
Strength-Based Approaches to Involving Inuit Youth in Archaeological Research

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ABSTRACT. In this collaborative paper between university-based archaeologists and Nunatsiavummiut youth, we discuss our attempts to unsettle our research while working on community-oriented projects in Hopedale, Nunatsiavut, through the application of strength-based approaches. We outline the need for strength-based approaches for involving Nunatsiavummiut youth in archaeology and the ways we apply these approaches to Kelvin's research project, the Agvituk Digital Archive Project, and Gilheany's dissertation research on the recent history of Hopedale. We incorporate key aspects of these approaches, including: focusing on the whole person and recognizing their social context; actively involving participants in decisions; recognizing strengths and expertise of participants so that everyone is both a teacher and a learner; and encouraging experiences where group members can be successful. We argue that an unsettled, strength-based approach necessitates a future-oriented archaeology.

RÉSUMÉ. Dans cet article produit en collaboration par des archéologues rattachés à l'université et des jeunes Nunatsiavummiuts, nous discutons de nos tentatives visant à déstabiliser notre recherche tout en travaillant sur des projets communautaires à Hopedale, Nunatsiavut. Nous mettons l'accent sur la nécessité d'adopter des approches axées sur les points forts pour faire participer les jeunes Nunatsiavummiuts à l'archéologie ainsi que sur les manières dont nous appliquons ces approches au projet de recherche de Laura Kelvin—le projet d'archives numé-

riques Agvituk—et la recherche de dissertation d'Emma Gilheany portant sur l'histoire récente de Hopedale. Nous incorporons des aspects-clés de ces approches, notamment : nous concentrer sur la personne dans son ensemble et reconnaître son contexte social; faire en sorte que les participants jouent un rôle actif dans la prise de décisions; reconnaître les points forts et l'expertise des participants afin que tous soient à la fois enseignants et apprenants; et encourager des expériences pour lesquelles les membres du groupe sont susceptibles de réussir. Nous soutenons qu'une approche déstabilisée axée sur les points forts nécessite une archéologie orientée vers l'avenir.

ISUMAGIJAUK. Tâpsuminga ikajuttigegijaujumut allakkasâjammik, akungani ilinnivitsuamit-ilinganiKajuk itsasuanittaligijjujunut ammalu Nunatsiavut inosittunginnut, uKâlautiKavugut piniannigigasuatatinnik pijagegasuagiamut Kaujisajattinik suliaKatiluta nunalinni-ilinganiKajunut sulianginnik Hopedale, Nunatsiavummi, taikkutigona ottugautikkut sangijottisigasugiamut-ilin-

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ganiKajunut piniannigigasuatatinnik. Allasimavugut atugialittinik sangijottisigasuaigiamut-ilinganiKajunut piniannitinnik ilautitsigiamut Nunatsiavut inosittunik itsasuanittaliginimmiut ammalu Kanuk tamakkuninga ilisigajammangâta pinianisanik taipsumunga Kelvin-iup Kaujisajammunik sulianganut, tâna Agvituk Kagitaujannut ilijaumajut Piulimajajunut Suliangujuk, ammalu Gilheany-iup ilinniagutigijangata nalunaikkutattâgiamut Kaujisajammunik ilinganiKajumut taimangasuanisumajuk Hopedale-imi ilinganiKajumut. Ilisisimavugut atuniKatsiatunut takunnâtaujunut taikkuninga pinianniujunut, ilautillugit: takunnâlugit iluingajumut inummut ammalu ilitatsilugit ilonnanginnik inosingita pitagijanginnik; ilautitsiluni ilauKataujunik kajusiutillutillugit, ilitatsilutik sangiojunik ammalu ilisimallagijunut ilauKataujunut imailinganiammat tamâgik ilinniatsijjuniammata ammalu ilinnialutillu; ammalu pikKujigasualluni atujangit ilonnatik kat- ingaKatigejut ilaliutilet kajusitsiaKullugit. kiumajiutiKavugut pijagettausimangituk, sangijuk-ilinganiKajuk piniannik atuttaugialet sivunnittini-Kaujimagettunillu itsasuanittaliginimmik.

IN THIS PAPER, WE DISCUSS OUR attempts to unsettle our research, while working on youth-focused community-oriented archaeology projects in Hopedale, Nunatsiavut (Figure 1). Our research stems from the acknowledgement of the special role that youth have in Indigenous communities and the contributions they can make to research projects. Colonial policies that aim to destroy Indigenous ways of knowing and being are often designed to sever the tie between youth and community knowledge holders, so traditions and culture are not carried forward. As a result, Indigenous youth are often the target of colonial structures, creating physical, social, and emotional challenges for their growth and well-being. Communities often request that youth be involved

in archaeology projects to connect youth to their past and help alleviate these challenges and ensure cultural continuity. Archaeologists have typically employed youth as field and lab technicians, and have looked to Elders to gain intellectual insight of the past (i.e., oral histories or traditional knowledge), while the intellectual contributions youth can make to archaeology have often been overlooked. Our projects aim to involve youth in archaeological projects in ways that go beyond limiting their role to assisting in traditional archaeological work. To effectively engage youth as learners, researchers, knowledge holders, and teachers, we have needed to build projects that understand archaeology as more than survey, excavation, and lab work. This approach means learning to do archaeology differently and expecting different outcomes and products from our research.

