

Working Towards Collaborative Archaeology: Exploring
Indigenous Perspectives on Archaeological Topics and
Research Questions in Nain, Labrador

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Archaeology is one avenue that people use to understand the past. It is through these contemporary understandings of the past that cultural identities are created and maintained. Unfortunately, Indigenous perspectives have been marginalized in archaeology and are dominated by mainstream western views. Indigenous archaeologists are attempting to decolonize archaeology by incorporating Indigenous perspectives and by engaging in collaborative projects with Indigenous communities. A successful collaboration is when all parties are involved in all aspects of the project, especially research design and formulation of research goals. Based on interviews with local Aboriginal community members in Nain, Labrador, this study explores Aboriginal perspectives on archaeological research. It specifically examines the types of research topics and questions local community members have about the past and discusses how archaeologists can begin to answer these questions. This study is useful to archaeologists working in Labrador who wish to practice a more inclusive and community-engaged archaeology.

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Chapter 1

Public Issues Anthropology and Archaeology in Nain, Labrador

Archaeology has developed in a western context, predominantly relying on “western ways of categorizing, knowing and interpreting the world (Atalay 2006: 280). Western ways of thinking about and interpreting the world are often accepted as authority. For the purpose of this thesis, the term western is used generally to describe dominant, mainstream culture that has been influenced by Eurocentric ideals and values. A direct consequence of this is that Indigenous perspectives and voices often become overlooked, resulting in a cultural hegemonic structure that caters to western sensibilities. Traditionally, Indigenous knowledge about the past is shared with the proceeding generations through oral histories. For academic institutions, however, knowledge is considered legitimate when it is supported by empirical evidence (Thomas 2004:18). Archaeology, as empirical investigation, is often seen as having more authority compared to traditional avenues of learning about the past, which is dismissed as pseudo-science or folk-science. The scientific method is often accepted as having the ability to reveal objective truth (D’Andrade 1995:400). However, as Donna Haraway (1998:583-584) points out, science is only a partial and biased view. The technology used in science is a lens through which scientists perceive the world and is socially constructed. One cannot be a passive or objective observer, but rather one that has situated knowledge prescribed by personal bias and technology; science is mediated. Therefore, there are multiple valid avenues of learning about the past, but institutionalized avenues that use scientific method, are perceived as more modern than non-institutionalized avenues (Thomas 2004:18). This marginalization of Indigenous people and perspectives in archaeology is a public issue with implications that extend beyond the discipline. For example, one aspect of developing and maintaining cultural identities is through archaeological research (Griebel 2013:18). Cultural identities are continually being created, reshaped, and maintained by contemporary understandings and manipulations of the past (Atalay 2006:283). Aboriginal voices and interests have not been well-represented by archaeologists in the past, but it is their interpretations of Indigenous groups’ cultures and pasts that become mainstream understandings. Consequently, Indigenous cultural identities are influenced by outside observers, such as archaeologists who study and write about Indigenous culture history.

This inadequate inclusion of Indigenous voices and perspectives limits Indigenous peoples' ability to manage perceptions of their own cultural identities within a broader social context. Furthermore, the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in archaeology limits their access to information and material culture uncovered from archaeological research (Atalay 2006:297). Traditional Indigenous knowledge, such as oral histories or knowledge of the landscape has the potential to enrich archaeological research and interpretation (Croes 2010; Friesen 2002; Nicholas et.al 2011). The marginalization of Indigenous people limits the possibility of sharing knowledge that could improve archaeological research (Nicholas 2006:350). As marginalized groups' perspectives of the past and interpretations of their own culture, along with alternative methods of knowing and interpreting the past are overlooked, western cultural hegemony continues.

These problems have occurred on a global scale, particularly in places with distinct Indigenous communities that have a western (or European) colonial history (Watkins 2005). It is clear that Aboriginal marginalization within archaeology is a problem that directly relates to broader Aboriginal marginalization within society. Political, socio-cultural, and economic marginalization of Indigenous peoples are all broader contributing factors to Indigenous marginalization within archaeology. Lack of education, low socioeconomic status, poor Indigenous- non-Indigenous relations are common barriers faced by Indigenous communities (Watkins 2005:430-431). Archaeologists and archaeological research have the ability to address this serious public issue.

The following is an overview of how archaeologists are responding to Indigenous marginalization in archaeology. Human rights and Indigenous rights activism occurring around the world, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, has been a catalyst for movements within archaeology to remedy the problem of Indigenous marginalization within archaeology (Murray 2011: 366; Lyons 2013:15). The United Nations and the World Archaeological Congress emphasized a need to help Indigenous groups regain control over their cultural heritage so that they could better thrive and be preserved (Murray 2011:366).

Postprocessual archaeologies, such as Indigenous, public, postcolonial, and community archaeologies emerged in relation to Indigenous rights, human rights, and postmodern discourse (Murray 2011:372; Atalay 2006:290-291). Such activism and discourse surrounding the issue of Indigenous marginalization has inspired new policies and practices that promote Indigenous or community engagement and protection in archaeology. These frameworks aim to engage local and descendant groups and to deconstruct colonial assumptions within archaeology (Atalay 2006:290-

291). Indigenous archaeology seeks to incorporate traditional knowledge into archaeology. Archaeologists are using these theoretical frameworks in many different projects globally, which manifest differently based on the social, political, cultural, environmental, economic, and historical contexts they are applied to. Many archaeologists working with Indigenous communities or on Indigenous lands have begun working under the principles of Indigenous archaeology (Atalay 2008; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Nicholas 2000; Silliman 2008; Warrick 2012). Indigenous archaeology is defined as:

an expression of archaeological theory and practice in which the discipline intersects with Indigenous values, knowledge, practice, ethics, and sensibilities, and through collaborative and community oriented or –directed projects, and related cultural perspectives. Indigenous archaeology seeks to make archaeology more representative of, relevant for, and responsible to Indigenous communities. It is also about redressing real and perceived inequalities in the practice of archaeology and improving our understanding and interpretation of the archaeological record through the incorporation of new and different perspectives [Nicholas 2008:1660].

