# *HERD: Inuit Voices on Caribou* Film Discussion | Text Transcript | GIDS

This is a text transcript for the recorded discussion of *HERD: Inuit Voices on Caribou*, presented by the Guelph Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) at the University of Guelph. The event was recorded on September 23, 2022.

Transcript:

## Dr. Andrea Paras:

[video starts mid-sentence] ...a professor in the department of political science. This is our first GIDS event of the academic year, and it's wonderful that you could all join us this afternoon from wherever you are. Before I pass things on to our moderator to introduce our guests, I want to begin, of course, by acknowledging the past and present realities of the land that we all share.

Here at GIDS one of the priorities at GIDS is to think through the role of development, both as an academicized study and as a practice in a long history of colonization here on Turtle Island, and to recognize that all of us at GIDS have a responsibility to recognize that history and pursue reconciliation in meaningful ways. And so, as a first step and not a last step, we recognize that the University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We are also on territory that is governed by the Dish With One Spoon Covenant which requires all of us to take responsibility for caring for these lands.

So, thank you again for joining us here today. I have the pleasure of passing things over to my predecessor, the former director of the Guelph Institute of Development Studies and a professor in the Department of Political Science, Craig Johnson. So, I'll turn things over to you Professor Johnson to introduce our guests and to start the event. So, thankyou so much.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Great, thank you Andy, and welcome everyone, and thank you for joining us for today's World in 2030 panel event. This is the first in a series of lectures in public speaking events that we'll be having here at GIDS and it's a real pleasure to be inviting today's panel, which I'll introduce in a few minutes. As Andrea mentioned, my name is Craig Johnson and I'm a professor of political science herein the Guelph Institute of Development Studies. It's a real delight to welcome the panelists today and to introduce this important film.

Herd is a documentary film about the ways in which Inuit populations in Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut have been impacted by and are coping with caribou related change from a health and well-being lens. The filmmakers describe the film as an emotional, audio-visual, qualitative repository that highlights Inuit feelings and experiences of loss and distress associated with caribou declines. It shares outlooks and actions of strength, hope, and resilience, and illustrates the need for Inuit leadership and guidance in caribou conservation and management.

Underlying the project, and the film, is a strong commitment that research must come from Inuit voices, be undertaken in collaboration with community members, and leverage the strengths of documentary film for communicating to a variety of audiences. As well as being available on CBC Gem, the film has received extensive media coverage in outlets like Canadian Geographic and the National Post, and it was also part of a private screening at Harvard University. So, we are in good company, indeed.

Let me introduce our panelists then. First of all, David Borish. David is a social and health researcher and visual artist, pushing the boundaries of using audio-visual methodologies to explore and understand relationships between humans and the environment. His work sits at the interface of documentary film, public health, cultural and social well-being, wildlife conservation, and audio-visual research methods. Through his PhD in public health and international development here at the University of Guelph, David worked alongside experts and leaders from different sectors, disciplines, and knowledge systems, as well as over 80 Inuit from the Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut regions to create both research and documentary film outputs.

I can't help but add too that I've known David for, I think, almost ten years now, and he first came to me when he was an undergraduate student with the idea of creating a documentary film about tiger poaching in Southeast Asia. I won't go into the details of that project, but just to say that it was an amazingly successful project and one that gave us all new insights about the challenges of going through our university's research ethics system. So, welcome David!

Next on our list, I'm just checking to see if she's joined us, unfortunately, I don't know if she's going to be able to make it, she just said that she's having some technical difficulties... Okay, I'll acknowledge her anyway and introduce her, and hopefully we can get her in there - in here before the event comes to an end. Also, part of the panel then, is Inez Shiwak. So Inez was born and raised in Rigolet, Nunatsiavut, Labrador, and is a Nunatsiavut beneficiary with deep connections to culture in the lands around her.

She's a proud daughter and aunt who carries on her family's renowned tradition of crafting and sewing, and is recognized nationally for her work. For over a decade Inez has been a leading Inuit researcher in Inuit Nunangat and was the recipient of the Inuit Researcher Recognition Award in 2017. For the Herd documentary film and research initiative, Inez co-interviewed more than eighty Inuit community members alongside David Borish.

Finally, we have Nicholas Flowers with us on the panel today, and Nicholas is an Inuk youth from Hopedale, Nunatsiavut. He's currently studying Inuktut at the Pirurvik Centre in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Nicholas was interviewed in the film and he shared - where he shared his experience of living under a total caribou hunting ban, and hopes to hunt caribou like his ancestors in the future.

Okay, before we start into the conversation and the screenings then, a couple of housekeeping things to take care of. First of all, to help us run the event as smoothly as possible, again I'll ask that audience members turn off their microphones and cameras. I also should inform you that the event is being recorded and the plan is to make it available online for those who are unable

to join us in real time. For the event today, we'll be screening two short films from the documentary, the first provides an overview of the film and the second gives a behind the scenes rendering of how the film was made. There will be opportunities for question and answer after each of the two films, and to ask a question you can either type your comments into the chat or raise your hand and I'll do my best to ensure that everyone is able to speak and be heard.

