individual, resulting in a high degree of consistency in the content from year to year.

The TJFB meeting minutes were analyzed using inductive, thematic coding using NVivo™ 12 software. A grounded theory approach allows the framework or theory to emerge out of the analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Multiple rounds of coding were used to generate a comprehensive list of codes that reflected the activities undertaken by the TJFB. In the initial stage of analysis, a long list of activities identified in the meeting minutes was generated. Particular attention was paid to the various activities that the Board undertakes during the meetings and the topics of discussion that arise during the meetings. These activities were then collapsed into categories of thematically similar activities (Chun Tie et al., 2019). A final round of coding was performed to verify these categories and to place each activity into the appropriate theme.

### **2.2.2 Annual Fisheries Workshop: Description of the data included**

The TJFB also hosts annual general meetings, called the “Annual Fisheries Workshop”. These workshops are the only formal, recorded instance where all the fisheries stakeholders assemble to discuss the fisheries. It was therefore determined that these meetings provide an important window into how stakeholders, particularly designates and fishers, participate in fisheries governance in the region. The TJFB uses these meetings as a way of encouraging communication between all stakeholders, and they also bring in representatives from DFO and other provincial and federal agencies as an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback in a public setting. The TJFB funds the meeting every year, including supporting fishers who need

to travel from other communities to attend. It is framed by TJFB as a chance to share information from the previous year, as well as administrative or legal changes in the year to come. It is an essential source of information for the TJFB. I use the meeting minutes to investigate how regional actors contribute to the TJFB's work by examining their participation in the meetings.

For this research, the TJFB made the meeting minutes available for Workshops from 2011-2019, a total of 17 meetings. The format of these meetings has changed slightly over the years. In early years, meetings were held for each commercial species individually, while in later years a single, two-day meeting was held to discuss all species. This accounts for the discrepancy in the number of meetings over a 9-year period. In addition to having access to the recorded minutes, the lead author attended the workshop meeting in 2019, 2021, and 2022. No formal data was gathered during this time, but observation of the interactions in-person gave some context to the information recorded in the meeting minutes.

The workshops were analyzed using the software NVivo<sup>TM</sup> 12. The minutes were coded first to identify the actors involved in the meetings. Every meeting contribution that was attributed to an actor was coded to reflect the actor's affiliation with a group or organization. These codes were created deductively from the meeting minute participant lists. Then, the deductive codes were cross coded to understand the "type" of contribution that was being made. These codes were developed inductively to cover the range of types of participation that arose in the meetings. Finally, a query was run through the NVivo software to show how the various actors contributed to the meetings.

## 2.3 Results & Discussion

In this section I describe some of the most significant findings from the analysis. During these meetings, board members establish official recommendations to governments, approve and amend work plans for the year and create research agendas. The minutes record agenda items, salient discussion points, requests for action, and decisions. It was therefore determined that the record of these meetings would provide an accurate picture of the depth and breadth of the TJFB's role in fisheries governance in the region. Through analyzing each of these activities, a richer understanding of the TJFB's role in governance emerged. The Annual Fisheries meeting minutes were analyzed to understand how stakeholders contributed to the TJFB's decisions. These results are then described to elucidate how fishers and other stakeholders in the region contribute to fisheries co-management.

### 2.3.1 Gathering Information

One of the most prominent activities undertaken by the TJFB is gathering and analyzing information. The TJFB spends a significant amount of time in their meetings discussing information gathering. Of all the activities recorded, "gathering information" was coded a total of 255 times, 42% of all activities coded in the minutes. Figure 2.1 shows how the TJFB first identifies the relevant context for decision-making, and then approaches collecting information and prioritizing information of relevance to Nunatsiavut towards the creation of recommendations.

The TJFB collects a tremendous amount of information when considering their recommendations. This information concerns the existing commercial fisheries, potential exploratory fisheries, traditional fisheries, ecosystem health, incoming policies, the legal

mandate of the TJFB, and more. Most of the information required to make decisions cannot be collected by the TJFB themselves – such as stock assessments, seabed mapping, or studies into the effects of seismic testing. The TJFB therefore relies on other organizations, particularly on research undertaken by DFO Science. Gathering Information was further subdivided into 5 categories that reflect the strategies the TJFB used to collect information: Research, Outside counsel, Annual Fisheries Workshop, Community consultation, and Attendance at national and international meetings. These elements of gathering information are reflected in Figure 2.1. The supplementary material provides a more detailed look at each of these elements.

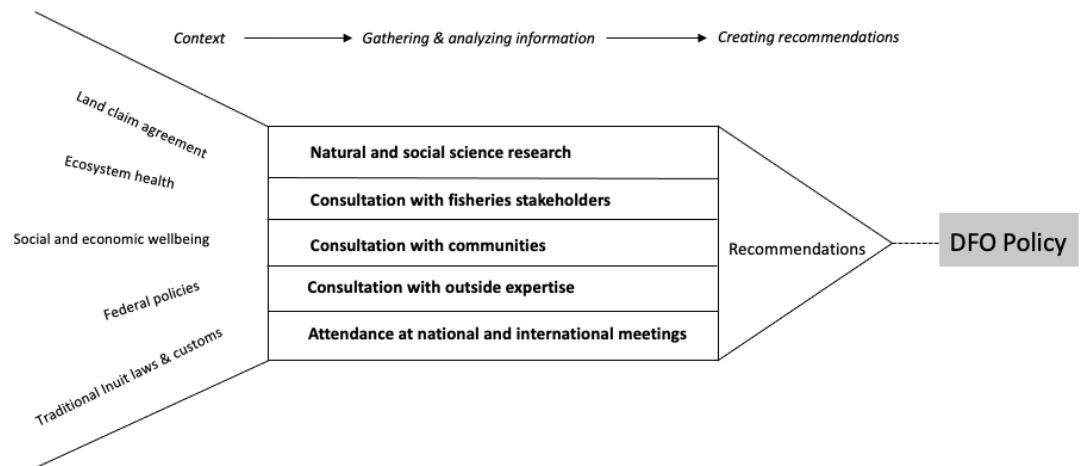


Figure 2.1: The Torngat Joint Fisheries Board process for creating recommendations for DFO fisheries policy

The TJFB has considerable leeway to drive research for fisheries governance in Nunatsiavut, and they make sure to take advantage of that role. Their emphasis on collaboration, particularly in recent years, has allowed the TJFB to steer research undertaken by the federal and Nunatsiavut governments. The TJFB discusses many ongoing research projects during the meetings, including habitat assessment and resource inventories, surveys of existing commercial

species, exploratory surveys of potential new species and areas, community-based monitoring programs, the social and cultural importance of the fisheries, and surveys of domestic fisheries.

Currently, fisheries and marine decision-making in the waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut are data poor. This is particularly true for inshore fisheries, where most of the Nunatsiavut beneficiaries who participate in the industry are employed, either on boats or in the processing plants (Kourantidou et al., 2020). The TJFB has implemented several research programs intended to fill gaps in the science. For example, beginning in 2013, the TJFB began collaborating with DFO to undertake a post-season trap survey for Snow crab in their adjacent waters. The survey is first noted in the meeting minutes #30 for March 2013 as the “TJFB Snow crab research program”. During the meeting, board members agree that the survey should be post-season. The survey is funded under the TJFB’s research program, and it provides important additional data that is added into the stock assessment and informs the TJFB’s decisions (e.g. TJFB 2016).

The TJFB pushes for research that supports community and fisher objectives. For example, the TJFB has run several surveys looking at the health and abundance of domestic fisheries, including Arctic char and Atlantic salmon. The TJFB emphasizes the social and cultural importance of these fisheries, and funds programs that support evidence-based decision-making concerning the commercial and domestic harvest. Despite the cultural importance of char, and the fact that DFO holds responsibility for this research, DFO largely stopped surveying this species in the 1990s after the commercial industry ended, and has not renewed its efforts (Kourantidou et al., 2020). The TJFB’s attention to community interests applies to the questions and perspectives of individual beneficiaries. During the Workshops, the TJFB regularly makes a note of fishers’ questions and concerns and prioritizes gathering information to answer their

questions. When concerns about seismic testing are raised, for example, the TJFB brought in an expert from DFO and a consulting company to share what they know. The TJFB subsequently created info sheets that can be distributed to fishers and community members.

Despite its importance to their work, the TJFB appears to have a lack of social science and community knowledge contributions to their process. There are a few occasions when a member of the Torngat Secretariat reports on community meetings, and once on a larger data collection process to gather community priorities and questions. But compared to the amount of natural science studies and reports that appear in the meeting minutes, very few studies are reported that systematically collect social science data, such as fisher perspectives, community priorities, observations on the water, or economic concerns. Without a fisher association or regular contact between the TJFB and the communities, access to the board and other decision-makers in Nunatsiavut is restricted. This might lead the TJFB to rely on individual community members who feel comfortable addressing board members directly. Additionally, most fishers and managers in Nunatsiavut fisheries are men over the age of 40, which means that consultation lacks direct communication with women, youths, and elders in the communities, which likely means that their concerns are underrepresented. The incorporation of fisher observations and Inuit knowledge for decision-making is important because it can contribute information from generations of observations and learning on the land and water (Pedersen et al., 2020), and it can lead to the identification of new questions, priorities, and values that guide research (D. McGregor et al., 2010). It is recommended that the TJFB engage communities using culturally relevant approaches, opening the door to more collaboration between the TJFB and communities (Latulippe & Klenk, 2020).

The TJFB has put significant resources into research programs over the past 12 years. Because they are working in a data-poor area, the information they collect both alone and through collaborations with NG and DFO have an impact on fisheries governance. This is significant because it marks a shift towards Labrador Inuit having more control over the research agenda for fisheries governance.

Indigenous control over the research agenda has long been considered essential for advancing Indigenous self-determination (D. McGregor, 2004). The National Inuit Strategy on Research is unequivocal in stating that control over research has direct consequences on social and economic equity for Inuit communities (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018b). Research conducted by and for Indigenous Peoples helps to build local capacity (Carter et al., 2019), allows for the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in decision-making (Pedersen et al., 2020), and creates opportunities for direct political action (Tester & Irniq, 2008). The work the TJFB is doing advances these goals, contributing not only to evidence-based decision-making, but also to broader social and economic goals for the land claim area. The TJFB has prioritized data collection specific to Nunatsiavut that fills in gaps in DFO's research agenda and is driven by Labrador Inuit concerns. To continue supporting Labrador Inuit priorities and to better incorporate Inuit knowledge into their scientific endeavours, TJFB should broaden the scope of their data collection programs to include more direct participation from communities.

### **2.3.2 Participation & System Maturity**

The Annual Fisheries Workshop meeting minutes were analyzed to understand how regional stakeholders contribute to the TJFB's activities. The Annual Fisheries Workshop is the only time when all stakeholders gather in a formal setting to discuss the fisheries, thus providing



an important occasion for the TJFB to hear from stakeholders, and especially fishers. This is the only “official” space where they contribute to decisions made by the TJFB. As Table 2 demonstrates, fishers participate actively in these meetings, and are recorded as speaking more frequently than any other group, participating a total of 126 times throughout the 10 years of meeting minutes.

**Table 2: Frequency of participation in Annual Fisheries Workshops meeting minutes, 2010-2019. The columns represent different types of participation, and the rows show different organizational affiliation of the participant. The boxes are shaded to highlight the most frequent types of participation by participants.**

Participants	Asking a question	Brainstorming ideas	Expressing an opinion	Identifying a priority	Identifying problems	Offhand Info Sharing	Prepared presentation	Total
TJFB member	5	2	6	5	2	2	0	22
External consultant	1	0	0	0	1	4	9	15
Federal MP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
DFO	4	1	2	1	3	25	28	64
Fishers	24	21	14	13	36	16	2	128
Nunatsiavut Government	12	4	5	5	7	20	25	78
Nunatsiavut Group of Companies	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Parks Canada	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Province of Newfoundland & Labrador	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	4
Torngat Fish Producers Co-op	6	6	8	5	19	15	18	77
Torngat Secretariat scientist	7	3	1	0	0	6	27	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>437</b>

Although fishers have an important participatory role in meetings, asking questions, identifying problems and brainstorming ideas, they were rarely invited to give prepared presentations. Yet prepared presentations made up the largest proportion of participation in the meetings. This type of participation refers to presentations that were created in advance of the meetings to provide information. Almost all presentations were made by DFO, NG, the Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative, or the Torngat Secretariat. In general, presentations are about scientific data, catch rates, and financial information from the past year in the fishery. The minutes record presentation titles, such as “Snow Crab Scientific Research Torngat Joint Fisheries Board Fisheries Research Program Manager Snow Crab Workshop November 15, 2011”, from the Torngat Secretariat, or “North Labrador Arctic charr program – Nain” from DFO in 2015. This indicates that the main goal of the meetings is to inform stakeholders about the fishery, not to gather feedback on the TJFB’s work.

Prepared presentations become a more prevalent part of the meetings over time. During the early meetings, a lot of time is given for open discussion, brainstorming, and “world café” sessions. As the meetings progress, less space is dedicated to these more informal methods of participation, and there is more focus on prepared remarks. Other informal interventions into the workshops are still prevalent throughout the decade, such as asking a question and expressing an opinion.

Berkes, Armitage & Doubleday (2010) outlined the 3 stages of maturity for an adaptive co-management arrangement: early, middle, and mature. They describe the evolution of a co-management board as moving from a more top-down, reactionary, and fractured arrangement to one with vertical and horizontal links between partners, equality among decision-makers, and the ability to shape and plan the future. In Snook’s assessment of Nunatsiavut co-management in

2010, he reported changes that suggested the organization had matured over their first 5 years in operation. One participant noted “After 2 years of stumbling along, we are starting to get on with our research projects, and we are starting to collaborate with many other agencies... and the information gathered is coming back to us and helping us make key decisions in terms of our recommendations.” (Snook, 2010). This research supports the notion that the co-management organization is indeed evolving, becoming more efficient over time.

There is a marked difference between the way the TJFB functions in the meeting minutes of 2010 and the meeting minutes in 2020. The minutes start out in 2010 with more focus on the administrative side of the work, including a long investigation into the TJFB’s mandate under the land claim. In the beginning, there are multiple workshops per year, each with time devoted to open brainstorming and discussions. As the system matures, the meetings become more formalized, and indeed more efficient, devoting more time to invited presentations and prepared remarks, which has allowed the TJFB to minimize time and resources needed for the workshops to progress, so the meetings are cut down to a 2-day meeting that covers all fish species.

A common critique of co-management is that the system can be bogged down by additional levels of bureaucracy and administration, and that it is a process of institution building that requires a considerable amount of time and resources (Plummer & Armitage, 2007; Zurba et al., 2012). This research demonstrates that this barrier can be overcome as the co-management arrangement matures. In this case, while the early years of the TJFB were marked by administrative work, the TJFB learns over time and focuses on management and research. These findings reflect what is seen elsewhere in the literature, that co-management requires decades of time and collaboration to become a mature and self-organizing system of governance (Armitage et al., 2009; Henri et al., 2020; Roa-Ureta et al., 2020).

This move towards efficiency, however, requires a trade-off. The more formalized setting suggests that the goal of the meetings has changed from a focus on problem-solving to a focus on sharing information. The meetings provide an opportunity to hear about and discuss the latest fishing season, but do not attempt to address issues or ideas in depth. If the TJFB loses its mechanisms for meaningful participation, some of the important aspects of their work may suffer. Without carving out space for future planning and strategizing, the fisheries are likely to remain stuck to the priorities set by the federal government, rather than the best interests of Labrador Inuit. For example, the workshop meeting minutes record a yearly conversation about the snow crab fishery, in which meeting attendees agree that the population of snow crab is declining rapidly. The group regularly votes to voluntarily withhold a percentage of their quota to try to allow the stocks to rebuild, but the stock continues to decline. The group cites fears that the fishery will be closed at any moment, but they have no ability to consider how they might avoid that fate, or plan to adjust in the future. This inability to consider the future of the fishery and its impact on Labrador Inuit have left them vulnerable to change.

As the TJFB has become more efficient, it has also done away with some of the more participatory aspects of their decision-making. During the Workshop meetings, there is less time dedicated to organic discussions, and more to “prepared presentations” in more recent years. Only on one occasion does a fisher present in this fashion, using a PowerPoint presentation to speak about their experiences in the fishery. Where a slide show presentation may take 10 minutes to half an hour, the questions and comments contributed by fishers only last a few minutes, leaving less time for their contributions to influence discussion.

Fishers may feel less comfortable participating in this more formal setting. The fishers do not have their own representation in this system. The TJFB relies on them to speak individually,

on their own behalf. While the meeting minutes mention a few occasions where the fishers are given space to discuss the creation of a fishers' association, these conversations do not result in a long-term organization. This means that a few fishers, particularly those who are more comfortable in formal boardroom settings, may have more influence over the system than others. Other than the Workshops, fishers have no other direct avenue to have their voices heard by the TJFB. This may erode trust over time if the fishers feel their needs are not being heard.

In as far as the goal of participation is to bring in diverse voices, the TJFB should consider solutions that are appropriate for the context and are culturally relevant for Labrador Inuit. Inuit and northern Indigenous cultures have traditionally used collaborative and dialogic governance strategies, where open discussion is essential (Brice Bennet & LIA, 1976; McGregor, 2009; Snook et al., 2020; Tagalik, 2015). A more formal, presentation-based setting may feel uncomfortable to some Labrador Inuit fishers. Indeed, researchers suggest that moving to a consensus-based approach can lead to more personal engagement and solution-oriented governance than other methods (Ferrazzi et al., 2019; McGrath, 2018). Others point out the importance of social and informal consultation in governance, which can lead to more reciprocal learning for all parties (Zurba et al., 2021). Insofar as fisher consultation is an important aspect of the TJFB's decision-making process, this indicates it would be worthwhile to create opportunities for dialogue between fishers and managers, instead of limiting communication to one-way, public presentations.

The goal of the Annual Fisheries Workshop appears to have shifted over the last decade, with more emphasis on informing stakeholders, rather than discussion and brainstorming practices. It may be the case that this is no longer an appropriate venue for this type of discussion, but that does not mean that such a forum should not exist. Inuit communities have

found success undertaking planning initiatives that focus on co-learning, mutual support, and sharing (Hudson & Vodden, 2020; Patrick et al., 2019; Riedlsperger et al., 2017). Creating a space that encourages equitable sharing and discussion can create solidarity among actors, and removes some of the competition from relationships (Hudson & Vodden, 2020). Actively encouraging fishers to communicate about their needs and priorities should be done in ways that are culturally relevant and place-based, and so rather than sacrificing the efficiency of the Annual Fisheries Workshop, new initiatives should be set up to facilitate co-learning and active feedback. Ferrazzi et al. (2019), for example, suggest using a consensus-based method for engaging Inuit, which requires providing a flexible space for discussion among a group of experts.

### **2.3.3 Resilience & Capacity**

This research shows an example of a land claim-based co-management board supporting self-sufficiency by adding capacity to a complex governance system. This counters long held narratives about the need for increased capacity in the north to achieve research goals and improve self-determination, which often frames visiting researchers or NGOs as the drivers of change. In this ‘deficit model’, Inuit communities are running a capacity deficit, and southern researchers are needed to counter it. Pfeifer (2018) writes on this pervasive framing as an issue of a “credibility gap”. Pfeifer argues that because researchers, funders and policy makers do not see Inuit knowledge as valid for governance, they see a need for southern researchers to fill in the holes in Inuit governance systems.

Through the Torngat Secretariat, the TJFB has managed to increase research capacity for fisheries management in the region. This is important for filling gaps in available knowledge

about the region, as well as for identifying priorities of local communities and fishers. The post-season crab survey that TJFB created in 2013, for example, has added a large area of coverage for DFO's crab surveys, providing consistent data for 10 years about an area further north than DFO has been prepared to survey in the past. This is particularly significant during a time when DFO is struggling to produce its own scientific advice in a timely manner (Archibald et al., 2021). Regionally specific research has been shown to improve research effectiveness and contribute to the wellbeing of communities, suggesting that the TJFB's contributions to marine and fisheries science have a direct effect on the strength of governance in the region (Hiruy & Eversole, 2020).

In addition to carrying out fisheries research, the TJFB has consistently made it clear that they want to emphasize the wellbeing of Labrador Inuit through their recommendations. This has led to a focus on the social and cultural dimensions of fisheries management. The TJFB has addressed these concerns by collecting information on community priorities, encouraging participation from fishers and fishing organizations in the creation of recommendations, and advocating for science on species of cultural interest, such as Arctic char and Atlantic salmon.

Another example of TJFB focusing on building resilience and capacity in the region is through their outreach and education activities. The TJFB sees it as part of their responsibility to provide education and stewardship initiatives to communities and fishers. The meeting minutes show that the TJFB has had several conversations over the years about how to improve communication, training programs, and education concerning the fisheries. The minutes record several initiatives, such as informational sessions on crab pots to improve catch quality, community consultation sessions and training for fishers on filing taxes from their enterprise. On a few occasions, the TJFB also scheduled information sessions for the Fisheries Workshops that

take place during the lunch hour or after the meeting is over. These meetings are also open to the public, suggesting that the TJFB is interested in outreach beyond existing fishing designates. The fact that the TJFB continues to invest time and money into these activities, despite the fact that this type of work is not strictly in the TJFB's mandate, suggests that they have deemed it to be important for the health of the commercial fishing industry.

#### **2.3.4 The TJFB's Mandate**

Despite all the good the TJFB has been able to accomplish, the interpretation of their mandate remains an issue. A good deal of their time is spent discussing the definition of their mandate through the Land Claim Agreement and discussing how or whether to legally challenge the Crown's interpretation of the Agreement. Discussion on this subject takes up a lot of their time, and DFO's interpretation of the land claim has clashed with what the TJFB consider to be their remit. These disagreements have restricted the TJFB's ability to make meaningful change for the region. For example, even though the TJFB has advocated for years that shrimp allocations to Nunatsiavut should be increased in line with the LILCA, DFO has chosen not to honour that recommendation as by their determination it falls outside of the TJFB's mandate (Snook et al., 2019).

It is clear from the meeting minutes that there is some disagreement between the TJFB and the DFO Minister(s) as to the TJFB's mandate. In the early meetings, the TJFB engages legal counsel for advice on the exact nature of their role, suggesting that they are still exploring the extent of their powers. The meeting minutes frequently state that the TJFB does not receive timely responses from the Minister's office – at one meeting in 2011, it is noted that responses are received 75, 76, and 91 days after the recommendations have been submitted, and meeting



attendees express frustration with the lengthy wait. The Minister is required to provide reasons for not accepting the recommendations, so the Secretariat is sometimes engaged to submit a second letter requesting that a response be given after 90 days. As the TJFB matures, members learn more about how to be strategic with their advice. They discuss the importance of the timeliness of their submissions, as well as how to reach out personally to individuals within DFO to create relationships.

The weakness here is not in the land claim agreement itself. The weakness is in the federal government's continuing restrictive interpretations of the agreement. Many Labrador Inuit have noted both through research and through the media that they believe the government is failing to honour the "spirit" of the agreement (e.g., Foley et al., 2017). Andrea Procter has argued that Labrador Inuit have been unable to fully benefit from their adjacent resources through the land claim because of neoliberal understandings of indigeneity, in other words, that Indigenous peoples have less claim to "non-traditional" resources like commercial fisheries and mining (Procter, 2016). The meeting minutes indicate that this continues to be a barrier to the TJFB's work.

Insofar as scholars have framed co-management as a problem-solving process that is characterized by soft power and social learning, they have shown that the signing of a land claim agreement is not the final word on power (Armitage et al., 2011; White, 2020). Co-management arrangements that engage in social learning and iterative problem solving will continuously grow and evolve over time. But this requires trust, reciprocity, and sufficient space for creativity to thrive (Davidson-Hunt & O'Flaherty, 2007). While the minutes present us with several examples of the TJFB learning and adjusting their behaviour and communications, no examples are recorded of the executive level of the Canadian federal government making the same attempts to

collaborate or to compromise. Problem-solving and creative co-learning can only take the TJFB so far towards creating meaningful change in the region if their counterpart in the land claim agreement is not interested in reciprocating.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the TJFB exercises a variety of soft powers (Quimby & Levine, 2018), despite some of the barriers they face such as land claim agreement interpretation, lack of investment in fisheries science by the federal government, and Ministerial discretion. Soft powers refer to the ways that the TJFB wields influence over fisheries governance. Graham White describes the power of co-management boards as the “intercultural transaction between Indigenous peoples and the state as well as integration of Indigenous peoples into the state system as they exert influence through that system” (White, 2020, p.322). In other words, although the current governance system forces Indigenous leaders to participate in the Canadian state system, Indigenous leaders have found significant ways of influencing the context in which decisions are made. Taken together, these findings suggest that the TJFB has been an effective way of improving Labrador Inuit participation in fisheries governance in the region.

To continue to strengthen the representation of Labrador Inuit in fisheries management, I suggest that the TJFB create new, culturally appropriate spaces to hear from fishers and community members on the values and priorities they have for the commercial fishing industry. The literature has shown that input from Indigenous women continues to be a weakness for co-management boards, as well as the authentic incorporation of Indigenous knowledge (White, 2020). Intentional data collection and the creation of spaces for Labrador Inuit to have open

discussions on the fisheries may be an opportunity for the TJFB to advance self-determination for Nunatsiavut.

Modern colonialism – the continued disempowerment of Indigenous peoples by patronizing central governments – continues to be an issue that prevents co-management from functioning as it was intended (Daigle, 2016). Still, the TJFB has managed to greatly increase research capacity in the region, push focus towards the socio-cultural dimensions of fisheries management, and strengthen the political voice of the region by improving communication among actors. Much of this success is down to the fact that the TJFB has relied on regionally focused and Inuit-led research and discussion. To continue with this success, it is important that the TJFB keep spaces open to allow greater participation and representation from Nunatsiavut beneficiaries. The TJFB may also benefit from also looking for more opportunities to consider the long-term trajectory of the fisheries and ensure that their objectives are driven by Inuit values and priorities.