Indigenous or community archaeology is usually carried out in the form of local community or descendant group engagement and collaboration. The extent and effectiveness of engagements with local communities and descendant groups differs based on the broader context. Factors include community knowledge and interest in archaeological projects, available resources and training, and socio-cultural relations between the Institutional group and the Indigenous community, to name a few, and is part of a broader public issues anthropology.

Working with Indigenous communities familiarizes Indigenous people with archaeology, which can spark personal interest in individuals to pursue archaeology. Having an adequate comprehension of what archaeology is and can do is important in equipping Indigenous communities to make informed decisions regarding management of their cultural resources.

Collaborative projects can meet the needs of different parties and can contribute to broader benefits beyond acquiring archaeological knowledge, including creating opportunities for jobs, education, and skill building. Successful collaborations work towards improving relationships between Indigenous groups and archaeological institutions. Moreover, initiating collaborative projects and by operating under Indigenous archaeological principles, archaeologists are helping to protect Indigenous rights where federal legislation lacks. Canada lacks uniform legislation regarding

archaeology on Indigenous lands and with Indigenous communities (Watkins 2005:434).

Archaeologists have been creating piecemeal guidelines based on examples around the world. For instance, although the Natives American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) does not legally apply to Canada, many archaeologists have made a significant effort to repatriate human remains and cultural materials to Indigenous communities. Finally, decolonizing archaeology and making it a more inclusive and accessible discipline to Indigenous peoples encourages cultural knowledge that shapes cultural identity and pride (Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010:230). This is particularly important to peoples who have been oppressed, marginalized, and victimized by mainstream society.

The research reported in this thesis involved interviewing local Aboriginal community members, in Nain, Labrador, about their perspectives on archaeology. I specifically sought to learn what kinds of topics they were interested in and what kinds of questions they wanted answered about the past so that archaeologists working in the Nain region, or in Labrador in general, can ensure that they are answering questions about the past that are relevant to and of interest to the local community. This thesis directly relates to the decolonization of archaeological research. Sharing in decision-making and the creation of project goals and research questions is a fundamental requirement of collaborative archaeology. Shifting the focus of archaeological research from what archaeologists are culturally trained to find interesting to what Indigenous communities would like to learn about the past is a step toward effective collaboration. By taking steps toward collaborative projects with Indigenous communities, archaeologists are addressing this public issue of Indigenous marginalization through their work.

The Canadian Journal of Archaeology is an appropriate publication venue for my research. The Canadian Journal of Archaeology is the Canadian Archaeological Association's biannual publication. They publish both focused research projects aimed at specific audiences and topics of broad interest for Canadian archaeologists. Publications include articles directly related to Canadian archaeology and broader works discussing archaeological theory and method.

My research relates to theoretical and methodological applications of collaborative and Indigenous archaeology within a Canadian context. Although Indigenous and collaborative archaeologies are being implemented around the world and have similarities with each other, the historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts that situate each project are unique. Therefore, Labrador is relevant within the Canadian context. Furthermore, many archaeological sites are located

on Canadian Aboriginal lands and numerous archaeologists working in Canada must engage with Aboriginal communities. Moreover, Indigenous and collaborative archaeology is a prominent topic of discussion in Canada as these theoretical and methodological frameworks are continually being developed.

Chapter 2

Working Towards Collaborative Archaeology: Exploring Indigenous Perspectives on Archaeological Topics and Research Questions in Nain, Labrador.

2.1 Introduction

Indigenous communities and descendant groups have long been marginalized from archaeology for various reasons, but archaeologists around the world are changing the way they do archaeology in order to make it more ethical and inclusive. Archaeology is a useful tool for descendant communities in learning about their past and in shaping their cultural identities (Nicholas et al. 2011:11).

Indigenous communities are affected by the archaeological research conducted on their lands and by the information written about their cultures (Nicholas et al. 2011:11). Indigenous archaeology has emerged in response to the problem of Indigenous marginalization within the discipline. The goal of this approach is to try to “decolonize” archaeology through engagement with Indigenous groups (Nicholas et al. 2011:12). Decolonizing archaeology means shifting the power from the colonizers to the colonized in terms of who controls how archaeological research is done and who has access to archaeological materials and knowledge (Nicholas et al. 2011:11). Many archaeologists consult or engage with relevant communities and descendant groups, but mere consultation or participation limits the potential role of the community and the potential mutual benefits of the project. The true decolonization of archaeology requires the descendant group or relevant Indigenous community to have decision- making power. Nicholas et. al. (2011:12) have outlined a scale to demonstrate levels of community engagement in archaeological projects, ranging from consultation and participation, to full collaboration. Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (2008:10) have described collaboration on a continuum extending from resistance to participation to collaboration. True collaboration is when the project’s goals are jointly created by both the archaeology team and the descendant or local community group (Nicholas et al. 2011:12). Collaboration has many challenges as both parties may have differing worldviews, values, and priorities (Nicholas et al. 2011:13). Collaboration is also characterized by free information exchange between the groups, full involvement and support of the descendant group, and meeting the needs of all parties involved (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:11). Collaboration is the ideal model, as it involves the community in decision making in all aspects of the project, including the formulation of research questions. In order to have full

collaboration between archaeologists and descendant groups, archaeologists must be informed about the culture's worldviews. At the same time, descendant groups are only properly equipped to make decisions about archaeology when they have adequate knowledge about what archaeology is and its potential role and capabilities in telling their story.