Okay, let's kick things off then. So, for both David and Nicholas then, just to get started I'd be really interested in hearing your thoughts and observations about how you first got involved in this project, and we'll start with David.

## David Borish:

Yeah for sure. So, thanks a lot Craig, and thank you for welcoming all of us here. So, I guess the context to how I got involved with this work was, Inuit across Labrador were looking to create a documentary film because the caribou populations were declining and the provincial government imposed a total hunting ban in 2013, which effectively cut Inuit and others off of this integral source of, not only food, but also culture and emotional well-being and social life, and many other things that you're going to see in the film. And they felt as though their perspectives, their knowledge, their voices were not being recognized and documentary film was probably a really good way to help amplify these voices.

And I had, just as Craig mentioned, was working on a tiger documentary related to Indigenous well-being in Southeast Asia. So, I had some of that experience with film, and research, and working with Indigenous communities, and it kind of just happened to be right place at the right time that I heard about this project and got involved that way as the main director and filmmaker. So, that's my kind of story on how I got involved with this, but yeah, Nick would love to hear your thoughts too.

## Nicholas Flowers:

Good day everyone, [speaks in Inuktut] I'm Nicholas Flowers from Nunatsiavut, and it's an honor to be here today to share a bit about my memories and experiences with talking to David and Inez. And the topic of caribou is very important, it's a topic that touches a lot of Inuit, and especially Inuit elders and Inuit youth, because in Nunatsiavut there has always been a caribou hunt for providing food and also well-being for Inuit. And when Inuit go on the land, they always would bring back caribou meat to provide for their family and elders. So, ever since I can remember, my father would hunt caribou, but by the time I got of the age to hunt caribou, the ban had already started.

So, from the memories of his stories, and the food, and the joy that it brought to my family and everyone else who I knew in the community, talking to David and Inez, - and sharing what I think about the caribou ban would be a very important topic. So, it was in 2019 when David and Inez came to Hopedale, where I grew up and lived in all my life, and it was really nice for my dad and my sister and I to sit down and talk to them. And it really connected us to talk on this topic because with the caribou ban, not many people are getting this experience, and a lot of youth are missing out on the stories and memories that are our parents, our grandparents,

great-grandparents had. So, thank you for letting me be a part of this, and I hope to share what I can, [speaks Inuktut].

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Thank you Nicholas. I imagine our audience will have many questions about, sort of, how things are changing and what that looks like from a young person. Next, I'll just turn back to David and just, I'm interested in getting a bit more insight about what motivated you to make the film and what your hope is, like, what your ultimate goal in making that film is?

### David Borish:

Yeah, so I guess, just at a personal level, you know, I'm deeply interested in the connections between biodiversity loss and human well-being, and especially for Indigenous communities around the world, who, you know, have some of the strongest connections to nature and have developed these complex and incredible knowledge systems. Yet, they're often the ones that are least represented in ecological decision making, and so I'm kind of just motivated as a filmmaker and a community-based researcher to help amplify, and explore, and document these voices that are so important to conservation efforts, and just understandings of humans and the environment.

And I guess, the second piece to your question there, was the hope for this film, this project. And you know, it's very much grounded in a specific context, obviously Inuit, and caribou and Labrador. But as you'll see the film, you know, I - we hope that it resonates with people on a higher level, in the sense that these are issues that are happening worldwide, you know, with biodiversity loss, with the loss of species, and that is having deep implications for communities on a cultural, a food security, and a mental health level. And so, what we hope this film is, really, you know, a glimpse into one pocket of Canada, but really speaks to a broader kind of narrative of what's happening in different parts of the world to different people.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

That's a perfect segue, I think, to sharing the first clip from the film. And so, we'll now share the first part and then there'll be opportunities after that to raise questions from the audience and have some discussion.

### David Borish:

Great, and please anyone, if you are having trouble seeing this or listening in, let us know, but there should be some subtitles as well which will help. But otherwise, yeah, we'll touch base in about fifteen minutes, I hope you enjoy.

### On screen content:

Watch the 44-minute documentary “HERD: Inuit Voices on Caribou” on CBC Gem: https://gem.cbc.ca/media/absolutely-canadian/s22e22?cmp=sch-herd.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Thank you so much for that, David. That was fantastic and the quality of the transmission too was perfect. I'll encourage people to put questions in the chat or to raise their hand, but in the meantime I might start off with Nicholas, just a question to you. The film documents so effectively, I think, the way in which the decline in the herd, and then the total ban, are affecting both communities and their relationship with hunting and with the environment, but also affecting kind of how they identify with themselves, and what it means to be a member of that community.

And I know you mentioned in your introductory remarks sort of, the hope to be able to hunt once again. So, I wonder whether you could expand a little bit on kind of what your aspirations look like, and what caribou hunting means to a young person?

## Nicholas Flowers:

Well, I think in the film, as Andrea Anderson from Makkovik described it, she was thinking a lot about the people and also the young men who are being robbed of this identity as an Inuk hunter, and how you learn so much from that first hunt you get as a boy. For me personally, as I mentioned earlier, I wasn't able to experience that only - the only knowledge that I have of caribou hunting is the knowledge that was passed down through stories from my father. So, the real dream and hope for me is that someday I'll be able to be content in knowing that there's enough caribou to hunt and sustain Inuit as it had been before I was born, when I was a baby, until the caribou ban happened.