# **Chapter 3: Embedding Labrador Inuit values in commercial fisheries governance**

## **3.1 Introduction**

As climate change has opened greater access to the Arctic, there has been growing interest in developing the industries that make use of Arctic marine waters, including marine shipping, oil and gas exploration, and commercial fisheries (Tai et al., 2019). In many cases, however, the benefits from these industries continue to prioritize southern enterprises over local peoples (Kourantidou et al., 2021). With rapid change on the horizon for Arctic communities, it is essential that communities have an opportunity to articulate what a desirable and equitable future would look like for them. One sector ripe for equitable transformation is the commercial fishing industry. However, research in northern Indigenous communities tends to focus on country foods and subsistence harvests without considering the important role of commercial fisheries. It is key to investigate how Inuit cultures and commercial fisheries are linked to understand how fisheries governance should be directed.

Many Inuit communities consider commercial fisheries to be vital for economic, social and cultural wellbeing in Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homelands across what is now Canada) (Snook et al., 2019). Given their experience with community-led management initiatives, relationships to the marine environment, and ability to access and use multiple knowledge systems for governance, Inuit communities are uniquely placed to create new, innovative models for resource governance (Snook et al., 2019). Additionally, land claim

agreements (sometimes called ‘modern treaties’) across Inuit Nunangat, the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), a Nation-to-Nation Mandate within the department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), and the DFO principle of adjacency all speak to the necessity for priority resource access for Inuit communities (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2019; Foley et al., 2015; *UNDRIP*, 2007).

Despite advances made by Inuit for the recognition of their rights, power imbalances remain in resource management. Increasingly scholars are identifying that settler colonialism is at the root of fisheries management in North America and in the Arctic (Bernauer, 2022; Kuokkanen, 2020; McMillan & Prosper, 2016; Parlow, 2022; Silver et al., 2022; Snook et al., 2022; Todd, 2018). Settler colonialism is described as a system of power, informed by the particular obligations, expectations, and relationships of Western society (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Liboiron, 2021). Settler colonialism is a specific type of colonialism that involves the dispossession of land and resources from Indigenous Peoples, and the delegitimization of their autonomy (Coulthard, 2014). Settler colonialism continues to exert power over Indigenous Peoples to disconnect them from their relationships to the land and to disavow their own systems of governance (Todd, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Understanding contemporary fisheries governance through this lens, I recognize that if we are to build just and equitable fisheries governance that uphold the rights and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples, we need to understand how communities relate to and value those fisheries (D. McGregor, 2018; Whyte, 2018). This paper details the steps taken to identify a cluster of values held by Inuit regarding the commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut, a land claim in northern Labrador, Canada. These values are articulated as an essential step in a broader visioning project to articulate ideal futures for the commercial fishing industry.

In Nunatsiavut, fisheries are a vital source of economic development, cultural preservation, and community wellbeing. Snook et al. (2022) found that the participation in the commercial fisheries is considered a “way of life” (pp. 4), one that dates back hundreds of years, demonstrating the significance of the industry to Labrador Inuit. The fishing industry is an economic driver, supporting hundreds of jobs and livelihoods for the region (Foley et al., 2017). Despite the clear importance of the industry for the land claim area, fisheries in Nunatsiavut are currently managed with a focus on problem-specific planning, while policy interventions redirect most benefits of adjacent marine resources outside of the region (Kourantidou et al., 2021; Snook et al., 2019, 2022). In this way, northern fisheries policy fails Inuit in part because the Canadian government’s mandates are determined outside of communities and do not focus on holistic, long-term governance.

While Nunatsiavut’s fishing industry is under a settler colonial governance regime, Labrador Inuit are not able to advance sovereignty over natural resources. I therefore propose that it is important to rethink fisheries governance in the region from the ground up, and ask: what values and principles do Labrador Inuit harvesters and managers hold in relation to the commercial fishing industry, and what are the implications of those values for the way that fisheries are governed in the region? This study aims to articulate Labrador Inuit values to inform a vision for a desirable and just future for commercial fisheries.

The fact that governance remains couched in Western institutions and upholds colonial values and priorities for management impedes Indigenous peoples’ progress towards self-determination. To rebuild fisheries governance for the benefit of Inuit

communities, it is necessary to “build beyond” the existing systems and consider new institutions built on Inuit ways of knowing (Todd, 2022). Building Inuit futures for fisheries requires an articulation of the values and perceptions that could underpin fisheries management in the region.

### 3.2 Values-based Fisheries Governance

In order to create equitable and just fisheries governance in the Arctic, we must consider the significance of commercial fisheries for Inuit communities. Equity is defined in terms of three dimensions: recognition (respect of Indigenous knowledge, values, and priorities); procedure (the process of management and decision-making); and distribution (the way costs and benefits are distributed) (Adeyeye et al., 2019). In this research I focus on this first dimension, recognition, which emphasizes the context – culture, knowledge, language, history, are all important considerations for the creation of equitable resource governance (Quimby and Levine, 2018).

Thus, an equitable future for Inuit fisheries must acknowledge the role that values play in fisheries governance. While values are defined in many ways across the literature, I follow the interpretation laid out in Song et al. (2013), in which they develop “common value types” for fisheries governance. Common value types are defined as both the fundamental beliefs held by individuals about the fisheries, and the meaning, merits, or benefits, that individuals assign to the fishery. Studying values provides insight into how people perceive the world, and how they make decisions (Alessa et al., 2010).

In recent years, there has been interest in the role that values can play in transformational governance. The International Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

(IPBES) released a report in 2019 arguing that the planet is headed for biodiversity and climate crises which can only be addressed if humans change the values that currently guide environmental management (IPBES, 2019). Values play an integral role in how we understand systems, choose pathways, set goals, and measure success (Fazey et al., 2020; Horcea-Milcu et al., 2022; Wyborn et al., 2021). Studying the attitudes and motivations of diverse stakeholder groups can contribute towards understanding conflicts over resource use, and potentially lessen the effects of complex problems (Armitage et al., 2012). Values provide a framework that guides how decision-makers respond to threats, so understanding a community's values can also lead to governance approaches based on justice and equity (Armitage et al., 2017; Raymond et al., 2022; Sowman & Wynberg, 2014)

Less well explored, however, is how value systems arise from culture, and the effect that this can have on governance. This is an important distinction because cultural values are derived from discrete paradigms for understanding the world. I refer to these paradigms as “knowledge systems”. All governance models are built on a knowledge system. Knowledge systems are developed through a peoples' history, socialization, cosmology, and even language, and dictate the ways that we understand and interpret the world around us, develop values, norms, and institutions (Whyte, 2018; N. J. Wilson et al., 2019).

Examining the values in a fisheries governance system can give some insight into how priorities are set. Currently, DFO has designed fisheries governance across Canada as a Western knowledge system, which can be described as a colonial paradigm (Snook et al., 2019). There are many examples of this management paradigm manifesting in contemporary fisheries management. Silver et al. (2022), for example, demonstrate how Maximum Sustainable Yield, a formula used to calculate how much of a fish stock can be removed from the water, was



developed according to the values and priorities of a settler colonial paradigm: the separation of an ecosystem into individual species, the exclusively economic valuation of fish, the assumption of power and control over the marine environment (Silver et al., 2022). Liboiron (2021) reflects on the failures of the colonial paradigm in the cod collapse in Newfoundland and Labrador in the 1980s and 1990s, one that valued short term economic gains over ecosystem health or community wellbeing and relied on a limited and flawed statistical model (Liboiron, 2021). Lee et al. (2019) demonstrate that the centralized structure of fisheries governance in British Columbia had direct consequences for the management of abalone, risking the extinction of this fish that is a cultural keystone species for the Haida nation (Lee et al., 2019). Snook et al. (2018) record Inuit leaders from across the north discussing the ways that the federal government fails to honour the spirit of land claim agreements in decentralizing power over fisheries governance, while Bernauer (2022) notes that this practice is an exercise in internal colonialism that prevents Nunavut commercial fisheries from seeing the benefits of an expanding industry (Bernauer, 2022; Snook et al., 2018). In Nunatsiavut, Kourantidou et al. (2021) and Foley et al. (2017) note that despite the fact that for years the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board has called for increased access to quotas in the waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut, DFO has continued to refuse this recommendation, limiting equitable allocation of the resource (Foley et al., 2017; Kourantidou et al., 2021).

I have pulled three important characteristics from the literature, including the texts above, which help to illuminate some of the qualities that guide the ways decisions are made and goals are set in the fisheries today:

- A species-specific framework for management, in which each species is managed individually, which largely disregards the social and ecological connections of

each species to one another and the environment (DFO, 2013; Murray et al., 2006)

- A neoliberal valuation of the fisheries, which considers individual economic profit as the top priority for fisheries management (Thornton & Hebert, 2015)
- A top-down hierarchical structure that amasses power within the federal government (Alessa et al., 2010; Quimby and Levine, 2017)

These characteristics are not meant to be, as Tuck and Yang (2012) wrote, “exhaustive or even inarguable” (p. 5), but instead are themes that I see arise continuously in the literature on the intersection of commercial fisheries and settler colonialism. The characteristics described here consist of the values seen in a colonial paradigm, which affects how managers make decisions about the fisheries, prioritizing bureaucratic efficacy, positivist scientific approaches, and short-term planning.

The tendency to perpetuate this colonial model of fisheries governance has continued despite the proliferation of land claim agreements across Canada. In the past 50 years, Indigenous Peoples have used land claim agreements to redefine the relationships and responsibilities between Indigenous Peoples, the Crown, and the land. Some Indigenous scholars, however, have pointed out that the interpretations and implementation of these agreements has largely failed to allow Indigenous Peoples to govern on their own terms and in accordance with their own knowledge systems, and remain couched in Western values and priorities (Borrows, 2005; Diabo, 2013; H. King, 2015). In a panel on modern treaties and Inuit self-determination, Kunuk Inutiq argued that “we are not in a place where we define our own relationship to land and that is where we need to start” (April 4, 2022). The dominance of a

Western colonial knowledge system in Canada has failed to consider or respect the governance value of Indigenous knowledge systems and perpetuated a colonial relationship with Inuit.

A reclamation of Inuit governance must be grounded in Inuit knowledge and culture. This will require that governance models be changed to align with Inuit culture and values. The goal of this research is to identify the values and priorities held by harvesters and managers in Nunatsiavut to explore how those values may be used to build a different governance model in the future.

### 3.3 Methods

The data for this research were collected as part of a larger project to create a Labrador Inuit-led vision for the future of the commercial fishing industry in Nunatsiavut. The interviews conducted here were the first step in an iterative data collection process. The project partners were the Nunatsiavut Government, the TJFB, and the Torngat Coop. Research Ethics approval was received from the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee (NGRAC-20006002) and the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board (#2019-4898) before data collection began.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with stakeholders (n=26) in the Nunatsiavut fishing industry (see interview guide at Appendix 2). Interviews were held between July and November 2021, and took place in person where possible, in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Makkovik, and Nain. When scheduling in-person interviews was not possible, interviews took place over the phone or through video calls. Recruitment was focused on stakeholders who are beneficiaries of the LILCA, and included shrimp, crab, turbot, scallop, and char harvesters, processing plant managers, managers of the Coop, current and former members of the TJFB, Nunatsiavut Government employees, including fisheries managers, a conservation officer, a

deputy minister, minister, and AngajukKâk (mayors) from 4 out of 5 communities in Nunatsiavut. A detailed breakdown of interview participants is available in Table 3. In 2021, 18 individuals were designated to fish under Nunatsiavut licences, of which I interviewed 11, more than half the fishers in the region. Interviews were between 35 and 90 minutes long, and were audio recorded and transcribed. On a few occasions, participants requested that their interviews not be audio recorded, in which case detailed notes were kept by the interviewers. Participants were asked about the role(s) they play in the industry, the characteristics of the fishery today, and their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the fisheries.

**Table 3: Interview participants by primary occupation**

<b>Representative Organization or Occupation</b>	<b># of participants</b>
Nunatsiavut Government	5
Torngat Joint Fisheries Board	2
Torngat Coop	2
Nunatsiavut Group of Companies	1
Fishers	11
Processing Plant Managers	1
AngajukKâks	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>

The interviews were coded using NVivo12 software. An iterative Grounded Theory approach was used to analyze the data (Strauss and Corbin, 1997). I used an inductive, open coding method to understand the value(s) that participants derived from participating in the fishery, as well as participant perspectives on important pathways to success for the industry, and challenges they face in achieving their goals. Particular attention was paid to those sections of the interviews that focused on the importance of the fisheries for individuals and for Nunatsiavut. These individual values were aggregated into themes, which represent the merits, benefits, and significance of the fishing industry for participants.

To help verify these findings, preliminary results were reported back to fisheries stakeholders on two occasions, once at the Annual Fisheries Workshop in March of 2022, and again at the same meeting in December 2022. On both occasions, members from the representative organizations were present, including employees from the Nunatsiavut Government, the Torngat Coop, the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board and the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies as well as designated fishers. I also discussed preliminary findings with the Research Assistant on the project, Jenna Gilbride, an Inuk from Makkovik, who helped to contextualize some of the data within the broader setting of life in a community that is active in the commercial fishing industry. Comments made in the meeting and made privately were noted and helped to shape how the values are communicated in this paper.

### 3.4 Results

Participants were clear in their interviews that the commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut are economically, socially, and culturally important for the region. In this section, I explain the findings from the interview analysis on the specific values that the commercial fisheries bring to Nunatsiavut. Eight values were identified in the analysis, which showcase the various ways that Labrador Inuit fishers and managers understand the meanings and merits of the commercial fishing industry. These values help to explain why Nunatsiavut beneficiaries choose to participate in the fisheries as harvesters and managers, and how they wish to invest in the future of the industry.

Throughout this section, I refer to “managers” as those individuals who are employed to help manage the industry, either through the land claim or local governments, the co-management board, or the cooperative. I refer to “harvesters” as those 11 individuals designated

to fish under the licenses. Distinguishing between these two groups allows some understanding of how fisheries are valued by those who are out harvesting, and those who see it as part of a larger project for Nunatsiavut governance. It should be noted, however, that many of those who are conceived of here as managers are part of fishing families or spent part of their own lives fishing in the industry and so also have important experiential knowledge of the value of the fisheries.

## **Employment**

Several interviewees emphasized the importance of fisheries as an economic driver on the coast. The employment of individuals as deck hands and processors provides an important source of income to the communities of Nunatsiavut.

Managers emphasized the importance of employment, even at the expense of greater profits that could be made by selling more quota from commercial licenses to the offshore

“I mean, it would be quite easy for us if we just decided we don’t want commercial fishermen and sell our licensing to offshore.... We could just reap all that money and put it into a gigantic pot and... say it’s all going into social programming, but we don’t. So, we create direct employment to our designated fishermen in their deckhands (Participant 1).

Managers argue that fisheries are a kind of investment in fishers, who create new opportunities and spend their money in communities.

While the fishers agreed that earning a living was essential for the fishery, some of those interviewed pointed to the difficulty of making a living wage off the allocation from a communal licence. Applying for quota on a yearly basis meant that some fishers

were unable to secure financing to get a boat of their own, leading to frustration. One participant (24), for example, complained that being Inuk meant that they were not allowed to make money out of the fishery. These fishers may stay in the industry because they feel trapped without other options for employment: “It’s all I’ve done all my life. I’ve been [fishing] since I was 13 years old. So, what else you want me to do?” (Participant 25).

Other fishers, however, see the fishery as an essential opportunity for employment and profit. “I’ve made a living. My crew have made a living. Everybody qualifies for [employment insurance] every winter. They get to be who they want from October to May. And then we get up and go fishing in the spring” (Participant 18). This quote demonstrates that the seasonal nature of the industry is positive for many fishers in the region, who use the off season to pursue other activities, including harvesting and visiting family. For some, being employed in the fishery is a chance to stay in their home communities. One participant observed that after the cod and salmon moratoria in the 1990s “there was no work for people. They had to go and look for other work in other areas... to secure an income” (Participant 14), referring to the significance of the industry for the local economy.

### **Community development**

Beyond the individual benefit of employment in the communities, many people spoke about how the economic success of the fisheries should be directed to communal benefits:

“When you consider the resource options available to the people of Nunatsiavut, the fisheries is pretty close to it. So, you know, building an economy out of the fishery should be the overall objective. And doing everything possible to squeeze every ounce out of it for holistic reinvestment” (Participant 6).

One trend that was observed in the conversations on the economic benefits of the fishery was that the fisheries were seen as a communally-owned resource, and that those managing and benefiting from the industry had an obligation to care for the greater community. Several beneficiary harvesters, for example, spoke about their responsibility to employ community members on their vessels, and three spoke about bringing family members on board to teach them more about the industry. Managers spoke in their interviews about the importance of harnessing every opportunity to see communities prosper through the fisheries.

Many also saw commercial fisheries as contributing to an active community. The economic significance of the fisheries came up in all 26 interviews conducted for this project. The fisheries are economically beneficial for the region not only because they contribute to livelihoods for individuals, but also because they bring a sense of life and drive into communities.

For some, that is because employment in the community through the processing plants or on fishing vessels helps to keep people grounded in their home communities, instead of being forced to move for economic opportunities elsewhere. “The char fishery has kept Nain alive. It continues to maintain the culture...since the fishery opened... When the fish plant opened, everybody went fishing. Everybody. It’s a culture” (Participant 17). This vision of a bustling, healthy community was important to participants who see the fisheries as providing purpose. It is a feeling that is clearly tied to the history of the fishing villages of the north coast, but it continues to provide feelings of wellbeing for many people, as in this quote: “The fishery brings life back to the community, it’s like a hope” (Participant 3).



## **Pride**

Many participants made a link between participation in the fisheries and feeling a sense of pride and purpose. For participants in management positions, this code was generally linked to the desire to see community members being active and contributing to the success of the community, such as in this quote from Participant 14:

“Educate our youth more about the fisheries. Because they don’t always know that you can actually make good money off of the fishery...I mean, it’s a big risk but it brings back more pride to yourself and to communities” (Participant 14).

Others, however, also linked this feeling of pride in the fisheries to their sense of identity as Labrador Inuit, that being a harvester brought a sense of connection to their culture: “I think the priority should be to create something for the people that’s sustainable but very meaningful culturally... that should be the top priority ... to develop something that the people can connect spiritually with” (Participant 23). This participant suggests that maintaining the fishery is a means of connecting to Labrador Inuit culture.

## **History and identity**

Participants were clear that beyond the benefits the fishery can provide, the fishery itself is a cultural value for Labrador Inuit. “There are huge benefits in the fishery itself. It’s why we are where we are in Nunatsiavut and in our communities. Our people – my people – have always been involved in fishing” (Participant 2). The significance of the industry to the history of the region was important to many participants, as the commercial and subsistence fisheries seem to mix in memory. When speaking about the commercial salmon and char fishery, which operated between the 1970s and 1990s, participants see the industry as inextricable from an Inuit way of

life “And at the end of the day, I mean, that fishery for those families, it was medicinal. Is that the word? It was medicine for everybody. They went out and they got to be out on the land...And everybody was happy” (Participant 18). The commercial salmon fishery that took families out into the bays during the summers is now gone, having been shut down in the early 1990s, but is still seen as the driving force behind commercial fisheries today. In fact, most of the harvesters interviewed cited the history of fishing on the land as their introduction to the industry during their childhoods. “[I’ve] been involved in the ocean-going life ever since I was a child. My mother and uncles were char fishermen...and I guess my love for the ocean grew from there.” (Participant 18). There are not many jobs in Nunatsiavut that provide an opportunity to get out on the water regularly, and the commercial fisheries, which are connected to personal histories and identities, provide the opportunity. These findings suggest that the commercial fishery occupies space in the collective history and identity of Labrador Inuit today, that runs deeper than the economic importance of fisheries. “Yeah, it’s important for jobs, but it’s also a tradition that has been around since I was born. Before my time, so I just think that it’s important for the people as well” (Participant 4).

### **Access to the land and to traditional foods**

The seasonal nature of commercial fisheries provides important support for those employed in the industry to get out on the land during the off season. In fact, multiple participants spoke about how continued access to the land and ability to continue practicing cultural activities was a motivation to many community members.

“[P]eople value lifestyle and activity almost more than they value income... a lot of the jobs here that people prefer is seasonal – to work all

summer so they don't have to work all winter because they want to be out [on the land]..." (Participant 7).

Being on the land gives Inuit opportunities to connect with their culture by practicing observational and harvesting skills, to access spiritually and personally significant places, and to spend time with family. In this respect, the fisheries support cultural practices.

An important aspect of having the time and resources to get out on the land is that it allows people the opportunity to access traditional and country foods. The commercial char fishery has helped some harvesters to pass on their knowledge to family members to support self-sufficiency for Labrador Inuit families. Getting out to fish for char is expensive, it requires access to a speed boat, fuel, equipment, and the navigation knowledge to travel through sandbars, polynyas, and islands on the way to good fishing grounds. The fishery provides one interviewee with the funds to be able to get out on the water and bring family members along. "It's like I said, at least she'll know if she ever catches char in a net, she'll know how to clean it and put it away and all that" (Participant 19). This has a deep cultural value for Participant 19 because it means that they are able to pass on their culture to the next generations, teaching important cultural activities like harvesting and preparing fish while also connecting with important places. That access and the opportunities it brings is made possible by the commercial char fishery.

### **Self-determination through rights and quota**

Participants also expressed concern that the economic benefits of the fisheries are currently being siphoned off to other areas outside of Nunatsiavut, despite the adjacency of Labrador Inuit to the resource:

“The resource is right on the doorstep of our beneficiaries within Nunatsiavut. And for years... we saw the resource being plucked underwater, being hauled away, processed many miles away, not creating jobs within the immediate area. ...The resource has been taken and gone off, and what did our people get out of it? Very, very little.” (Participant 13)

While participants felt that the fisheries were providing important economic resources to the region, they felt that the majority of those resources were still not being harvested for the benefit of the region. Participants characterize the marine environment as a potential source of income for the region because of the abundance of resources but see people travelling from the south and from the island of Newfoundland as draining those resources away. Many see it as important for Nunatsiavut to develop its fishing capacity to bring more quota to the region and ensure that the benefits of the fishery are brought back to the region: “just because you stop fishing it doesn’t mean people from the island or people from the south also stop, right? You’ll have people come in and fish it for you” (Participant 11).

Importantly, all the participants in these interviews mentioned that they did not feel that the land claim agreement was being respected, and that they were not being listened to. “[T]he federal government should be respecting these land claims agreement things... I don’t know. It seems like they don’t for some reason” (Participant 26). For many, developing the fisheries is a pathway for having the land claim agreement upheld, an opportunity to create a fishery more in line with Inuit life “southern rules should be made for southern areas, and northern rules should be made for northern areas... What

you're doing is not coinciding with Inuit ways, so you should change it.... I think that's meant to be the point of a land claim, right? (Participant 18).

Interviewees frequently frame development not only as an opportunity for increased capacity or efficiency, but also importantly as a way of advancing Nunatsiavut's influence and control over fisheries management in the region. For example, when discussing the need for monitoring and enforcement on the water, Participant 13 said "I honestly think, since Labrador land claim agreement got ratified, we're under self-government. We should be in a position now to take those programs down and say, here. We're sending our own people off".

### **Food security and food sovereignty**

Many participants spoke about the need for fisheries to contribute to food in the region. I distinguish between food security and food sovereignty here to demonstrate that participants saw the fisheries both as an avenue for increasing their economic development and food purchasing abilities (generally referred to as "food security"), and as a tool for gaining increased control over the means to produce and manage culturally significant foodstuffs (known as "food sovereignty") (Jarosz, 2014)

Char is seen as important for feeding community members, either through the commercial industry or as a subsistence harvest. Food sovereignty conversations centred around char, salmon, and trout, because those species are harvested by community members for personal consumption, and participants generally agreed that the traditional harvest should take precedence over the commercial industry. "I think the big thing is that if there's a choice between having a commercial fishery or reduced food fishery, food fishery is number one, because people will want to catch their food. So, you've got to have enough for a food fishery,

and then enough to make a viable commercial fishery.” (Participant 5). The commercial char fishery also contributes to the nutritional economy of the region when the Nunatsiavut Government purchases the majority of the char and redistributes it through the community freezer program for those who are unable to get out on the land to catch their own.

The Nunatsiavut Government also occasionally provides shrimp and crab through the community freezer program, so the commercial fisheries contribute directly to food security for community members. Food security and nutrition are major concerns in Nunatsiavut communities. As noted by Bowers et al. (2020), a 2014 study found that 59.3% of the population was food insecure, while in the same year the same measurement Canada-wide was 22%. According to Participant 8, some of the char bought by the Nunatsiavut Government is also traded with fishers in southern Labrador for Atlantic cod, which gives the community freezer program some variety. All of the AngajukKâks interviewed emphasized the importance the community freezer has for the communities. According to participants, both the commercial and subsistence char fisheries play an important role in providing traditional country food to communities.

Where the char fishery has an immediate and obvious cultural value, other fisheries also help to support access by providing the funding necessary to keep char fishing alive. Despite the fact that the char fishery is a net loss every year, Participant 1 explained that the Torngat Coop uses profits from their offshore shrimp licences to fund char processing, a demonstration of how stakeholders in the commercial fishing industry recognizes and prioritizes cultural value. It is also one of many ways all the fisheries in

Nunatsiavut are interconnected, and each contribute to the system of Labrador Inuit values.

### **Stewardship**

Some interviewees shared how participating in the fishery provides them with an opportunity to care for and learn about the land and marine environments, an important aspect of Labrador Inuit culture. Many participants voiced concerns about what they have seen while out on the water, including reports about the ice breaking up sooner, leading to longer fishing seasons, concerns about the crab, turbot and char stocks, concerns about changes in the seal and bird populations, observations of new species coming up in the nets (such as red fish and wolffish), and about erosion in the bays. Several participants discussed the need for closing areas, or shortening the seasons, and more discussed the need for catch logs and observers to maintain healthy fish stocks. There was a sense that being on the water was not just a chance to collect important information about the state of the fisheries, but about the ecosystems more broadly: “It’s not just for the fish; it’s for the fish eaters – the birds, seals – how it affects the ecosystem there” (Participant 17). Participation in the fishing industry expands and deepens participant knowledge of the marine environment and gives harvesters opportunities to practice and learn on the water, which participants expressed was an important aspect of their cultural identity.