By virtue of their university training, professional archaeologists normally focus on research topics that they were taught in their courses and textbooks to find interesting. For the most part, archaeologists have not asked descendant groups if those are the questions they want asked or if they have other questions they would like to see answered. For Archaeologists working in cultural resource management or salvage archaeology, the priority is to recover and record of as much archaeological information as possible before it is lost to development or environmental threats. Therefore, often descendant groups' questions are not prioritized.

This study explores local Aboriginal perspectives on archaeological research. It specifically aims to uncover what questions, methods, and approaches are culturally relevant and of interest to Aboriginal peoples in Nain, Labrador. I set out to explore the kinds of research questions community members think archaeologists should attempt to answer about the past in Labrador and whether these questions align with what archaeologists are already asking. My findings should help inform archaeologists about the kinds of research questions local Aboriginal community members are interested in learning about, and thus inform future archaeological projects in Nain and elsewhere in Labrador.

2.2 Background

Labrador covers approximately 294,000 square kilometers of the most northeasterly portion of the Canadian mainland. Northern and Southern Labrador differ in climate and topography. Northern Labrador is characterized by the Torngat mountains and polar tundra, while the southern part has lower relief and a subarctic climate. Labrador's coastline is made up of rocky beaches, numerous bays and fjords, and thousands of small islands. The sea ice is also an important feature as it dictates sea mammal, and by extension, human migration patterns.

Nain is located south of the Torngats, and is the most northern permanently inhabited community in Labrador (Hood 2008:1) with a population of approximately 1,500. Nain is also the administrative center for the Nunatsiavut government, which was established in 2005 (Fay 2008:35).

Labrador is home to both Inuit and Innu. Innu are an Algonquian-speaking First Nations group. Today there are two Innu communities in Labrador at Davis Inlet and Sheshatshiu (Armitage 1997). The Inuit are Inuttitut-speaking descendants of the Thule culture. There are many Inuit communities in Labrador, including Nain, Makkovik, and Hopedale.

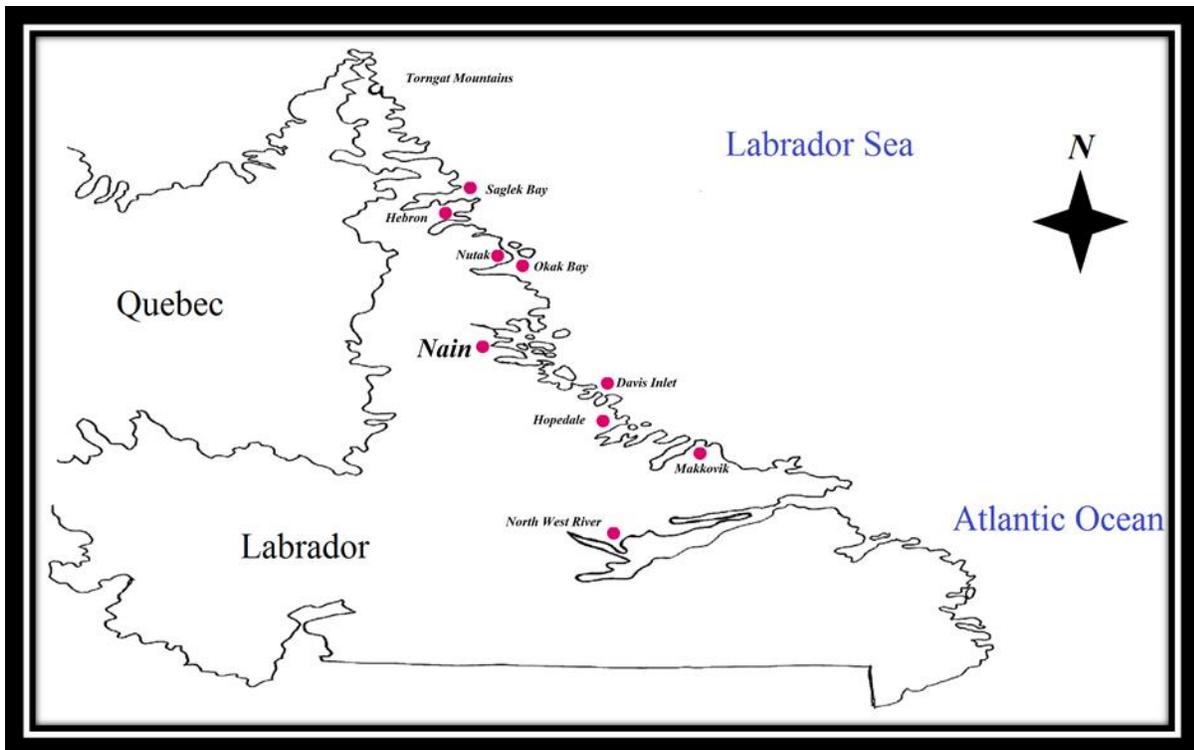


Figure 1: Map of Labrador

(map adapted from http://www.heritage.nf.ca/lawfoundation/essay2/full_map.html)

2.2.1 Culture History

Labrador has seen significant archaeological research over the past five decades. Since the 1960s archaeologists have amassed substantial knowledge about the culture-history in the central and northern coast of Labrador, particularly due to Smithsonian fieldwork, which has been frequent in Labrador (Hood 2008:4). The archaeological record indicates that Labrador was occupied for more than 7,000 years by groups ancestral to or related to the Innu and Inuit (Hood 2008:1). The cultures that appear to have been ancestral or related to the Innu include Maritime Archaic, Intermediate Indian and Late Pre-contact Indian, while the cultures ancestral or related to the Inuit include Pre-

Dorset, Groswater, Dorset, Late Dorset, and Thule. These groups were mobile hunter-gatherer groups who strongly relied on marine resources for subsistence (Avataq Cultural Institute 2011; Hood 2008; Kaplan 2012; Pastore 1998; Tuck 1991; Tuck 2012).

