Études/Inuit/Studies

Creating space for negotiating the nature and outcomes of collaborative research projects with Aboriginal communities
Créer un espace pour négocier la nature et les résultats de projets de recherche en collaboration avec des communautés autochtones

Natasha Lyons

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Résumé de l'article

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Cet article examine les questions de propriété intellectuelle et d'éthique impliquées dans la négociation des processus et des résultats de recherches faites en collaboration avec des communautés autochtones. Une série d'idées y sont soulignées pour poser les fondations d'une réflexion sur les manières de créer un espace conceptuel de discussions ouvertes et constructives entre partenaires de recherche. On applique la notion «d'espace communicationnel» d'Habermas à un partenariat entre des anthropologues basés dans le sud et des membres de la communauté inuvialuit de l'Arctique de l'ouest canadien. Ce partenariat se concentre sur la documentation de savoirs au sujet d'une collection exhaustive d'objets ethnographiques ancestraux conservés à la Smithsonian Institution à Washington, D.C., et sur la manière pertinente de diffuser ces savoirs auprès des communautés des Inuvialuit, des anthropologues et des muséologues. Cet article présente une suite de méthodes générées par le groupe de recherche qui contiennent certains paramètres utiles pour concevoir la recherche et entretenir la confiance et l'engagement entre partenaires. On y discute aussi de la dynamique des pratiques de la recherche communautaire et, en particulier, des méthodes par lesquelles les projets de recherche sont conçus, construits et poursuivis.

Abstract: Creating space for negotiating the nature and outcomes of collaborative research projects with Aboriginal communities

This article investigates intellectual property and ethical issues involved in negotiating research processes and outcomes in collaborative projects with Aboriginal communities. A series of ideas are outlined to lay a foundation for thinking about ways to create a conceptual space for open and constructive discussions between research partners. Habermas's notion of "communicative space" is applied to a partnership between southern-based anthropologists and members of the Inuvialuit community of the Canadian Western Arctic. This partnership is focused on documenting knowledge about a large and comprehensive collection of ancestral ethnographic objects housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and on disseminating this knowledge in meaningful ways to the Inuvialuit, anthropological, and museum communities. This article presents a suite of methods generated by the research group that lay some useful parameters for designing research and fostering trust and investment among

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partners. It also discusses the dynamics of community-based research practices and, specifically, methods for conceiving, constructing, and sustaining research projects.

Introduction

Intellectual property—construed here in a broad sense to mean both tangible and intangible property of Indigenous peoples (Nicholas and Bannister 2004; UNESCO 2003)—is a compelling framework for discussion about cultural knowledge and community-based scholarship in and with Aboriginal communities. Bell and Napoleon (2008: 18) state that intellectual property discourse fundamentally aims to "restructure relations [...] in a manner that acknowledges and respects unique First Nations identities and is consistent with First Nations values, beliefs, laws, and practices." This perspective brings research partnership with First Nations and other Aboriginal communities clearly into the realm of ethics and appropriate practice.

While questions about intellectual property and ethics are central to all research pursuits, they are especially critical to Aboriginal communities and researchers who have continually suffered under the ethnocentric regimes of outside research and political institutions (Grande 2008; Smith 1999). In advanced capitalist societies, as Habermas (1971) observed, technology and science have eclipsed the role of ethics and self-reflection in research practices. He recognised that contemporary research is closely equated with positivism, and that science is no longer seen as one form of knowledge but as *the* form of knowledge (Held 1980: 296). Consequently, the knowledge of Western-educated "experts," be they doctors, scientists, academics, or government administrators, has subverted other forms of knowing and being, legitimising the powers of these individuals to make decisions on behalf of much wider constituencies (Held 1980: 264). It is these very assumptions, and the protocols of research based on them, that Indigenous people and scholars working with them seek to examine, decolonise, and ultimately transform.