So, that's really the dream, is that when I become the age that my dad was when he taught me these stories, that I'll actually be able to teach my future children, if I have any, that experience, one-on-one in person rather than just imagining what it would be like. Because it's that experience that really liberates a young man and makes him become a man, through the hunt, through the knowledge and understanding that you can provide for your family, you can provide for the elderly and those who aren't able to go and harvest the meat themselves. So, there's so much identity, and pride, and joy that comes from caribou hunting.

So, my dream is to know that young men can have that opportunity, and that they won't have to travel to another area in Inuit Nunangat. For example, I'm in Iqaluit right now, I'm living Iqaluit, Nunavut and there are people who are able to hunt caribou if they have a license, and I would really like to see that happen back home someday. So, I really am hopeful that it will happen because when I was younger as well, my grandmother would tell me that many, many years ago, even in the 1930s, there were a few caribou around and they wondered if they would hunt them again. So, by time the 1990s came around there were a lot of caribou again, so I'm really hoping that it's a cycle and that young men will have that opportunity.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

I just saw as you were answering there, that I think Inez has been able to join us, so welcome Inez, I gave you some words of introduction in your absence but it's wonderful to see you here with us now. Just to double check, is your audio working okay and are you able to join?

## Inez Shiwak:

I'm here, thank you.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Wonderful! So, I - just to bring you up to speed, we've just shown the short clip of Herd, of the film, and I was just asking Nicholas about, kind of, the impact of the ban and the decline in the herd on young people and connections to community, and their hopes and aspirations. Another theme that comes out for me in the film is the relationship to food security, and to livelihood and affordability in the region. I wonder if you could speak a little bit Inez about just the challenges being faced, in the more general context, around food security, cost of living, and changes going on in people's lives?

## Inez Shiwak:

I think, like, when you think about food security or cost of food, before Covid it was sort of manageable, like people were able to get around it. But like, now that we're not able to hunt caribou or to share caribou, it's like you're sort of losing a part of who you are and what it means to you, sort of thing. Like I know, the food prices have gone up quite a bit and depending on where you go, on the north coast, around the south coast, like, how do you get access to all of these things? Like, do you order, bulk order in the fall or do you sort of like buy a lot of stuff at one point, sort of thing?

So, I think a lot of people feel the crunch because we're not able to access a lot of these foods or a lot of these things, and then to see how people are dealing with not being able to get caribou to sort of supplement our diets, or our, the food that we do bring in. Like, I know we can get a lot of chicken, or beef, or anything but that's not the same thing and it's not the same thing as if you're growing your own foods or anything. A lot of people here are more, well, food dependent than of like homegrown vegetable sourcing, and a lot of people tend to buy a lot of that stuff, so it's very different to figure out what's going on. I think I got a customer, I gotta put you on mute for a second if that's okay.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Okay, boy, I thought I was multi tasking. So, a few questions have come up in the chat now, and they're actually ones that I was going to ask as well. So, maybe I'll direct these to David, and one is from Andrea Paras and the other is from Qianyu Chang. Both are asking about, sort of, the causes of the decline in the herd, and so I'm wondering whether there is a consensus around what has led to the decline?

And I think, a second and related question is, whether there were discussions, or debates, or consultations around the value of having a total ban? And it seems, I think, one really striking quote that comes out of the film, one of the young men says, he says the ban made him feel like a criminal. And so, I'd be interested just in hearing your thoughts on what caused the decline, and then also this rather extreme solution to the decline.

## David Borish:

Yeah, for sure, thanks for that. You know, this is the big question that so many people have is, you know, why did the caribou decline and how did they decline so rapidly? And the short answer is, I don't know and I don't think anyone fully understands the ways of the caribou. There's a lot of really great research being done to try to understand it, but we, what we do know from both Indigenous knowledge and Western science, is that caribou populations go through natural cycles over periods of decades.

So, as the film might have alluded to, back in the 1950s this same herd was somewhere around twenty thousand animals, and then within a matter of a few decades it shot up in population, it just exploded, and then a few decades after that to where we are right now, declined by 99%. So, this happens with caribou herds around the world, these ups and downs, but what's happened in Labrador and Northern Quebec is, I think, a pretty extreme version of these cycles, and no one fully understands why they inclined so fast and declined after that.

And, of course, there's also a lot of other potential causes that might be playing a role into it now that are not natural, such as climate change, such as human developments, all these things are potentially either playing a role in the declines or the inability of the herds to increase again. But I'll just say, there's a lot of great research being done on all that. That's not something that this work was focused on, we weren't looking at why are the caribou declining but rather what are the impacts of this decline on people?

And to the second point of that question, on the hunting ban, you know, after talking with more than thing that almost everyone agreed on was that it's really challenging to put in place a total hunting ban that completely disconnects people. And yes, the caribou are declining and everyone recognizes that you can't have, you know, an open season like you did maybe a few decades ago, but the hunting ban kind of, I think, disregards a lot of not only the food aspects, but the cultural, the identity, the social aspects that come, just as, you know, Nick and Inez were sharing.