### **3.5 Discussion**

Given the information shared in the interviews, I find that the commercial fishing industry is tied to Labrador Inuit culture. In this section, I discuss how the values identified in this study represent a potential paradigm shift for northern fisheries governance.

### 3.5.1 Values as a System

Although the results above show values as distinct entities, in fact the values are connected in a network of dependencies. This organization was done through the analysis to identify the ways that values are communicated, but it does not represent the ways that these values nurture and support other values in the network. It is noteworthy that an initial attempt to organize the values into instrumental, relational, and intrinsic values (a common value type used in identifying values) was set aside when it was found that no value sat comfortably within one single category. What matters for our purposes is therefore not what “type” of value each is, but that it is expressed for the purpose of imagining a desirable future (Chan et al., 2018). Many values presented as a material gain, either for an individual or a community, but also as a non-material value, one that supports traditional activities, connection to culture, or a sense of wellbeing (Wilson et al., 2019).

For example, many participants emphasized the importance of employment as an economic driver on the coast. While employment/income may at first seem like an instrumental value, for many, employment in and of itself is less beneficial than the type of employment that commercial fisheries offer, namely that it is seasonal and on the water. Seasonal employment allows community members to get out on the land during the off seasons, leaving them plenty of time to harvest country food and visit culturally and spiritually significant places. In turn, this time on the land is an opportunity to make observations about the ecosystem, such as how the ice is forming in fall, or breaking up in the spring. It is a chance to monitor indicator species like seals and sea birds. These monitoring opportunities give them insight into the fishing season to come, and the



ability to practice those observational skills and to learn on the land is an important aspect of maintaining a strong connection to Inuit culture and Knowledge. This interconnection between the values is of key importance to the operation of any single value. I argue therefore that the values are a complex and interdependent system which should be seen as more than the sum of its parts.

To represent this system of values, I have drawn on the work of Wilson et al., (2019), who depicted the relationship between material and non-material values of water resources for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation. Material and non-material values communicate with one another, and nurture people through their interdependence. Figure 3.1 is based on their work. It depicts the material and non-material values identified in the analysis. In my version of the figure, I have added a third concentric circle that represents the expression of these values as care and kinship, community autonomy, and belonging to and identifying with one's community. These are the deeper themes that emerged from the aggregated codes in the analysis. They represent a set of overarching Labrador Inuit values from which fisheries-specific values emerge. I provide more information on these themes below. The lines in the diagram are porous to show that no value belongs squarely in either category, and the arrows demonstrate how these values commune back and forth.

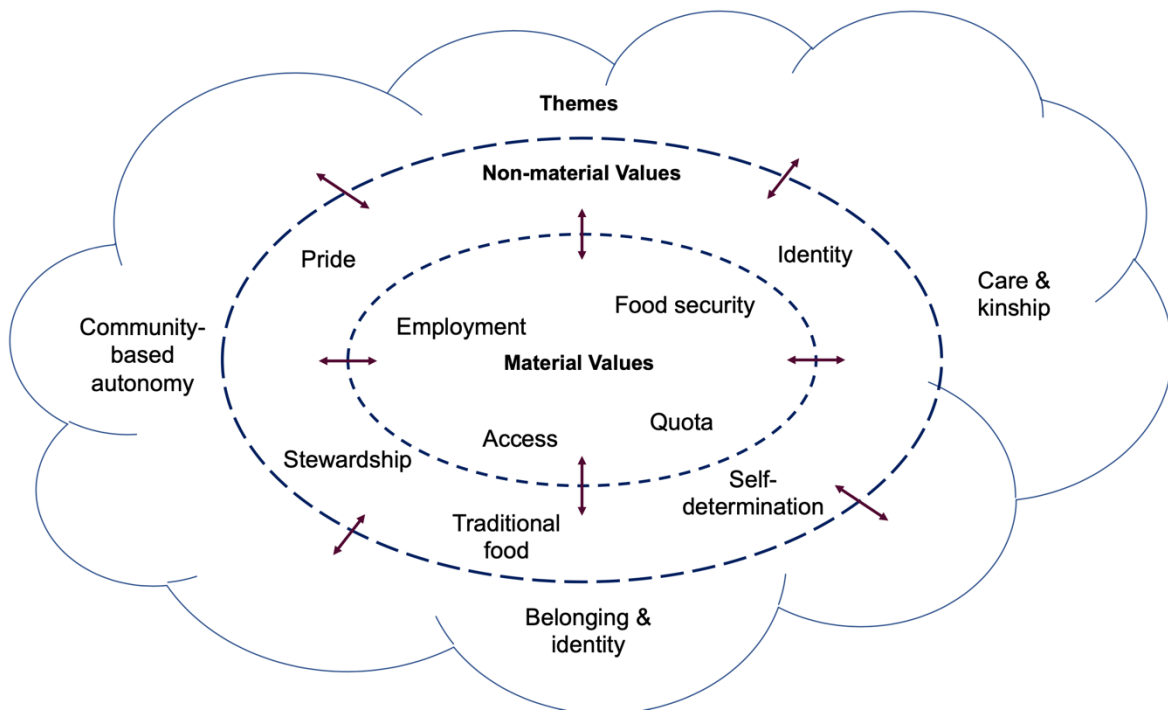


Figure 3.1: Values held by Labrador Inuit in connection to the commercial fishing industry, as identified through interviews with harvesters, fisheries businesses, and managers.

### 3.5.2 The fisheries support a Labrador Inuit ethic of care and kinship

During the interviews, managers and harvesters consistently prioritized the wellbeing and advancement of communities. Many see their participation in the fisheries as an opportunity for cultural rejuvenation by connecting to a traditional activity, bringing pride and dignity through work, and learning out on the water. Nunatsiavut fisheries managers all speak about their work almost as a higher calling, that they invest time and energy in the fisheries because it is a way of caring for and nurturing Labrador Inuit communities. Several harvesters also speak with pride about the observations and data gathering they do while out fishing. Being out on the water for months at a time over the decades gives them the opportunity to observe and record environmental changes. They express concern for the long-term sustainability of the fisheries and share valuable information about the whole biophysical system.

This care for community through the fisheries resembles what Whyte and Cuomo (2017) refer to as an Indigenous ethic of care, which encompasses the diverse ways that Indigenous Peoples connect the “importance of caring for other human beings as a way of caring for nature” (Whyte and Cuomo, 2017, p. 237). Participants are motivated by a responsibility to care for their communities and their marine ecosystems, and the fisheries are viewed as a tool for caretaking. A plurality of organizations and individuals see themselves as participating in a collective leadership that helps direct the flow of benefits back to communities and encourages Labrador Inuit culture to flourish (Spiller et al., 2020).

Where they have jurisdictional authority, Nunatsiavut fisheries organizations already enact caretaking practices for both human and non-human communities. For example, the Torngat Coop uses profits from offshore vessels to fund the char fishery (Foley et al., 2017), thereby providing opportunities to maintain a culturally significant fishery and provide an important country food for communities. The TJFB runs data collection projects that support fisheries management and conservation in the region (Cadman et al., 2022; Snook et al., 2018). But Nunatsiavut fisheries organizations do not have control over their adjacent resources to the extent that they can change the extractive and profit-driven focus of Canadian fisheries management in the region (Kourantidou et al., 2021).

Whyte and Cuomo (2017) place care directly into the public realm, as a communal act that focuses on the connections and interdependencies between humans, non-human others, and future generations. In this sense, care requires an understanding of the relationships between all elements of the system. Indigenous Peoples in Canada have a right to fish, but as Reid et al. (2022) point out, that right is about much more than fish as a source of food: it is about learning

and teaching place-based values and protecting and enhancing Indigenous knowledge systems on the water, extending those connections, and caring for community:

“We’ve always coexisted. Even the people who go commercial fishing, ... they would take their family out fishing. You know?... And say [name], he went fishing to make a living but also at the end of the day he went fishing to have fun with it, with the thing and for his own family. It coexists with the fishing.”

(Participant 17)

The values expressed in this research, such as employment, community development, food security, and stewardship, are expressions of care for Labrador Inuit culture and wellbeing.

### **3.5.3 The fisheries are a part of Labrador Inuit identity**

During the interviews, participants discussed the significance of the fisheries for Nunatsiavut, the impact fisheries have on their lives, and the assets that keep them participating in the fisheries. From these conversations, it is clear that commercial fisheries are a core part of participants’ identity, cultural heritage, and personal histories.

The relationship between commercial fishing and Labrador Inuit culture is not something that can be over simplified. Some participants shared that the fact that the commercial fisheries have been operating for hundreds of years and have long been a major economic driver in the region as being significant for cultural heritage. For others, it is through growing up in families that fished in the commercial char and salmon fisheries out in the bays during the summer that ties them to the fishery. For others, participation in the industry itself is not a part of their identity, but the ways that participation in the fisheries support access to cultural activities are important for community wellbeing. The intricacies and difficulties of Inuit identity are beyond

the scope and capabilities of this paper. My aim here is not to point to a universal understanding of Inuit culture. Rather, I wish to show that Inuit culture is not at odds with modern, commercial activities like fishing, and vice versa. In fact, commercial activities have been embraced in order to enrich and expand Indigenous cultures (Snook, 2022; Procter, 2016). The species and technologies may have changed over time, but that does not lessen the connections between Labrador Inuit and the marine environment, nor does it diminish the capabilities of Inuit governance systems to manage their adjacent resources.

The long term and varied connections that participants have to the commercial fishing industry means that there is a wide range of expertise on the history and management of the fisheries. This, in turn, means that contemporary operational management of commercial fisheries is spread over several organizations. While the Nunatsiavut Government holds a great deal of legal authority through ownership of the licences and consultations with DFO, the Torngat Cooperative also holds licences, and runs the processing plants for the region. The Nunatsiavut Group of Companies owns licenses as well and strategizes how they should be used to best benefit the region. The Torngat Joint Fisheries Board runs multiple important research programs in the region and provides policy recommendations to DFO based on scientific data and community needs, as mandated in the LILCA. In practical terms, this means that management and political power are spread over multiple jurisdictions. A Labrador Inuit model for fisheries governance may require that Canadian governments respect flattening the hierarchical power structure to create greater equity for multiple voices and expertise to participate in decision-making and strategizing.

As Indigenous Peoples have worked towards self-determination, they have focused on gaining control over the things that influence their quality of life and wellbeing (McMillan and

Prosper, 2016). The story of commercial fisheries in northern Labrador is inextricably tied to Labrador Inuit political mobilization and opposition to colonial forces. The Labrador Inuit Association recognized commercial fisheries as key for Labrador Inuit wellbeing during the land claims negotiation process (Andersen, 2009; Foley et al., 2018). This posits a new conceptual model for commercial fisheries, one that frames the industry as having value beyond its material dimensions, and includes political self-determination and agency (N. J. Wilson et al., 2019). Managers see the fisheries as a way of establishing political control over adjacent resources, and of creating more vibrant, and healthy communities. The connection of Labrador Inuit to the commercial fishing industry makes it an important site to negotiate and build self-determination for Nunatsiavut.

#### **3.5.4 Labrador Inuit resilience and resurgence**

The results of this study demonstrate the extent to which the commercial fisheries offer an avenue for a continuation and even proliferation of Labrador Inuit values. Despite the long history of oppression by settlers, Labrador Inuit have, at least internally, managed to continue relating to the fisheries and the land in ways that uphold their cultural values. This is an example of the resilience and resourcefulness of Labrador Inuit, who have always been able to adapt to new environments, new social and physical situations. Kaplan (2012), looking at 200 years of Inuit history, calls flexibility and ingenuity the “defining characteristics” of Labrador Inuit (p. 28), a testament to the resilience of this people through time (Woollett, 2007).

The closure of the salmon and char fisheries in the 1990s were deeply felt in northern Labrador, and many of the participants spoke in their interviews about the loss of a more traditional way of life. In the same breath, however, they would speak about the current fisheries' potential to carry on providing some of those same benefits to current and future generations. As Participant 10 put it: "The species have changed, but the livelihood hasn't".

This ability to take an ostensibly colonial management arrangement and use it to support the continuation of Inuit culture is not unique to Nunatsiavut's commercial fishing industry. Procter (2012) chronicles the long history of attempted federal and provincial control over the harvesting of terrestrial species across Nunatsiavut, highlighting a desire to control what was considered traditional and what was not. Labrador Inuit rejected this kind of cultural essentialism that would restrict their ability to harvest, and managed to open some space into the LILCA that would allow the Nunatsiavut Government power to develop harvesting support programs, which helped them to establish the community freezer program (Procter, 2012). Further afield in Nunavut, Dowsley & Wenzel (2008) found that Inuit in Nunavut ran into conflict with polar bear managers when their knowledge and relationship to the polar bear contradicted management measures. Dowsley (2010) found that local hunting organizations were still managing the harvests according to their own value system, prioritizing long term upkeep of the human-bear relationship.

Tuck and Yang (2012) drawing on Wolfe (1999) argued that colonialism is a structure, not an event. It is a process that reshapes and reframes connections and understandings of land and relationships. Understanding colonialism as a structure does not absolve individual actors who work within it and perpetuate its harms. All of us who are involved in fisheries research and policy are implicated by this system, and we have responsibility to push back and make changes

in our own work to fix these issues (Silver et al., 2022). However, in understanding colonialism as a system-level problem, this research also points to the ways that fisheries research and policy will require fundamental, structural changes to their epistemological, ontological, and methodological basis if they are to create just fisheries governance.

The process of colonialism is unfinished, and unable to swallow up other knowledge systems because Indigenous Peoples continue to resist colonialism (L. B. Simpson, 2014, 2017). These studies illuminate the resilience and strength of Indigenous cultures and provide a window into an alternative paradigm for environmental governance.

### 3.6 Conclusion

This study revealed a complex system of values that motivate fish harvesters, managers, and other stakeholders who participate in the fishing industry in Nunatsiavut. These values are embedded in a Labrador Inuit perspective on the fishery and provide some insight into what self-determined fisheries governance would look like in Nunatsiavut. Rather than a list of independently held values, these interviews demonstrated a collective understanding of what the fisheries provide to communities, and the responsibilities born by the communities in return (Todd, 2018). The values are culturally and ontologically distinct from the current colonial governance system in place to manage the fisheries. Importantly, the institution currently in control of fisheries governance, DFO, has jurisdiction over many more facets of marine management, including marine spatial planning, protected areas, shipping, and science. The conclusions drawn in this research would have implication across multiple sectors, and



equally, changes in those areas would affect fisheries. While this research examines values in fisheries governance alone, expanding this research to understand more of the context for marine management would be instructive.

In response to centuries of harm to Indigenous communities, and through growing recognition of the important and valuable science done by Indigenous communities, many scientists and policy makers have called for better inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in governance, and more participation from Indigenous voices in decision-making. This study emphasizes that “inclusion” and “participation” do not adequately address the systemic and institutional barriers that face Indigenous peoples in having their values and priorities properly addressed (Lalancette, 2017; Zuercher et al., 2022; Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2021). The gap between “box ticking” consultation practices and meaningful, decolonial, and just engagement requires restructuring governing institutions to correspond more closely with the knowledge systems and specifically here the values that, in part, make up that knowledge system of rights holders.

In 2012, Jeff Cornthassel wrote that Indigenous resurgence and decolonization would require that Indigenous communities “envision life beyond the state” (p. 89). Truly transformational change in fisheries will require that communities rebuild governance institutions to reflect their values and knowledge systems. Commercial fishing, though it may be regarded as a “modern” or Western activity is not at odds with Inuit culture, and in fact supports the interviewees to maintain that connection. Particularly because Labrador Inuit have identified commercial fisheries as an important aspect of their social wellbeing, it is an important space to consider future governance that is led by Inuit. By identifying and articulating a system of values

held by Labrador Inuit in relation to the commercial fishing industry, I hope to illuminate some priorities for the future led by and for Inuit.

# **Chapter 4: Using Target Seeking Scenario Planning in support of Inuit-led fisheries governance**

## **4.1 Introduction**

In Inuit Nunangat, the Inuit homelands in the country currently known as Canada, Inuit have long advocated for the importance of not just being involved in research, but of driving the research agenda for the benefit of Inuit. The National Inuit Strategy on Research (NISR) outlines five priority areas to facilitate Inuit self-determination in research: advance Inuit governance, enhance ethical conduct, bring funding into alignment with Inuit priorities, develop Inuit sovereignty over data resources, and build capacity within Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018a). The concerted effort of Inuit to build self-determination in research has led to a proliferation of new projects that involve Inuit as leaders and partners and are directed towards Inuit needs (e.g., Carter et al., 2019; Held, 2020; Henri et al., 2020; Snook et al., 2018). This in turn has required new participatory approaches to research that are informed by Inuit values and priorities (Ferrazzi et al., 2019; Pedersen et al., 2020).

Scenario planning is an increasingly popular framework to consider potential and desirable futures (IPBES, 2016). It is possible to create highly participatory future planning processes that incorporate the perspectives, beliefs and values of resource users (Harmáčková et al., 2022). Scenario planning can be used to predict how change might affect a system, so that managers or practitioners can build more resilience into infrastructure or decision-making processes (Harrison, 2021), or to imagine ideal futures, so that management can work towards

desirable outcomes (Tevis, 2010). This second approach is known as “target seeking” scenario planning. Despite the growing interest in participatory scenario planning, however, it remains underutilized in the Arctic and has limited engagement with Indigenous communities (Flynn et al., 2018; Oteros-Rozas et al., 2015)

In 2019, a group of fisheries stakeholders in Nunatsiavut, an Inuit land claim area in Labrador, identified a need to develop a vision of the future of commercial fisheries for the region. This group includes the Nunatsiavut Government, the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, and the Torngat Co-op, who decided to lead a target seeking scenario planning process that would help them co-develop a set of objectives to help guide decision-making options for a future determined by and for Labrador Inuit.

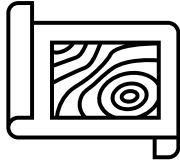
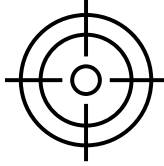
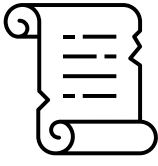
Through this target seeking scenario planning process, we encountered challenges and opportunities and learned important lessons on using the target seeking scenario planning method for self-determination over natural resources. I report on the findings from this case study to reflect on our experience applying this method in practice and consider broadly the strengths and weaknesses of participatory scenario planning for Indigenous governance. In doing so, I acknowledge that many Indigenous knowledge systems and governance regimes around the world have been repressed through colonial violence, and Indigenous Peoples are working to reclaim their rights to their lands and waters, and to natural resource management. As part of that process of reclamation, some are looking to build governing regimes beyond current colonial structures. This paper provides some reflections on one potential framework for articulating Inuit-led futures.

## 4.2 Scenario Planning

Scenario planning (also known as scenario analysis/development/building) is a framework for imagining potential futures of a given region, resource, or ecosystem to develop strong policy and management measures (Amer et al., 2013; Blythe et al., 2021; Martin et al., 2022). Scenarios are potential or imagined states of a system, and are described in order to reduce uncertainty about the future of that system (Birkmann et al., 2015). Scenario planning is often used in resource management and development because it provides an opportunity for large groups with diverse expertise and interests to navigate decision-making around contested spaces (Kiatkoski Kim et al., 2022). Increasingly, researchers are employing participatory approaches to scenario planning, frequently involving input from stakeholders, such as Indigenous rights holders, resource users and subject experts, who help to bring a wide variety of perspectives and priorities to the visioning process (Freeth & Drimie, 2016; Wollenberg et al., 2000).

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) identifies 3 different types of scenario planning: exploratory, target seeking, and policy review scenario planning (Martin et al., 2022). We outline the basic format for each of these approaches below, and in Table 4.1.

**Table 4: Three types of Scenario Planning**

	<b>Exploratory</b> 	<b>Target Seeking</b> 	<b>Policy Review</b> 
<b>Approach</b>	Exploratory	Normative	Evaluative
<b>Methods</b>	Identify drivers through literature reviews, expert interviews. Quantitative and/or qualitative modelling future scenarios	Soliciting stakeholder perspectives	Document review
<b>Output</b>	Multiple scenarios are developed based on drivers of change	An ideal scenario is developed based on what participants want	Existing policy is assessed for its relative ability to support objectives
<b>Outcome</b>	Managers develop the ability to anticipate changes to the environment	Participants identify potential pathways for achieving an ideal future	Possible policy interventions are identified
<b>Objective</b>	Increased resilience and adaptability for communities of practice, added transparency and participation in decision-making	An articulation of an end point for future resource development for improved collaboration and empowerment of resource users in decision-making.	An evaluation of the policy landscape and locate ways to adjust policy for improved outcomes

Exploratory scenario planning is currently the most common type of future planning in the literature. It involves the identification of significant drivers of change that will affect a given resource or ecosystem. Drivers include climate change, changes to traditional activities and harvesting practices, added pressures from evolving infrastructure, and socio-economic shifts (Carlsen et al., 2013; Enfors et al., 2008; Flynn et al., 2018; Harrison, 2021). These drivers form the basis of a series of scenarios or visions of potential futures. Managers can then use these

predictions to help them develop management protocols and decision-making practices that will make the resource or ecosystem more resilient to harm and adaptive to change (Birkmann et al., 2015). Exploratory scenario planning is often employed in complex and contested resource management situations because it helps to anticipate change, set the agenda for discussion, and focus decision-making by limiting the scope of possibilities (Harrison, 2021).

Target seeking scenario planning focuses less on anticipating possible futures, and more on the articulation of an ideal vision for the future and the subsequent identification of the steps it will take to accomplish that future (Aguiar et al., 2020). While exploratory scenario planning has historically been the most popular approach for thinking about the future of social-ecological systems, target seeking planning has emerged as a growing interest in recent years. This is in part because of global targets like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set by the United Nations 2030 Agenda (Aguiar et al., 2020; Kok et al., 2018). Thus, where a particular future is desired, or at least desirable, target seeking scenario planning offers a more efficient approach.

While the SDGs can be considered a very high level and global effort to establish target scenarios, there are many examples of projects that focus on particular sectors and regions (Alcamo, 2008). In general, target seeking or anticipatory scenarios are developed first, and then actors are asked to work backwards to establish potential pathways to achieve that future, an activity often called “backcasting” (Paehlke, 2012; Sarkki & Pihlajamäki, 2019). While some proponents of this method use the phrases “target seeking” and “backcasting” interchangeably, others distinguish between the development of an ideal or desirable future, and the development of pathways, as two separate (though related) activities (Aguiar et al., 2020; Leach et al., 2010). In this paper I consider them as separate processes and focus specifically on the development of desirable futures.

Policy review scenario development is a retrospective study of existing policy documents, with the goal of evaluating policy interventions around a certain topic or resource to draw lessons for future management (Martin et al., 2022). This type of scenario development is less frequent than the other approaches. Policy review may follow the implementation of an exploratory or a target seeking intervention, in order to evaluate the effects of the exercise (IPBES, 2016).

Though these three forms of scenario planning have been separated into types, in practice the distinction between them is more ambiguous. For example, some exploratory approaches include an intermediary step for “scenario creation”, where a normative, desirable future state is established (Flynn et al., 2018). Similarly, exploratory and target seeking approaches often require a preliminary policy review to understand the historical and contemporary legislative context for intervention. In general, the tools and paradigms that are used to support scenario planning can be tailored to fit the needs of the particular policy context (IPBES, 2016).

#### **4.2.1 Target seeking scenario planning and participatory governance**

When it comes to using scenario planning for empowerment of resource user communities, this group of partner organizations saw target seeking as the first step in building a truly participatory process. I therefore focus the attention of this paper on processes for identifying desirable futures for a community of resource users. First, I outline *why* the identification of desirable futures is an essential component of participatory scenario planning.

Interest in participatory methods is on the rise as academics and practitioners recognize the importance of including affected and/or vulnerable communities in planning and decision-making (Leach et al., 2018; Oteros-Rozas et al., 2015), as well as communities with particular



rights over lands and resources. Inuit researchers and community leaders have provided ample guidance on how to engage in participatory research methods in ethical ways, and there are a great number of important works on ethical and responsible approaches to participatory research that non-Inuit researchers should follow when entering the Arctic. The *Aajiqatigiingniq* research methodology, for example, was developed in Nunavut by the Aqqiumavvik Society to help non-Inuit researchers approach research through culturally-relevant methods, ethical engagement, and relationship building (Ferrazzi et al., 2019). As previously mentioned, the NISR contains a number of important resources. This has led to a growth in successful research partnerships in the north (Carter et al., 2019; Henri et al., 2020; K. J. Wilson, 2022)

Participatory scenario planning, however, remains an underexplored practice for Inuit governance planning (Flynn et al., 2018). Target seeking scenario planning asks resource users, stakeholders, or members of the public to imagine an ideal future, thus allowing communities an opportunity to steer decision-making in ways that reflect their needs and priorities. Participants are asked “what future do we want, and how do we achieve it?” (Aguiar et al., 2020). As such, scenario planning may involve a discussion around what constitutes a “good life”, highlighting the needs and priorities of communities, and making the method useful for the development of just and equitable management measures (Amazonas et al., 2019).

As is always the case with participatory methods, *who* is engaged matters. To that end, some researchers may focus on engaging with subject matter experts to provide insight for plausible futures (Revez et al., 2020; Varho et al., 2016). Calls to democratize this approach by including non-experts and stakeholders have shown that a greater diversity of participants supports more creative problem-solving (Hussler et al., 2011). In a diverse group of stakeholders, individuals will have a variety of interests in the subject matter and will be affected differently

by the outcomes of a scenario – what is good for one may have negative consequences for another (Reed & Rudman, 2022), and indeed the same stakeholders might perceive the potential benefits of a scenario differently in different contexts (Reed et al., 2021). The inclusion of a governing authority can also affect the extent to which the process has practical implications. Rawluk et al. (2018) call for scenario planning that brings multiple decision-making authorities into dialogue with one another to encourage understanding and problem solving where trade-offs exist. The discussion of who is included in a scenario planning process is essential for the quality and influence of the outcomes.