2.2.2 European-Inuit contact

Britain asserted control over Labrador in 1763 (Fay 2008:27). Hugh Palliser, the governor of Newfoundland at this time, joined with Jens Haven, a Moravian missionary working in Greenland, to establish a mission in Labrador (Fay 2008:27-28). Fourteen missionaries settled in what is presently Nain, Labrador in 1771 (Fay 2008:28). The Moravians traded dry goods, such as flour and tea, in exchange for fish and furs to bring back to Europe (Fay 2008:28). Moravian missions were later established in Okok (1776) and in Hopedale (1782), and by 1800 had gained over 100 converts (Fay 29-31). The Moravians had a significant influence on Inuit cultural change, influencing the shift from semi-mobile life, exclusively based on plant and animal resource availability, to more a sedentary lifestyle that incorporated European style houses and goods (Fay 2008:29-32).

Inuit settlement patterns changed again in the 1800s (Kaplan 2012:25). During the 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) moved into Labrador and competed with the Moravians. As a result, Moravians built more mission houses and HBC and Missions were seemingly fighting for Inuit loyalty (Kaplan 2008:25). Families living in bays or inlets were pressured to move into nearby settled communities (Fay 2008:32). Instead of settling near animal resources, nuclear Inuit families built small above-ground houses close to Moravian missions and HBC posts (Kaplan 2012:27). Intermarriages between Inuit and Europeans created bicultural and bilingual households. In 1918, northern communities suffered the spread of the influenza virus, which was brought over on a Moravian trade ship. Okak and Hebron drastically lost a third of their Inuit population (Fay 2008:32).

2.2.3 Confederation and Relocation

Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, and with that many new social services were introduced (Fay 2008:33). Particular efforts were made to improve the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Northern Labrador. One response was to relocate people southward for easier access to community resources and social services. In the late 1950s charitable organizations, such as the International Grenfell Association and Moravian missions, withdrew public and social services from the coastline north of Nain, which forced people southward due to their reliance on European resources (Evans 2012:86). Furthermore, Newfoundland closed trading in Nutak and Okak Bay in 1956. This resulted in many

Inuit having no choice but to move south, with government subsidized housing awaiting them at Hopedale, Nain, Makkovik, and North West River. Alternatively, some people chose to move to Hebron to remain north. Nutak's closure, however, further isolated Hebron from goods and services, such as shipping and mail (Evans 2012:86). By 1959, the Hebron Mission closed and community members migrated to Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik where they lived in makeshift houses, tents, and emergency shelters provided by the American military (Evans 2012:86). Okak residents who moved to Nain still had access to their hunting and fishing grounds with short travel, but Hebron inhabitants were geographically farther removed and spoke a different dialect (Fay 2008:35).

2.2.4 Post-relocation

Since 1960, many more changes have occurred in Nain and in Northern Labrador in general. The Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was established in 1975 to protect the continuity of Inuit culture and to participate in land claim negotiations (Fay 2008:35-36). The Inuit land claim was granted in 2005 with the official transition from LIA to self-governance occurring on December 1st. (Fay 2008:37).

2.3 Methodology

In order to learn whether the questions being investigated by those archaeologists resonate with Nain residents today, in August 2014 I travelled to Nain and spent seven days conducting interviews there. I received approval to conduct this research from the University of Waterloo Ethics Review Board and the Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee. Participants in the study were predominantly male and female adult Aboriginal community members living in Nain. Archaeologists working in Nain were also interviewed to add relevant contextual information. The target sample size for the study was 20 participants. I interviewed 19 participants in total, 18 Aboriginal Community members living in Nain and one non-Aboriginal archaeologist. My project did not distinguish between Inuit and Innu, as both groups are represented in the community and have a stake in the archaeology happening in the region. Although I interviewed both Innu and Inuit participants, the majority of participants identified themselves as Inuit. This was expected as there is a greater Inuit population in Nain. For the purposes of the study, it was not necessary for the archaeologist participants to be Aboriginal. However, it is noteworthy that a few participants were Aboriginal community members who had significant archaeological training, experience, and knowledge. I distinguished between Aboriginal participants who had significant archaeological training and those that did not.

With significant help from the Nunatsiavut Government archaeology office and the OKalaKatiget society, a public service announcement about my research project was broadcast on the local radio station. Soon after, I was contacted by the OKalaKatiget society for a radio interview discussing the details of the project. Once I arrived in Nain, I put up posters inviting people to participate in my study as well as to participate in a public information meeting. The public meeting was an informal gathering at the Nunatsiavut Government building to further discuss my project and to connect with interested people. In addition to posters, a radio interview, and a public meeting, I rallied interest by walking around town introducing myself to local people. It is the latter initiative that generated the most responses and helped me to gain a better understanding of the local community and the cultures that define it.

Information was gathered through semi-structured one-on-one interviews with participants. Interviews ranged in length from 15-60 minutes; participants who had previous experience or a personal interest in history and archaeology tended to contribute lengthier and more in-depth responses. On average, interviews were 30 minutes long. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Interviews were conducted in public spaces, such as outdoors or in the local restaurant, participant's homes, and in a reserved space in the Nunatsiavut Government building, each at the choice and convenience of the participant. I asked a series of questions that fit within four categories. I inquired about each participant's knowledge of and experience with archaeology, how participants currently learn about their pasts, and what they thought archaeologists could do to better engage with the local community. These categories yielded many insightful perspectives and covered topics beyond the scope of this thesis. Furthermore, I asked questions about the kinds of topics, research questions, regions, and time periods participants wished to learn more about through archaeology, the responses to which are the main focus of this project. For the purpose of confidentiality, I use pseudonyms below when discussing participants.