And so, the idea of placing a total hunting ban on, not only this animal, but on this entire cultural practice, is something that I think a lot of people have questioned on whether that's really the way to go about this. But no doubt that it's complex, and yeah, hopefully that's a bit more context.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Yeah, no, absolutely that's, it's really interesting to hear. I mean, I've got other questions, I guess, for later on about, kind of, varied responses among the people who participated in your film and among community members. I just want to relay another question though from Tad McIlwraith, who's asking whether people are optimistic or not about conservation efforts, and particularly directed it towards Nicholas, you sound hopeful about hunting in the future, but are you? And can you expand, I guess, on kind of the ways in which you've perceived and looked towards the future in relation to this series of events?

## Nicholas Flowers:

Yeah, like David mentioned, I mean, no one is really sure of what caused that dramatic decline in caribou. Although, like you mentioned there has been cycles documented in the past for the caribou herd. So, I guess, in my opinion, I really hope that in time they will regain enough so that instead of a complete caribou ban, maybe at least people who get tags will allow certain, like so much caribou for each community. Even just to have that, so that people can get that experience. You know, maybe even if there was a caribou hunting group of people who got together and only were allowed to hunt so many, at least they would be able to hunt some and to share that experience.

So, I guess with regards to being optimistic for it in the future, I really hope that people are optimistic because that's the only way you'll have hope to do it again in the future, like Gregory mentioned therein the film, like you said, it makes people feel like a criminal if you have that desire to go and hunt caribou. Whereas, before the caribou ban it was just apart of your everyday life, you prepare for that trip in the wintertime, and you teach your family these skills and also, people get together like, friends, a lot of people, extended family.

So, that connection to each other, connection to community, I really hope that people have that hope that it will continue, but with regards to the uncertainty of it, it's really uncertain what will happen and who will be making these decisions, you know, whether it's the government of our province making the decisions.

It's really - it's a really hard one to answer because we do want the caribou to come back, we really want the conservation of them, but at the same time I think that people also need to get at least a few caribou for each community. Maybe, through this caribou ban people understand, you know, not to waste anything at all, and traditionally Inuit have always done that, only take what you need, and I really hope that this caribou ban helps people to know that. So, if you go hunting you only take what you need.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

And are many young people leaving the communities? Like, is that a more general phenomenon you're seeing?

## Nicholas Flowers:

I don't know of many other people who are leaving the communities, only young people who are leaving for work or leaving to go to school, but with regards to hunting other wildlife, people, young men and people do go hunting, like seals, you get to hunt all these other wildlife that aren't having the ban, and people do get that sense of pride in giving back to the community. But the caribou hunt was definitely the largest hunt, so, people definitely need to get that back.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Right...I think it's a good segue then to the second screening of the behind the scenes, and I think there are many social science and humanities researchers here in the audience today, I

think, will be interested in just sort of understanding more about how the film was made, and also David, how you as a filmmaker connected with your participants and with the communities. So, why don't we turn to the second screening and then we can field more questions?

## David Borish:

Yeah, sounds great. Again, hopefully you can see this, but this is essentially the making of Herd, which is the film that you just saw. So, we'll touch base in about ten minutes.

## David Borish (in the film):

Hi, my name is David Borish, I'm the director of Herd: Inuit Voices on Caribou, which is an Inuit-led documentary film and research project about the relationship between Inuit and caribou and the Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut regions of Labrador, Canada all in the context of a 99% decline in caribou populations and a total hunting ban that's been in place since 2013.

Developed over five years, this initiative explores a diversity of lived experiences with the caribou declines, including the impacts on Inuit culture, food security, mental health, and a variety of other dimensions of their lives. This film work as a storytelling output is really at the heart of this initiative, but equally important was the process, the behind the scenes of creating a community-led research-based documentary film. But what does that actually mean?

This was not a project where a big production company came in with an idea, it was an initiative that Inuit were leading from the start. In the context of the caribou population declines and total hunting ban, Inuit communities across Labrador voiced a need to document Inuit knowledge about their relationship with caribou, and to do so through both Inuit-led film and research, so that Inuit voices could be communicated and shared in different ways.

A caribou project steering committee was formed which included Inuit community members, representatives from the Nunatsiavut government, the NunatuKavut Community Council, the Torngat Wildlife, Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, and researchers from across Canada. And this committee was leading all aspects of this work, from the ethics processes, the study design, data collection, story development, and the overall management of the film.

When it came to the actual filming, we had two main focuses, people and caribou, and both required community input and direction while filming. When filming caribou, one of the ways that we traveled out onto the land was by Ski-Doo with Inuit knowledge holders, such as Theodore Ward from Cartwright, NunatuKavut, he knew the land better than anyone and helped us get a whole bunch of different footage...not all of which was usable.

To find the caribou we first needed to find their tracks, but they aren't the only animals around. We came across some really big tracks, and when we followed them, they led us to a torn up seal, polar bear, but we kept searching and after about half a day we finally came across some fresh caribou tracks, which led us to more tracks and eventually we came across what we were out to see.