Finally, the literature reflects the view that eliciting visions of the future also provides an opportunity to gain insight into contemporary conceptualizations of governance. By asking diverse groups of stakeholders to reflect on the current state of the system, and then to reflect on and often negotiate a better future, researchers uncover unspoken and underlying characteristics of the system, including assumptions about what institutions should be responsible for delivering on that future (Loring & Hinzman, 2018; Özden-Schilling, 2022). All these characteristics make scenario planning, and particularly target seeking scenario planning methods appear to be a useful tool for Indigenous Peoples who are working to move beyond current colonial structures of governance, and towards governance that reflects their values, cultures, and knowledge systems (Nikolakis, 2020).

Not everyone, however, sees futures-oriented research as positive for Indigenous governance. Some have warned that long term future planning initiatives run counter to Indigenous knowledge systems, and therefore rather than challenging colonial structures, futures research may further entrench a Western way of thinking about governance (Howitt, 2010; Suchet, 2002). Certain anthropological studies have pointed out that for Inuit, claiming

knowledge of the future is a futile, even hubristic, practice, and therefore governance emphasizes flexibility and adaptation in the face of uncertainty (Bates, 2007; Kaplan, 2012). To be culturally relevant and aid in Inuit self-determination, scenario planning projects must acknowledge this legacy. Where Indigenous Peoples have been involved in scenario development processes to date, they are generally included as one among many stakeholder groups, represented by community leaders such as councils, elders, and knowledge holders (Flynn et al., 2018; Oteros-Rozas et al., 2015). There is a need to reflect on whether scenario planning that is led by, and focused on, Inuit futures is a useful and appropriate approach for developing Inuit self-determination. In particular, it is essential that this work is requested, led, and owned by Inuit, as it was in this case.

## 4.3 Case Study: Nunatsiavut Commercial Fisheries

### 4.3.1 Background

In May 2019, a group of stakeholders in the Nunatsiavut commercial fishing industry assembled to discuss the state of the industry. In the room were members of the land claim co-management board, the Inuit government, and leaders of a fishing cooperative, all of whom agreed that the commercial fishing industry in Nunatsiavut has faced barriers to long term planning and that collective, strategic planning would be necessary to move the industry forward for the benefit of Nunatsiavut Inuit. This group partnered with university researchers to undergo a visioning process to identify a desirable future for the Nunatsiavut commercial fishing industry; a future that is Inuit-led and proactive, rather than colonially-led and reactive (Tuck & Fine, 2007)

The visioning process that the group underwent can provide important insights into the needs, values, and priorities of Labrador Inuit in commercial fisheries. Insofar as target seeking scenario planning asks participants to articulate an idealized future that is in line with culturally specific values, perspectives and priorities, this method may provide an opportunity for Indigenous rights holders to think beyond the current colonial management systems and imagine a self-determined future. I reflect on the process we underwent to better understand the role that target seeking scenario planning might play as an emancipatory tool towards self-determination for Inuit.

The Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement (LILCA) was ratified in 2005, recognizing the lands and waters on the north coast of Labrador, Canada as the traditional territory of Inuit, and naming the new region Nunatsiavut (*Our Beautiful Land* in English). Fishing and marine harvesting have always been culturally, economically, and socially significant activities for Labrador Inuit, who have relied on the coastal and marine environment around Nunatsiavut for generations (Cadman et al., 2023). There has been a commercial fishing industry in the region for 200 years, and during that time Labrador Inuit have participated in multiple commercial fisheries, harvesting marine mammals, anadromous species, pelagic species, groundfish, and shellfish.

Today, Nunatsiavut beneficiaries harvest from five main commercial fisheries: Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*), Snow crab (Putjotik, *Chionoecetes opilio*), Northern shrimp (kingupvak, *Pandalus borealis*), Arctic char (IKaluk, *Salvelinus alpinus*), and Icelandic scallop (Matsojak, *Chlamys islandica*). The fisheries management regime is complex and involves multiple jurisdictions, in part because of the long history of fishing and evolving colonial policies. Through the LILCA, a fisheries co-management board was formed under

Article 13.11. The TJFB is responsible for making recommendations to the federal minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) on the conservation and management of fisheries within the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LILCA, 2005). The Nunatsiavut Government, the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies, and the Torngat Co-op all have powers and responsibilities within the fisheries sector.

Labrador Inuit who are beneficiaries under the LILCA can participate in these fisheries in several ways. Most significantly, the Nunatsiavut Government holds communal commercial licenses in Snow crab and Northern shrimp, and beneficiaries can apply for a portion of the quota under those licenses. The Nunatsiavut Group of Companies, an institution designed to stimulate Nunatsiavut's economy, also hold additional Snow crab quota, which it gives to the Nunatsiavut Government to distribute. As a cooperative, the Torngat Co-op owns licenses for offshore Northern shrimp, and operates fish processing plants in the communities of Makkovik (processing Snow crab and turbot) and Nain (processing char and scallop), which employ several community members during the fishing season. Very few beneficiaries own individual commercial fishing licenses, and until recently most had to lease boats from the south to come up to the region to fish their quota in exchange for a percentage of the profits. The inability to invest in one's own boat and gear stemmed in part from the fact that quota allocation from the Government to beneficiaries was done annually, meaning the quota did not act like an asset that would allow beneficiaries to seek out loans in support of a fishing enterprise development. In 2021, the Nunatsiavut Government changed the policy to a multi-year quota designation process to give beneficiaries an asset with which to secure the capital needed for them to purchase boats (Nunatsiavut Government, 2021).

The participatory scenario planning method allowed us to make some significant strides in articulating a desirable future for the commercial fishing industry in Nunatsiavut. While scenario planning has become an increasingly popular method for articulating possible or desirable futures, the literature lacks reflective reporting on the process (Nalau & Cobb, 2022). In participatory research it is often necessary to adjust the objectives, methods, and outputs of the research program in response to input from participants (Malmberg et al., 2022), and therefore it is particularly important to provide reflexive reporting of the process to contribute experiential knowledge to the literature (Franco-Trigo et al., 2019; MacLeod et al., 2021).

Scenario planning in an Indigenous context has unique features that go beyond regular “participatory” methods. This is because Indigenous Peoples hold unique rights and responsibilities on their traditional territories, including particular treaty and constitutional rights of access and use of natural resources which will affect the way that the visioning process progresses (Coombes et al., 2011; Latulippe & Klenk, 2020). Importantly, the colonial history of Canada must also inform partner-driven research between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners as it affects power dynamics and trust within the group, as well as how Indigenous knowledge is taken up into governance. While the methods employed for this scenario planning process largely fulfilled the goals of the project, we faced some issues that limited the effectiveness of the project. As part of the partner-based research process, and in the spirit of working towards reconciliatory relationships in research, it is essential to reflect on lessons learned during the research and the ways in which the method could be improved in the future (Held, 2020).

I reflect on our experience with a participatory scenario planning process through the dual lenses of “participatory” and “partner-driven” research to better understand the

effectiveness of this method for eliciting collectively held visions of the future, and the suitability of the process for Indigenous governance planning. To do this, I explain our process for creating the research design, our methods of data collection and analysis, and highlight some key results from the study in order to discuss the strengths and limitations of target seeking scenario planning at each stage of the research process.

#### **4.3.2 Before Beginning: Data Sharing Agreement**

We started this partner-driven process with a data sharing agreement to outline the terms of the relationship before the work began. Partner-driven research is one way of meeting the guidelines set out in the National Inuit Strategy on Research (2018). The guide outlines how researchers must engage with Inuit throughout all stages of their research: project design, data collection, data analysis and reporting. Each phase must be carefully considered to promote ethical behaviour, authentic relationships, and trusted results. Before the project itself was discussed, we acknowledged that power was distributed disproportionately among the group, which was a potential source of conflict. To help level the power dynamic among the partners, we created a data sharing agreement (see Appendix 1). Notably, data are owned by all three partner organizations, and will be stored at the Torngat Secretariat office following the completion of the project. Project partners are authorized to use the data for outputs, and any interested party can request access, with discretion to share being held by the Secretariat. Research ethics approval was received through the Nunatsiavut Research Advisory Committee and Dalhousie University. Data collection was delayed due to COVID19 but began in July 2020 in accordance with Nunatsiavut's COVID guidelines.

The creation of a data sharing agreement was essential because data use and governance is a central issue in research undertaken by Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. There is a long history in Canada of harmful and extractive research that has disproportionately benefitted settler researchers and has disregarded the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018a; Kovach, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2014). McGrath (2018) refers to this practice as “mining for treasure”, where “crude” information is unearthed from the community and “refined” by the researcher into something precious, without returning anything of value to the community (McGrath 2018, 342-343). Frequently Indigenous Peoples have no control over data once it has been collected, which can leave them dependent on the state and perpetuates the colonial project (Carroll et al., 2019). This has prompted Indigenous activists and non-Indigenous allies to call for the “repositioning of authority over Indigenous data back to Indigenous Peoples” (Carroll et al., 2019, p. 1). Data sharing agreements like this one can be used to formalize partnership arrangements to ensure that data sovereignty is upheld both during the research process, and once the research has ended.

### **4.3.3 Research Design**

The project (hereafter referred to as the Visioning Project) emerged from several years of conversations among members of the partner organizations, the TJFB, the Nunatsiavut Government’s Department of Lands and Natural Resources, and the Torngat Co-op. Members of these organizations recognized a need to consider the long-term future of the fishing industry. These project partners recruited academic researchers including myself to facilitate a Visioning Project for the group.



The goals of the Visioning Project were largely established through a series of in-person and online meetings and workshops between May and November 2019. The group that met for these initial brainstorming sessions included representatives of the partner organizations, as well as visiting researchers from Dalhousie University. During those discussions, it became apparent that the vision itself was only part of what motivated partner organizations to participate. The group of stakeholders is diverse, and the partners knew that there would be some disagreement about the outcomes. Instead, they saw the Visioning Project as an opportunity to enhance communication, and provide insight into the way that other organizations, as well as communities, conceived of the fisheries in Nunatsiavut. In this way, the process of coming together to create the vision was as important, if not more so, than the vision itself. The partners also recognized that creating a coalition of Nunatsiavut-based fisheries stakeholders would provide some political advantages. Thus, through these discussions, three goals for the Nunatsiavut Fisheries Visioning Project were identified:

1. To start a dialogue among the Nunatsiavut fisheries stakeholders to share information about their plans;
2. To identify areas of agreement and overlap that would support better strategic collaboration among the partner organizations; and
3. To create a long-term vision of the future that is based on the needs and priorities of Labrador Inuit.

The Torngat Secretariat drafted a project description detailing the framing and goals of the project based on these conversations, and all partners signed.

During these initial discussions, it was agreed that project partners would participate in the Visioning Project as interviewees. A list of names was created based on these discussions

centered on invitees to the TJFB's Annual Fisheries Workshop, which includes all designated fishers and fisheries managers in the region. The partners agreed that they wanted to extend participation to include the Nunatsiavut Government Department of Education and Economic Development, and the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies. These groups each hold a direct stake in commercial fisheries, either through personal investment, jurisdictional authority, or management responsibilities. The names of employees from these organizations who work on fisheries were added to the list. To a lesser extent, the project partners also wanted to receive feedback and insights from the broader Nunatsiavut communities and from the federal government. Partners recognized that hearing from a broad list of stakeholders would be strategic to their vision formulation. The names of federal government employees working in Nunatsiavut fisheries were added to the list.

Following these discussions, I created a list of potential participants and circulated it to the partners. Partners provided feedback and occasionally contact information, until a complete list of desired participants was approved by all partners. Thirty-seven people were contacted as potential participants, and 28 individuals agreed to be interviewed. A breakdown of participants in the process follows in Table 4.2. AngajukKâks are elected leaders of their communities and were asked to act as community representatives in the interviews. At least one fisher was interviewed for each species harvested commercially in the region. In 2021, there were a total of  $n=23$  people designated as fishers operating out of northern Labrador, and during this research we were able to speak to three quarters of them ( $n=17$ , with some overlap in Steps 1 and 2). While many participants have played multiple roles in the fisheries over their careers (for example, serving on the TJFB while also being a fisher), their occupation is listed here based on how they primarily identified themselves in the interviews.

**Table 5: Participants in the Visioning Project**

<b>Representative Organization or Occupation</b>	<b># of participants Step 1</b>	<b># of participants Step 2</b>
Nunatsiavut Government	5	5
Torngat Joint Fisheries Board	2	2
Torngat Co-op	2	2
Nunatsiavut Group of Companies	1	1
Fishers	11	12
Processing Plant Managers	1	0
DFO Employees	2	0
AngajukKâks	4	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>

During each stage of the process, the researchers executing the work returned to the group of partner organizations to present research design, preliminary findings, and planning for next steps. Project partners were asked to provide comments and feedback at multiple points during the year through partner meetings, public presentations, group emails, and private conversations. Through these interventions, researchers were able to gain new insights into the questions and concerns that affected managers. They were also made aware of emerging problems that provided insight for data analysis.

In addition to the partner feedback and consultation, the research questions, methods, and interim results were presented to the broader Nunatsiavut fisheries stakeholder community at the Annual Fisheries Workshop held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 2019, 2021 and 2022. These presentations were used to keep fishers in the region updated, and to invite comments or feedback on the process. How partners, university researchers, and fisheries stakeholders participated in each step of this process is outlined in Figure 4.1.

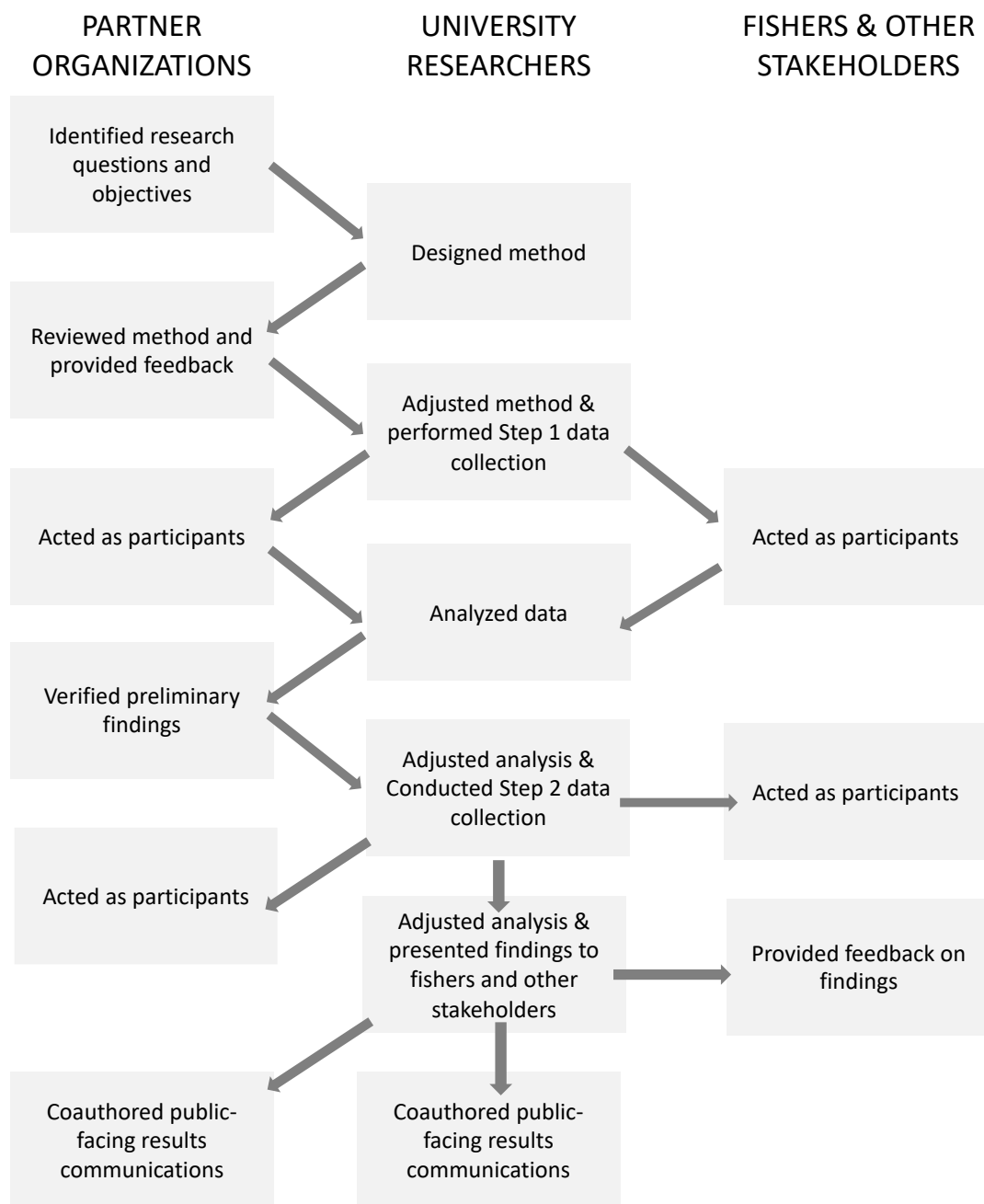


Figure 4.1: Contributions to the design and execution of the Visioning Project. “Partner Organizations” refers to the representatives from the TJFB, the Torngat Co-op, and the Nunatsiavut Government. “University Researchers” refers to the academic researchers who were invited by the partner organizations to facilitate the process. “Fishers and Other Stakeholders” refers to fishing designates, AngajukKâks, and other stakeholders who participated in the Visioning Project.

#### 4.3.4 Methods

The methods for collecting data for this Visioning Project were composed of three steps (Figure 4.2). The first round of data collection (Step 1) consisted of a semi-structured interview with all participants. Interview scripts were initially composed by academic facilitators, and then shared with project partners who provided feedback on the questions. The interviews focused on understanding the state of the commercial fisheries today, and asked participants to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the industry, as well as the role fisheries play in life.

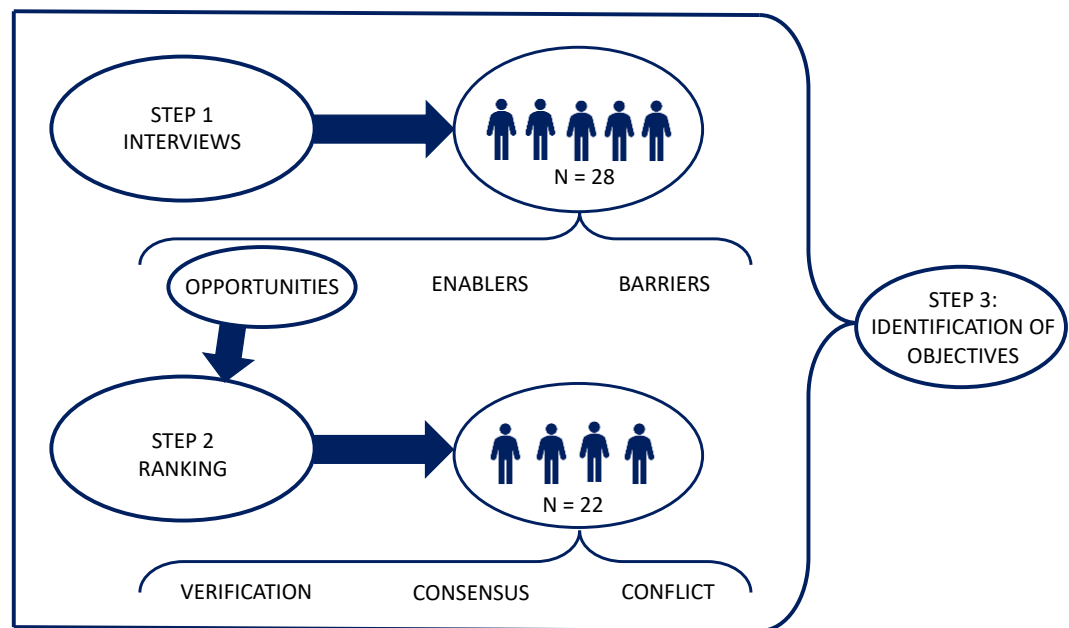


Figure 4.2: The process of data collection and analysis used in the Visioning Project. In Step 1, interviews were conducted with 28 participants. The data were analyzed using a deductive analysis to identify opportunities, enablers, and barriers. Opportunities identified in this analysis are then returned to 22 participants for Step 2, who were asked to rank the opportunities. This process is used to verify the preliminary results, induce dialogue between participants, and identify possible areas of conflict and consensus. In Step 3 all the data collected were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis to reveal high level objectives shared by the participants.

Following the completion of these interviews, I analyzed the data using a deductive template analysis to identify all the ideas for changes participants wanted for the industry. First, *a priori* broad categories drawn from the interview scripts to address the research questions (Crabtree & Miller, 1992; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2016). The following broad categories formed the basis for the codebook: opportunities for the future, enabling factors (strengths), and barriers they faced (weaknesses, threats). All statements coded as “opportunities” “enabling factors” and “barriers” were subsequently analyzed a second time and grouped into similar statements inductively. The opportunities identified in the analysis formed the basis of the second round of interviews.

In Step 2, a core group of organizational participants were asked to review the opportunities and discuss their applicability and appropriateness for Nunatsiavut’s commercial fisheries. Ten individuals from partner organizations participated in these interviews. Participants were asked to rank the statements in order of importance. During the ranking process, participants were asked to provide feedback on the results by commenting on the accuracy of the opportunity statements, the challenges they encountered through the process, and the rationale behind the order of ranking. Interviews were recorded and transcribed.

It was agreed that asking fishers and other interviewees from Step 1 to return for a second interview was an unnecessary burden for these participants. Instead, I brought the same opportunity statements to a Fisheries Workshop hosted by the Torngat Secretariat in March 2022. Acting as a facilitator, I walked through the project and the objectives with fishers who were attending the event, and they reviewed the statements and discuss them with me. Fishers ranked the statements by choosing their top 5 (most important) and bottom 5 (least important) statements and shared their thinking with me. I took handwritten notes of these conversations.

Statements that were ranked neither most important, nor least important, were interpreted to be neutral statements. Twelve fishers participated in this process. The data gathered through Step 2 were used to verify and refine the analysis from Step 1, and to gain insight into which potential points of consensus or conflict could arise during the Visioning Project.

The interview data from Steps 1 and 2, as well as the detailed notes from round 2 were compiled, and an inductive thematic analysis was performed by academic researchers to identify the overarching objectives held by participants for the future of the fishing industry, as well as similarities and differences across the group, which indicates spaces of consensus and conflict (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2016). Several stories told during the interviews were also pulled from the transcripts, which highlighted qualities or moments that participants had found “successful” – anything that made them feel pride, that they remembered fondly, or that helped them explain why fisheries were important to Nunatsiavut. These results were presented back to partners for feedback.

#### **4.3.5 Results**

In this section we present on the results of the scenario planning process. Through the data analysis of the interviews, a group of high-level objectives were found. Analysts also found several enablers and barriers identified by participants that they see as affecting the possibility of achieving those same objectives.

##### *4.3.5.1 High-level Objectives*

Through this iterative data collection process, twenty-eight opportunities were identified which provided some insight into the projects and prospects that participants saw for the region.

In the second round, they were asked to rank these opportunities, while discussing their strategies for prioritization. While individual rankings varied widely across the group, the accompanying interviews revealed an important finding for future planning: a shared set of high-level objectives for the commercial fisheries in the region. These high-level objectives are thriving communities, self-sufficient fishers, local governance and sustainable harvests.

### *Thriving communities*

The first objective identified through this process was thriving communities. Many participants reflected on the fisheries as a communal benefit that kept the communities alive, bringing “pride”, “life”, and “industry” to these coastal villages. The fisheries were seen as an important economic opportunity that can be leveraged in a space with limited opportunity for economic development:

“the fishery is the one renewable resource that we have decent quota, we have the ability, we have the capability. If we wanted to develop this industry, we could. ... by God, we do have quite a lot of fish” (Participant 7).

Participants expressed a desire for commercial fisheries to be a key driver for the rejuvenation of their communities. They viewed the fisheries as something that not only provides economic support, but also is embedded in Labrador Inuit culture and therefore should be a central feature of an independent, flourishing Nunatsiavut. For example, several participants celebrated the fact that commercial fisheries were contributing to food security in the region, providing access to wild food for community members:

“One of the biggest things that I’ve seen with the community freezer... it was Nunatsiavut Government who secured funding to bring in cod and scallops and



shrimp to the community. Oh my gosh, what a big hit that was. People were so happy to get that... Especially if we have programs that fill up our freezers with fish – it's wonderful. I know it's very expensive, but people eat it more, because they don't have access to it, and they can't afford to buy it" (Participant 14).

Fisheries are an important opportunity to bring wealth and health to the communities, and participants emphasized that these benefits should be maximized so communities can thrive.

### *Self-sufficient Fishers*

In addition to the desire for communal benefits, participants also expressed the importance of individual fishers, and the need to ensure that they were generally stable and active participants in the industry. For many fishers, a desirable future was described as one that gave them access to sufficient quota to invest in their own vessels, as well as financial, infrastructural, and logistical supports such as boat storage facilities, processing plants, and fisheries-specific financing. For fishers and managers alike, economic success from the fisheries would provide individual fishers with the stability and self-sufficiency they need to advance their enterprises. According to participants, financial gain through fisheries could be spread through the community via designate fishers, both because designates could hire community members as deck hands and keep the processing plants in business, and because the fishers would spend their income in the communities for a trickle-down benefit.

From the perspective of organizational participants, such as businesses and government, there was a desire to see motivated and invested fishers, who participated actively in developing the fisheries and took initiative to explore new potential avenues. Almost all participants spoke about the importance of fishers sharing information on an ongoing basis, both to provide timely

observations on the fishing season, as well as broader insights about fishers' wellbeing and their needs. A desirable future for participants is one where fishers benefit from the fisheries and collaborate on fisheries management and development.