2.4 Participant responses

Many of the participant responses regarding what aspects of the past they would like to know more about fall into four main categories or themes: the recent past, graves, Inuit spirituality, and the distant past. Participants wanted to learn about the recent past, specifically about the two or three generations before them and the contact and pre-contact periods. Participants were also interested in the study of graves, but many noted the ethical and spiritual concerns of removing human remains from the ground. Multiple participants discussed Inuit spirituality; pre-contact and contact era

shamanism was of particular interest. Although participants did not discuss the distant past as thoroughly or as descriptively as the recent past, it was another theme that commonly came up in the interviews.

2.4.1 Recent and Distant Past

The majority of participants expressed primary interest in the recent Inuit past, while nearly each participant secondarily and vaguely mentioned interest in the deeper past, with questions such as “where did Inuit come from?” and “how did we get here? Participants did not make specific chronological distinctions between the recent and distant past. Participants characterized the recent past relationally by linking them to immediate ancestors, whereas, the distant past was characterized by early migration to Labrador and preceding cultural groups. While discussing the recent past, multiple participants specifically wanted to know more about how their immediate ancestors lived and survived on the land before relocation to Nain and neighbouring southern communities. While some participants made reference to pre-contact times, most participants did not distinguish between pre-contact and contact. The main distinctions participants made were between ancestors living on the land before relocation and post-relocation community living. When asked if there is a certain time period or geographical region that they would like archaeologists to explore or would like to know more about, numerous participants showed an interest in learning about the north, sometimes generally referencing the north, which refers to the region north of Nain where Inuit settlements were located prior to relocation. Participants specifically stated that they wanted to know more about the Hebron and Okak regions, as this is where the majority of participants themselves, or participant’s parents and grandparents grew up. One participant called Jacob stated that he would like to learn about archaeology in “Okak, Hebron, Natuk, anywhere up north”. He explained, “it’s just where my ancestors came from, because my mother was from Hebron too and she got relocated here... it’s where my family and my sisters lived”. Another participant, Allen, described wanting to know more about the north. Allen said, “it’s just the old ways, I guess”. Allen associated pre-relocation life with a traditional Inuit lifestyle. Participants’ interest in their ancestors living on the land and methods of survival specifically referred to how their ancestors, such as grandparents, great-grandparents, and so on, navigated the northern landscape and subsisted.

Numerous participants wanted to learn more about the tools their ancestors used while living on the land (referring to pre-relocation/pre-Europeanization of settlements) and techniques used for survival. Participants, such as Allen, frequently mentioned wanting to learn about hunting tools and

“old objects” that are no longer used, such as harpoons and seal oil lamps. Allen also mentioned an interest in learning about Inuit games and clothing. Another participant called Rebecca, among others, showed an interest in learning about her ancestors’ “tools, utensils, the way they cooked, what they made to pass the time...”. She marked a vague time period she is interested in by clarifying that she is interested in learning about life before cars, before hammers and nails, and other modern technologies. Another participant, Damien, stated that he is interested in how “people used to live and what is the use for hunting the different [animals...]. They used to make their own sod houses, some of them in the old days sawed their own logs and made their own houses with the logs”. Based on Damien’s response, his main time periods of interest are pre-contact, as indicated by the use of sod houses, and the contact period when Inuit were transitioning to European style houses made out of wood. Damien’s interest in the contact period, prior to relocation, was evident when he stated:

The interesting part is how they lived up in the bay and there wasn’t much to eat, how they lived off the land with the wild meats and a bit of sugar and flour to make a few things. I don’t know how they survived, really, especially big families with 10 or 12 or 8 or 10 people in the family. That was hard times, I guess, them days, trying to trap to make a living, maybe foxes and different things.

He also indicated an interest in Inuit hunting tools used, such as “spears”.

Many of the participants expressed a desire to learn about their immediate ancestors. For instance, when asked what kinds of topics and time periods he would like to learn about the past, Thomas explained that there is a lack of records due to a fire that happened in the Moravian church, but that he is interested in finding out who his great grandparents were and where they came from. Another participant, Rachel, has been actively seeking information about her ancestors by reaching out to extended family members and by researching through online genealogy websites.

Although the recent past and learning about one’s direct ancestors was the primary focus of the majority of participants, multiple participants specifically showed interest in Inuit origins and migration patterns into Labrador. However, it seems as if participants were less knowledgeable about the distant past than the more recent past, and therefore, their responses were less descriptive than when speaking about the recent past. Four participants stated that they wanted to know where Inuit came from. Damien directly acknowledged their migration from elsewhere. He wished to learn about “how [the Inuit] came across the ocean, in sailboats or something like that”. Another participant, John, wanted to know “where [the Inuit] emigrated from” and wondered if certain archaeological sites

would be able to provide such information. Similarly, Thomas stated, “I’d like to know where we came from...when the Inuit started living in Labrador and where they came from. I don’t know how you would find out stuff like that, but I would be interested”. Furthermore, Julie, who also expressed a curiosity as to where Inuit came from, wanted to know “the more lifestyle specific [information] and even how they knew about the weather changes”.

One participant, Jake, described being interested in migration patterns, trade, and interactions between the different Inuit groups in Northern Labrador, including the Inuit from Okak, Hebron, and Nain. He was particularly interested in knowing how these groups were similar or how they differed culturally and in their methods of survival. He specifically showed interest in learning how often and what objects these groups traded with one another, and in learning more about migrations in search of resources. Furthermore, he was interested in how different Inuit groups interacted and traded with First Nations peoples travelling in the area.