Another way that we filmed caribou was by helicopter when we traveled to Northern Labrador, this was also a collective effort, going with Henry Lyle an elder, knowledge holder, and Torngat wildlife co-management board member, Aaron Dale, a policy analyst at the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fishery Secretariat and Eldred Allen, an Inuk drone pilot from Rigolet, Nunatsiavut. This was an incredible experience and a whole other way of documenting the herds.

We did get a chance to get right up close to a group of George River caribou, and although it was just a small glimpse into what this herd once looked like, it was still an incredible experience to interact with these animals in this way. As many Inuit describe, they really were magical. And it wasn't only caribou that we saw on this excursion.

## Crew members:

Hey, a wolf! Wolf! Wolf! We got a wolf here, Tim... [unintelligible]

## David Borish (voice-over):

Filming these shots of caribou would not have been possible without Inuit community members and our team collaborating together for this film work. When it came to filming people, it was also really important that there was community direction in this process. So, the video interviews were co-conducted between myself and Inez Shiwak and Inuk community researcher from Rigolet, Nunatsiavut. Together we spoke with more than across Labrador.

## Inez Shiwak (voice-over):

I think there's always been an interest to talk about caribou and, this is, when the ban sort of happened it gave people that little push to say, okay, we need to actually document this thing and this is what connects us to our culture, our family, and our need of being on the land, it helps.

Being able to record the people with video and with the recording their voice, we're actually recording the story and it's there for the next generations and nothing gets mixed up, or nothing is added to the story sort of thing. Like, we have the actual proof or we have the actual knowledge, you know, that can be passed on to another generation. My hope, I think it's so that people will understand where we're coming from. It's just like, just listen to us, we know.

## David Borish:

So, we had Inuit leadership with the steering committee, as well as in the filmmaking process, but for this film to be of actual value for communities, we needed to make sure that we were hearing directly from participants themselves. And so, a critical part of this co-creation process was to organize knowledge sharing events, where we could show some of the visuals, and the quotes, and hear direct feedback from people.

We also shared draft versions of the film throughout the post-production process which was really helpful to get an idea about how people felt about the work. At the end of the day, we wanted this film to do justice to the story of Inuit, and caribou, and Labrador, and that would not have been possible without direct leadership from Inuit community members. If you're

curious to learn more about our co-creation process, check outa link below for a paper that we wrote all about our collective experience.

Okay, so, that's a glimpse into the community-led aspects of this project, but Herd is also a research-based documentary film. What does that mean? Well, when we first started this project we knew that there were two types of objectives that we were trying to meet, storytelling objectives in the form of documentary films, as well as research objectives in the form of research articles, and this research component was really important, in part to support decision making processes for Inuit partners, but also as another way of sharing Inuit voices about the decline in caribou populations.

And before going into this work, we recognize that there were a lot of synergies between qualitative research and documentary filmmaking, and so, our approach was to try to blend the two together. As an example, in the film you'll hear long-time caribou hunter Joey Angnatok say...

### Joey Angnatok:

It was almost like the caribou was the reason and everything else happened after.

### David Borish:

This quote was not only used in the film, it was the title of a research article published in Global Environmental Change that explored the effects of the caribou declines on Inuit well-being. This article is filled with quotes from Inuit participants that we video interviewed, which meant that we were using the knowledge shared in the video interviews not only as content for the film, but also as qualitative data to be analyzed, explored, and written about all in collaboration with Inuit partners.

But to take a step back, before we started this project there wasn't really a technique or an approach that we were aware of that would allow us to work on video editing and a qualitative analysis at the same time, and so we developed our own technique that we call a video-based qualitative analysis. In a nutshell, instead of integrating video into pre-existing qualitative analysis softwares, our approach was the reverse.

Integrating qualitative analysis strategies into video editing software, specifically Final Cut Pro X and The Lumberjack Builder Program. By repurposing these video editing programs, we were able to connect interview transcripts directly to video interviews and apply codes to these video interviews representing different themes, such as culture and food security. This allowed us to listen, watch, and read the data all at the same time, which was really important for exploring Inuit knowledge.

We were also able to use the coding and filtering tools that already exist Within these programs to search and filter through these themes, and it was really cool because we could explore different relationships between these themes, such as quotes that talked about both culture and food Security in the same answer to a question.

So, by using this approach we were able to explore different themes in depth for our analysis while also building out storylines and scenes based on these themes. We developed an entire step-by-step guide for other researchers, filmmakers, and communities who also want to create both storytelling and analytical outputs from the same process. So, check out the link below for more information.

So, as a whole Inuit Voices on Caribou is a story of Inuit and their deep connection to an animal, but there's also a story behind the film. The behind the scenes of creating a community-led research-based documentary film. This project has shown us the opportunities for co-producing knowledge and stories through reciprocal partnerships, and how important it is to create space for Inuit voices.

It has also shown us that documentary film offers something different to a research initiative, as we were able to involve participants in ways that were accessible, and visualize their knowledge in ways that otherwise might not be represented in text. We're so excited for you to watch the film and learn more about this project, make sure to follow along @inuitvoicesherd on our socials and feel free to reach out if you have any questions. Thanks for watching.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

This is such a great example of community engaged and community-led research, but also an innovative form of documentary filmmaking, blending with qualitative social science research. Again, I'll encourage the audience to put questions into the chat or to raise your hand and pose it yourself, but in the meantime, I mean, I should say, I'm somewhat familiar, David, with the project and the methodology, because I think I was part of your qualifying exam in development studies, and then I certainly attended your defense in the spring.