### *Local governance*

As a pathway to gain economic success and cultural rejuvenation, many see the fisheries as an important place to advocate for increased political power for the people of Nunatsiavut. Many of the opportunities identified during the interviews were seen to contribute to greater autonomy for the region. The most popular statement in the ranking process was “federal and provincial governments should recognize the spirit of the land claim agreement”, which was ranked positively by 77% of participants (n=17). In the debriefing interviews, several individuals noted that the interpretation of the LILCA has precedence over other possible opportunities because “it’s all connected. If you [recognize the spirit of the land claim], then everything flows from there” (Participant 5). For participants, the intent of the LILCA was to establish a co-management board to provide balanced advice that would support Nunatsiavut’s ability to govern itself, but they found that the federal government through DFO was not respecting that role. Specifically, participants wanted the federal government to “give more weight” to the TJFB and their powers under the land claim agreement (Participant 1). Interview conversations concerning the LILCA indicate that most participants believe that fisheries policy is an important site for negotiation and interpretation of Labrador Inuit rights.

This was particularly true around rights to access adjacent fisheries. Another popular statement in the exercise was “Nunatsiavut-based organizations should lobby for increasing access to adjacent quota”, which was ranked positively by half of the participants, and only

ranked negatively once. In general, access to adjacent quota is seen as a way for the federal government of Canada to recognize Nunatsiavut's rights to their traditional territory.

### *Sustainable harvests*

Many participants spoke about the commercial fishery as an integral part of Labrador Inuit culture. Many of the fishers discussed how they began working in the commercial fishing industry as children with their parents, and their interest grew from there. They expressed a desire to see fisheries remain an integral part of Nunatsiavut life and livelihoods. Participants noted concerns for the longevity of the industry, citing several environmental challenges that may limit the possibility of sustainable harvests. People emphasized that they want the long-term future of the fishery to include healthy fish stocks and sustainable harvests, even at the expense of more profits. For example, one interviewee, in reference to the Snow crab fishery, said: "the close eye right now needs to be focused on the crab fishery to protect that species. If it's to take a couple of years' break to do some studying on that crab, so be it" (Participant 13); or this quote from a char fisher: "The resource is there. I mean, there's a lot of char there. If it was in trouble...I wouldn't be at it" (Participant 19). Participants emphasized that their priority is for healthy fisheries that can be sustained for years to come.

The research questions and research products from the scenario planning process emerged through strategic meetings between the partner organizations, which enabled the construction of a project with outcomes that would be highly relevant and useful in the region. The partner organizations identified three goals for the Visioning Project: to create a high-level vision of an ideal future, to commence a dialogue among the stakeholders, and to find out where

the stakeholders overlap on their needs and priorities for the future. The methods and process were developed based on these goals.

#### *4.3.5.2 Enablers and Barriers to Objectives*

Once the twenty-eight opportunities were laid out for participants, they were able to see the scope of ideas stakeholders had for improving the industry. This prompted many to discuss not only their priorities for advancing the industry, but also their personal experiences with trying to improve the industry. During the ranking exercise many participants ranked the opportunities based on how practical they believed the suggestions were. Those opportunities that were perceived as being more easily achievable were often ranked higher. Through these conversations, we identified several major gaps that participants felt would need to be filled for their idealized future to unfold. In this section, we describe the main enablers and barriers to achieve the high-level objectives that were identified by participants.

For many, creating Inuit-led commercial fisheries is complicated by the apparent lack of science being done to manage the fisheries well. Partners and fishers both shared the concern that there is insufficient data being gathered in the Labrador Sea adjacent to Nunatsiavut. Participants called for more monitoring of the species, particularly Arctic char and Snow crab, which people felt is being ignored. Participants were also interested in monitoring the fishing practices themselves, and several discussed the introduction of observers to the Snow crab fishery: “in order to keep the industry clean and whole, we need to monitor more of what the fishers are doing themselves, in terms of their gear, not losing driftnets, they're not taking too much softshell crab” (Participant 5). In general, participants connected their vision of a sustainable commercial fishing industry with strong monitoring.

Participants also believed that advancing greater self-determination for Nunatsiavut would require better collaboration between fisheries stakeholders. Better communication between the Nunatsiavut-based stakeholders would have positive results for fisheries management: “we [should] all get together and start discussing the fishery in Nunatsiavut. Cause at the end of the day, we’re all in this together, right? I don’t want to be doing something that doesn’t make sense for the overall fishery. Increased control over decisions...comes with collaboration and discussion” (Participant 16). Several participants noted that collaboration and communication has been a challenge to date, with some suggesting that this was due to a lack of capacity or interest. One participant suggested that “mandating” more relationship building might encourage better communication.

Lastly, almost all participants mentioned issues to do with the remoteness of Nunatsiavut. Nunatsiavut communities are only accessible by plane or by ferry (the latter is only available when there is no sea ice), with no roads to transport goods. This leads to high costs and logistical issues that make it more difficult for certain infrastructural requirements to be met. For fishers, remoteness requires more travel time to get to processing plants and to boat storage facilities. For license holders like the Torngat Co-op, it makes it more difficult to export their products. AngajukKâk participants mentioned that people have to travel far outside the region for training and could struggle to get financial support because there are no banks in the region. Several participants noted that the remoteness of the region makes it easier for federal and provincial regulators to disregard the unique needs of the region.

## 4.4 Suitability of Target Seeking Scenario Planning in Action

Indigenous Peoples are increasingly self-organizing to conduct research themselves to inform community development and decision-making (L. McGregor, 2018), and there is a need for frameworks to support that inquiry. The iterative nature of the method employed through this process provided significant opportunity for dialogue among the participants. Though many scenario planning activities follow set frameworks for carrying out data collection and analysis, a literature review by Nalau & Cobb, 2022 found that the majority of scenario planning researchers have used a more general approach without relying on a strict methodology to prompt future visioning. Particularly when it comes to participatory approaches, researchers have found that the process should be flexible and adjusted to meet the specific needs of the participants (Carlsen et al., 2013; Wesche & Armitage, 2014).

In this case, we designed each step of the process to emerge from findings of the previous step. For example, the interviews in Step 1 revealed the extent to which partners disagreed with or were unaware of the goals and priorities of other stakeholders in the region. Originally, the method had been designed to help isolate specific goals that would direct the next steps of the data collection. Instead, it was clear that more transparency and communication was necessary to help give partners a better idea of the scope and possibilities that might be available for the future of the industry. We introduced a ranking exercise for Step 2 to prompt the partners to think beyond their own operations and stimulate dialogue. This helped to clarify that partners did indeed agree on high level priorities for the industry, even if their approaches may differ. We found that this flexibility was essential throughout the project, and that iterative data collection supported this.

By engaging in this iterative method, participants were introduced to a conversation with their fellow stakeholders and asked to think through and provide feedback on all the possible directions for the future. Participants provided practical and empirical insights into commercial fishing operations in Nunatsiavut that can help to develop recommendations and policy decisions in the future. Involving stakeholders in the planning process is important for linking visions of possible futures with their implementation in real-world situations (Keseru et al., 2021). When completing the ranking exercise, many participants weighed their answers based on their perceived practicality – opportunities that were more likely to be achievable were ranked more highly. Through this process the group developed a high-level vision of the future that can be carried forward in strategic planning because it is informed by experience.

We found that for the partners, the fact that this project has practical implications for the lives and future of their communities prompted a high level of engagement and participation in the process. One partner called the project “one of the most important aspects of our work over the past four years” (Participant 2) and another asserted that the Visioning Project is “the only way to make effective change to the way the fishery of Nunatsiavut is managed” (Participant 6). This indicates the timeliness and importance of the research for local actors. The momentum of the Visioning Project provided an opportunity to channel a dialogue that had been happening in a haphazard fashion in the region. While in the past, Inuit governance may not have explicitly considered long-term future planning (Howitt, 2010), in this context Inuit partners approached the exercise with enthusiasm, as something that had been missing and needed for their work. By grounding the project in stakeholder objectives, we were able to instigate important dialogue for the fishing industry.

The vision that we created through this target seeking process is only the first step in a longer process. Some scenario planning exercises include “backcasting” as part of the activity, which involves creating potential pathways towards ideal visions of the future. This first step allowed the group to develop collectively held high-level objectives, and now it is important to consider how these goals can be implemented. Due to increased attention on Indigenous governance in the past few decades and the rise in new legal and political structures, Indigenous Peoples and communities are frequently preoccupied with the mammoth task of building entire new governance systems that combine their cultural governance regimes within a Western settler paradigm – performing administrative duties, conducting research, dealing with immediate issues, which can make long-term planning or making significant changes to existing policy very difficult (Snook et al., 2018; E. Wilson et al., 2018). Without providing practical suggestions for pathways, visioning exercises of this nature may simply be asking Indigenous partners to contribute to conceptual, scholarly outputs without providing concrete value in return, and thus perpetuating a cycle of extractive research (Mosurska & Ford, 2020). It is important that non-Indigenous partners emphasize practical outputs to ensure that the work is relevant and useful for local actors to move forward enacting the results. In the case of this Fisheries Visioning Project, the Indigenous partners who prompted and own the work will dictate how to move beyond the high-level objectives to practical action.

Though the project was focused on developing idealized versions of the future, many participants still struggled to think beyond practical, deficiency based and short-term needs. Loring & Hiszman (2018) argue that when asked to sort future priorities, participants may organize their thinking based on what is needed, rather than what is “right”. That means that depending on their cultural or philosophical outlook, participants may look for solutions that



solve the immediate problems, a “deficiency-driven” way of valuing opportunities or they may prioritize “dependency-driven” actions that need to happen quickly in order for more ideal opportunities to happen down the road (Loring & Hinzman, 2018). We would add to this that trust in the system played an important role in the ability to imagine ideal futures. Most participants prioritized those opportunities that were achievable by their fishing sector because they did not trust the Canadian federal or provincial systems to contribute to creating a future driven by Labrador Inuit. As Snook et al. (2022) note, a long history of dispossession of marine resources have made Inuit in Labrador wary of new policies and has limited the ability of stakeholders to imagine desirable futures.

To help prompt creativity and thinking beyond immediate needs, some scenario planning facilitators have used visual or narrative methods. A study by Amazonas et al. (2019), for example, used participatory drawing to elicit participant conceptualizations of the “good life” in the Tumucumaque Park and Eastern Paru River Indigenous Lands, Brazil, which they found helped participants to think outside of conventional framings and rely more on their intuition for what was most important. This was also significant for working across knowledge systems. Another team based in British Columbia created a video game to help participants visualize possible climate change futures (Dulic et al., 2016). They found that visualization and play were important elements in helping participants understand trade-offs and to force decisions. A plethora of arts-based and creative methods exist for eliciting desirable futures and would have been helpful for moving beyond the many barriers of the current system.

Critics of futures research with Indigenous communities warn that long term planning may be antithetical to Indigenous ways of knowing and to their role in the “management” of lands and resources (Howitt, 2010). Escobar (2002) warned that futures research was bound up

with the discourse of “development”, and therefore remains entrenched in Western colonial assumptions about the present and future. Further, some anthropologists working in the Arctic have suggested that Inuit dismiss the possibility of long term planning in the face of great uncertainty, opting instead for governance systems designed to allow for quick response and adaptation (Bates, 2007). These works help to frame futures research, including scenario planning, as a political activity that is always already bound up in a Western cultural paradigm, and that engaging with it cannot move a People beyond a settler colonial paradigm.

Rather than being a decolonial project, this target seeking scenario planning process is more accurately referred to as an anti-colonial act, in which imagining desirable futures opened space for fisheries stakeholders to articulate the next step towards self-determination. Over the past 60 years, Inuit have driven what Ken Coates referred to as a “comprehensive process of re-empowerment” (Coates, 2015, 28). This work has led to the establishment of land claim agreements across the north and the development of Inuit governance bodies including the Nunatsiavut Government and the TJFB. Implicit in this work is the fact that Inuit have long been imagining what their futures should look like (see, for example, Pedersen et al., 2020). This has been important work on the path to self-determination for Inuit, but the path is not yet complete. Natan Obed, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, has said: “if you dream about the way the universe fits, and you think about it as an Inuit universe...there’s no reason to think that we cannot make as big a difference today and tomorrow as our parents did creating land claims and creating representational organizations” (Obed, 2020, 30-31). The process of re-empowerment is ongoing, and target seeking scenario planning provided a useful framework to begin thinking about the next step down the path.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Target seeking scenario planning provided a useful framework for facilitating futures research in support of Inuit fisheries in Nunatsiavut. There is a need for research frameworks that can guide Indigenous and non-Indigenous research partners through co-designing and executing a process to articulate desirable futures for Indigenous Peoples. However, as many researchers have pointed out, the relative success of co-producing research depends heavily on the context in which it is carried out, and this remains true for target seeking scenario planning (Malmborg et al., 2022). Reflecting on the process that we undertook provides important, experience-based knowledge for future projects. Through the scenario planning process, we identified fundamental goals that can guide fisheries decision-making in the future, but our group was also successful in encouraging dialogue and knowledge exchange among diverse stakeholders, which lent rigour and relevance to the process and is an important step towards further collaboration. The elevation of Inuit voices makes this vision specific to the region and reframes fisheries as a tool for cultural and political rejuvenation in the region.

# Chapter 5: Imagining post-colonial futures for the Nunatsiavut fishing industry

## 5.1 Introduction

Stories are a powerful tool to create meaning by ordering and making sense of the world. Participatory scenario planning is a tool that is used to support groups of people in developing a story, not about what is or has been, but about what is possible in the future. Telling stories about the future can help groups to imagine new, possible worlds (McDowell, 2019), and stories can also help disparate groups of people to find agreement and build trust (Datta, 2018). In these ways, storytelling can be an empowering exercise, one that can support groups in articulating the futures they want. The stories about desirable futures that are shared through this process can also provide important insights into the values and priorities of the storytellers.

Between 2020 and 2022, a group of Inuit organizations chose to undergo a process to build a story about an ideal future. This group was made up of stakeholders in the commercial fishing industry in Nunatsiavut, a land claim in northern Labrador, Canada. Over the course of three years, using an iterative participatory scenario planning process, the group sought to imagine the future of fisheries in the region, asking “what would a future determined by Labrador Inuit look like for the commercial fishing industry?”. Facilitated by myself as a visiting university researcher, this group developed a vision for the future that is based on group consensus.

The resulting story is a vision of Nunatsiavut holding far greater influence and investment in the industry than it does today. Commercial fisheries are a socially and

economically important industry for the region, and the outcomes of management have weighty implications for the wellbeing of the communities (Snook et al., 2022). This vision demonstrates the ways that fisheries are interwoven with Nunatsiavut's way of life and has implications for their rights and responsibilities.

In this paper, I report on the outcomes of the visioning project and discuss how the final vision is bound up with a particular conceptualization of Inuit sovereignty. This group sees greater ownership and control over fisheries as an essential next step in building their capacity to thrive. In this vision, they imagine how Labrador Inuit knowledge and values can be folded into fisheries governance to support Nunatsiavut to achieve success according to its own cultural heritage. The participatory scenario planning process has furnished the Nunatsiavut fishing industry with an empowering story for their future that can also provide us with a deeper understanding of how a sovereign Inuit land claim might contribute to governance in the future.

## 5.2 Nunatsiavut Fisheries

Nunatsiavut is a land claim area based in northern Labrador, in what is currently known as Canada. The land claim was negotiated by the LIA, a representative group that was created in the 1970s for negotiating the LILCA and was dissolved upon the ratification of the final agreement in 2005. Nunatsiavut is comprised of the five communities of Nain, Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, and Rigolet. Inuit and their predecessors have lived on the north coast of Labrador for thousands of years and have been involved in the commercial fishing industry for hundreds. In fact, first contact between Europeans and Inuit was the advent of Basque whaling vessels entering the region in the 1760s. Since that time, Labrador Inuit have participated in many commercial fisheries, including everything from seal and walrus harvesting to salt cod,

char and salmon fisheries, to the present day shellfish and groundfish industries (Mills et al., 2018). Currently, there are five fisheries operating in the region: Snow crab (Putjotik, *Chionoecetes opilio*), Northern shrimp ((kingupvak, *Pandalus borealis*), Greenland halibut (turbot, *Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*), Arctic char (iKaluk, *Salvelinus alpinus*), and Icelandic scallop (Matsojak, *Chlamys islandica*). For many people in Nunatsiavut, the industry has strong ties to their history, livelihoods, and identity (Snook et al., 2022).

The LILCA established the Nunatsiavut Government, which manages a number of communal commercial licenses for the region. Quota from the licences is distributed to land claim beneficiaries who are qualified to harvest it. These beneficiaries are referred to as “designates”, and they manage enterprises to fish the quota. Some of these designates are able to afford their own vessels, but many are not (Foley et al., 2018). The LILCA also established the TJFB, which is the fisheries co-management board for the region, and housed under the Torngat Secretariat. The Board is comprised of appointees from the federal, provincial, and Nunatsiavut governments. Their role, according to the LILCA, is “the conservation of species or stocks” and the “management of fisheries in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area” (LISA) LILCA, 2005, 13.11.1). They conduct research and provide recommendations to the minister of DFO on these topics. Shrimp is processed outside of the region, largely at a plant in Charlottetown, NL, but Nunatsiavut has processing plants in Makkovik and Nain that have the capability to process turbot, Snow crab (Makkovik), and Arctic char (Nain). These processing plants are run by the Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. (Torngat Co-op). The Torngat Co-op also owns offshore shrimp licences, which they lease to southern fishing enterprises to help fund their processing operations.

### 5.3 Indigenous Sovereignty

In this paper, I position these visions of the future within the context of Indigenous sovereignty, in pursuit of a Labrador Inuit definition of fisheries sovereignty. The concept of Indigenous sovereignty has been an important one in Indigenous scholarship for decades, entangled with conversations on governance and law (Borrows, 2015; Coates, 2015), writing and research (Carroll et al., 2019; Lyons, 2000; Tuck & Fine, 2007), history and storytelling (Bodkin-Andrews et al., 2016), and resource use and governance (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; Prosper et al., 2011). Indigenous sovereignty has no one “quintessential definition” (Moreton-Robinson, 2020): it is bound up with its particular context, with the lands and the culture that envisage it (Snelgrove et al., 2014). I therefore use this section to outline what I mean by the concept of Indigenous sovereignty and show how it intersects with fisheries.

The term sovereignty has not been without controversy, even among Indigenous thinkers. Kanien'kehá:ka scholar Taiaiake Alfred aligned the word sovereignty with a settler colonial ideal based on dominance, coercion and homogeneity (Alfred, 2005). It has also been argued that basing an Indigenous governance paradigm on a European concept would erode and pervert Indigenous knowledge systems (J. Barker, 2005). It is possible, however, to remove the concept from its Western political and legal mooring, to “Indigenize” the term for the benefit of Indigenous Peoples. The term sovereignty is then understood by grounding it “within Indigenous people’s struggles for autonomy, self-sufficiency, and self-determination rather than within assertions of domination, control, and authority over ancestral homelands” (Coté, 2016 p. 9).

In general, there are two schools of thought in approaching Indigenous sovereignty. These revolve around the question of recognition (Bodwitch et al., 2022; Van der Porten, 2012). Namely, can an Indigenous People really be considered sovereign if that sovereignty is built on

the acknowledgement and legitimization of the state? The dichotomy here is that Indigenous Peoples can generally pursue sovereignty either with an outward turn, by appealing to legal courts for their rights to be recognized, or by looking inwards, nurturing and protecting their own legal orders and governance systems (Stark & Stark, 2018).

In accessing the Canadian legal system to negotiate and establish a land claim agreement, Labrador Inuit chose to pursue their sovereignty through an outward approach. Commercial fisheries were written directly into the LILCA, making it the first comprehensive land claim agreement in Canada to explicitly consider commercial fisheries (Andersen, 2009). This is an indication of how important commercial fisheries are to a Labrador Inuit way of life. Despite centering the discussion of fisheries rights through the land claim process, however, many managers and fishers have expressed frustration that they remain largely on the outside of decision making processes (Foley et al., 2017; Kourantidou et al., 2021a; Snook et al., 2022). Fisheries management remains couched in Western science and valuations, with the benefits leeching out of communities and spreading to southern Canada. As an important dimension of social, cultural, and economic wellbeing for Nunatsiavut, commercial fisheries are potentially an important industry for nurturing Labrador Inuit knowledge and values, contributing to the overall sovereignty of Nunatsiavut (see Chapter 3, (Cadman et al., 2023)).

Regarding sovereignty, the celebrated Mississippi Ojibew of Leech Lake and Mdewakanton Dakota of Lower Sioux scholar Scott Richard Lyons wrote:

“Our claims to sovereignty...are nothing less than our attempt to survive and flourish as a people. Sovereignty is the guiding story in our pursuit of self-determination, the general strategy by which we aim to best recover our self-respect. For indigenous people everywhere, sovereignty is an ideal principle, the



beacon by which we seek the paths to agency and power and community renewal” (Lyons, 2000 p. 449).

I take this imagery of a beacon to heart and see the discussion of sovereignty as an exercise in building strength and resilience for an Indigenous People. As I share the vision of fisheries sovereignty that was expressed by the Visioning Project partners, I position the process and the outcome as part of a broader conversation on sovereignty for Labrador Inuit. Grande (2007) argues that sovereignty is a restorative, not a separatist, project for Indigenous Peoples. In reporting on the visioning process and its outcomes, I hope to show how this project can be a restorative process – a step towards articulating what sovereignty would look like for Nunatsiavut from the perspective of a particular industry.

## 5.4 Methods

The methods employed for this research were decided through a series of meetings between the project partners in 2019. In early meetings, the partners discussed goals for the project, and agreed that what was needed was an explicit, shared, and long-term vision for the future. Considering the desire for open discussion and consensus, as well as the need for articulating a desirable vision of the future, participatory scenario planning was identified as an appropriate framework for the research (see Chapter 4 of this dissertation). Scenario planning is a group of methods for engaging in the consideration of potential or possible futures (Oteros-Rozas et al., 2015). Participatory scenario planning is a subset of these processes that focuses on facilitating futures conversations with resource users, stakeholders and communities (Flynn et al., 2018). The group employed an iterative approach, building each phase on the findings of the last. In each phase, the findings were presented to the participants to allow them to comment on

the directional flow of the research, and to allow them an opportunity to evaluate their own answers in the light of the group's general interests (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014; Stoll et al., 2023). This process allowed me to locate the areas where stakeholders held similar views about the priorities and values underpinning the industry, and where potentially inflammatory topics might hinder the research.

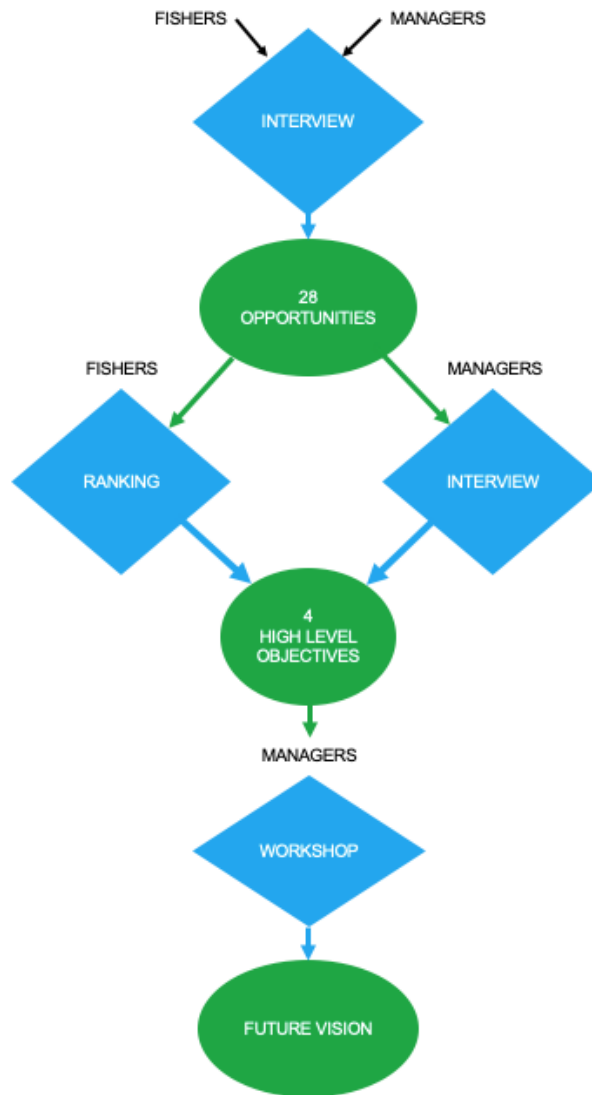


Figure 5.1: Flowchart of the Participatory Scenario Planning Method used for the Fisheries Visioning Project

Data were collected in three phases (see Figure 5.1). This approach was used to create a dialogue among participants, to identify points of consensus and build a vision collectively. First, 28 individuals who work in the commercial fishery were interviewed. Interviews took place in the summer and fall of 2021, in person in Makkovik, Nain, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, and over the phone or on Zoom for individuals located elsewhere. Participants included partner organizations, fishers, and community leaders. Employees at the Nunatsiavut Research Centre in Nain supported this recruitment process by providing contact information and making connections on behalf of the primary researcher. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to establish a baseline of how fisheries stakeholders understand the current fishery. Participants were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats they experience in Nunatsiavut's commercial fishing industry. Transcripts of these interviews were analyzed using NVivo to identify all potential opportunities shared by participants. These opportunities were then analyzed inductively and grouped thematically into a comprehensive list, which were used to guide the second phase of the research.

Second, this list of opportunities was used to prompt another round of interviews, this time with a smaller group of participants. Interviews were conducted with the partner organizations (n= 10) between February and April 2022. Participants were presented with the list of opportunities and asked to rank them in order of their importance. The objective of these interviews was to provide insight into where the partner organizations might agree about priorities for the future of the industry, as well as to identify any sensitive or controversial topics that could derail the dialogue. Participants ranked the opportunities and discussed their choices with the interviewer. The same list of opportunities was presented to a group of fishers (n= 12),

who chose their top and bottom five priorities, and provided further feedback on their priorities, values, and concerns. Notes were taken during these conversations.