This paper is a collaborative effort between Laura Kelvin, a postdoctoral fellow from Memorial University, Emma Gilheany, a PhD student from the University of Chicago, and Denver Edmunds, Nicholas Flowers, Mackenzie Frieda, Claire Igloliorte, Halle Lucy, and John Piercy, Nunatsiavummiut youth from Hopedale. Throughout this paper, direct quotes from the authors are used to properly acknowledge their intellectual and emotional contributions to the understandings of the work being presented. In this paper, we outline the need for strength-based approaches for involving Nunatsiavummiut youth in archaeology and the ways we apply these approaches to Kelvin's research project, the Agvituk Digital Archive Project, and Gilheany's dissertation research on the recent history of Hopedale. An underlying goal for our research is to help empower Nunatsiavummiut youth

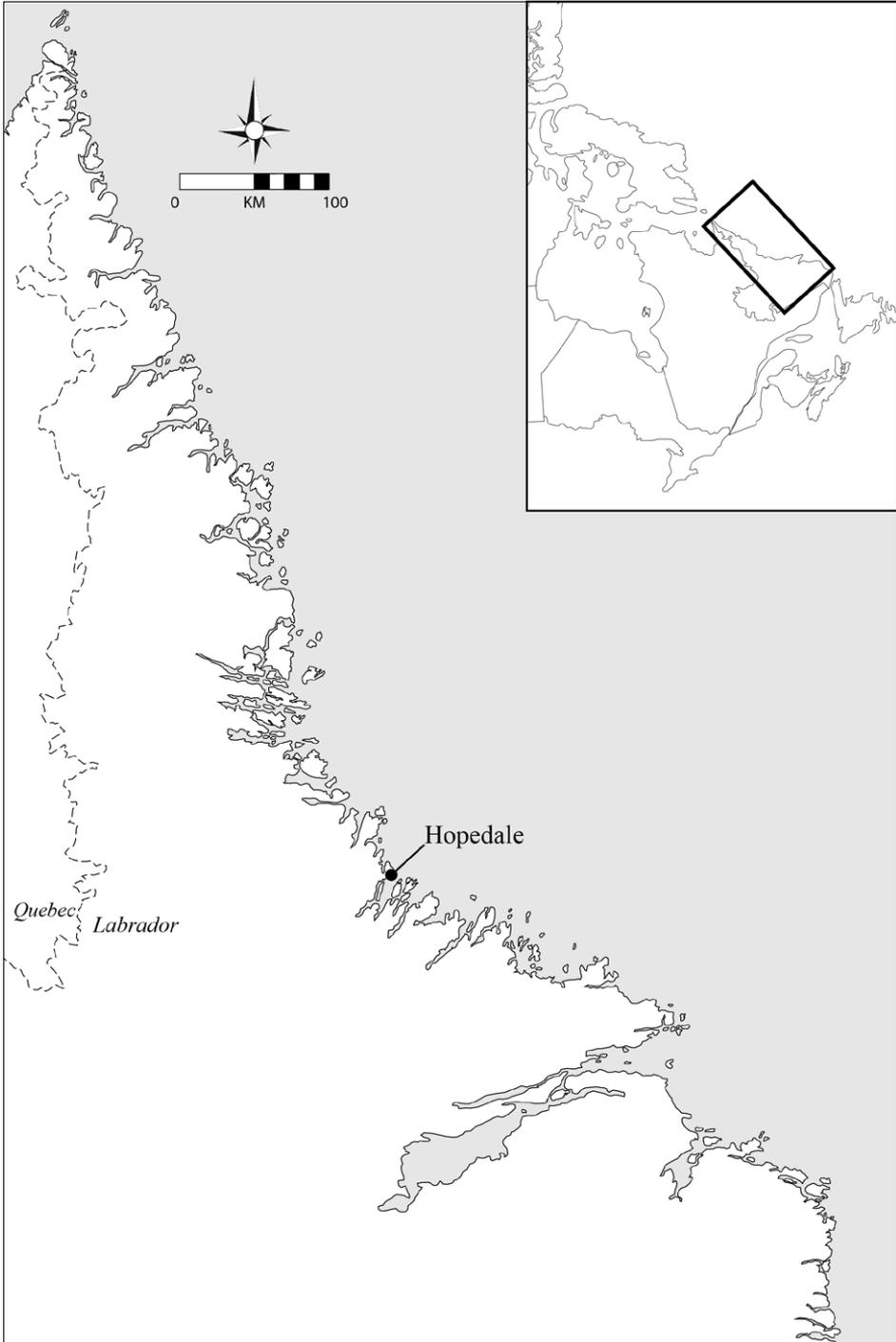


FIGURE 1. Map indicating the location of Hopedale.

through archaeology, so together we can continue to work towards dismantling the settler colonial structure, not just within archaeology but in all aspects of our lives. By looking to the past, we work towards keeping youth future-oriented by applying an approach that encompasses education, employment, and healing.

History of Hopedale

Agvituk (also spelled Avertok) is the original Labrador Inuttituk dialect name for the area now called Hopedale. It expresses that it is a place of bowhead whales. During the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, Agvituk was a large gathering and whaling site that was an important part of the Inuit-European coastal trade network (Arendt 2013; Bird 1945). The importance of Agvituk was not lost on early Moravian missionaries, who likened it to London or Paris within Inuit society (Kennedy 2009:29). In 1782, Moravians settled a mission next to Agvituk and named it Hoffenthal, meaning “the vale of hope”, which was eventually anglicized to Hopedale. Over time, the occupants of Agvituk joined the mission settlement, and Agvituk was eventually abandoned in 1807 (Brice-Bennett 2003). As the settlement of Hopedale grew and spread over the landscape, houses and roads were built over the remnants of Agvituk, yet the site has always remained important to the Hopedale community. Today, the Nunatsiavut Government takes an active role in mitigating the impacts development has on culturally important sites like Agvituk.