2.4.2 Graves and Human Remains

Burials were brought up frequently in interviews. Many of the participants identified archaeology as digging up human remains, which was seen as a negative practice for spiritual reasons and because of problems with access to the remains after they were studied. Some participants described archaeologists visiting the Nain region and the surrounding islands in the 70s and 80s to dig up graves and take them to be studied or to be put on display elsewhere. Their main grievance was that human remains should not be disturbed after burial out of respect. A general trend in responses from participants suggests that human remains should be left untouched and not studied. However, some participants have expressed interest in learning about Inuit burials. One participant, Katie, described an interest in seeing her recent ancestor’s graves in Hebron, while Jacob showed a general interest in learning about old graves. Julie showed more specific interest in Inuit burial practices on Rose Island. She stated:

I’m sure you’ve heard of Rose Island, it’s an island within Saglek Bay. It’s a small island with over 600 graves on that one island, Inuit graves, and it’s tiny. And that’s almost never heard of to the Inuit culture because they don’t have a cemetery, this is [...] pre-Christian. So there are the stone graves above ground, and there’s nowhere really documented where there’s that many graves on one island. There’s some type of cultural significance to that area and we don’t know why and that’s something that I’ve always wondered...There’s a huge gap and archaeology can fill in those gaps. Or fill in those types of perspectives...Inuit were buried where

they died, they don't get brought to a special spot but maybe Rose Island was one of those special spots.

2.4.3 Inuit Spirituality and Shamanism

Three participants brought up the topic of pre-contact Inuit spirituality. The coastal Labrador Inuit were introduced to Christianity by the Moravian missionaries. The missionary influence and Inuit becoming more integrated into European style communities, largely based on European Christian values of the time, encouraged many converts. Contemporary coastal Labrador communities, such as Nain, are predominantly Christian. Prior to the introduction of Christianity to Labrador, the Inuit practiced their own spirituality which consisted of animistic beliefs and shamanistic practices. Angakkuit, or shamans, were communicators with the spirits and mediators between the natural and spirit worlds (Oosten 2006:147-148). Shamanistic practices included drumming, dancing, chanting, among other rituals. Much of the traditional Inuit spiritual practice has been lost in northern coastal Labrador, as the European and Moravian presence began much earlier in this region than further inland. However, elements of Inuit spirituality remain today. Many Inuit Elders and lay people, despite identifying as Christian, believe in Inuit animism and in the presence of contemporary shamans (Oosten 2006:459). Furthermore, during Inuit-Moravian contact, Inuit converts were adopting the label of Christianity, but in practice only incorporated elements of Christianity that suited them, or attempted to bridge Christian and Inuit spiritual beliefs and practices (Oosten 2006:462). Oral histories about spirits in the mountains, such as the Torngats, and supernatural encounters were described in multiple interviews.

One participant, Ethan, stated that he would like to learn more about pre-Christian Inuit Spirituality. He made specific reference to Inuit singing, chanting, and drumming practices before European arrival to Labrador. Ethan inquired “where do spirits come from or where did the shamans come from”. Jake had questions about Inuit shamanism during the time of contact, specifically how Inuit resisted Christianization or conceded to it. He explained that according to the oral histories, during the time of Moravian evangelism in Labrador, Inuit Shamans and lay people were “being pulled from one way of belief to another, and they were called heathens”. Jake described the social and spiritual struggle of individuals choosing between traditional Inuit spiritual practices and Christianity, but asserts that there were some individuals who resisted adopting Christianity; he questions what happened to those people and where they went. He stated:

“I think that the Inuit really believe in Shamanism and people today even say there are people out there that still believe in that sect. You

know the way it used to be, tell people how it can affect change and the story about the land and the legends...People say don't fool around with the Torngats, the spirits, leave them alone because to this day they still respect that because they truly believe that there's something there in the mountains that's so powerful".

Jake also referenced the Spirit Sedna, which he explained is a spirit present in legends and oral histories of different Inuit groups. He is interested in understanding how these legends evolve or get passed on through different groups in various locations.

Similarly, Julie described wanting to learn more about the "shamanistic views of the Inuit, which is not documented anymore". She explained that Inuit shamanism is more thoroughly documented in the high arctic with the Inuvialuit and in Nunavut groups compared to the Nunatsiavut Inuit groups because of the earlier presence of Christian missionaries due to geographical location. Julie explained that Inuit culture on the Labrador coast was "more diluted" earlier on compared to Inuit groups inland or in the high arctic where contact happened much later. She continued, "so shamanistic views haven't been heard of in a long time along the coast. And all of [the] Elders are Christian and Moravian". She explained that a lot of the information about pre-contact Inuit spirituality has been lost, but that "it was present, you hear a couple stories about myths about the Torngats, which was considered the highest spirit in the region and that's why it's called the Torngat mountains, but there are different views on Torngat". She described certain rituals that individuals had to perform to show respect to the spirits, for example, rituals that accompany killing your first seal of the year. Julie said that learning about such practices and beliefs was of interest to her.

2.5 Discussion

In the following section I return to each of these themes and discuss how archaeologists might respond to them.

2.5.1 The Recent Past

In their discussions with me, participants expressed more interest in learning about the recent past than the distant past. I attribute this finding to two main factors. First, events in the recent past relating to relocation and residential schools appear to have alienated people from knowledge about their past. Second, many people in the community are unfamiliar with prehistorical and historical timelines and with the scope of archaeology. Participants described their immediate ancestors as living more traditional lifestyles prior to relocation to Nain and other southern communities. A