Aboriginal communities have steadily taken back the reins of research, in an effort to produce questions, models, and outcomes that are of primary use to themselves rather than to outside interests (e.g., Battiste 2000; Bishop 2005; Mihesuah and Wilson 2004; Smith 1999). This process has occurred throughout the circumpolar North, in addition to many areas throughout the world, as Indigenous communities challenge and confront colonial relations, including those embedded in the research process (e.g., Atalay 2006; Fienup-Riordan 2010; ITK and NRI (2007); Lyons et al. 2010; Marshall 2002; Pratt 2009). The emerging research models apply Indigenous epistemologies both to the questions that interest communities and to the larger organising principles

that guide the work. Clark cogently describes the process of reclaiming research agendas and returning authority to community hands:

> The argument emerging […] is that the authority for Indigenous studies must be located prominently among Indigenous institutions and rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and being. From these essential sources of authority, Indigenous scholars and our non-Indigenous allies rightfully are empowered to discipline the disciplines and to subject Indigenous studies to the concrete needs of Indigenous Peoples (Clark 2004: 219).

These models are often conceived as processes that allow the community to "grow with" the research (Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and Smith 2009: xiii). This approach gives equal emphasis to process as product and has led to discussions on the clash of epistemologies that pits process-oriented against product-oriented research (MacPherson et al. 2000; Turnbull 2000). It also emphasises pragmatism, thereby assuming an open and evolving dialogue that invites broader conversations and new meanings and understandings on a given question (Baert 2005; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005; Preucel and Mrozowski 2010: 33).

This article investigates intellectual property and ethical issues surrounding how researchers[1] negotiate the nature and ownership of research processes and outcomes in collaborative projects with Aboriginal communities. It examines the intersection of interests in research partnerships between Aboriginal communities and outside research allies. While it is laudable to conduct all research "in house," this is not possible for many Aboriginal communities who are stretched with other demands and who often lack the capacity and personnel (Lyons 2007: 63). Below, I consider how research goals, processes, and products are negotiated between collaborators. Such partnerships raise a key challenge of meeting the divergent needs of respective team members. For instance, there is a fundamental disconnect between the types of products and outcomes that are useful to most Aboriginal communities and those required by most outside researchers.[2] Many Aboriginal communities seek to build infrastructure, capacity, resources and inter-generational relationships through their collaborative research partnerships (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Fienup-Riordan 2010; Lyons et al. 2010). In contrast, most academic practitioners must routinely publish journal articles that their institutions acknowledge and that use a framework and language specific to the discipline in question. The articles are seldom written in commonly accessible language and formats (ITK and NRI 2007; Trimble and Fisher 2006).

I will first outline a series of concepts for negotiating the production and dissemination of research results. The concepts are drawn from different cultural

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[1] While social science researchers may originate from source communities, this paper focuses on collaborative research conducted by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal partners.

[2] Researchers who are working with Aboriginal communities are associated with or employed by a variety of institutions, such as private and independent businesses, government, academic and public institutions, and of course Aboriginal communities themselves. In this paper, I will focus on academic interests. My own affiliation is as an independent heritage consultant associated with the Department of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University.

traditions that recognise the theoretical and practical elements of making space for dialogue. I am particularly interested in looking at ways to create space for open and constructive discussions between partners. I elaborate on Habermas's (1996) notion of "communicative space" and apply it to my work with the Inuvialuit community of the Canadian Western Arctic. Our partnership currently has a goal of documenting knowledge about a large and comprehensive collection of ancestral ethnographic objects housed at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and disseminating this knowledge in meaningful ways in the Inuvialuit, anthropological, and museum communities (Loring et al. 2010; Lyons 2010a; forthcoming). My intent here is to highlight a suite of methods that our project team has generated that lay some useful parameters for our research discussions and which foster trust and investment.

Creating space for the middle ground

There are deep historical roots to Aboriginal distrust of Western newcomers, be they government representatives, educators, religious practitioners, or researchers (Grande 2000, 2004, 2008; Mihesuah and Wilson 2004; Noble 2008; Pyburn 1999; Said 1978; Smith 1999). The newcomers' institutions and practices have marginalised Aboriginal communities from public and political processes, and excluded them from Western society at large. Indigenous scholars cite a history of dehumanising research practices that have shown disrespect or even worse for their persons and cultural traditions (e.g., Smith 1999: 1). Grande maintains that Aboriginal communities continue to live under the spectre of colonialism: "We live within, against, and outside of its constant company, witnessing its various manifestations as it shape-shifts its way into everything from research and public policy to textbooks and classrooms" (Grande 2008: 234).

