

# Mobilizing *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* in Narwhal Management Through Community Empowerment: A Case Study in Naujaat, NU

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## Background

- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA), and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) all recognize the importance and value of utilizing indigenous knowledge systems in creating effective resource management regimes, especially in identifying management priorities and reducing conflict between resource users and managers
- The existing narwhal management system in Nunavut fails to effectively utilize IQ in decision-making: efforts to incorporate IQ have consisted mainly of knowledge collection studies which remove IQ from its original context
- IQ is an experiential knowledge system; as such, the effective mobilization of IQ requires that Inuit, as the knowledge-holders, are empowered within the decision-making process



## Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)

- Refers to an Inuit worldview encompassing language, history, decision-making, social organization, values, knowledge, and ways of knowing<sup>1</sup>
- **Experiential, oral knowledge system** developed over centuries of Inuit living on the land; more than “traditional ecological knowledge”
- First used in the context of management and governance in the NLCA<sup>2</sup>

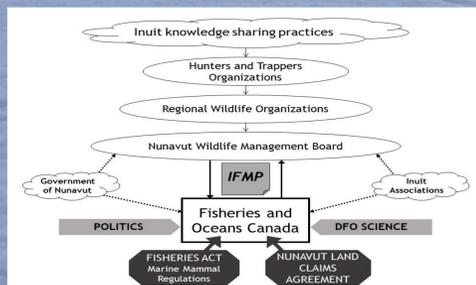
## Methods

- Literature review
- Ten in-person, semi-structured interviews with narwhal management stakeholders in Naujaat (formerly Repulse Bay), NU, conducted during a six week field research period from June-July 2015
- Feedback on preliminary findings obtained through radio broadcast, expanding the reach of data collection

**Research Question:** Based on the experience of Naujaat, how can a narwhal management regime which reflects Inuit priorities and enables Inuit direction of the management process be established in Nunavut?

### 1. How are narwhal currently managed?

- Prior to 1971, Inuit had autonomy over narwhal harvesting activities; in 1971 the federal government introduced a quota-based management system<sup>3</sup>
- The NLCA mandates that wildlife in Nunavut are co-managed, but DFO has the final decision-making power for management; management practices are outlined in the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP)



### 2. How does the existing management system influence the use of IQ?

- Interview respondents identified several changes within local narwhal harvesting practices corresponding to the introduction of quota-based management:
- Hunting activities are more rushed because hunters must meet their needs before the community's quota is used up for the season
  - Increased competition between hunters
  - The traditional pace and pattern of winter preparation activities is altered
  - Hunters pursue narwhals rather than waiting for narwhal to approach shore
  - Opportunities for knowledge transfer, training new generations of hunters in IQ are limited

### 3. What is the ideal relationship between management and IQ?

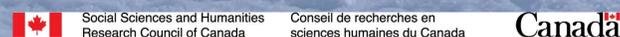
- Respondents also discussed ongoing issues with management:
- IQ is meant to be expressed through Inuktitut, but the existing management system requires IQ to be translated into language of management: Inuktitut should be integrated into decision-making process
  - Poor communication across all levels of management impedes the ability of Inuit stakeholders to identify opportunities for mobilizing IQ in decision-making: need for better communication
  - Government has an important role to play in regulating harvesting now that hunters are accustomed to the quota system
  - Community-based management could be a way to enable mobilization of IQ in management by empowering local level actors, such as Hunters and Trappers Organizations

### 4. How could such a relationship be established?

#### Recommendations

1. Improve communication between high-level management and community stakeholders
2. Promote knowledge-sharing (e.g. include communities in aerial surveys) between managers and community-level stakeholders
3. Create equitable knowledge-sharing partnerships
4. Situate more decision-making power with local management authorities (RWO, HTO)

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