And I think for me the film and then the making of the film raises so many interesting questions about how we think about evidence, how we think about data, the technologies that we might use to code and interpret what we call data, and then contributing to a scholarship that engages with people who have a real stake in what you're studying.

I guess, as just a follow-up question, did you encounter obstacles along the way? Like were there, in either the peer review process or, I don't know, in your qualifying exam or other places, were there are people who stood up and said, this isn't data or you should do it differently? I'd love to hear more about the challenges you faced.

## David Borish:

Yeah, for sure, lots and lots of challenges without a doubt. I mean, when we first started this, as that video showed, you know, we were really trying to do two things which seemingly were gonna be completely different projects, you know, working on a documentary film and then me having to, you know, write my dissertation and put out journal articles and all of that.

And I think one of the biggest challenges was just the time commitment, I mean, to make a film on its own is a huge amount of, you know, time and energy, and the same thing with quality research. So, to do the two together, it extended that kind of process, which had its own

implications, you know, just on the work and, you know, on my own emotions of spending so much time with it. So, there were those kinds of challenges.

I think I was pleasantly surprised about how open others were to this form of work, of course not everywhere, and there were certain conferences or workshops where I was talking about my work and people were trying to say, okay, that's great that you're doing the communications pieces, but like, what about the research? And so, it was, you know, in some cases challenging to say this was the research, you know, the data was the video because of the way that we went through this work.

So, that was a challenge, but I'd say overall I think more and more people have become more open to this kind of practice and part of that is because, you know, it's everyone knows how important it is to mobilize research and knowledge and instead of seeing, you know, the communication process as something to think about after the research. You know, I think this approach that we went through really integrates it from the start, so you're thinking about how the work is being communicated at every single step of the research, and trying to communicate that in itself has been a challenge, but I think something that people are interested in at a high level at least.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Yeah, it means - it seems that in the film you have a lot of people giving their intimate feelings and thoughts about the decline in the herd and the ban. How did you overcome, I guess, the challenge of getting people to speak, kind of how they feel?

### David Borish:

Yeah, you know, that's something that I'm sure Inez can share her thoughts on as well, but you know, I think it speaks to how important this subject is for people, because not everyone, you know, is comfortable being on camera or just sharing their thoughts, but when it comes to caribou, you know, it's something that so many people wanted and were open to sharing their stories on.

And we, of course, asked everyone beforehand, listen this is what we're trying to do, are you okay being filmed, and almost every single person aside from just a few, were totally comfortable being on camera. But part of that process was making sure that people are comfortable, and in their own space, and doing things that are in some way meaningful to their relationship with caribou.

And so, if it was just me, on my own, going to these communities and talking to strangers, it would not be nearly the same, comparing to the approach that we took which was, you know, working with community members, working with Inez to talk to people, and doing interviews out on the land or in people's homes while they were, you know, looking at Caribou photos, like with Nick and his family. So, you know, doing things that weren't - that were connected to this, to the process, but yeah, Inez, I'd love to hear your thoughts on it as well.

## Inez Shiwak:

Sorry... [laughter] Hold on...

## David Borish:

Yeah, Inez is just working right now as well, so maybe we can come back to that whenever…

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Yeah, I can come back around to Inez and Nicholas in a second. There's one question in the chat from Andrea Paras and then Emmanu has his hand up. Andrea's question though, I think connects to your experience, David, and is asking about the lessons that you would pass on to IDS students who would be interested in doing this kind of collaborative community-engaged research?

## David Borish:

Yeah, I think, that this approach has a lot of, I mean I'm biased, but I think it has a lot of potential for people that are doing any kind of work at the community level that is focused on hearing, documenting, and preserving people's perspectives and stories. And, you know, you don't have to work on a high quality film production to do this. If you're trying to explore human dimensions of environmental change, or people's experiences with health, or whatever, it might be simply recording with video ads.

It's an opportunity to collect more data through something that you would already be doing anyways, which is interviewing people. And you know, I always say this is, you know, worst case, we could have done all the video interviews and decided, okay, we're not using the video anymore, we're just focusing on the audio recordings, that would have been just like any other kind of qualitative interview that we would have done.

So, I think that there are opportunities for people who are interested in working with communities to document knowledge in this way, but also framing it as a more accessible approach to participatory work, because at least, you know, with many communities that I've worked with, sharing information through text-based formats isn't always an appropriate or accessible way to engage them. But, just having the videos that anyone can listen to and watch is a whole other way toto get involved with the work.

So - and just to that point, if anyone is curious about these approaches or would, you know, like to learn more about integrating video and visual media into research, you know, I'd be happy to chat at a later point.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

That's great, thank you. Thank you so much for that. Emmanu, you have your hand up.