Moravian officials claimed that their aim was to make their mission stations in northern Labrador self-sustaining, and focused on creating a local economy dependent on seasonal natural

resources, relying heavily on Inuit cultural skills and knowledge of the landscape. Moravian missionaries gave sermons and provided formal education in Inuttituk. Although they encouraged Inuit to carry on some aspects of their culture, they were still very much a colonial force—bringing about not only spiritual change in the community, but social, economic, and political change as well. They encouraged traditional activities like hunting, which ultimately economically benefitted the mission, while discouraging many aspects of Inuit ways of being as they were deemed unchristian (Arendt 2011; Kaplan 1985; Loring 1998). In the early twentieth century, Moravians began to face financial hardships and eventually transferred control of their economic affairs in Labrador over to the Hudson’s Bay Company, but continued to operate their missions. When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949, education, healthcare, and other services fell under the control of the Provincial and Federal Governments (Brice-Bennett 2003). This new government structure made the residents of Hopedale subject to colonial policies similar to those operating throughout Canada at that time, including the residential school system, which had a profound negative impact on Inuit culture, language, and well-being.

During the Cold War, the United States military established a network of radar stations, known as the Pinetree Line along the border of the US and Canada and up through the eastern coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, to detect Soviet missiles headed for American airspace. Construction of the Pinetree station in Hopedale began in 1951, and the station was fully operational from 1953 until 1968. The station

included a bowling alley, movie theatre, and bar—which were sometimes open to the Hopedale public. This huge infrastructure, and its decaying batteries and machinery, were left behind when the base was shut down, leading to PCB contamination in the groundwater and the area’s hunting and fishing grounds (CBC News 2009; Sistili et al. 2006).

Despite the long history of settler colonialism in Labrador, the Labrador Inuit have remained resilient and have actively worked not only to preserve their culture and livelihood, but also assert their sovereignty. Nunatsiavut is the first Inuit region in Canada to be recognized by the federal government as self-governing. This change was brought about by the hard-fought Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement that grew out of a land claim filed by the Labrador Inuit Association in 1977, and was ratified in 2005. Nunatsiavut, which means “Our Beautiful Land” in Inuttitut, encompasses 72,520 km² of land in Northern Labrador extending into Quebec. The agreement established details of land ownership, resource sharing, and self-government, making the Nunatsiavut Government responsible for education, healthcare, and cultural affairs. Hopedale, the second-largest and second-northernmost community in Nunatsiavut, is the legislative capital of Nunatsiavut (Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement 2005).

Archaeology in Hopedale

Agvituk has long captured the interest of European visitors and settlers as an archaeological resource, where cultural materials were extracted and exploited to learn about past Inuit lifeways. Of the earliest archaeological investigations of the site, the best documented are those of Eliot Curwen, William Duncan

Strong, and Junius Bird. Curwen came to the coast of Labrador in 1893 to work as a medical missionary on the Grenfell Mission. He had an interest in archaeology and collected artifacts from Labrador, including Agvituk. These artifacts are now kept at the British Museum in London (Rompkey 1996). Strong was a member of the Second Rawson-MacMillan Subarctic Expedition to Labrador from 1927 to 1928. The artifacts he collected from Agvituk as part of this expedition are now housed at the Robert S. Peabody Institute for Archaeology in Andover, Massachusetts. Although the artifacts from these investigations have been cared for over the years, little to no information remains of where in Agvituk they came from and their archaeological context. A large-scale investigation of the site was carried out by Junius Bird, his wife Peggy, and Hopedale community member Heinrich Uisuk in 1934. Together they excavated nine of the 20 house ruins they located (Bird 1945). Most artifacts recovered and notes from this investigation are held at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. However, some of the artifacts remain in Nunatsiavut and are on display in the Moravian Mission Complex and Museum in Hopedale. These early investigations followed traditional archaeological practices that reinforced colonial power relationships by removing Inuit material culture from Labrador, without Inuit permission, to write stories of Labrador’s past with very little application of Inuit voices. Furthermore, the interpretations from these excavations were never properly disseminated to the Hopedale community. It was also common practice at the time to disturb burials to retrieve artifacts and human remains. These actions ignored the wishes and beliefs of Inuit to not

disturb burials, and have contributed to negative feelings towards archaeologists held by some Nunatsiavummiut. Some community members feel that there were some benefits to having their material culture on display in museums throughout the world, including educating people about Labrador Inuit in the hopes of combating racism. However, ultimately, some are frustrated that they do not have access to these materials themselves. More recent investigations of Agvituk and the surrounding area are employing approaches that are more community-centred and work towards unsettling archaeological practice.

It is widely recognized by archaeologists who aim to conduct community-centred research, including community-based archaeology and Indigenous archaeology, that every community is different, and has its own needs, goals, and resources, so there is no one method for completing this kind of work (Atalay 2012; Smith 1999). What these projects have in common, however, is the aim to involve community members in all aspects of the research, from the initial research design to the dissemination and ownership of research results. In terms of our research, “unsettling” is an approach within community-oriented research that aims to address criticisms of decolonizing methodologies. It is an avenue to shift away from colonial aspects of archaeology without erasing them from our consciousness. It puts the focus on the work that must be done by non-Indigenous scholars to create space for other ways of knowing, being, and conducting research in academia, rather than expecting Indigenous scholars to solely carry this burden.