For this reason, building the foundations for successful and mutually beneficial partnerships between Aboriginal communities and outside researchers takes a good deal of time, commitment, and faith in order to enter a realm where trust can be built (Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Kral and Idlout 2006). Given this history of research, it is critical that Aboriginal and outside researchers establish a safe space for discussion. I call this largely unrecognised element of community-based research "the middle ground," where the nuts and bolts of a project are negotiated (see also Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2010; White 1991; Zimmerman 1997). The list of items up for discussion is contingent on the project, but might at minimum include research questions, process, communication style, roles and responsibilities, leadership, decision-making, funding sources, copyright, ownership, deliverables, and strategies for sharing and disseminating outcomes. These questions loom much larger and are more pressing in a research partnership than in a study undertaken individually by a researcher, as there are more parts to coordinate and more places and ways to fall down. On the other hand, the shared successes and sense of accomplishment of things done well and right are felt much more broadly and deeply in collaborative research.

So how does the middle ground get negotiated? This is a complex topic and engenders additional questions: How are agendas created, research questions formulated, intentions arrived at, and deliverables and outcomes decided upon? The middle ground is a tricky space, especially at the beginning of a partnership when the parameters of both research and collaboration are being formulated and established. Yet, this is exactly how the middle ground should be viewed: as a *space* to be recognised, occupied, developed, and expanded. It needs time and breathing room, energy and flexibility. It needs consideration ahead of the work because the project's ultimate success will rely on how it is cultivated. Making space for such dialogue has both theoretical and practical elements, as seen in selected cultural concepts outlined below.

Several cultural and spiritual traditions recognise the need for creating space to acknowledge the spoken word. Amongst the Stó:lo and other Northwest Coast societies, large-scale ceremonies and feasts are held to observe the naming, passing, and other rites of passage of community members. Within Stó:lo longhouses, a purposeful and tangible relationship is cultivated between speakers and guests. Certain guests are formally "asked to witness" the words and cultural work of the longhouse speaker in a respectful way (Carlson 1997: ii). Witnesses are deemed responsible for remembering the words expressed and the cultural work that attended them as a record of their occurrence; this is a sacred obligation (Bierwert 1999: 113-114; Carlson 1997: 184; McHalsie 2007). Similarly, in certain Buddhist traditions, witnesses assist the speaker by "holding the space" into which the spoken word is delivered (Nhat Hanh 1995). These witnesses help to create an atmosphere of peace, calm, respect, and compassion by chanting, joining hands, or otherwise enabling a harmonious environment into which the words are invited.

Various academic models have also been developed to explore and expand this notion of creating space for facilitating research process. From the perspective of Indigenous scholars, an "intellectual space" or "inquiry room" is needed to examine avenues for decolonising research methodologies and to identify their place in and relationship to research processes (Grande 2008: 234; Mihesuah and Wilson 2004; Smith 1999, 2005). In Grande's (2008: 234) "Red Pedagogy," this work starts by situating the problem "in the historical disconnect between Indigenous education and Western theory." Grande articulates how Indigenous research epistemologies are distinct from Western paradigms, with a view to providing a platform for the creation of alternate, "Red" theories. Such research has been very much equated with regaining the humanity of Indigenous peoples within both the scholarly community and the secular world (Wilson 2004). It has also been argued that the perspectives that emerge should be judged on their own merits, and within their cultures of origin, rather than by neo-colonial standards (Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 2).

Jürgen Habermas and other critical theorists have examined the question of how groups of people communicate in the public sphere. This work provides a close look at methods for "levelling the playing field," referring to the process of identifying and working to reduce the impact of pre-existing social cleavages, power differentials,

language barriers, and other factors that prevent respective parties from creating an environment suitable for discussions (Crossley 2004; Habermas 1984, 1989; Leone and Preucel 1992; Noble 2008; Preucel and Hodder 1996). In his *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas (1984, 1989) describes a process "in which people consciously and deliberately aim 1. To reach *intersubjective agreement* as a basis for 2. *Mutual understanding* so as to 3. Reach an *unforced consensus about what to do* in the particular practical situation in which they find themselves" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005: 575-576). Habermas also closely examined the question of how to keep these communications between groups clear and undistorted, through a sustained reflexivity (Crossley 2004; Held 1980: 256).