## Emmanu T:

Okay, thank you. I chose to raise my hand because I wanted to talk a little bit. So, this film was really interesting to me because this is one of the areas, Labrador, stories in Labrador is one of

the reasons that I got involved in the research I'm doing now. I got involved in research on Indigenous led conservation because of the stories of Labrador. So, I had this colleague when I was at Memorial University, at Memorial University, I think he's the director of wildlife at the university government, now Jason Decker - Dicker, sorry, yeah...

### David Borish:

Jason Dicker.

### Emmanu T:

Yeah Jason Dicker, yeah. So, we used to talk about the things happening there, I used to talk about the caribou situation in that area, and then talking about Indigenous lifestyle and the kind of things they did, and I kind of related with that somehow, with some of the things we also had back home from where I came from. And then, so that's how I started understanding Indigenous issues in Canada, and then moving to Ottawa, I also leave some kind of - I saw some kind of thing. So, that also checkout my mind, I like, I wanted to understand more and get into there and probably, suggest my own - bring in my own solutions.

So, my question to this, about that area is, when the community noticed that caribou was declining... I have kind of previous question, was there any kind of education in the community about the decline? So that the people could start looking for alternatives? Because I think, the thing is, like, when the people still didn't realize that there was a cut off completely from what they were doing, and they didn't know exactly what went on, what went wrong, or something.

Maybe it was just like, somebody mentioned in the film, that they found themselves being treated as if they were thieves in their own area, like criminals in their own area, of which it was something put in place in order to help regenerate the population. It was like to help, yeah, the game they had, the caribou herd. So, probably, I was not sure whether education was done in the community to say, this is what is going on in the community, we need to probably do this before - in order to recover from the losses we are facing.

And in the course of that, was there, probably also education on alternatives, kind of, food, or alternative kind of meat to get whatever? Because I don't know whether the moose, they talked about the moose, like my friend used to talk about the moose that was brought in and they were not very used to it. So, I think if that education and kind of suggesting an alternative, maybe would have helped reduce that kind of stress, or like the feeling that they're cut off from the original.

Given the context in which we are in Canada, in the relationship of wildlife, of conservation with the community, and the crown government, or the colonial government back then. So, that keeps coming to mind, like anything happens, you'll always be related to that, that's the human mind, that if you are not educated that you feel is that the backdrop of the things you've been living since the colonial period.

And the last one would be, did you manage to do any research on the recovery rate of the caribou, so that the people have some hope? Like, we are coming back. Because I relate this to

the moratorium on cod fishing, it was supposed to be for 10 years since 1992, and now we are over, we are 30 years now on the line, and they're still having issues, and the Newfoundland economy is really going down the ditch. And they're still with the moratorium, so that keeps affecting the community, so that's why I'm looking at the caribou too in the area, in that area in Labrador. Thank you.

### David Borish:

Yeah, no, thank you so much for all those questions and that context, and great that you also know Jason Dicker. Maybe, Inez and Nicholas, if you want to share your thoughts on moose and alternatives that'd be great.

### Inez Shiwak:

Did you want to talk Nicholas or do you want me to?

### Nicholas Flowers:

You can go ahead if you don't mind.

### Inez Shiwak:

For the first question when you were talking about if there was any education or any indication at the caribou was declining, to my knowledge or to what I know, I don't think we had any education that the actual herd was declining. It was more people would see that they would have to go further to hunt caribou, so that was a lot of it. Or I know with my parents, it was more, it's just a cycle or they're moving, they're moving further north, so they've had to go further north to hunt them if they wanted to.

And during that year, I think in 2010, when people were taking notice of it, was a really bad year for weather, like the ice didn't develop like it should have, we didn't have as much snow. And because - I know I was going to school in Goose Bay at the time and there were some people coming to Goose Bay on Ski-doo, but like, it was really sketchy about where they would go, on the routes they would take, they didn't normally, that we normally take sort of thing. So, we didn't really have an indication, only that there was going to be a press conference with the government to say, to let us know about the caribou and what would be happening, and then all of a sudden we had the ban. So, we didn't – we weren't able to hunt caribou anymore.

As for getting moose, it's totally different. We don't have, it's a totally different taste and getting people to realize what it's like and how it's to prepare it or how to keep it in the year. [Inez speaks to someone in the background] People aren't used to moose, like I know, in Newfoundland they're used to like, well you kill it, you hang it, you leave it like that for so many days, but here in Labrador, there's a few people who would hunt moose in Labrador, but they would always say you had to get it in a certain season because if you don't, it's gonna taste really willowy or really woody.

And being - and preparing it is totally different. I know when we were doing interviews here in Rigolet, there was one gentleman, he's older, and it was about the first time he ever seen a moose in Labrador, and they were hunting, they didn't know what it was. They killed it, they

thought it was like a devil or sort of thing because they didn't know what it was, that's not something that you don't see, and to have to go from caribou to moose it's totally different whereas, I don't, like it's different. I don't know and I don't know what will happen if we're going to be 30 years down the road and still unable to hunt caribou and to be to be able to have access to it.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Nicholas do you want to add on to that, onto that commentary?

### Nicholas Flowers:

I think Inez said everything that I had in mind as well, like when the caribou ban came first, it was like very sudden people knew that there were less and less caribou. I remember hearing stories my dad telling me, like my uncles on their last caribou hunting trip, my uncle went in very far in the country but he said that they were too late and they didn't see any, where they would usually see a lot, so they came home with nothing.