Recently, there has been a proliferation of archaeological and anthropological research conducted by

non-Indigenous scholars that claims to “decolonize”. Tuck and Yang (2012) have argued that the easy adoption of decolonizing discourse in advocacy and scholarship turns decolonization into a metaphor, as true decolonization would require the return of Indigenous lands and livelihood. Likewise, we—the authors of this paper—question whether archaeology, a discipline that arose out of colonial expansion and exploration and is built on western fundamentals of time and space, can truly be decolonized. The metaphorization of decolonizing can be dangerous as it makes it possible for settlers to reconcile their guilt, while ensuring their continued benefit from settler colonialism. It is our aim that an unsettling, rather than a decolonizing framework foregrounds the ways that settler colonialism acts as “a structure, not an event” (Kauanui 2016; Wolfe 2006). It asks archaeologists to consider these structures that allow their work to take place and how we can unsettle aspects of these structures so we can build strong collaborative relationships and projects. An unsettling framework maintains that archaeologists must always be cognizant of the ways that: 1) past archaeological emphasis has focused on the colonial moment of contact, which furthers an event-based, rather than structural understanding of colonialism; and 2) unsettling archaeological practice requires archaeological engagement to not only focus on the past but look at the way archaeology intersects with contemporary issues and how it can be future-oriented by creating projects that address these issues and help build strong futures for Indigenous communities. To do this, archaeologists must be careful not to fetishize the past, making sure that their own interest in the past does not become

more important to them than the recent realities of Indigenous communities. This unsettling necessitates that archaeologists acknowledge their own roles in perpetuating colonial practices, and critically engage not only with the issues at the heart of archaeological practice—including concerns regarding labour, intellectual property, and ownership over the past—but also issues faced by Indigenous communities with whom we partner. To unsettle is to be uncomfortable with the legacies and fundamentals of archaeology and to constantly push boundaries towards more meaningful collaboration—collaboration that can serve the specific goals and futures of Indigenous communities.

Agvituk Digital Archive Project

Kelvin's project, the Agvituk Digital Archive Project, is part of the Agvituk Archaeology Project (formerly the Avertok Archaeology Project), which was initiated by the Inuit Community Government of Hopedale through the Tradition and Transition: Piusitukaujuit Asianguvalliajuillu research partnership between Memorial University and the Nunatsiavut Government. Hopedale community members hoped that an archaeology project could help generate tourism activity and support local interest in the history of Hopedale. The community also requested that youth be involved in the project, preferably in ways that could lessen the community-perceived gap between Elders and youth. The Agvituk Digital Archive Project works to this end by creating a digital archive of archaeological and community knowledge of Hopedale and the surrounding area.

Agvituk Archaeology Project excavation and survey activities commenced in 2017, with the Agvituk Digital Archive

Project working alongside. Kelvin has been documenting, photographing, and creating digital 3D models of artifacts from the archaeological activities, as well as artifacts from Agvituk and the surrounding area that are now housed in museums throughout North America and Europe. She then works with Nunatsiavummiut youth from Hopedale (including the Nunatsiavummiut authors of this paper), who are hired as archaeological field technicians through the Inuit Pathways Summer Work Experience Program, to record community knowledge pertaining to the artifacts and related activities for the archive. To disseminate their research, the field technicians have created a video series which has been shared with the Hopedale community during community meetings, as well as through the Agvituk Archaeology Project YouTube channel and the Nunatsiavut Stories: Nunatsiavummi Unikkauset website. Through the development of the archive, she is aiming to determine a set of best practices for knowledge sharing and research dissemination.

Exploring the Recent History of Hopedale

Gilheany has volunteered on Kelvin's project while laying the groundwork for her PhD research, which aims to use archaeological and anthropological methods to think about the recent past of Hopedale. She hopes that by focusing on two aspects of the recent past, the Moravian Mission and the US Military Radar Station, she can help reveal the unique nature of settler colonial infrastructures in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic. The central goal of her research is to identify ways that archaeology can be used for and intersect with Inuit sovereignty. Her dissertation project has been framed by conversations with commu-

nity members, the local church, and the AgvituK Historical Society.

Gilheany first became aware of Uviluktok (GiBw-01), also known as Mussel Island or Double Island, when David Igloliorte, the manager of the Moravian Mission Complex and Museum, informed her that it would be an interesting place to consider the long history of Inuit sovereignty and separation from colonial forces. Uviluktok is a historically important summer fishing location, particularly for cod. In 1903, Inuit fishers built a church on the island so they could preside over their own services on Sundays without having to return to Hopedale and interrupt their fishing practices (Rollmann 2009). After many community members expressed an interest in learning more about the island's past, Gilheany conducted an archaeological survey of Uviluktok with the help of Flowers, Lucy, and Piercy in the summer of 2018. She plans to continue working with Nunatsiavummiut youth to survey other sites of resistance or refusal in Hopedale's recent past.