As his theory matured, Habermas (1996) recognised that establishing the conditions for communicative action opens a kind of "communicative space" between people. The idea of communicative space can be considered both metaphorical and literal, as defined and operationalised by the group in question. It is a space that lays a foundation of trust and respect between group members. This foundation gives rise to several outcomes. First, communicative space fosters solidarity among members who open their lines of communication in truthful, sincere, mutually comprehensible, and ethically appropriate ways (Habermas 1996). Second, the communication is conducted freely and openly by participating members, and is thus legitimate and meaningful to them. Such legitimacy or authenticity, in a public process or otherwise, is rare "in a world where communications are frequently cynical, and where people feel alienated from public decisions and [...] political processes" (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005: 576-577). In what follows, I adopt Habermas's (1996) concept of communicative space to develop ideas on the negotiation of research.

How to create communicative space in the real world

The Inuvialuit partnership

To shift the foregoing conversation into more concrete terms, I look at a real-world example of group process in action, using my work with the Inuvialuit community of the Canadian Western Arctic. The Inuvialuit are the Inuit of the lower Mackenzie River and adjacent shorelines of the Beaufort Sea. They are descended from Thule peoples who migrated from Alaska ca. 1000 AD, and who specialised in beluga whale hunting (Friesen and Arnold 2008). When Europeans arrived in their territory, the Inuvialuit were living in a number of named local groups that together formed one of the most concentrated populations in the Arctic (Alunik et al. 2003: 14-17; McGhee 1974: xi; Stefansson 1919: 22-23). Post-contact Inuvialuit history is closely associated with the bowhead whaling industry, whose centre was at Herschel Island, and which brought environmental devastation to the region and its peoples (Usher 1971). With the collapse of the industry, many Inuvialuit moved from the coast to the Mackenzie Delta and became successful trappers and traders. In the late 20th century, they would halt oil and

gas development and successfully assert a land claim, signed in 1984 (Berger 1977; Inuvialuit Final Agreement 1984; Usher 1993).

The land claim settlement called for the creation of institutions to foster, document, and promote the "social, cultural and educational welfare of Inuvialuit" (Alunik 1998: 21). In the 1960s and 1970s, Inuvialuit leaders began to document traditional land use and occupancy (Cournoyea 1997), a task that is today being performed by the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre. This institution opened in 1998, and its energies have largely focused on language reclamation, culturally specific curriculum development, and revival of living cultural traditions, such as drum dancing, sewing, and land-based skills (e.g., Arnold and Hanks 1991; GNWT 1991; Inuvialuit elders with Bandringa 2010; Hart 1994, 1997, 1999, 2001; Hart and Cockney 1998; Nagy 1994a, 1994b, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2006; Parks Canada 2004; Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre n.d.a, n.d.b, n.d.c; Radford 2005).

I have been working with the Inuvialuit for a decade on community-defined heritage goals (Lyons 2004, 2007, 2009, 2010b, 2011, forthcoming; Koutouki and Lyons 2009). Our current project is to document Inuvialuit and museum-based knowledge about the MacFarlane Collection, an assemblage of nearly 300 ethnographic items collected in the mid-19th century from Anderson River Inuvialuit, which became a founding collection of the Smithsonian Institution (Lepage 2009; Loring et al. 2010; Lyons 2010a). This collection was purchased and assembled by Hudson's Bay trader Roderick MacFarlane with help from Anderson River people, in whose territory he established a short-lived post from 1861 to 1866 (MacFarlane 1890-1891; Morrison 2006). The MacFarlane Collection has been little studied or exhibited, and few of its items have ever been circulated among or studied by Inuvialuit.

This project seeks to facilitate Inuvialuit access to the MacFarlane Collection, and to create a platform to generate knowledge, interpretation, and meaningful engagement with the objects and, in turn, to share this knowledge in meaningful ways with the Inuvialuit and wider communities. In November 2009, our team of Inuvialuit elders, youth, educators, and anthropologists conducted a weeklong workshop at the Smithsonian Institution to view, interact with, and begin documenting knowledge about the MacFarlane Collection. Throughout 2010 and 2011, we conducted outreach activities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to share our experiences through school visits and community information meetings to document elders' knowledge and to engage youth interest in the collection and the project (Lyons et al. 2011). With the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN n.d.), we have launched the MacFarlane Collection on an online museum portal hosted by the University of British Columbia. We also have recently launched a project website that presents traditional and curatorial knowledge, Inuvialuit perspectives about the collection, and curricula for local schools (see Inuvialuit Living History n.d.).