In analyzing this ranking process, I found that there were deep disparities both in terms of what they considered to be priorities, and in terms of how they weighed the different options. On their own, these rankings did not provide a clear path forward for the vision. Instead, I returned to the interview data from steps 1 and 2, as well as the notes taken during conversations with fishers, and performed inductive thematic coding in NVivo to find the topics that partner organizations generally agreed were priorities for the future of the fishing industry. Four high-level objectives were identified in the analysis, which were used to guide the final phase of the research.

For the final phase of the research, a three-day workshop was held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in December 2022. Present at the workshop were 8 individuals from the partner organizations: 2 from the Nunatsiavut Government, 1 from the Torngat Co-op, and 5 from the TJFB. Audio recordings were taken of the whole workshop, and facilitators also took notes during discussions. A breakdown of the workshop agenda can be found at Appendix 4. On the first day, participants shared stories about the history of the fishery, focusing on moments that they characterized as “successes” and “failures”. The group discussed what made those stories positive or negative. The facilitator recorded all of the characteristics that the group thought were important for a successful fishery. On the second day, participants were put into four breakout groups of 2. Each group was assigned one of the high-level objectives identified in the second phase of the Visioning project. Breakout groups were asked to use the prompt to tell a story about an idealized fishery 50 years in the future that is being managed for one high-level objective using this prompt: The year is 2072, and fisheries are being managed for [high-level

objective]. Facilitators sat with each group and used prompts to help the groups think in detail about their ideal fishery. In addition to the prompting questions, groups were provided with cue cards that listed the characteristics of a successful fishery from Day 1 to help elicit ideas.

Breakout groups then came back together, and discussed their stories, considering where the stories overlapped, where trade-offs might occur between futures, and what priorities the overall group had for a single ideal future. On the third day, a rough, synthesized vision containing all 4 futures was presented to the group. The group discussed the synthesized vision and provided feedback and adjustments. The day was closed with an evaluation session on the entire visioning process. The final, synthesized vision was presented to a large group of stakeholders, including fishers and managers, at the Annual Fisheries Workshop held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in December 2022 for final comments and feedback.

Following the completion of the workshop, audio recordings were transcribed and notes from all facilitators assembled. Data was analyzed to provide additional detail to the synthesized vision.

## 5.5 Future Visions

Analysis of the second round of interviews produced four high-level objectives shared by all the partner organizations: environmental sustainability for the industry, cultural wellbeing for Nunatsiavut communities, political autonomy for Nunatsiavut, and economic success for the fishers. In the workshop, participants were asked to imagine futures based on these four objectives. Below I share the individual futures they imagined, and then the synthesized vision, inspired by all four objectives, that the group developed collaboratively. I also share artwork by Inuk artist Jessica Winters, who created illustrations based on the visions. Winters' art brings

these stories to life, told through her own understanding of the visions. Winters read the stories and chose elements that she found particularly important to represent, and thus her work has a hand in how we come to understand the significance of the vision(s).

### 5.5.1 Individual Visions

*1. The year is 2072 and the Nunatsiavut fishing industry is being managed for sustainable harvests*



Figure 5.2: “Sustainable Harvests”. Artist Jessica Winters was commissioned to create illustrations based on the four visions imagined during the workshop. This is the first illustration she created, showing sustainable harvests.

In 2072, to help minimize fishing pressure in the Labrador Sea, there is a mix of inshore fisheries, executed by small and mid-sized boats run by Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, and offshore fisheries where fish are harvested by a large trawler with onboard processing ability that is owned jointly by the Nunatsiavut Government, the NGC, and the Torngat Co-op. Fishing capacity is driven by Nunatsiavut-based enterprises, and Nunatsiavut is able to harvest all of its own quota. Fishers can pursue multiple species throughout the year, decreasing reliance on one or two commercial species, and supporting resilience through an ecosystem-based approach to management.

In this future fishery, management is driven by stewardship and care for the waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut. Under this management paradigm, subsistence fisheries are prioritized over commercial harvests. Species including Arctic char, Atlantic cod, and Atlantic salmon are protected for the people of Nunatsiavut to continue traditional harvesting at sustainable levels before any commercial harvesting can occur. To support this, Inuit and non-Inuit collect science in the inshore and the offshore to support good decision-making. Additionally, a Fisher Association exists that supports fishers to advocate for themselves, to have their voices heard in decision-making, and to report on their observations on the water.

2. The year is 2072 and the Nunatsiavut fishing industry is being managed for cultural wellbeing



Figure 5.3: “Cultural Wellbeing”. In this illustration, Jessica Winters portrays a scene drawn from the vision for a future of fisheries that supports cultural wellbeing.

In 2072, there is a focus on returning benefits from the fishery to Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, so that they may enjoy a long-lasting social and cultural connection to the fishing industry. The focus of this management regime is around employment. All inshore vessels fishing in waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut are owned and run by Labrador Inuit, and offshore vessels fishing Nunatsiavut-owned quota employ beneficiaries as well. Processing of all the fish caught in waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut are processed in processing plants located within Nunatsiavut through the Torngat Cooperative. Finally, there is an observer program run out of



the region to support region-specific monitoring, and hires knowledge holders to ensure that Inuit knowledge is used to frame onboard monitoring.

Beyond the benefits seen from employment, the future industry will make sure that the fisheries will contribute to community growth and wellbeing. The Nunatsiavut Government will fund the community freezers to buy and distribute fish to increase food sovereignty and connection to marine species across the region. Revenues from communal licenses can also fund better infrastructure in the communities, such as services and roads.

3. The year is 2072 and the Nunatsiavut fishing industry is being managed for Labrador Inuit autonomy



Figure 5.4: “Political Autonomy”. Jessica Winters portrays a scene based on the vision for Nunatsiavut to hold political autonomy over fisheries governance

In 2072, the fisheries are an important tool for advancing sovereignty and independence in northern Labrador. Fishers are able to own their own vessels because they have a guaranteed access to quota for many years, allowing them to operate independently. Processing is done within the region so that Nunatsiavut beneficiaries control the production and distribution of fish caught in the adjacent region.

In this new paradigm, the Nunatsiavut Government has access to all new and existing marine species both within with LISA and adjacent to the LISA, and they work to lobby DFO

when new opportunities arise. Inside the LISA, and adjacent to the LISA, the Torngat Joint Fisheries Board holds decision-making authority, without veto power being held by a federal government minister, so that the power is truly shared among the three governments.

4. The year is 2072 and the Nunatsiavut fishing industry is being managed for economic development

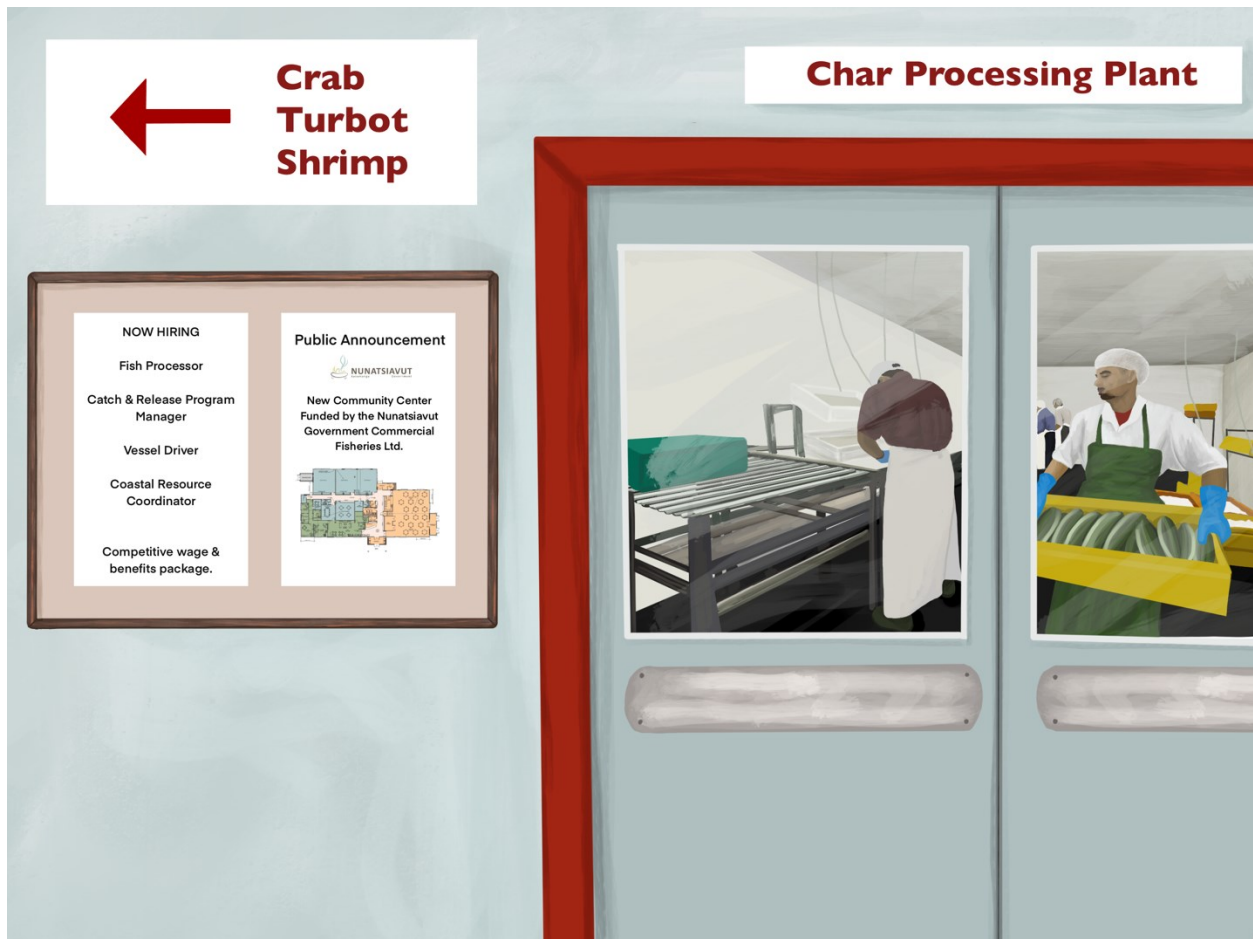


Figure 5.5: “Economic Development”. Jessica Winters illustrates how the fisheries might bring prosperity to the communities in the fourth vision

By the year 2072, 100% of the resource adjacent to Nunatsiavut is controlled by Nunatsiavut beneficiaries. In this new regime, beneficiaries can pursue multiple species throughout the year, and the Nunatsiavut Government is given access to expand into new and emerging fisheries when they arise. Because they have control over fish harvested within Nunatsiavut waters, fishers and processors are able to make a good wage, supported by a strong industry.

Having gained control over the fisheries, Nunatsiavut is able to reinvest the economic benefits into community development. Revenues from the industry are redirected into supporting

the communities through new infrastructural projects and education. In order to sustain the subsistence char fishery for the communities, the commercial char fishery has evolved into a tourism industry with a catch and release program, which supports training and travel for beneficiaries to learn about char harvesting while earning a wage.

### 5.5.2 Synthesized Vision

The breakout groups came back together to share their visions. When they started talking, they realized that they all agreed that their visions all depended on Nunatsiavut holding far greater authority over their adjacent resources than they currently do. A synthesized version of the future containing elements of all 4 breakout group visions was collaboratively built from the points that followed in the discussion.



Figure 5.6: A synthesized vision for the future of commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut by Inuk artist Jessica Winters. Her final illustration shows all four individual visions brought together, overlaid with an image of Nunatsiavut itself, depicting the final vision developed by partners during the final discussion of the workshop.

In 2072 in an ideal world, Nunatsiavut would have 100% access to all marine resources inside and adjacent to the LISA and operate a mix of inshore and offshore fishing that is owned

and run by Nunatsiavut-based organizations. The TJFB, as a collaborative body, would need to have control over decision-making. Everything else in the vision of the commercial fisheries hinges on this core concept of sovereignty for Nunatsiavut.

Importantly, this management paradigm values Inuit knowledge and local fisher knowledge alongside Western science, and all relevant data to help make decisions will be collected from within the area adjacent to Nunatsiavut. In support of that goal, there is a fisher association providing advice on quotas, safety, and observations on the water. There is also an emphasis placed on protecting species for subsistence fishing before commercial fisheries, ensuring that communities always have enough wild food. The Nunatsiavut Government can help further food sovereignty by supplying the community freezers with catch from the Nunatsiavut fishing fleet.

The outcomes of gaining control over the adjacent fisheries will have huge impacts for community development. Fishers will be independent, stable, and bringing in a good income from the vessels that they own and manage themselves. Processing plants operate within the region, they are safe, and they recruit employment from the communities. Revenue from the fisheries is reinvested into the communities, with a priority on fisheries infrastructure, including docks and ship storage.

## 5.6 Three Pillars for Labrador Inuit Fisheries Governance

Here I discuss some of the implications of these results and reflect on the significance of this project for the future of the Nunatsiavut fishing industry. I identify three overarching themes that form the basis of the workshop participants' vision for the future. By framing these future

visions within the literature on Indigenous sovereignty, these themes can be understood as the three pillars for Nunatsiavut's future fishing industry.

This group had never had the opportunity to sit together and discuss, in depth, the issues facing the fishing industry and the hopes they had for its future, and they approached the task of openly discussing desirable futures with enthusiasm. The vision of the fisheries that emerged from the discussion is built on three pillars: Access to marine resources, shared control over management decisions, and values-based governance. I describe these three pillars and discuss their significance for Inuit sovereignty.

### **5.6.1 Access**

First, the partners agreed that they would need access to 100% of the quota within the LISA and in the area adjacent to Nunatsiavut. This includes access to existing commercial fisheries, and all potential future fisheries. During the workshop, participants discussed the importance of access to fishing quota for the continuation of the fisheries. Participants saw it as essential – “principle number one”, as a member of the Torngat Co-op called it, that adjacent quotas should be under the control of Nunatsiavut. From a board member: “Certainly the objective...would be that the Indigenous population owns the resource, manages the resource for their own benefit...So in 50 years... anything that swims off the coast of Labrador that is caught should be under the control and for the benefit of the folks in Nunatsiavut”.

The question of access to adjacent quotas is an important one for Nunatsiavut. Access to Northern shrimp, in particular, has long been a source of contention between Nunatsiavut entities and the federal government. Shrimp Fishing Areas (SFA) 4 and 5 are 100% and 97% in and adjacent to Nunatsiavut, but the Nunatsiavut Government only has access to approximately 10%



of the quota in each area. It is suggested that a history of inequitable policies like DFO's "Last in, first out" policy, as well as disregard for the spirit of the land claim agreement, have prevented Nunatsiavut from developing a strong industry (Snook, Cunsolo & Morris, 2018; Torngat Joint Fisheries Board 2022). Both the TJFB and the Nunatsiavut Government minister for Lands and Natural Resources have unsuccessfully advocated for Nunatsiavut to be given significantly more access to shrimp quotas in and adjacent to the LISA (CBC News, 2020; Torngat Joint Fisheries Board, 2022)

The debate around access to quota reflects a much broader ongoing debate about the nature and extent of Inuit rights. Canada has long insisted that Indigenous identity and rights are closely tied to very specific territories and traditional activities (Borrows, 2019). Framed this way, it is possible to argue that modern activities like commercial fishing are not "traditional" enough to be considered part of Indigenous rights. For example, commercial fishing requires access to modern technology and brings fishers further out to sea than their ancestors would have fished. But it is worth noting that settler colonial states benefit greatly from controlling and restricting Indigenous identities, particularly when it comes to natural resource extraction that occurs on the lands they occupy (Procter, 2016). When defined by Inuit themselves (and not by the Canadian government), Inuit identity and rights are grounded in relationships and responsibilities to family, community, and the land, and are not defined by the continuation of certain activities, technologies, or species (Tagalik, 2015; Tester & Irniq, 2008). Thus commercial fishing does not have to be at odds with Inuit life, and in fact can play a role in supporting culture and wellbeing in the present day, whether or not its role in the past is clearly recorded (Snook et al., 2022). Equally importantly, Labrador Inuit need income to access housing, health care, and food security. Bennett et al. (2018) point out that Canada's rights of

access over marine resources is based on the principle of adjacency, why should the same not be true for Indigenous nations and land claim areas?

When the participants identified access as a primary pillar for sovereignty, they are bringing to the forefront these conversations on the nature of Inuit rights. Fisheries do not have to be at odds with Labrador Inuit culture, in fact fishers and managers see the commercial fishing industry as an important way of caring for community. Gaining access to quota in the waters adjacent to Nunatsiavut are seen as essential for supporting livelihoods and wellbeing for Labrador Inuit communities.

### **5.6.2 Management**

Second, the partners decided that the TJFB, as the tripartite co-management board for the region, should have decision-making authority over the management of fisheries from within the LISA. When asked to imagine an ideal future for Nunatsiavut fisheries, workshop participants saw co-management as central to its success, and this is reflected in their vision to have the board holding decision-making authority about management and conservation in the LISA. As one breakout group in the workshop put it, the structure would “move from a recommendations board to actually having decisions that couldn't be overturned by politics. The Board would have the full final authority, so it couldn't keep getting rejected”

The role of the co-management board was much discussed throughout the visioning process. The co-management board was established under the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement in 2005 to generate recommendations for the minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada on the conservation and management of fisheries in the LISA. Made up of 3 appointees from Nunatsiavut, 2 from the federal government, and 1 from the province of Newfoundland and

Labrador, the co-management board's major role is not to act as representatives from those bodies, but to work together to assess and advise on science and policy matters in ways that uphold the land claim agreement (Cadman et al., 2022; White, 2020). Despite this mandate, the federal minister maintains veto control over all decision-making, limiting the normative power the board is able to wield over fisheries management in the region.

Though the board has evolved over the years to become more strategic in its activities and gain more indirect influence over policy making, this lack of formalized power remains frustrating for many. During an interview, one board member pointed out: "The role of the board has improved considerably over the past couple of years, but there's still an obliviousness... a total ignoring of us. We send letters and they don't respond, you get contrary about it, and they'll say 'oh, we read that and took it into account'. I find it to be incredible". The relative power that co-management offers for Indigenous Peoples is debated in the literature (see, for example, Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020; King, 2015; White, 2020) and yet, it is notable that the group chose to maintain this cooperative management structure over something that would give a Nunatsiavut-based organization complete control over fisheries in the region. In line with the management created through the land claim agreement, participants saw an advantage to maintaining a collaborative management organization that included insight from provincial and federal appointees, as well as those from Nunatsiavut to lead fisheries in the region. It indicates that the group sees value in sharing power among the three states. The board has been shown to be a leader in eliciting participation from resource users and conducting regionally specific science to contribute to decision-making (Cadman et al., 2022).

### 5.6.3 Inuit Knowledge

The final pillar supporting this future vision of Nunatsiavut's commercial fisheries concerns grounding fisheries governance in Inuit knowledge and values. Participants felt that respect for and integration of Inuit knowledge and way of life was an important aspect of running a fishery for the benefit of Labrador Inuit. Current fisheries governance within the LISA, as with the rest of Canada, is directed by the Canadian federal government according to Western, settler colonial ideals and cultural expectations (Alessa et al., 2010; McMillan & Prosper, 2016; Silver et al., 2022; Thornton & Hebert, 2015; Todd, 2018). Participants felt that a connection to Labrador Inuit lands was important to understand how fisheries should be governed to benefit the region.

For Indigenous Peoples, sovereignty is bound up with the land and waters to which it pertains, and with the requirement of cultural continuity (Snelgrove et al., 2014). There is no sovereignty that does not account for Labrador Inuit culture and Knowledge. The synthesized final vision pays attention to Labrador Inuit values, norms, customs, and land use both in terms what is put into decision-making, and what the group saw as the outputs.

One important input that was identified in the visioning process was the inclusion of Inuit knowledge in the science informing decision-making in the fishery. Participants discussed the need for more regionally specific science and inclusion of Inuit knowledge in assessments (see Fig. 5.2). One breakout group suggested that the future vision should include an observer program staffed by Labrador Inuit, so that their knowledge could inform data collection. Another suggested that a Fisher Association should be established to support fishers in sharing their observations on the water for improved management. During the final day of the workshop, when presented with a rough draft of the "final vision", the group gave the feedback that this

should be the top listed bullet point: “Inuit knowledge and local fisher knowledge is part of the science being collected”. One participant said “there's got to be a little more weight put into the traditional knowledge... it's still there with offshore shrimp, or crab or anything else. I think it should be the most important thing.”

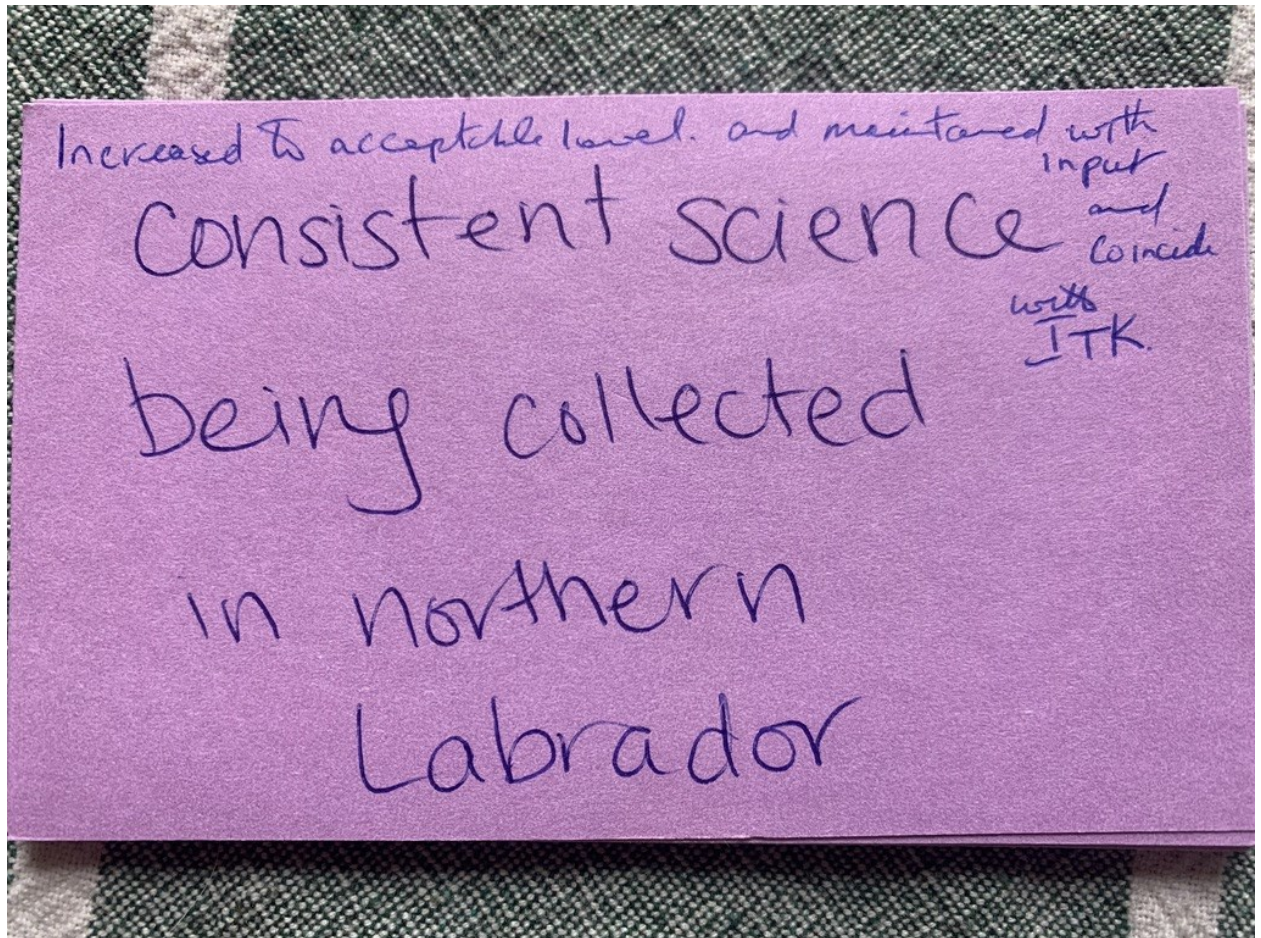


Figure 5.7: A photograph of a prompt card from the workshop reads “consistent science being collected in northern Labrador”. A participant has added text to the card which reads “Increased to acceptable level and maintained with input and coincide with ITK” [Indigenous Traditional Knowledge]. I note that during the final discussion of the workshop, participants agreed that the term “Inuit knowledge” should be used

The other participants agreed, which sparked a discussion about the best term for this knowledge system that is not completely about fisheries or ecology more generally, nor is it

completely historical / “traditional”. The group talked about how their knowledge connects to modern fisheries like crab and shrimp, the physical environment and changes to the climate, and a more “holistic” understanding of the marine environment adjacent to Nunatsiavut. The group concluded that “Inuit Knowledge” would be the best term to capture this understanding.

Participants saw increased inclusion of and respect for Inuit Knowledge as essential for producing the outcomes they wanted for their communities. One board member noted that “food security is part of our identity and history”, speaking to the ways that Inuit communities see it as essential to share their resources. This became incorporated into the final vision through the maintenance of community freezer programs. During the final discussion, the participants noted the importance of “maintaining our culture and connection to land” through the fisheries. Two breakout groups noted that by gaining more control over fisheries governance they would be able to implement policies that promoted better stewardship – including less invasive gear types.

The group saw the future of fisheries to be embedded within an Inuit Knowledge system, guided by their own cultural values and world view. This extends the vision beyond general control over management mechanisms and outcomes and into an interest in governance (Grey & Kuokkanen, 2020). In this context, I define the word governance in line with Kooiman (2003). The governance of natural resources is distinct from management because it refers to the connections between everyday decision-making and the broader social and cultural context in which those decisions are made. No governance system is a blank slate. It is always wrapped up in the cultural norms and values of the people that created it. When Whyte (2018) wrote that Indigenous Knowledges have “governance value”, he was referring to the fact that Indigenous Knowledges are their own paradigms for understanding and interpreting the world, guiding decision-making and connection to land (Latulippe & Klenk, 2020). In Canada, fisheries

governance is embedded in the settler colonial state, guided by a certain set of values and norms (Silver et al., 2022; Todd, 2018). The interest of the workshop participants in aligning the inputs and outputs of commercial fisheries with their own values and Knowledge system implies an interest in getting involved with governance at a systemic level, beyond that which they currently could be said to have control over.