Youth, the Past, and Archaeology

The Hopedale community requested that youth be involved in the AgvituK Archaeology Project, preferably in ways that would nurture their connections with Elders. The inclusion of local youth in archaeology projects is a common practice for community-centred approaches. This focus on youth recognizes their special role within communities. Edmunds, Frieda, and Igloliorte feel that their role in their community is to be respectful while learning from Elders and community knowledge holders how to be Inuk and become adults. Edmunds explains, "We still need to grow proper. How are we supposed to go out and do stuff if we aren't being shown?" Youth

are not only the future leaders for their community; they link the past with the future by relying on the past and their cultural knowledge to ensure cultural continuity, the well-being of the community, and the building of a strong future.

This special role is the reason children and youth often were, and continue to be, the target of colonial policies that aim to destroy Indigenous lifeways, such as the residential school system that operated in Canada from the 1850s to the late 1990s (1940s to 1980s in Labrador, specifically). These schools were developed to isolate children from their families and assimilate them into white culture under the guise of educating Indigenous children from remote and dispersed communities. Barnes and colleagues (2006) recognize that, while attending residential schools, children were placed in harmful psychological situations, such as separation from their parents, becoming immersed in a new culture, having to learn a new language, and the deterioration of their language and cultural knowledge. The racist attitudes of school staff and the countless acts of mental, physical, and sexual abuse carried out by staff against students further contributed to these psychologically harmful situations. The devastating effects of the residential school system are still felt today by the people who attended them, their families, and their communities. Indigenous children continue to be removed from their homes, only now they are placed into foster homes instead of residential schools. Indigenous children account for 52.2% of the children under the age of 15 in foster care in Canada, while they only make up 7.7% of the country's child population (Government of Canada 2019). In Newfoundland and Labrador, 1.3% of the population identify as Inuit

(Statistics Canada 2016), but Inuit children account for 14.9% of the children in care and many of those Inuit children are sent to non-Indigenous rural communities in Newfoundland (Office of Child and Youth Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador 2019). The disproportionate number of Indigenous children in foster care reflects a colonial structure that would rather place Indigenous children in often unstable and ultimately damaging care than work with Indigenous families to provide the tools needed to care for children (Sinclair 2016). The trauma of residential schools and similar colonial policies has manifested across generations within Indigenous communities through depression, anxiety, addiction issues, violence, and the loss of language and culture (Kelvin 2017). Nunatsiavummiut youth are facing an overabundance of challenges not limited to the transgenerational trauma of the residential school system, but also food insecurity, poverty, isolation, and inadequate access to mental health care and housing, or as Edmunds puts it, “too many things to name.” These challenges make it difficult for youth to learn “how to grow proper” and have resulted in a youth suicide rate in Nunatsiavut that is more than 20 times higher than the Canadian average (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2016; Pollock et al. 2016).

There is a concern within Hopedale that not enough traditional knowledge is being passed on to youth. Flowers believes,

Not too long in the future today’s technology will overrun it, and it will be lost into the soil, into the ground. And I think a lot of knowledge is being lost when our Elders pass away, and I think there should be more youth and young

people just getting out there and learning more of the knowledge and wisdom of our ancestors and Elders.

Edmunds, Frieda, and Igloliorte feel that the residential school system resulted in many community members not learning traditional knowledge, especially knowledge of the deep past, so they are now unable to pass it on to the youth. They also feel that although there have been great improvements to the education system since the establishment of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement, more could be done to include traditional knowledge in their formal education. They also believe that being on the land is the best place to learn traditional knowledge, but time, money, and issues pertaining to mental health limit the amount of time many community members can spend on the land. It can be hard to make time to go on the land with a busy school and/or work schedule. A skidoo or boat and gas can also be very costly, particularly in the North, making it difficult for many families to afford (on February 9, 2020 gas was \$1.53 CAD/L in Hopedale compared to \$1.04 CAD/L in Winnipeg). Additionally, anxiety or depression can make it hard to travel. The Hopedale community has been proactive in working to enhance traditional knowledge transmission in many ways, including requesting youth participation in archaeology projects.

As Inuit throughout Inuit Nunangat have regained political control of their lands over the last 50 years, they have made it clear to archaeologists that they want to be included in the production and management of their history, sometimes by denying permission for archaeologists to excavate (Helmer and Lemoine 2002; Rowley 2002). Beginning

in the 1970s, archaeologists established a series of archaeological field schools in the North involving Inuit youth and Elders to address Inuit concerns regarding archaeological research and attempt to open dialogue between Inuit and Western understandings of the past (Arnold and Hanks 1991; Bertulli 1985; Bielawski 1989; Hart 1994; Rigby and Stenton 1995; Rowley 2002).

Although this model can have merit depending on the community and their needs, many archaeologists have since recognized the inherent colonial structure of including Inuit in archaeology without actually changing the way we understand archaeology or conduct our research (Griebel 2010; Hodgetts and Kelvin 2020). This recognition has led to a shift towards practices that can better encompass the specific understandings, needs, and goals of the communities they partner with and their youth and has led to the development of projects that go outside of the traditional scope of archaeology to better engage with youth and the wider community (e.g., Qingauq Archaeology Project [Kitikmeot Heritage Society 2019], Inuvialuit Living History Project [Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre 2012], Ikaahuk Archaeology Project [Kelvin and Hodgetts 2015], Avataq Archaeology Project [Avataq Cultural Institute 2000]). We are working to this end by developing strength-based approaches for working with Nunatsiavummiut youth. We think that a strength-based approach requires a re-thinking, or un-settling of how archaeologists typically engage with youth.