The Inuvialuit project is a partnership between a number of individuals and institutions, including Catherine Cockney (Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre), Mervin Joe (Parks Canada, Inuvik), Albert Elias (elder and interpreter, Ulukhaktok), James Pokiak

(hunter and outfitter, Tuktoyaktuk), Maia Lepage (photographer, Inuvik), Charles Arnold (retired Director of Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Yellowknife), Kate Hennessy (School of Interactive Arts and Technology, Simon Fraser University), Stephen Loring (Arctic Studies Center, Smithsonian Institution), and myself, Natasha Lyons (Ursus Heritage Consulting; Simon Fraser University). The present paper is single-authored, largely because I took this opportunity to develop a number of my own ideas about research collaborations in the general sense, and how they relate to the work we have done together in a specific sense.

Communicative space and the Inuvialuit partnership

In the following sections, I consider how the members of our Inuvialuit partnership have created a communicative space to establish goals of mutual interest, and how this space has helped us to develop effective and equitable processes of communication. Our project has moved forward via three processes: establishing a charter for research conduct; developing methods for vetting interview data; and creating time and space for relationships. These discussions lead to a consideration of how to address conflict and challenges in research partnerships.

A charter for research conduct

Early on in our research, our team drew up a charter to define our collective and individual goals and responsibilities. The aim was to establish some ideals of conduct to look to and rely upon in our working relationships. The charter outlines the following areas of collective action: the kind of atmosphere we are interested in cultivating and sustaining (open, honest, positive, supportive, and constructive); how we will conduct our communications; how we will support project goals and remain flexible in light of new ideas or opportunities; and how we plan to provide feedback on project deliverables.

The charter recognises that the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre holds copyright to the data we produce, including interviews with elders and youth, and gives partners latitude to produce articles and conference presentations that others can provide feedback on. At an individual level, our charter outlines the roles and responsibilities of team members, and how they can contribute to activities and products decided upon by the collective. We consider this document, like other project documents and products, to be living and subject to ongoing revision and re-consideration. Although many of us have known and worked with each other for some time, this charter has helped to facilitate a trusting space between us and a protocol to be used as needed.

Vetting of project materials

This is a second area of considerable interest and discussion among partners. We are currently working on a set of methods for reviewing, vetting, and verifying the

documentation collected from interviews and curatorial research. The first step involves reviewing interviews by project collaborators and determining which perspectives, ideas, and opinions to base our interpretations on. Once we have decided on a set of interpretations, we then return to the elders, youth, and other community members who contributed the information to verify it and to ask permission to publish it on the project website.

Vetting is an extremely important step in the interpretive process because it filters the information that will ultimately be presented about the collection, and may privilege certain voices over others. As interviews are transcribed and translated, we must also consider the question of maintaining the integrity and the intent of the speaker's statements (Nagy 2002, 2006). We are very conscious of the different factors that inform community dynamics, and are working to develop procedures that select the most accurate set of stories or interpretations, at the same time as representing different voices and perspectives (see Cournoyea 1997; Habu et al. 2008). An important element is to relay how we made our inferences and arrived at our interpretations. In my prior work with Inuvialuit elders, I found that recurrent ideas or interpretations of ancestral artifacts are often—but not always—the most historically accurate ones (Lyons 2007: 213-218). Previously, I have presented a range of different individual experiences and memories of historical events, family, and personal histories (Lyons 2010b). Inuvialuit contributors have always chosen to have their names attributed to the information they have provided.