## 5.7 Contextualizing Sovereignty for Labrador Inuit Commercial Fisheries

This idealized vision for the future of fisheries provides some insight into a Nunatsiavut-specific approach to fisheries sovereignty. The definition of sovereignty emerging from the vision is framed around the ongoing work of Labrador Inuit for representational self-determination over Nunatsiavut lands and waters. I understand that there are many “sovereignties” existing with Indigenous Peoples across the world, and so I scope this investigation into sovereignty to Labrador Inuit fisheries, acknowledging that other sectors, Peoples, and set of obligations will change how sovereignty is understood. By centering this research on the future of commercial fisheries for Labrador Inuit, I provide insight into one small piece of a large and complex puzzle for Indigenous sovereignty.

The question of recognition is central to the conversation of Indigenous sovereignty. Van der Porten (2012), drawing on work by Coulthard (2007), locates this problem in the Canadian context. In order for an Indigenous nation or people to achieve self-determination, they must ask the federal government to recognize their claim, reinforcing the power imbalance between the two parties. In this framing, an Indigenous People cannot rely on the state to provide true

sovereignty and must turn inward to protect and nurture its own legal, political, and governing orders as a way of achieving sovereignty.

But the legal structures implemented by the state continue to shape Indigenous lives and rights in real time. The future vision developed through this process does not break away from the issue of recognition politics. There is an understanding among the partners that addressing the current legal framing is necessary to move towards greater sovereignty. The three pillars emerging from the discussion all require that the federal government grant extended rights or “privileges” to Nunatsiavut. The success of this future depends on the government acquiescing. But the individuals involved in this process are very familiar with the political context of Nunatsiavut. This analysis came from a specific time and place, from a group of people who work within and are affected by the everyday decision-making concerns of commercial fisheries and more generally colonial fisheries management. This vision of sovereign fisheries is embedded in the social, political and legal realities facing Nunatsiavut fisheries stakeholders.

The extent to which Labrador Inuit have authority over fisheries is grounded in a land claim agreement, which was negotiated and signed by both the Labrador Inuit Association and the federal government of Canada. Several of the institutions responsible for fisheries governance in Nunatsiavut were created through that agreement – in particular, the Nunatsiavut Government and the TJFB. Capacity to support, evolve or expand fisheries in the region relies on these groups. This understanding of sovereignty does not occur out of space and time; it is grounded in the legal and political realities that Nunatsiavut lives with, and thus I would argue that whatever articulation of sovereignty developed through this research must acknowledge recognition from the state.



Importantly, however, this vision does not invalidate the significance of grounding this definition of sovereignty within a Labrador Inuit Knowledge system. The research question, the methods used, and the interpretation of the results are motivated by a desire for the revitalization and rejuvenation of a Labrador Inuit governance system according to their own knowledge system, values, and priorities, and for the continuation of Labrador Inuit culture. It thus displays some of the characteristics of both an “outward” and an “inward” turn for achieving sovereignty.

Increasingly, Indigenous scholars are suggesting that land claim agreements, under their current iteration, may not offer adequate solutions for Indigenous sovereignty to thrive in the Canadian context (Inutiq, 2022; H. King, 2015; Snook et al., 2022). The vision presented in this paper moves Labrador Inuit treaty rights and responsibilities beyond what is described in the LILCA. Labrador Inuit management and governance has grown significantly since the land claim was ratified in 2005, and it may be that what they can do for themselves (administratively) surpasses what was imagined by the negotiators. This raises an important question: is the current land claim agreement robust and resilient enough to adapt to an evolving Inuit territory? It may be that a more generous interpretation on the part of the federal government, in line with the “spirit of the agreement” (Snook et al., 2018) would be enough to help Nunatsiavut achieve its vision. If not, however, it may be necessary to evaluate our understandings of land claim agreements as one step in a longer process towards the sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples.

One note written in a facilitator’s book from the final visioning workshop reads “incremental change isn’t the way – or is it?”. Perhaps by reconceiving of sovereignty as a process, as well as a “beacon” to aim for, we can see the ways that Labrador Inuit are working for a future guided by their own governance system.

## 5.8 Conclusion

The Fisheries Visioning Project produced a story for the future of Labrador Inuit commercial fisheries that advances their interests in the access, management, and governance of fisheries adjacent to their traditional territory. This story provided us with an opportunity to examine how Labrador Inuit fisheries stakeholders understand the commercial fisheries as bound up with Labrador Inuit culture and wellbeing. In so doing, I identified 3 pillars that support their vision of the future and provide some insights into how this future vision fits into a conceptualization of sovereignty.

On its own, a vision like the one in this research cannot be emancipatory. Significant systems-level changes would be required to carry out the vision put forward in this exercise, which seems unlikely to happen within our lifetimes. But the vision may act as a beacon for what might be possible given Labrador Inuit control of the resources off their shore. It remains a step on a longer journey towards sovereignty.

# Chapter 6: Conclusion

## 6.1 A synopsis of the research

This dissertation is structured around the Fisheries Visioning Project, a partner-led project to develop a vision for the future of commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut. For partners in the TJFB, the Nunatsiavut Government, and the Torngat Co-op, the most important outcome of the research is the vision itself, which they created, and which will help inform their activities in the coming years. For me, the work of this dissertation has been to use the Fisheries Visioning Project as an opportunity to consider how commercial fisheries fit into Inuit sovereignty. The central research question addressed in this dissertation is *how can commercial fisheries be reimagined to support the vitality and resilience of Inuit knowledge, values, and priorities?* I looked at this through the context of Nunatsiavut commercial fisheries, highlighting how the particularities of the legal and political arrangement as well as the history and present of Labrador Inuit knowledge and culture shape the answer to this research question.

To that end, the following three research objectives are addressed:

1. Characterize the relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries
2. Describe how power sharing operates between Inuit and settler actors in practice and evaluate the effectiveness of co-management for achieving Nunatsiavut sovereignty
3. Balance the importance of research outcomes with a focus on process

I approached the dissertation by first identifying the present conditions of fisheries governance in the region, and then by facilitating a process for participants to think about the future of the industry. First, in Chapter 2, I looked at approximately 10 years of meeting minutes

kept by the TJFB to understand their role as the co-management board for fisheries. Through a deductive/inductive analysis process, I identified the activities in which the TJFB engages, and how they engage with other actors involved in fisheries governance in the region. Next, in Chapter 3, I conducted semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in sectors across the industry to tease out the relationship between fisheries stakeholders and the commercial fishing industry in the region. Through inductive analysis, I drew out a network of values that inform how Labrador Inuit connect with the fishing industry. Then, in Chapters 4 and 5, I turned to the future of the industry. First Chapter 4 outlined the iterative process in which I conducted 2 rounds of data collection to try to identify priorities for the future of management. Reflecting on the effectiveness of the method, I found that the process has been stymied by its structure and that participants are hampered in trying to think creatively and positively about the long-term future. I concluded that more open, conversational methods are required to draw out an idealized future vision, and so Chapter 5 provided an overview of a final workshop, which drew together the partner organizations to share stories and construct a desirable future. I shared that vision and reflected on its implications for a Labrador Inuit conceptualization of fisheries sovereignty.

In this concluding chapter, I provide an overview of the finding throughout this dissertation and the greater implications and applications these findings have on the co-management literature and literature on Inuit fisheries governance more broadly.

## 6.2 Overview of Findings

Here I address each of my three objectives in turn and discuss how research chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 support these conclusions.

### **6.2.1 Objective 1**

*Describe how power sharing operates between Inuit and settler actors in practice, and assess the effectiveness of co-management for achieving sovereignty for Nunatsiavut*

In this dissertation, the term “co-management” refers to formal arrangements between governments and resource users and are generally used to bring more participation and power to rights holders or stakeholders in resource management (Berkes, 2010). Co-management is one of the main mechanisms for managing lands and resources on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples (White, 2020). Co-management arrangements have proliferated across Canada as a way of upholding the rights of Indigenous Peoples to share in decision-making and benefit from resource extraction on their traditional lands and waters (G. N. Wilson et al., 2015). Fisheries have emerged as a particularly important space for shared management in many territories across Canada, in part because of the social and economic importance of fish in Indigenous communities and their constitutionally protected rights to harvest fish (e.g. Fox, 2006; King, 2011; Reeder-Myers et al., 2022).

Over the past few decades, however, many have come to question the extent to which co-management is able to deliver on the promise of greater power-sharing and improved outcomes for management (Boudreau & Fanning, 2016; H. King, 2015; Thornton, 2010). Whether co-management results in substantive improvements for management or for power-sharing is still a contested subject. Given the importance of fish and fisheries to Labrador Inuit, this thesis characterizes the ways that power manifests in a specific situation to assess the suitability of co-management as an arrangement for advancing Inuit sovereignty (Reo et al., 2017). Two frameworks emerged through the course of the research that provide insights into how Inuit hold and exercise power in fisheries co-management.

### *6.2.1.1 Adaptive management and power in process*

Carlsson & Berkes (2005) argue that by reconceptualizing co-management as a process, rather than as an outcome, we can find new ways of understanding power. When we think of structural, formal (“overt”) power, such as the powers distributed under a land claim agreement, our understanding of power begins and ends when the agreement is signed. As such, we neglect the ways that individuals and institutions can influence how power manifests itself in the daily activities and interactions of management. In line with its methodological approach to deliver practical, useful results from the research, this dissertation examines co-management as situated in a specific context, involving particular actors, legal structures, and social, cultural and historical factors. As such, the research aligns with the literature that frames co-management as a process (Armitage et al., 2011; Berkes, 2010; Collins & Ison, 2009; Zurba et al., 2012). The dissertation starts with an up-close look at the co-management board (the TJFB), but then widens the lens to look at the collaborative nexus of actors and organizations involved in fisheries management in a broader sense. This framework allowed me to recognize the agency of Labrador Inuit in the creation and maintenance of the co-management paradigm, and to account for change since the land claim agreement was ratified (Armitage et al., 2011; Cleaver & Koning, 2015).

First, the dissertation establishes that power-sharing did not remain static over time. It is a dynamic and evolving set of relationships between the Nunatsiavut and Canadian governments. The key here is in looking past the formal legal arrangement of “co-management”, and towards how the actors operate in practice. By looking at how Nunatsiavut’s fishing organizations’ activities and capacities have shifted over the last ten years, I acknowledge their agency in advancing their goals (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Cleaver & Koning, 2015). Chapter 2 follows

ten years of co-management board meetings, during which time the TJFB's power and influence have changed as they have engaged in adaptive, problem-solving process. The TJFB is shown to leverage resources and capacity to support Nunatsiavut's voice in management, and the co-management arrangement is labelled as "mature", a demonstration that the power dynamics did not crystalize when the land claim agreement was signed, but continuously evolve. Then in Chapter 5, participants imagine a future for the fisheries that further extends their power and capacity in the region to manage the fisheries for the benefit of Labrador Inuit. The future vision gives insight into how participants conceptualize the relationship between Nunatsiavut and Canada as continuing this trend, opening space for Labrador Inuit to govern fisheries on their own terms.

Unfortunately, while Nunatsiavut-based organizations' capacity and influence has grown over the past ten years in practice, the way that the Canadian government has chosen to interpret and implement the land claim agreement has not. Chapter 2 observes that a narrow legal interpretation of the land claim agreement has limited the ability of the TJFB to continue growing and evolving in such a way that it might one day meet the federal government as a true partner in co-management. I argue, in line with Snook et al. (2018), that the government should recognize co-management as an adaptive, process-based governance system that evolves over time.

This also holds significance for other regions considering a CLCA to advance their prospects for self-government. As a region, Nunatsiavut was able to develop significant capacities over the past 20 years, which have created the conditions for new concepts of sovereignty to emerge. Despite the constraints the Canadian state placed on the direction and quality of their advancement, Nunatsiavut was able to use the political and legal tools at their

disposal to improve their conditions and are now prepared to take on new challenges, possibly to move beyond the framework imposed by a settler colonial governance structure. It may be used by other nations and Peoples with similar goals who want to work towards new conceptions of sovereignty.

#### *6.2.1.2 Internal and external sources of power*

A second framework for understanding how power manifests in this research is through the politics of recognition and refusal (Coulthard, 2007; Hunt, 2013; A. Simpson, 2014a). Glen Coulthard introduced the concept of the politics of recognition in Indigenous struggles for sovereignty to highlight the ways that the Canadian state continues to require assimilation with the settler paradigm of law and governance (Coulthard, 2007). To be caught up in the politics of recognition forces Indigenous identities and power to be defined by the state instead of through their own ontologies (Daigle, 2016). Audra Simpson speaks of the “politics of refusal” as a different path to sovereignty – one that was internally defined by an Indigenous People for themselves (A. Simpson, 2014a). She argues that Indigenous sovereignty and Canadian/American sovereignty are “nested” systems, with Indigenous sovereignty existing “within and apart from settler governance” (p. 17), each problematizing the other. Refusing that assimilative type of power is to reimagine Indigenous self-determination beyond the state.

Through the visioning project in chapters 3, 4 and 5, two types of power emerged in discussions that are illustrative of the tension between recognition and refusal. I refer to these two powers as “internal” and “external” in reference to how they are granted. The first is an inward-facing power wherein Nunatsiavut, as a land claim area, is building its own strengths,



capacities, and cultural values for governance. The second is the power granted by the Canadian government through Labrador Inuit advocacy and political agitation.

This research notes a type of power held within Nunatsiavut that is independent of the state. In Chapter 2, I found that while the TJFB is limited in terms of the power granted to them under the land claim agreement, the work they perform, including collecting their own data, increasing participation from stakeholders, and increasing the region's resilience, capacity, and wellbeing, does not rely on the recognition of the state. Thus, the work of the TJFB is an example of building a kind of sovereignty that is internal to Nunatsiavut.

In Chapter 3, where I explored values held in relation to the commercial fishing industry, I recorded a proliferation of values related to Labrador Inuit history and identity. These findings are perhaps the clearest example of the politics of refusal in the dissertation. The values are products of a Labrador Inuit Knowledge system, and therefore this network of values is culturally and ontologically distinct from the current Canadian settler governance system. The ways that these values continue to inform how Labrador Inuit relate to the fisheries display the resilience of Inuit Knowledge and culture, which refuses to be subsumed within settler colonialism. Similarly, in the final vision in Chapter 5, participants favoured opportunities they saw for taking action on their own, and generally dismissed any ideas that required the Canadian government to "gift" them power or resources (Simpson, 2014, p. 18). The goal of achieving access to and authority over quotas in the area adjacent to Nunatsiavut was not solely about having control over the resource; it was about how that control would allow the fishery to be managed according to the values and benefits participants had expressed. This suggests that Labrador Inuit are interested in pursuing a kind of sovereignty beyond the kind of legitimacy

granted by the Canadian government. In forging its own path and in articulating a culturally grounded vision of the future, Nunatsiavut is investing in an internal power.

Still, however, the research does not reveal an easy dichotomy between these two types of power. It was clear through the visioning process that for individuals in the fishing industry, this tension is unresolved in their daily lives. The final vision described in Chapter 5 reflects this tension; participants push forward a vision that is guided by their own values and Knowledge system, but they also recognize that the legal structures guiding Nunatsiavut's fishing industry influence management in real time. In Chapter 4, I discuss the debates that arose among participants about whether they should focus on things within their power to change, or whether they should imagine a future in which their legitimacy was properly recognized by Canada. The research does not show participants wanting to exist entirely outside of the current system – they are not asking to “burn it all down”, but they are turning towards a vision in which Nunatsiavut is run by Inuit for the benefit of Inuit and in accordance with Inuit values, culture, and ontology.

Adaptive Management and the Politics of Recognition and Refusal both provide insight into the state of power-sharing in co-management and provide a framework to assess whether co-management is the best framework to support Inuit-Crown partnerships. Over the last 15 years, Nunatsiavut has developed its capacities and political influence in fisheries management thanks in part to the structure and resources provided through the co-management system. This has been instrumental in advancing Labrador Inuit interests in the Labrador Sea through the addition of locally relevant data and increased participation from resource users. Throughout that time, they have maintained a connection to culture and Knowledge through the fishing industry. From those connections a new idea of what fisheries could look like is emerging, one that advances not just political goals for equity, but its own cultural and ontological paradigm. And yet it seems that

Nunatsiavut is hitting the ceiling of what is possible under the Canadian government's current interpretation of the land claim agreement that would help to ground the future of fisheries in Labrador Inuit Knowledge and values. For co-management to continue to be a useful framework for supporting Nunatsiavut fisheries management, the Canadian governments will have to understand it as a dynamic adaptive process that has fundamentally shifted over the last decade and will continue to change. A true meeting of partners requires that co-management be approached as an iterative learning opportunity in which both partners carry their own governance capabilities.

### **6.2.2 Objective 2**

*Characterize the relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries*

While there is a great deal of attention paid to how settler colonialism affects traditional activities, practices and Knowledge systems, the literature has focused less on how settler colonialism plays a role in less ostensibly "traditional" activities, including commercial fisheries. Reeder-Meyer et al. (2022) point out that commercial fisheries do not have to be synonymous with capitalism, instead arguing that many Indigenous fisheries have been used for trade and for the benefit for individual and communal living, and can therefore be considered a commercial industry (Reeder-Myers et al., 2022). Reid et al. (2021) show how Indigenous fisheries center livelihoods and collective wellbeing in the management of their fisheries, providing a distinct lens on fisheries governance (Reid et al., 2021). Pfeifer (2018) argues that Inuit hunters are scientists, researching biophysical patterns and change to inform their harvesting practices: "Hunters are Arctic scientists and professors, experienced wildlife, ice and water researchers, and environmental knowledge keepers" (Pfeifer, 2018, p. 31). Their work is informed by

generations of experiential research on the land, but it is also a dynamic resource that is continually updated.

Indigenous scholars have pushed for a change in terminology around the phrase “traditional ecological knowledge”, pointing out that Indigenous Knowledge systems are not relegated to history, nor are they exclusively focused on the natural environment (Latulippe & Klenk, 2020; D. McGregor et al., 2010). This language addresses a larger impulse in Canadian society, one that is reflected in the literature, to confine Indigenous Peoples to the past, to disconnect them from their own forms of governance, to disregard the ways that Indigenous Peoples have continued to survive and evolve as people. There is discomfort in the concept of change: that growth is part of Indigenous cultures and Knowledge systems, and that this has inevitable consequences for negotiations around resource rights. Modern commercial activities have a role to play in Indigenous communities, and should not be considered incommensurate with Indigenous Knowledges or livelihoods (Bennett et al., 2018; McMillan & Prosper, 2016). Given this fact, it should be up to individual Peoples to dictate how and under what circumstances those activities are carried out. The dissertation outlines two characteristics of the relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries.

#### *6.2.2.1 The fisheries support connection to culture, wellbeing, and identity*

In setting this objective, the dissertation tries to understand how, or whether, commercial fisheries interact with Labrador Inuit knowledge and values in the present. If, in addition to being an economic opportunity, the commercial fishery has a social or cultural relevance for Labrador Inuit, that has implications for the kinds of processes and outcomes Labrador Inuit may wish to see in fisheries governance. A commercial fisheries governance framework, such as the one

Canada uses to guide its decision-making, inevitably affects how Labrador Inuit will see and connect to their fishing industry, but it should not be assumed that economic opportunity is the only benefit Labrador Inuit see in the fishery. The research in this dissertation highlighted how the fisheries also support Labrador Inuit connection to culture, wellbeing and identity.

The first investigation into this topic came from Chapter 3, in which I examined how Labrador Inuit value the commercial fishery. Semi-structured interviews revealed a network of values that connect fishers and managers in Nunatsiavut with the commercial fishing industry. The values support and inform one another, elucidating the ways that fisheries help Inuit connect with the land, support their communities, and reaffirm their identity(ies). This represents a unique, context-specific relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries.

What was clear in this research was how, though federal regulations have restructured the ways Labrador Inuit have access to fish, Nunatsiavummiut have found ways of maintaining their relationships to fish and fisheries. Chapter 3 speaks to the many ways Labrador Inuit have been resilient in the face of dispossession, leveraging every opportunity to nurture their cultural values. The fisheries themselves are an opportunity to get out on the water, to observe seasonal changes and practice stewardship, but also several fishers also shared that the seasonal nature of the work, as well as the wealth it brought them, allowed them to reinvest in subsistence activities during the off-season. Chapter 5 reiterates this resilience as participants emphasized a vision of the future fishery that prioritized community wellbeing over “fishing-as-business” (Berkes, 2003; Reid et al., 2021). The Visioning Project was an opportunity for participants to consider how fisheries might contribute to improving life for the people of Nunatsiavut, and consistently they saw that improvement as not solely an economic activity, but one that was embedded in cultural considerations and Inuit Knowledge.

### *6.2.2.2 Fisheries are political*

The relationship between Labrador Inuit and commercial fisheries is not only cultural; it is also political. In Chapters 2 and 5, I illuminate the ways in which fisheries stakeholders, and the partner organizations in particular, understand fisheries as one of the arenas in which Nunatsiavut's negotiation over power in its traditional territory occurs. Through recorded meeting minutes from TJFB meetings, I demonstrate how fisheries co-management has evolved over the last decade into a more formalized and efficient system under the guidance of the TJFB. Their growing involvement in scientific research, both independently and in collaboration with governments, has provided them with opportunities to fill data gaps and influence policy. The final vision presented in Chapter 5 starts with "Inuit knowledge and local fisher knowledge is part of the science being collected" – I was asked to move it to the top of the list during the workshop because participants wanted it to be emphasized. Managers in the fishing industry understand that who is collecting the data, and whose information is valued, have an outsized influence on the policies being made, and they chose to emphasize the knowledge held in communities.

In Chapter 5, the Visioning Project highlighted the ways that participants understood control over the fisheries as a move towards greater sovereignty for Nunatsiavut. Chapter 4 describes "Nunatsiavut political autonomy" as one of the four overarching goals jointly held by interview participants. Then in Chapter 5, the workshop participants agreed that the best mechanism for achieving the future that they wanted was to have complete access to and control over their adjacent quotas. Their ability to bring the benefits they wanted into Nunatsiavut depended on political control over the resource. The fact that fisheries are a space for negotiating

and advancing Nunatsiavut sovereignty is key to how commercial fisheries are connected to Labrador Inuit.

These findings show that participating in fish harvesting and fisheries management planning offer an opportunity for an affirmation and revitalization of Labrador Inuit governance, based on their cultural values and knowledge system, contributing to their overall sovereignty in their traditional territory and for the wellbeing of their people. In parsing the relationship between Inuit culture and commercial fisheries, it is not accurate to say that this dissertation demonstrates that commercial fishing is a cultural activity. When I conducted interviews and spoke to community members more broadly about my research topic, not everyone agreed that commercial fisheries in and of themselves are a part of, or an extension of, Labrador Inuit culture, though many did. Instead, I argue that Labrador Inuit have used commercial fisheries as a tool to support the proliferation of their values and Knowledge, and to advance their political goals in the Labrador Sea.

### **6.2.3 Objective 3**

*Balance the importance of research outcomes with a focus on process*

This final objective is a methodological one. Indigenous Ethicist Julie Bull and others have taught that working with Indigenous Peoples requires a non-Indigenous researcher to weigh the processes and methods of research as heavily as the outcomes (Bull, 2010; Carlson, 2017; Castleden et al., 2012; Chilisa et al., 2017; Kovach, 2009). In writing Chapter 4 as a reflective piece on the effectiveness of methods used in the Fisheries Visioning Project, I am interpreting that call literally. It is an opportunity for reflexivity that is integral to an iterative, Inuit-centered approach to writing a dissertation (Held, 2020).

In addition to the ethical imperative, focusing on the process of research provided some important insights that may not have been possible without the emphasis on reflexivity. First, that this visioning process to imagine desirable futures contains important potential as a strength-building exercise. Following the final workshop, participants commented on how energized they felt by the discussions. In Chapters 4 and 5, I speak about the openness of conversation and the excitement that people expressed to be voicing their opinions and to have the same sentiments echoed by others around the room.

But this feeling of empowerment did not emerge in every step of the process. The first rounds of interviews contained a lot of conversation about the barriers fishers and managers face in the industry, and these conversations demonstrated the difficulties of prompting people to think beyond practicalities and deficiencies in the current system to dream of something idealized. Loring & Hinzman (2018) observe that when asked to imagine desirable futures, participants may get stuck looking for solutions to immediate problems. In the course of this visioning process, I saw this play out, but found that introducing a storytelling exercise focused on the past, and bringing the group to an in-person discussion facilitated a more open and creative environment for participants.

Adding a reflective, evaluative aspect to the visioning project was also an opportunity to share the method in detail: from the development of research questions to the interpretation of results, this process was carefully designed by a collective team of partners. Despite that fact, a lot of learning had to happen “on the job”, leading to adjustments in the method throughout the process. As noted above, for example, I had little success in generating consensus through the highly structured process I had initially designed, leading me to incorporating a more informal and narrative-based workshop. Communicating the process in detail, including these learning



moments, is important in reporting to ensure that future researchers take the approach seriously and understand the intentional and rigorous planning that goes into the process. Consensus and co-learning do not just “happen”, research must be carefully designed and run to ensure the desired outcomes. Participatory scenario planning provided a very useful structure to lead us through this process – the process is often described as scenario planning “techniques” instead of a method or structure because it is such a loosely assembled group of activities and approaches to thinking about the future. Some may see this lack of specific steps as a weakness, but I found it highly conducive to participatory and inductive learning.

The iterative nature of participatory scenario planning did have its downsides, however, and in the evaluation forms which were filled in by project partners, some pointed to how much time it took to go through all the stages of this method. Were this project to have been done by a practitioner, it might have been completed on a much shorter timeline because the outputs that are important to a thesis – this manuscript, published papers, conference presentations, all take away from time that could be spent concentrated on the vision itself.