Implementing Strength-based Approaches to Archaeology

At the 2019 Labrador Research Forum, an Inuit and Innu-led biennial forum

dedicated to sharing knowledge, experience, and innovations about work happening in Labrador, there were multiple calls for researchers to be attuned to the real-world effects of the production of their research. At the two final plenary panels “Arts, Culture and Research in Labrador” and “Youth Perspectives and Suggestions for Research”, both of which were all Inuit and Innu panels, there was a strong call for researchers in Indigenous contexts to complicate and oppose overwhelmingly negative narratives of Indigenous communities. Panel members discussed the ways that these narratives make their way out of academia and into mainstream media to inform non-Indigenous understandings of Indigenous people and communities, which creates and reproduces negative stereotypes. Panel members urged researchers to illuminate the positive aspects, strengths, and resiliencies of Indigenous communities in their work. We hope to do this by incorporating an approach that highlights the strengths of our youth participants to empower them, and challenges often-racist preconceived notions of Inuit held by outsiders.

Strength-based approaches are rooted in a social work practice theory that emphasizes peoples’ self-determination and strengths, and are increasingly being applied beyond the field of social work. These approaches do not set out to fix a problem, but rather to create an opportunity to explore the strengths and capacities individuals might have in the process of taking control and learning (Graeme 2016; Hammond and Zimmerman 2012; Lietz 2007; Pollio et al. 1997). For example, the Daughters of Mikak project employed a strength-based approach to re-frame and re-affirm a narrative created by and about Inuit women in Nunatsiavut that recognized

and celebrated strength. This project aimed to build on this strength by recognizing and celebrating the historical and contemporary leadership roles that Inuit women play in creating and maintaining healthy communities in Nunatsiavut (Tradition and Transition 2016). Some key aspects for this approach that we try to incorporate are: 1) focusing on the whole person and recognizing their social context; 2) actively involving participants in decisions; 3) recognizing strengths and expertise of participants so that everyone is both a teacher and a learner; and 4) encouraging experiences where group members can be successful (Graeme 2016; Hammond and Zimmerman 2012; Lietz 2007; Pollio et al. 1997). Although strength-based approaches can be a great way to empower youth, we cannot ignore criticisms of these approaches. They have been criticized for only focusing on strengths while ignoring weaknesses and for taking responsibility from people in power and placing it all on marginalized people (Gray 2011). We have kept these criticisms in mind while trying to develop our approaches.

As mentioned above, archaeology projects often employ youth to perform labour such as assisting with survey, excavation, and lab work. This framework is problematic for many reasons. Most importantly, it attempts to “Indigenize” archaeology simply through the incorporation of Indigenous labour into existing models of archaeological fieldwork, the same models that are criticized for their colonial foundations. This framework places western academic understandings of contribution and productivity on Indigenous youth. They are expected to contribute in the same ways, and sometimes even at the same levels, as professional archaeologists or university

students who study archaeology. It also values the physical labour of Indigenous youth over the intellectual contributions they could be making. Training Indigenous youth in only specialized archaeological techniques is also short-sighted, as most of the youth who participate in these projects do not desire to pursue a career in archaeology. To meaningfully involve Indigenous youth in archaeology projects in ways that can have lasting benefits to them requires a restructuring of fieldwork and a reimagining of the products of an archaeology project.

We are aiming to include youth as interlocutors for building projects that recognize their cultural roles and the intellectual contributions they make to their community. This begins with focusing on the whole person and recognizing their social context. The Nunatsiavummiut authors of this paper have stressed that they think it is important for outsiders who come to their community, particularly those who are working on community-based research projects, to spend a significant amount of time learning about the issues that contemporary Indigenous communities face before developing their research program.

During the first year of the Agvituk Archaeology Project, the Nunatsiavummiut youth that were hired to work on Kelvin’s project also helped excavate and clean and catalogue artifacts from the Agvituk Archaeology Project’s excavation that year. Afterwards, the youth told Kelvin that although they felt comfortable working with her and Gilheany in the cataloguing lab, they were often uncomfortable when we went out to site and were with the rest of the crew. This was in large part due to their suddenly becoming the minority among highly educated, white people from the south, which unfortunately led to uninten-

tional microaggressions. For example, the youth mentioned that they felt other members of the crew were judging their work and contributions to the project too harshly. It seemed some crew members expected them to work to the same capacity as the university students hired for the excavation, not taking into account differences in age, archaeological experience, education, employment history, and the factors affecting the youth outside of the work environment which were discussed above. Additionally, the community requested to have youth involved in the project so that they could further strengthen their ties with their heritage. They did not request for the project to hire them solely for archaeological labour, or teach them only archaeological excavation techniques. The youth were there to work, but they were also there to learn, teach, and grow. If there were better communication among the crew about work expectations, and a deeper understanding of the lives of Nunatsiavummiut, the youth would have been more comfortable. By recognizing the whole person and their social context, we can create spaces where everyone can actively participate, learn, teach, and be successful.