common trend in participants' responses was that life in the north prior to relocation, referring to settlements like Hebron and Okak, was more "living off the land". Although Inuit were already living in settled but small communities in the early 1900s, participants associated relocation from Hebron, Okak, and elsewhere to Nain with a loss of the past and a waning of an authentic Inuit culture. Participants associated pre-relocation life in the north with hunting and gathering, living in simpler dwellings (e.g. wood-stove heated homes, sod houses, or tents). Many participants described a longing for learning about their past by going hunting, by travelling "up north", and by learning to live off the land from relatives and Elders. In addition to oral history, experiential learning is a significant part of passing on Inuit culture. Experiential learning is learning through interacting with the landscape and practicing methods of survival. This disconnect between individuals and landscape has altered the way in which the past is learned and passed on. Similarly, the residential school system, which kept students away from their families for most of the year, was a disconnecting factor. For many participants, there was a personal interest in the recent past and genealogy in order to fill the gap. Julie was a participant in her twenties who was educated in northern cultural studies; she was not archaeologically trained, but has substantial knowledge of the past in Northern Labrador due to her employment in a related field. She explained that she is more interested in the distant past because she has encountered the topic in her employment and her past studies, but moreover because her family was not directly impacted by the northern relocations. Furthermore, she attributed her greater interest in the distant past in contrast to the more recent past with being raised with strong familial ties and experiences hunting and "living off the land", which satisfied her knowledge about the immediate past. Julie stated:

a lot of people in Nain have direct relations to the Hebron relocation... There might be a huge [knowledge] gap because... there have been a lot of issues and hate and a lot of people stopped talking about that kind of thing... a lot of people stopped sharing their Inuit customs and traditions because the pastors, school teachers, and the ministers said it was wrong.

Furthermore, the separation from "the north" is also a contributing factor to this disconnect. Many of the people I spoke to clearly associate "the north" with the past. The physical landscape of northern Labrador, where participants' ancestors lived, seemed to hold a synonymous meaning with the past and traditional Inuit culture. Therefore, it is important to note the participants' geographical symbolism of the past, which was just as much talked about as chronological descriptions of the past.

Historical archaeology is already used to study the recent past in Labrador. The contact period has been extensively studied to understand cultural interactions, assimilation, and cultural change over time. Aboriginal oral histories and written records from early settlers, traders, and missionaries are used to contextualize the archaeological record of the recent past. Government reports, trading company documents, and church records, contribute to what we know about the recent contact period. Oral histories have been consulted to understand the pre-contact period as well. Oral histories provide insight into various aspects of life, including spirituality and ritual, governance, and hunting and migration patterns, to name a few. Drawing upon consistencies between historical documents, oral histories, and the archaeological record often reveals a coherent representation of the past.

Historical archaeology is already being conducted by archaeologists working in the region, but many people are not aware of this. It would be beneficial to make historical archaeology projects accessible to the public. Organizing an excavation within community limits gives community members the opportunity to see archaeology and to ask questions. Similarly, setting up an artifact processing station within the community for sites that are remote provides an opportunity for community members to learn about what happens to the artifacts after they are excavated. Creating opportunities for active community participation in projects through employment, collecting oral histories to contextualize the research, or simply by making it visible improves community access to knowledge about the archaeology process and about the specific site being studied.

2.5.2 Graves and Human Remains

In terms of studying graves, the Nunatsiavut government's policy is that archaeologists must "avoid any disturbance of a site known to contain human remains or a site of religious or spiritual significance to Inuit unless explicitly authorized to do so" (Land Claims Agreement 2005: section 15.6.13:235). There is a lot of antipathy in Nain toward archaeologist due to inaccuracies regarding early unregulated work and the removal of human remains. A common misconception of contemporary archaeologists is that they dig up burials and take the human remains elsewhere to be studied and placed on display. Specific reference was made to Smithsonian archaeologists digging up graves and taking the human remains. This misconception perpetuates the idea that archaeology is a threat to Inuit cultural heritage.

However, it should be possible to both satisfy people's interest in graves and what can be learned from them, while at the same time not disturbing them in any way. In conjunction with mapping, recording, and historical archaeological methods, such as collecting oral histories, archaeologists can apply non-invasive studies to burials that can yield archaeological information without displacing human remains. Archaeologists and forensic anthropologists use geophysical survey techniques, such as ground penetrating radar, and magnetometry to locate burials. Ground penetrating radar, for instance, can detect soil and stratigraphy disturbances, which could indicate grave shafts (Jones 2008: 5). Geophysical techniques can be used to map and record burials, but also to locate human remains within the burial, which can reveal body positioning and the inclusion of other grave goods. Geophysical techniques used in tandem with historical archaeology are useful for interpreting Inuit burial practices. Not all geophysical techniques are conducive to all environments and soil types. Therefore, applying a variety of methods is useful in gathering as much information as possible, when conditions are not ideal. Conducting non-invasive studies on human remains would address participants' interests about graves, while at the same time respecting cultural values and government policy. More importantly, conducting such studies is an opportunity to involve the community and to better inform community members of contemporary archaeological techniques. In addition, conducting non-invasive studies on burials of the recent past, or in the community's memory, helps to develop a story and personal connection to the archaeology project.

2.5.3 Inuit Spirituality and Shamanism

Several participants expressed an interest in pre-contact Inuit spirituality and Shamanism. Participants mentioned ritualistic activities such as chanting and drumming, and were interested in Inuit animistic beliefs. Although belief and ideology are in themselves non-tangible, they manifest in material culture and thus there are ways that archaeology can attempt to learn about them.

Spirituality shows up in the archaeological record through the objects that people use to express their beliefs and to interact with the spiritual world. Objects that reveal ritual practices include portable and non-portable art, costume, architecture or structures, ritualistic objects, and the landscape. Rock art, altars, figurines, masks, ritualistic dress, and musical instruments are all examples of the material culture used to understand a culture's ritualistic or spiritual systems (Price 2001).

Archaeologists apply cognitive and symbolic archaeology to understand any broad symbolic structures that relates to the material culture that reveals spiritual worldviews and associated ritualistic

practices within a culture. Archaeologists studying prehistoric spirituality and shamanism rely heavily on the material culture and on ethnographic comparisons (e.g.; Devlet 2001; Fedorova; 2001; Lahelma 2005; Sutherland 2001; Whitley 2013).