Once the draft of a document, presentation, website text, or other product is completed, there is another level of vetting by team members and other appropriate reviewers. This is an important step for the information to be culturally appropriate and accurate from an insider's standpoint, but also for outsiders to have a chance to comment using their knowledge of the research area and cultural context. Our group does not wish to create histories that are proprietary or that uncritically provide only one facet of a group's social history. Together, multiple lenses or viewpoints can help form a kind of situated or contingent objectivity to historical narratives (*cf.* Haraway 1991; Wylie 2000, 2006). In our partnership, we have consciously worked to create a safe space for discussions about vetting and interpreting practices, as these processes form the main axis of our work. Our discussions—whether between two of us or among many—operate in a space where differing opinions can be put forward and discussed.

Building time and space for relationships

In our partnership, we are always working towards the most (culturally) appropriate methods for planning our project, sharing our findings, and making time to work on our relationships. We regularly set aside time and space for conventional teleconference meetings, but many of us also maintain friendly communications outside the workplace. Although our team members hail from all three coastlines of North America, we manage to come together for meetings, public outreach, and

workshops once or twice a year. We consciously allot time and activities to these visits without a formal agenda so that we can enjoy each other's company and catch up on news and family life. This is an important feature of relationship building, as we are all invested in the process of the work as well as the friendships we have cultivated with each other. In fact, the strength of these relationships is the basis for our team's synergy and the high level of engagement among partners and community members.

Falling down and getting up: Addressing conflict and challenges

With the above ideals in mind, I will briefly address the issue of conflict within community partnerships. My perspective is that we should not shy away from establishing procedures for conflict or from discussing its challenges. My own anthropological practice has seen mistakes of procedure and interpretation that were corrected by my colleagues in the Inuvialuit community (and elsewhere). In each case, when I realised my mistake (or when it was pointed out to me), I apologised and asked how it might be corrected. Recently, one such correction meant attaching an addendum to a published paper that was going out to Inuvialuit community members and organisations. Afterwards, two of us talked in detail about revamping and improving our review procedures.

It is never comfortable to be in the wrong, but naming the mistake and facing the conflict—rather than skirting it to avoid confrontation—does provide some redress and help to move things forward. Showing colleagues in academic and descent communities that you have the humility to admit your transgressions is a sign of leadership and accountability; it shows that you are fallible and willing to learn from mistakes (Lyons 2007: 72-73, 243-245). This kind of presence is particularly important in cases where the research cites the voices and words of community historians, or discusses family histories and other themes near and dear to the hearts of community partners (*cf*. Cournoyea 1997). As suggested above, there should be ongoing discussion of protocols for presenting the views and interpretations of project partners and Inuvialuit community members—in whatever format (web, print, video)—because project goals and activities develop and change.

Discussion: Inclusion, rigour, and space

It is not easy to strike a balance between the needs, interests, perspectives, ideas, and personalities of respective team members in research partnerships. The true litmus test of success is the engagement of all team members and, in our case, their commitment to generating and disseminating the knowledge we are producing. Balance also implies caring for each other and for the individuals we invite into our research process. Many of our research participants are the oldest living members of their communities, and face many types of health challenges (Lyons 2007: 155). We have adopted an ethical approach that seeks to care for those involved in our process with

thoughtfulness, attentiveness, and nurturing (Battiste 2008; Denzin and Lincoln 2008: 3).

Relationships must also be negotiated on a more political basis. One element is the interplay between Aboriginal individuals and organisations, and the policies and protocols developed by academic, governmental, and other outside institutions. Battiste (2008: 505) states that "reciprocal [research] relationships must embody both recognition of the custodians of knowledge and awareness of the associated responsibilities of the custodians and the receivers of knowledge." This mandate requires that all parties understand the nature of the knowledge, its intended uses, and the places where it will be disseminated. Noble and others have put forward the idea of "recognition spaces" as places where Indigenous people are acknowledged as the "driving force" in creating their own laws and customs of ownership (Noble 2008: 477; Pearson 1997).

In our partnership, we have established the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre as the holder of copyright and the primary repository of the data we gather. There is certainly a great deal more distance to go in recognising Inuvialuit protocols for ethics and cultural recognition. Our primary mandate is to be inclusive, in both the theoretical sense and the practical sense. In Cooper's (2006) assessment, the epistemic notion of inclusion, by its very nature, connotes truthfulness, virtue, and professional integrity. Inclusiveness, however, does not imply a lack of critical rigour in the research process. Habermas maintains that critical concerns go hand in hand with reflexive and ethical practice. He developed his brand of critical theory both to counter the hegemony of positivistic science and to restore ethical and reflexive concerns to the centre of the knowledge-producing enterprise. He observed that critical self-reflection in the research process "leads to insight due to the fact that what has previously been unconscious is made conscious in a manner rich in consequences: analytic insights intervene in life" (Habermas 1974: 22-23 in Held 1980: 317).