We have strived to include youth in the decision-making aspects of our projects. This inclusive decision-making process led to the development of the Agvituk Archaeology Project video series. After documenting hundreds of artifacts from Agvituk and the surrounding area, Kelvin asked the youth she was working with what they thought would be the best way to interview community members about them. Together, they decided that attempting to interview community members about every artifact would be ineffective. Instead, they decided that dividing the artifacts into activities that

they would have been used for, and then conducting interviews about those activities, would make the project more manageable. After completing some of these interviews, they decided to make short videos to communicate what they were learning to the Hopedale community. At the start of every field season, Kelvin asks the youth she is working with what they are interested in focusing on. Together, they decide on topics for the videos and how the work for the videos will be carried out. In 2017 and 2018, the youth field technicians decided they would each produce their own video based on their interests, but all of the technicians would help with the interviewing and filming (Figures 2 and 3). The topics for these videos included carving, kayak making, the use of ground penetrating radar in archaeology, dogsledding, fish netting, bow-drills, and the work of Junius Bird and how it relates to the Agvituk Archaeology Project. In 2019, the youth field technicians decided they would collectively produce two videos, one about sewing and one about Inuksuit. When it comes to interviewing community members and creating videos, Kelvin has tried to work more as a project facilitator, rather than an employer, allowing the youth to develop their own research projects and come up with interview questions that they think are relevant. This has created work that the youth are interested in and confident pursuing.

During Gilheany's survey of Uviluktok, she actively engaged the youth in decision-making. Together they decided what would be of value to the survey. They all agreed that no GPS points or photographs would be taken of any features resembling graves. They also decided that anything that any person on the crew decided was significant



FIGURE 2. Nicholas Flowers, Halle Lucy, Denver Edmunds, John Piercy, and Elder Andrea Flowers after an interview at her home in 2018.



FIGURE 3. Nicholas Flowers, Denver Edmunds, Laura Kelvin, and John Piercy conducting an interview with Reuben Flowers on how to make dry fish in 2018.

would be flagged. This included curious rock formations, animal bones, and recent garbage. This led to more group conversations about what aspects of the past and the present are important to record, and how this can be culturally influenced, rather than relying on a more processual approach dictating the importance of a feature or artifact based on its age. This created a space where students felt confident asking questions and validated in their understandings and knowledge of their landscape.

We have tried to recognize and foster the strengths and expertise of participants in many ways. For both of our projects, we have worked with youth to ensure that everyone is given a chance to learn how to do everything. However, once they have learned, they are able to take on project roles that speak to their strengths. For example, Edmunds is particularly interested in photography and often took on the role of photographer during interviews and survey. If one is to take a strength-based approach to empower youth, we think it is important that archaeological research methodologies are taught in a way that could be replicated by community members. This means using low cost technologies, many of which the youth participants already have access to and may have even used before. For example, during the survey of Uviluktok, Gilheany had the students use both a hunting GPS and their smartphones to take GPS coordinates of artifacts and features. The students were already comfortable with both technologies and felt empowered to know that they could conduct a scientific project with technology already available to them, and without the presence of outsiders. Similarly, Kelvin makes digital 3D models with an iPad, a common piece of technology in Hopedale, and an attach-

ment called a structure sensor, which is a relatively inexpensive technology compared to other 3D modeling technologies.

Kelvin and Gilheany were surprised to learn that the youth they work with do not feel that they hold much knowledge of their past or culture, when in fact, these youths are very knowledgeable. It is important to recognize that the knowledge that youth hold of their past and culture may differ from Elders' knowledge. Knowledge is always fluid and adaptive, and the lives and experiences of Nunatsiavummiut youth are different from those of Elders. Therefore, the knowledge the youth do possess may be applied differently and understood in relation to different things than that of Elders. Nevertheless, their knowledge can still make important contributions to archaeological interpretations, and we have tried to utilize their knowledge whenever possible. The youth applied their own knowledge of artifacts, language, and archaeological sites to the videos they produced, while looking to Elders for guidance. While conducting survey at Uviluktok, Gilheany also encouraged them to discuss what they thought might have happened on the island and how they thought different features they encountered were used.

It is important to create experiences where youth can be successful. Traditional archaeological and ethnographic projects are long, and the end results could take years to emerge, meaning that youth who participate in these projects may never see the results and never feel the accomplishment of the completion of these projects. Kelvin and Gilheany have developed projects where youth participants can see a finished product from their work. These finished products include the video series,

articles written for *Them Days* magazine (Flowers et al. 2018), a paper written for the Labrador Research Forum, and a blog post for Day of Archaeology (Kelvin and Semigak 2017). Edmunds feels that “the best part of doing this work is the feeling of accomplishment when we finish a project.”

Looking to the Future: Employment, Education, and Healing

We believe that the basis for a strength-based approach is creating projects that are future-oriented. We have tried to do this through the incorporation of employment, education, and healing. There are few employment opportunities in Hopedale, especially ones that are available to youth. The Nunatsiavummiut authors of this paper recognize the importance of gaining work experience to build up their resumes for their future. Edmunds first applied to work on the Agvituk Archaeology Project because he wanted to get his first job and get experience. He feels that working on the project helped him set a routine for himself and gave him good work experience for when he gets a full-time job. Igloliorte and Frieda feel that they gained teamwork skills and interviewing experience, which will help them with future employment.

Educating youth about the past was an important request of Hopedale community members. All the youth participants felt that they learned more about the past and archaeology through their experience working on Kelvin and Gilheany’s projects. After completing interviews, Edmunds, Igloliorte, and Frieda were all surprised to learn how much Hopedale community members know about the past and Inuit culture. By also educating youth in research practices, they will be able to think criti-

cally about research taking place in their community. As future leaders for their community, they will have the power to request or conduct research to benefit their community. Conversely, they will also have the power to deny research that does not benefit their community. Kelvin and Gilheany hope they have helped them attain the skills to recognize whether research is beneficial to them and has their best interests in mind, and the confidence to speak up when they feel that it does not.