In order to study pre-contact Inuit shamanism, archaeologists rely on the artifacts and features uncovered to gain a glimpse into what kinds of rituals occurred. Often it is difficult to decipher if an object had a practical or ritual use, particularly if an object had multiple uses. It is difficult for an archaeologists to uncover intent when analyzing cultural material. For example, a knife might be used for cooking, for ceremony, or used for both. Archaeologists can look at the relationships between the various objects to distinguish between practical and ritualistic contexts. For example, an animal adorned with goods and uncovered on an altar might indicate ritual sacrifice. Inferences are made based on the artifact assemblages, positioning, and location of objects uncovered. Some ritual contexts, however, are not visibly distinct from daily activities resulting in unclear ritual contexts. It is in these instances that historical documents, oral histories, and ethnography might provide additional insights.

Archaeologists also draw upon ethnographic studies and cultural comparisons to gain insights. For instance, Inuit groups living further inland in Canada also practiced animism and shamanism. There are challenges in using cross-cultural comparisons and ethnographic data in interpreting belief systems and worldviews. Spiritual worldviews are complex systems that have been poorly represented in ethnographic writings or are limited by linguistic barriers (Sutherland 2001:137). Ethnographic studies have revealed that shamanism and animism in the circumpolar north differ culturally (Sutherland 2001:136-137). There is a risk of making generalizations and homogenizing Aboriginal groups. Despite these limitations, there is value in cross-cultural comparisons and ethnographic works. Archaeologists can use these sources as reference and see if ethnographic data corroborates with the archaeological record. Cross-cultural comparisons with direct ancestral groups or with future descendant groups are more effective than simply comparing with cultures that share the same geographic region or have similar subsistence patterns. To demonstrate, Patricia Sutherland notes (2001:137) that in order to better understand meanings of Paleo-Eskimo art, it is more useful to compare it with Siberian art instead of with Inuit shamanic thought. Archaeologists also look to oral histories and historic writings of early explorers and settlers to uncover more information. In order to study changes in Shamanism during the contact period, historical archaeology is a useful tool.

2.5.4 The Distant Past

Participants spoke in more detail about and expressed more interest in the recent past than the more distant past. However, interest in the distant past was present, but more vaguely described.

Participants that were more familiar with the techniques, methods, and capabilities of archaeology expressed an equal or greater interest in the distant past than the recent past. Therefore, it appears that if community members were more thoroughly informed about what archaeology is and is capable of, participants' answers might have yielded more specific research topics, more directed and detailed research questions, and a wider variety of interest concerning the distant past. For example, Amy, who graduated from an undergraduate archaeology program, stated that she would like archaeologists to study methods of sewing and weatherproofing sealskin boots and dogsled and other transport technologies. Amy also acknowledged an interest in Inuit ground-stone technology in contrast to chipped-stone technology. She stated:

before contact materials came in, Inuit were making ulus and blades and [objects] out of ground stone. It's fascinating technology. I don't know why there have not been more studies on it because it is such a contrast to chipped stone technology.

Amy has been trained by a mainstream institution. Therefore, it is possible that she has been influenced by her academic training to find specific topics interesting, whereas the majority of community members do not have archaeological training and are not enculturated to think a certain way according to disciplinary norms. A more accurate knowledge of prehistoric and historic chronology, however, coupled with experimental archaeology might lead to more comprehensive interest in the more distant past in general. Experimental archaeology is used for improving understanding of how objects were made and used. For instance, archaeologists experiment with stone-knapping, building traditional Inuit dwellings, building and using transportation vehicles, hunting methods, all using traditional tools and attempting to recreate comparable environments (Croes 2010; Milne 2005; Griebel 2010).

Despite showing an interest in the past and in archaeology, most participants I spoke to had limited knowledge about archaeology. Even participants who understood archaeology as uncovering artifacts from the ground had little knowledge about what happens before and after excavation. Participants would ask me how archaeologists came to their conclusions or how they knew the story of certain objects. Informing the Indigenous communities about the interpretive processes archaeologists use can contribute to demonstrating the relevance of archaeological inquiry in

understanding the past. Participants showed interest in their cultural heritage, but many were unaware of how archaeology contributes to the development of cultural heritage. By having a basic understanding of the possibilities and limitations of archaeology, archaeologists and community members can work together to find ways of incorporating traditional methods of learning about the past with archaeology for a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach.

Although people had questions about the past and about archaeology, their limited knowledge about what archaeology is and about the kinds of questions that archaeologists can answer limited the depth of their inquiries. Communities need to be better equipped to be involved in decision-making processes, which is the goal of many archaeologists attempting to practice a more inclusive and collaborative archaeology. Although there are numerous archaeological sites throughout Labrador, I suggest that the excavation of sites located within communities, especially historic sites, be given priority. Archaeological projects that are visible and accessible to the public, and that address questions demonstrably of interest to them (i.e., the recent past) will spark interest and discussion, and will help inform the public about the techniques it uses.

2.6 Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that people in Nain are not only very interested in their past but are attracted to archaeology as a means of furthering their understanding of earlier times. Participants were eager to share stories about their knowledge of the past with me and were interested in what knowledge I had to offer. If communities are to be called upon to suggest research topics and questions to archaeologists conducting research in Labrador, archaeologists need to provide them with a better basic understanding about what archaeology is and can do, that can be built upon, in ways and in language they can identify with. In general, archaeologists are excited to share knowledge about archaeology or their specific projects, but much of the archaeology in Labrador is done in remote areas that the general community would not encounter. Moreover, people's misconceptions about what archaeology is and their limited awareness of its usefulness and possible applications are also an obstacle. Once the community is informed about very basic archaeological methods and principles, people will be able to contribute to collaborative projects, specifically by suggesting research questions they would like answered, in a more meaningful way.

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