## 6.3 Implications & Applications

### 6.3.1 Land claims and the long journey towards sovereignty

The research chapters identify that Nunatsiavut is beginning to grow its capacities beyond the terms outlined in the LILCA and is capable of further advancing Labrador Inuit self-determination in fisheries under the current co-management arrangement. While Nunatsiavut-based stakeholders have advanced their influence over the system, the future vision they developed in Chapter 5 points to far more extensive rights to access, management and governance that is grounded in Labrador Inuit Knowledge.

What is emerging here is a picture of an Inuit land claim area whose capacities for governance are growing beyond the bounds set out in the land claim agreement. This thesis established that signing the land claim agreement was not the final word on how power is allocated among the actors. “Fisheries governance” happens at the nexus of several organizations – the Nunatsiavut Government, the TJFB, the Torngat Cooperative and DFO all have important roles to play in the broader governance paradigm of the region, and their roles and interests have shifted over the years. Acknowledging how capacities and powers have evolved over the last decade also means recognizing that those same dynamics will continue to evolve in the coming years and inevitably raises the question: will the LILCA, in its current iteration, be flexible enough to accommodate this change? If co-management is to be an iterative process of co-learning, it is necessary that I frame the land claim agreements that enable them in the same way.

These findings have implications for other Indigenous Peoples who are in the midst of, or are considering, whether to negotiate a land claim agreement. It points to the limits on self-determination offered by a comprehensive land claim when it comes to Indigenous governance and Knowledge. But it also shows how CLCAs and co-management arrangements provide a suite of legal and political tools that Indigenous Peoples can leverage to their advantage despite the constraints the Canadian state tries to impose on their systems. From this work, new and emerging paradigms for governance seem possible, though it may take decades of time and advocacy for progress to be visible. For Canadian settler governments, it also offers a warning: If you are unwilling to meet Inuit governments where they are at in terms of their capacities, priorities, and their understanding of their own sovereignty, you may find yourselves back at the negotiation table.

### **6.3.2 Moving from co-management to co-governance**

Where the Canadian governments have embraced the language of “reconciliation”, “nation-to-nation governance” and “Inuit-Crown partnerships”, they are indicating an interest in advancing a more equitable approach to governance between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown. One of the biggest changes in this direction in the environmental sciences has been the calls to incorporate Indigenous Knowledges into decision-making processes. Settler government and Western scientists are required to understand the validity of Indigenous sciences, based on multiple generations of place-based learning and observation. While this is a positive development, many Indigenous academics, leaders, and activists have pointed out that Indigenous Knowledges are so much more than the facts that they provide to scientists: they are governance systems in their own right (Kovach, 2009; Latulippe & Klenk, 2020; D. McGregor et al., 2018; Pedersen et al., 2020; Reid et al., 2021; Todd, 2018; Whyte, 2018).

This definition has important implications for what it means to “incorporate” Indigenous knowledge systems into fisheries management. This would require a radical change in the processes and approaches that currently dominate the Canadian landscape. Currently, Indigenous knowledge is treated as supplemental information to the Western science being produced for management, but in reality, Indigenous knowledge systems inform the ethics, values, modes of inquiry, communication, connections, relations, reciprocity, consequences, of conducting the work and making decisions. Respecting these things equally to a Western knowledge system and working together to build an entirely new paradigm for fisheries governance goes beyond the purview of co-management, and towards a concept of co-governance.

During the Fisheries Visioning Project, participants in the workshop acknowledged that there was still a role for co-management through the TJFB in the future, but that it would require

some change in how they were placed in the nexus of organizations making decisions in the Labrador Sea. In their future vision, the participants placed the co-management board at the top of the hierarchy, above either DFO or Nunatsiavut, making the TJFB the ultimate authority over decisions. Additionally, they imagined that their future fisheries management regime would be arranged according to the values and knowledge of Labrador Inuit – emphasizing care for community and for the health of the fisheries before all else. This future vision points towards an idea of co-governance, where the decision-making authority is shared between partners, and is grounded, at least in part, on Labrador Inuit values. This dissertation highlights the ways in which truly just governance that is shared between Indigenous and Crown governments requires that knowledge systems are central.

### **6.3.3 Moving beyond the politics of recognition**

The dissertation also grapples with different definitions of “sovereignty” for Indigenous Peoples in praxis. The Fisheries Visioning Project was an opportunity for Labrador Inuit fisheries stakeholders to articulate their own abilities, capacities, and rights, and in so doing, a specific idea of the future of Nunatsiavut, run by and for Labrador Inuit, began to emerge. In my analysis, I brought in the concepts of the politics of recognition and refusal to try to understand where participants saw a chance to advance their goals and develop strength. The vision of the future developed through the research does not fall entirely into one category or the other: participants recognized the practical need for Canada to work with them and recognize their claims, but they also were interested in developing power beyond that relationship, internal to Nunatsiavut and grounded in Labrador Inuit values and priorities. This is significant because the

concepts emerging from this research demonstrates how Inuit sovereignty continues to challenge the legitimacy of Canadian ownership and jurisdiction over Inuit Nunangat (A. Simpson, 2014b)

I do not have similar interviews from 50, 20 or even 5 years ago to consider how this conception of Inuit sovereignty may have shifted, or the role that the land claim has played in that process. What I can say, however, is that perceptions of participants have been shaped by the land claim and the co-management paradigm that guides fisheries management. The goal posts are shifting for what self-determination might look like in the coming decades. If Canada truly intends to reconcile with Indigenous Peoples, it needs co-management arrangements that empower Indigenous Peoples as equal partners, which requires parity between knowledge systems. Canadian co-management arrangements have not sufficiently contended with how context, knowledge and culture affect their ability to meaningfully share power. To date there has been little attention paid to power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors in Canadian governance (Alcantara & Morden, 2019), and the effect that power has on instances of co-management. The first foundational step towards ensuring that our governance systems are just and equitable is to create a framework through which the processes and outcomes of co-management can be understood.

## 6.4 Limitations

The project was co-designed with partner organizations, who helped to identify who should be included in a conversation about the future of fisheries. There was consensus about the group of stakeholders to be included, and the data collection process managed to recruit participants from all the major stakeholder groups named in those conversations, except for the broader communities of Nunatsiavut. Originally, my intention had been to elicit participation

from the communities, per the request of the partner organizations. This would have given a much more expansive understanding of how Labrador Inuit more generally value the fisheries. Speaking only to those who have a financial stake in the industry undoubtedly affected the results of the study. Broader community engagement in the project was deprioritized because of COVID-19 and a lack of time, I chose instead to interview AngajukKâk to act as community representatives. To help make up for the lack of community voices, I travelled to Nunatsiavut as often as I could when it was safe to do so and engaged with friends, colleagues and community members outside the bounds of data collection to have a better sense of where commercial fisheries fit into Inuit lives. I was also able to hire an Inuk research assistant Jenna Andersen, based in Makkovik, to help interpret the data in Chapter 3 through the eyes of a person who lived locally, but was not personally involved in the fisheries. Still, tying community voices directly into the study would have provided me with a richer data set and the research partners with important information.

Relatedly, I note that few women participated in the research. This is largely because there are few women in the industry, but even among those who do fish, I found it difficult to recruit them to participate. Losing out on how women connect to the fishing industry, and how they imagine its future, limits the perspective of the study. This is a particularly difficult gap in the dissertation because elsewhere in the literature it is shown that women who participate in fisheries, either as fish harvesters or as carers contribute significant social and economic benefits to their families and broader communities while facing greater barriers and inequalities (Ferguson, 2021; Rohe et al., 2018). Recognizing these contributions and articulating how they fit into the social context of fisheries in Nunatsiavut would have greatly enriched the research. Broadening the inquiry to the communities would have been one way of including more women

in the conversation, as would speaking to the processing plant employees. It is notable that women employed at the Nunatsiavut Research Center sat with me on many occasions chatting about fish and fisheries, and even went through my list of potential participants to update phone numbers and ensure I was safe. These kinds of labour in research, which are largely undervalued or not even recognized as labour, are often gendered work. They are acts of care and mentorship, and reflective of how the roles of women can so fundamentally affect the work. It is to the detriment of this thesis that a gender-based analysis was not done in order to recognize all of the ways in which women contributed to the visioning process beyond the participant list.

The study analysis was also blind to difference among communities – I did not explicitly investigate how different communities along the coast of Nunatsiavut would feel differently about the fisheries. Anecdotally, Makkovik and Nain have a strong connection the commercial fishing because of the processing plants and because memories of the char and salmon fisheries run deep. How this affects the relationships between Labrador Inuit and the fisheries was not explicitly examined in this dissertation, in part because the spread and number of participants and their roles in fisheries did not allow for an in-depth look at the potential for difference.

The most significant contributions that the dissertation makes are in the realm of methodological approaches around target seeking scenario planning and partnership driven research, as well as the practical outputs that are currently emerging from the visioning project. Many of the findings from the thesis are deeply embedded in the specific context of Nunatsiavut and will have less relevance beyond northern Labrador. Additionally, the design of this research was so iterative and participatory that I recognize the final study design will not be relevant for all research examining the same questions.

The framing of this dissertation – that Knowledge, values, and co-management are all dynamic systems that evolve over time – has implications for the limitations of the research itself. The relationship between Labrador Inuit and the commercial fisheries is bound to continue evolving, and the values identified in this research will not be relevant forever. What the research does provide is a snapshot of the current state of co-management and the associated connections between Inuit and fisheries.

## 6.5 Future Research

From a practical perspective, the work advanced in this dissertation can be expanded upon to support the breadth of the findings and to provide useful outputs for the partners. First, there is a practical report being drafted for the partner organizations that covers the findings of this dissertation and help support communications and advocacy in implementing the vision in the future. However, having developed an ideal vision for 50 years in the future, it is essential that we establish some practical pathways for achieving that vision. What steps do the partner organizations need to take in the coming fishing seasons to advance their goals? A backcasting exercise could be done, in which the partners would be able to identify those steps. Relatedly, while this research helped the group achieve consensus on some high-level goals, many participants in the process did not agree on how to prioritize the individual actions or opportunities that might improve the industry. It would help to clarify the complex system of governance, including how governance and power sharing might work in practice, to better understand how different stakeholders prioritize or visualize their role in creating the ideal future they created.



If, as this research suggests, there is growing interest in developing an Inuit-led governance paradigm for fisheries, there is an opportunity to dig into what that paradigm should look like. Understanding the rules, values, and processes that guide Inuit decision-making will be important for advancing an Inuit-led model for fisheries governance. What does it mean to translate rules like “take only what you need” into everyday management planning? How can we ensure that care for community and kinship are reflected in funding structures, management, distribution of allocations? Do Inuit decision-making structures concerning consensus and elders’ councils fit into commercial fisheries governance? Further research, led by Inuit, would help to articulate the specifics of this vision.

The study revealed that fisheries are deeply connected to community wellbeing, and that fishers see their role as providing for family and community. Given this finding, it would be valuable to expand the investigation of the relationship(s) between commercial fishing and Nunatsiavut communities to better understand the ways that fisheries are woven into community life, and how fisheries should be managed in the future. Involving Nunatsiavut beneficiaries, and drawing on diverse perspectives, particularly from women, youth, and elders would help to deepen this understanding. Additionally, many people participated in commercial salmon and char fisheries before the collapse, who were forced out of the industry – how does the disappearance of that way of life affect their life and connection to culture? For many, fisheries are only one piece of a complex relationship to the coastal and marine environment, and so future research should prioritize connecting with all 5 communities, as well as diverse ages and genders, to explore those relationships and how they may influence the role of fisheries in the future of Nunatsiavut.

To expand on the research program, other Indigenous Peoples may be interested in engaging in a similar program for future visioning work. Applying a similar program in different contexts would bring new insights into how different communities and Peoples are conceptualizing or working towards sovereignty. It would also be useful to experiment with more arts-based and culturally appropriate research methods, like storytelling, illustration, or on the land workshops.

In addition to all of these future research goals and pathways, it is essential to say that the responsibilities associated with this dissertation are not yet finished. Jessica Winters' art is part of this dissemination process, as a new way of explaining the project, but I need to do more results dissemination, especially plain language reports and presentations to ensure that partners, participants and the fishing industry understand the implications of this project. The research is not the end of this partner-driven relationship, and it is an opportunity to think about the applications of this work into concrete steps towards the future vision.

## 6.6 Final thoughts

In the judgement on *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997), Canada Supreme Court Judge Lamer wrote: "Let us face it, we are all here to stay". This line has been repeated many times in many forums as an acknowledgement that Indigenous and Canadian sovereignties will continue to bump up against each other and require new negotiations, collaborations, and frustrations. Importantly, the line is also an acknowledgement that Indigenous Peoples are here to stay *as* Indigenous Peoples, not to be assimilated or to fade away (O'Sullivan, 2020). We must find ways of navigating this tension, of living together and continually relitigating how to do so while upholding Indigenous Rights, knowledge systems, and wellbeing.

This research contributes to one tiny corner of that broader conversation by investigating commercial fisheries co-management in Nunatsiavut. Fisheries management and governance has implications for social and cultural wellbeing, economic benefits, and environmental health. For Nunatsiavut, commercial fisheries are embedded in a Labrador Inuit way of life. Governance of the fisheries should reflect that importance and support the rejuvenation of Inuit/fisheries connections.

This dissertation records a group of Nunatsiavut-based fisheries rights holders who are recognizing this gap and taking it upon themselves to imagine what an Inuit-led governance paradigm might look like for fisheries. As I have facilitated and recorded that process, I have reflected on the power dynamics between Canadian settler governance and Inuit governance, and what might be required to reach a just and equitable space for fisheries governance. What I have seen through the course of this research is that Canada has a window of opportunity in which to recognize that its Western settler colonial paradigm for governance is insufficient for a true reconciliatory relationship. Labrador Inuit have fostered their capacities and influence in fisheries management, and they are capable and ready for more than a seat at the federal government's table. I suspect that they will not wait for sovereignty to be "gifted" to them by the government. Articulating visions of the future, such as the work I had the pleasure of facilitating in this dissertation, provides an important next step for Inuit who are demonstrating what it really means to have sovereignty over fisheries governance.

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# Appendix 1: Data Sharing Agreement

August 1, 2022

Research Agreement

## **BETWEEN:**

**Rachael Cadman, on behalf of Module I: Informing Governance Responses in a Changing Ocean (“Module I”) - Researcher**

- and –

**The Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat (“TWPFs”) - Project Lead**

## **WITH SUPPORT FROM:**

The Nunatsiavut Government Department of Lands and Natural Resources and  
Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. – Project partners

**Project title:** *Visioning the future of commercial fisheries in Nunatsiavut*

The research team, on behalf of Module I, and the TWPFs, have reached an agreement to carry out this collaborative research project, as per the directions and conditions contained in the following document.

### *Objective of the research project*

The TWPFs, with partners, led a literature review in 2019 characterizing commercial fisheries that have operated in and adjacent to Nunatsiavut in the past 200 years. The literature review found that of the 14 commercial fisheries that have historically operated in Nunatsiavut, only 4 continue at a commercial scale, and none of these persist in isolation of each other, or broader social, economic, and ecological systems. The results of the literature review warrant reflections on the year-to-year species-specific management approach to fisheries and raise questions about the extent to which a holistic, long-term approach to understanding fisheries necessitates a corresponding shift in the ways we set goals, assign values, manage fisheries, and vision the future of Nunatsiavut fisheries over the next 100 years.

The purpose of the study is to build from that history to develop a shared vision for commercial fisheries in and adjacent to the region to guide Nunatsiavut the future. With changing social, ecological, economic, and political systems as our shared context, and with a shared understanding of the past, we consider this an opportune time to turn our attention to developing a shared vision of the future of the commercial fishery for Nunatsiavut.

To achieve this, the TWPFs partnered with other Nunatsiavut-based fisheries stakeholders, namely the Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society Ltd. and the Nunatsiavut Government, and with researchers at Dalhousie University to conduct a multifaceted and collaborative research project to generate a collective vision of the future for the fishing industry that can guide decision-making and coordinate conservation and management.

Partners involved in this research are committed to collaborating towards this shared goal. The TWPFS will take the lead on the direction of the work as it evolves, and project partners will be informed and consulted at each stage of the project.

#### *Data sovereignty*

In support of Inuit data sovereignty, data collected in this study will remain be owned by the project partners. Raw data collected in relation to this project shall be maintained by the TWPFS, and in the case of any Inuit or Traditional Knowledge (ITK) collected, it will continue to be owned and controlled by the individual Knowledge holder. Each participant shall have the opportunity to indicate how they would like their Knowledge and/or contributions included and identified (or not) in project databases and outputs.

Project partners will be consulted at each stage of the visioning process for an opportunity to give feedback on preliminary results and direct the progress of the research. Input will be sought from project partners in the development of the final data products, and verification of any information will take place prior to any final products. This sharing and communication throughout the research process will allow Knowledge holders to have full control of the knowledge that is shared and how it is shared. Data will not be used or shared without consent from participants, and data can be withdrawn from the study at any time. TWPFS will be the copyright holder and author of the final document(s) and internal databases, and the de-identified data may be made available upon request to all project partners (Memorial University, Dalhousie University, Nunatsiavut Government, Torngat Fish Producers Co-operative). Ownership by the TWPFS notwithstanding, data will be shared freely with Rachael Cadman and other members of the Module I research team for the pursuit of her PhD, and the manuscripts and degree coming out of this project shall remain her intellectual property.

During data collection, raw data will be stored on a password protected computer and may also be backed up on an external hard drive or USB. The legend to the participant number code will be written in a password protected Microsoft Word document and stored on the TWPFS server. The primary researcher and the supervisors on this project will have access to it. A back-up copy will be stored in an encrypted file on an external hard drive.

All raw data will be kept by the TWPFS in a permanent TWPFS database, unless stated otherwise via consent. When the data are catalogued, anonymous codes will be assigned to the participants were preference was indicated for de-identification. The documents that list the corresponding codes to the participants will be kept secure and separate from the collected data.

#### *Returning results to the community*

As a research partner and Project lead, TWPFS participation in this collaborative project will promote open data sharing, alleviate data ownership/use challenges, and project partners access to the data to make evidence-based decisions.

Preliminary results of this study will be communicated with participants and partners prior to the completion of any final reports or publications (knowledge dissemination may include, but is not

limited to, community presentations, social media, art work, non-technical reports, etc.). Raw data will be available to project partners. Plans for further dissemination to the communities of Nunatsiavut will be co-developed between the academic team and the project partners. Plans could include community tours if travel opens, policy briefs, academic papers, videos, and artwork.

**All the above information is outlined in the consent forms and will be verbally communicated to participants before and throughout research.**

We agree with the conditions outline above:

**Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat**

By:

Title:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Module I**

By: Rachael Cadman

Title: IDPhD Candidate, Marine Affairs Program, Dalhousie University

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Torngat Fish Producers Cooperative Society Ltd.**

By:

Title:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nunatsiavut Government Department of Lands and Natural Resources**

By:

Title:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Interview Scripts

### Interview #1: Characterize the fishing industry in Nunatsiavut (Where are we?)

*Researcher reviews consent form with participants and asks for any questions/points of clarification.*

#### Roles within the industry

- Please describe your organization and your position
- What is your organizations' role in the Nunatsiavut fishing industry?
- Why is your organization's role important for Nunatsiavut fisheries governance? What contribution does it make?
- From your perspective, who are the stakeholders in the fishing industry?
  - Who (if any) is the most important?
  - Who has the most influence?
  - Who is missing/should anyone be more involved?
  - Who do you work with most frequently? Do you often collaborate or does your organization tend to work alone? Why?

#### Objectives/Current trajectory of the fishing industry

- Commercial and subsistence
  - How does the commercial fishing industry interact with subsistence fishing? How do those operations overlap?
  - Do you find that the relationship between the commercial and subsistence fisheries is working as it should? Is that the appropriate relationship? If not, what changes can be made?
- Do you attend the annual fisheries meeting?
  - What is the purpose of that meeting?
  - What benefit does it have for you / your work (if any)?
  - Have you ever changed your recommendations, policies, or choices because of feedback at the meetings?
  - I know it has been going for 15 years now, has the meeting changed over time?
  - Are there any other spaces that you think are important for decision making?
- How does the fishing industry in Nunatsiavut operate?
  - What are the goals/objectives of management? Are they short-term or long-term objectives? How are they identified and by whom?
  - What benefits do the fisheries bring to Nunatsiavut?

#### Strengths and weaknesses of the industry

- What is the most successful fishery, and why? What defines success
- What are the most important fisheries, and why?
- What do you perceive to be gaps in the management of the fishing industry right now?
- What barriers does your organization face in achieving its objectives?

- What barriers does the industry face to achieve its objectives (and/or be successful)
- What opportunities do you see for improving the industry?

Thank you for your participation in this interview. For the next step in this process, I will be aggregating the information from all of the interviews, and I will report my findings back to you during our next meeting.

## **Interview #2: Imagine the future for the fishing industry (Where do we want to go?)**

[Interviewer]: Thank you for participating in this interview. Let me remind you that you are not obligated to disclose any information that you feel should remain confidential. You can refuse to answer a question at any time or stop the interview. If you need a break, please let me know. This interview will be audio recorded, like the first interview. Please confirm if you are still comfortable with the interview being recorded. If you are not, I will put the recorder away, and I will take notes instead. Are you comfortable with this interview being recorded?

After the last round of interviews, I aggregated the data from all of the participants. Here is the most important information we found: [*note: findings will be described*]

1. Major characteristics of the Nunatsiavut fishing industry
  2. What participants think are the major gaps in the industry as it currently operates
  3. What participants think are the major opportunities for the industry as it currently operates
  4. How do participants define “success” for the industry?
- Do you have any feedback on or reactions to these findings? Anything that you find surprising or disagree with? Why?

We found 28 different ideas for how to improve the industry in the interviews. You will be given a list of all of the different opportunities. Please rank those opportunities from least important to most important, following the triangular framework in front of you. [*note: During this work, the recorder stays on, and interviewer asks prompts during the sorting exercise*]

Prompts:

- Why did you make that opportunity the most/least important?
- Do you see any patterns emerging?
- What are the top priorities for the future?
- Why are these the priority? (*examples – are these top answers more time sensitive? DO you need these things to happen before the other things can happen? Are you thinking long term, or short term future?*)
- Who would be in charge of making these opportunities happen? Does that group have the capacity to achieve it?
- Are opportunities missing from this list?

## Appendix 3: Table of Opportunities

The snow crab fishery should be closed to allow the stock to recover	Organizations should be advocating for new exploratory fisheries for species such as whelk, sea cucumber, or red fish	DFO should implement the precautionary approach to manage existing fisheries	More natural scientific data should be collected to inform decision making
More social scientific data should be collected to inform decision-making	Organizations should encourage fishers to participate more actively in the Fisheries Workshop	Organizations and fishers should discuss and come to an agreement on the roles and responsibilities of all Nunatsiavut-based organizations	Federal and provincial governments should recognize the spirit of the land claim agreement
An independent association should be established to represent people who fish in Nunatsiavut	Investment should be made for improving boat maintenance and storage infrastructure in Nunatsiavut	Investment should be made in a shrimp processing facility in Nunatsiavut	Members of partner organizations should pay attention to personal relationships to improve collaboration
Nunatsiavut-based organizations should lobby for increasing access to adjacent quota	Partner organizations should communicate more frequently and collaborate on projects	Organizations should support local capacity by investing in training and education programs	Investment should be made in improving the transportation in Nunatsiavut to allow for better shipping options
Organizations should provide support to beneficiaries trying to create a business plan	Organizations should create a collector boat program to support beneficiaries who want to travel further north and participate in the char fishery	The commercial fisheries should contribute directly to better food security in Nunatsiavut through the community freezer program	Organizations should support stable employment in the fish processing plants
Organizations should support the expansion of the char fishery, to harvest more char	Organizations should focus on supporting and increasing local employment opportunities on fishing vessels	Organizations should support the expansion of the scallop fishery, to harvest more scallop	Organizations should focus on advocating for the protection of significant habitat and/or on the protection of fishing rights in new MPAs
Organizations should invest in communications and recruitment of a new generations of fishers	Organizations should support a Nunatsiavut-run observer program to monitor the in-shore fisheries	Nunatsiavut-based organizations or individuals should focus on acquiring new licences in other fishing areas, such as areas further south	Nunatsiavut organizations should move towards offshore vessel ownership



# Appendix 4: Workshop Agenda

## Day 1

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions
2. Presentation on Phase 1 of the Visioning Project
  - a. Results
  - b. Summary of activities to date
  - c. Goals for the Workshop
  - d. Feedback and Questions from participants

BREAK (15 mins)

3. Break out groups develop short narrative descriptions of each objective, following these prompts:  
The year is 2100 and the fisheries are being managed:
  - a. for environmental sustainability
  - b. for the benefit of communities
  - c. according to the principles of good governance
  - d. for local autonomy

What do the fisheries look like? (e.g., offshore, inshore, small scale, multi species, ground fish, pelagic)

Who is fishing? (e.g. community members, individual leasers, companies)

What benefits come out of the fishery? (e.g., profits for individuals, profits through NG, food security, access to country food, running a processing plant)

4. Come back together to share stories & discuss
  - a. What is your vision?
  - b. What stood out to you in the discussion?
  - c. Is it possible to achieve all parts of your vision?
  - d. Was any part of this exercise challenging for you? Why?

## Day 2

1. Review of yesterday's visions & recap of insinuating discussion

BREAK (15 minutes)

2. Discussion continues, following these prompts:
  - a. What connections and parallels exist between the 4 stories?
  - b. What trade-offs and tensions might exist?
  - c. Is one of these objectives more important than the others? Why?
  - d. Is one of these objectives more urgent than the others? Why?
3. Identifying early wins

- a. Together, the group identifies 5 objectives that support some aspects of the 4 stories (e.g., build a shrimp processing plant)
- b. Discuss: how does this group make the priorities a reality?
  - i. Which organization will take the lead?
  - ii. What are the first steps?
  - iii. What resources are needed?

### **Day 3**

1. Review the merged vision and discuss
2. Pass out and complete Evaluation Questionnaires
3. Outputs and Next steps