Many Aboriginal scholars endorse this critical and reflexive approach, but from new and distinct standpoints. Grande (2008: 236) asserts that the building of critical perspectives fosters solidarity in Indigenous causes and forms a platform for decolonising pedagogies, developing research methodologies, and initiating institutional reform. This approach is similarly being taken up by Inuit scholars, who note that oral histories and northern narratives should be subject to literary criticism and analysis, like any other canon of scholarly work (e.g., Carpenter 1997; Ipellie 1997; Martin 2009; Vuntut Gwichin First Nation and Smith 2009: xii-xv). Martin (2009: 192) has suggested: "while [Inuit] Elders and their knowledge may be 'traditional', they are also contemporary, adaptable, and therefore not only relevant but essential to the study of Inuit intellectual traditions." These provocative discussions challenge the methods by which such histories have conventionally been approached, produced, and compiled by Inuit and non-Inuit researchers. Our partnership will consider these issues as we move forward in collecting, analysing, and verifying the documentation we are producing.

A particularly successful example of critical practice is Bell, Napoleon, and Paterson's work, as represented in the companion volumes, *First Nations Cultural Heritage and Law: Case Studies, Voices, and Perspectives* (Bell and Napoleon, 2008) and *Protection of First Nations Cultural Heritage: Laws, Policy, and Reform* (Bell and Paterson 2009). Bell and Napoleon (2008: 15) suggest that the diversity of perspectives heard in their case study volume stems not only from the diversity of opinion among their collaborators and participants, but also from the considerable time spent negotiating the expectations and outcomes of each independent study (see Fienup-Riordan 2010; Kral and Idlout 2006). This kind of investment is the hallmark of a successful research partnership, signalling that the groundwork was carefully laid for an equitable process of shared planning, decision-making, and ownership of the ideas and products of the work.

The Inuvialuit Living History project has sought to develop a communicative space in which to engage and operate. To this end, we have established a charter for research conduct, developed methods for vetting interview data, and created time and space for the relationships at the core of our work. We are currently working to use digital spaces as sites for research discussions and processes. Such spaces help to collapse the geographic distances that separate us, and to bridge the disconnect between academic and community agendas. Our primary product after several years of compiling community and curatorial knowledge is a website that seeks to share knowledge about the MacFarlane Collection and make it once again a living collection within the Inuvialuit community. In this regard, community members have been very keen to obtain and recreate patterns from different items, while educators and students have been excited to learn about this ancestral collection through an online exhibit and lesson plans tailored to local curricula. The website, by serving multiple purposes, joins academic goals to community ones. The online exhibit provides both community and curatorial knowledge about the items in the collection. Through the Reciprocal Research Network, one can also query a particular item, add knowledge, and discuss existing interpretations.

We anticipate the need to continue re-visiting our vetting procedures and sharing protocols as questions arise within the research framework. For instance, we are currently discussing intellectual property issues concerning how many details about artifact manufacture should be shared with non-Inuvialuit visitors to the website. Similarly, our team must address who will maintain, support, and update the website over time. The communicative space we have developed does not offer solutions to these issues, but it does provide a safe place where they can be discussed.

We will rely on the communicative space that lies between us as our partnership progresses. Our documents and protocols have addressed some of the challenges and interpersonal conflicts that can arise when the subject matter involves the ideas, opinions, and historical knowledge of community members, knowledge that is collectively very close to the hearts of our Inuvialuit partners. It seems inevitable that well-meaning outsiders will make mistakes, fall down, and (hopefully) be supported and instructed by community members in the ways to do things right. Similarly, outside

researchers have technical and theoretical knowledge, in addition to other sets of skills, to contribute to the collective. Our research framework will not alleviate the need for difficult discussions. What we have established, and will continue to cultivate, is a space for safe and open dialogue that allows us to enjoy and share in the process and products of our research.

Acknowledgments

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