We have tried to incorporate education into our projects, not just by educating the youth about archaeology and archaeological interpretations of their past, but by also having youth educate Kelvin and Gilheany, as well as the public. The youth participants provided interpretations for archaeological features and artifacts, and taught Kelvin, Gilheany, and Agvituk Archaeology Project crew members about their community and culture. The videos and publications the youth produced through these projects have been used to educate Hopedale community members and the wider public about the history of Labrador. Kelvin and Gilheany hope that the youth will gain confidence in their own knowledge through this role as educators.

An important aspect of our strength-based approaches is recognizing the ways that learning about the past and archaeology can lend itself to the process of healing. As excavation and survey are primarily land-based activities, taking part in them gives youth a chance to go out on the land. Land-based activities are often cited as a way northern youth cope with mental health issues (Hackett et al. 2016; Lys 2018) and there have been successful well-being initiatives that apply this concept to youth programs, such

as *Going Off, Growing Strong*, in Nain, Nunatsiavut (Hackett et al. 2016). Similarly, youth participants recognized that going out on the land is helpful to the healing processes because first, it physically removes them from situations that are causing them stress, and second, the land itself is healing. Edmunds believes,

Going out on the land you don't even need to hunt or anything like that, just to get away from your phone, get out of the house, or just go out on the land to get a break from anything that is bothering you.

The youth found that going out on the land as part of survey and excavation for the Agvituk Archaeology Project (Figure 4) and Gilheany's research helped them heal, especially because they were visiting places used by their

ancestors. Igloliorte feels that a benefit of working on the Agvituk Archaeology Project was

going in a speed boat and going to an island and seeing different Inuksuit, old tent rings, and just being on the land, feeling refreshed.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (2016) has identified creating cultural continuity that is strongly grounded in Inuit language, culture, and history as one of six priority areas for their suicide prevention strategies. There are many reasons why knowing the past is important. As Searles (2017:77) explains:

The Inuit past is not just a set of subsistence practices and settlement patterns that can be reconstructed through the recovery of



FIGURE 4. Claire Igloliorte and Mackenzie Frieda taking a break from archaeological survey in 2019.

material remains buried in the ground. The past has become a contested set of truths bound by one essential message: maintaining strong vibrant connection to local and regional history is essential for the ongoing vitality of a culturally distinct and politically self-determining Inuit society.

Knowing the past can also have a comforting effect. Lucy acknowledges: "It's a pleasure to know how our Elders lived." Knowledge of the past can also help youth cope with the challenges they currently face. Edmunds, Frieda, and Igloliorte feel that archaeology can be an important way to learn about the past because they feel a lot of knowledge of the deep past was lost due to the residential school system and other colonial policies. Furthermore, Schaepe and colleagues (2017) demonstrate how archaeology can contribute to community health, healing, and well-being, through promoting interconnectedness and belonging. Edmunds, Frieda, and Igloliorte were surprised to learn during interviews how much Hopedale community members know about their past and culture. They felt that interviewing Elders and community knowledge holders brought them closer together, and they feel more comfortable going to them in the future to ask questions. By studying the past through interviews and archaeological research, youth participants felt better connected to community members and their ancestors. This connection helps build their confidence and focus on their future. Denver Edmunds explains,

Although I am unsure what I will do in the future, I think this work will help me. Learning about the

past makes me more confident because it teaches me more about the people before me, my culture, and myself.

Conclusions

The unsettling approach that we are outlining is not meant to be methodologically simple, or a blanket one-way-fits-all methodology. It is an acknowledgement that researchers must consider the local histories and nuances of their field sites. Although Canada is a large settler colonial state, the experiences of Indigenous people and their communities vary, making unsettling practices differ between projects. An unsettling approach can be seen as a call for long-term obligation with the local, as this can lead to more effective understandings of research that people might be interested in, or that Indigenous communities might want to implement. It is a response to the criticisms of decolonizing methodologies, by acknowledging that we may not be able to decolonize archaeology because it is so firmly rooted in Western thought. We may, however, be able to unsettle aspects of the discipline and work with Indigenous communities and scholars to Indigenize our research. A key to unsettling practices is shifting from an *extractive mindset*, where cultural objects and structures are considered archaeological resources, and information, knowledge, and artifacts need to be gathered, to a *creative mindset*, where relationships are built, interpretations are co-produced, and personal and collective meanings of, and connections to, the past are made. To conduct future-oriented research using an unsettling approach, a researcher must step away from their own research agenda and goals to ask what research is interesting, important, or empowering for Indig-

enous communities. This might mean stepping away from certain research questions, or research, entirely—and giving communities the opportunity to refuse research (Tuck and Yang 2014). The future of archaeology on Indigenous communities needs to be determined by Indigenous people.

The strength-based approaches described in this article are reactive to conversations in Indigenous spaces, with Hopedale community members, Nunatsiavummiut youth participants, and Labrador Research Forum participants. The approaches are meant to respond to community requests for involvement in research, as well as community concerns, not just with previous research practices, but also concerns over the well-being of their youth and their community. They are also a provocation for archaeologists that are reading this to consider the ways they interact and work with local youth and their expectations of them. To help empower Indigenous youth, archaeologists need to always be cognizant of colonial power structures they are working within and to be aware of and understand both the history and the current social context of the communities with which they work. We should seek to engage with power differences. We should feel unsettled.

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