And then it wasn't long after that the government said that there would be a caribou ban and then everyone - I was only young at the time and when they said that, we kind of realized what? No more nikku? Like no more dried caribou meat? Because everyone loved just the close, intimate connection to the foods and every part about the caribou, so as a young boy then I realized wow how long will this last? You know, we were told it would only be five years, and then I thought, to my friends I was like, well I can't wait for five years to be up, I'm excited for when I'll be able to. But it's been a lot longer than that.

So yeah, we did have to get used to eating a lot more foods that substituted for caribou, like moose for example, and not a whole lot of people prefer moose over caribou, I don't think I know anyone that do. But we're still very thankful as a community to have what we do receive and also, we have been receiving caribou from different areas of Inuit Nunangat, more of the central Arctic and also some from Nunavik. So, we're thankful for what we get, but at the same time it's a lot different than harvesting it in your own territory, in Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Just a follow-up question either to Inez or to you Nicholas, is there a spiritual dimension to caribou and to the hunt? Like does this, beyond symbolism is there a spiritual significance that people have?

### Inez Shiwak:

I don't know if it's more spiritual, but it's more of a teaching lesson as well like I know when I killed my first caribou... hold on yeah?

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

[laughs] Really left us hanging there.

## Inez Shiwak:

Sorry, sorry, I had to...

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

[laughs] That's alright!

## Inez Shiwak:

But I know when I killed my first caribou, like it was sort of a family thing. Like my brother had received a rifle for Christmas, and it was at the time, my sister, me and my sister Jarrell, so home we're, the caribou were close, like we could drive an hour and we would be there, or two. So, our whole thing was like, oh we're gonna do it, we're gonna do it, so we went up and like I killed it.

My dad was like, okay this is your first caribou so the meat that you have, you had to give it away, like we could keep a meal for ourselves but all of the caribou would have to be given away, and that was sort of one of the things about -one of the things that we're losing out on, is that we're not carrying on distribution of, when you kill your first caribou you give all the meat away to people in the community who may not have access to killing a caribou.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

I mean, that's it's a good segue then to one of the closing rounds of questions that I have for all of you. Which is why it's important to you to bring this message, and share this experience and knowledge with people living outside of Labrador and the Arctic? Perhaps, we'll start with you Nicholas, like most of the audience here today I'd venture to say, lives in Southwestern Ontario, where hunting is not a way of life and it's a very different cultural context. So, I guess what is what's motivating you what's the message that you want to get out?

## Nicholas Flowers:

Well, first of all I would like to commend David and the producers of this film for allowing the stories of Nunatsiavummiut, people from Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut, to share their stories, and for people to understand the deep connection that Inuit have with caribou, and that this connection it goes beyond just having a food source, it's a way of life. And I really am glad to know that people are starting to know this, and that people who may not be living in Labrador can also understand what it means to have the caribou taken away and to have that caribou ban on Inuit. So, I really am glad to know that people have that option to know and understand more.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Thank you Nicholas. Inez, how about you? Why is it important that this film and research be shared outside of Labrador and the Arctic?

## Inez Shiwak:

I think if we didn't collect this information that we did, it would be lost. So it's always good to have something that's sort of there, people are able to see and people are able to relate to

what we've gone through or what maybe another generation may go through, since we're not allowed to hunt caribou. But to make people understand, if we can't hunt one species and we deplenish another species, like this is going to be the same thing, like what aren't we going to be able to hunt next because caribou isn't there?

So, I want people to understand like I don't like, I don't know, like it's hard to put into words sometimes how it makes you feel that you won't be able to have something. So, it's sort of taking away some - if you lived in the city and taking away McDonald's or Tim Hortons, and you're only allowed to have it maybe twice a year.

And for me, to make other people understand that this is what we're going through, is something that we need others to understand that not everything can be replaced by a chicken or beef, sort of thing. Like, we need to be able to let people know that this is what's happening, this is what we need and, like this is how we want you to understand that caribou is important, and we just can't go living off like store-bought things all the time.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Just a follow-up question for you Inez, and it relates a little bit to Emmanuel's question about recovery of the herd, but how do people look at government? Be it the federal or provincial government, and I mean, people in the community, like how do they perceive government in light of this really restrictive ban?

### Inez Shiwak:

I think in light of this, I think a lot of people have a lot of distrust, like they don't believe the government, because the government really doesn't believe us, unless we have scientific research. And not everybody - and like that's the thing, like my dad in the sixties or seventies when we lost the Mealy Mountain caribou herd, where we weren't allowed to hunt, because like we're directly next to the Mealy Mountains here in Rigolet.

He was a wildlife officer, and like they seen the decline, like they seen what was happening to the caribou but they just didn't believe him because they weren't scientists, and I think you get a lot of distrust like with scientists. Not sort of like David or anything, but it's more to do with like government scientists or biologists sort of thing.

Like, how do you believe them when they're not actually people who are living in the community who are experiencing what we're experiencing? Its sort of...to hear government scientists talk sometimes it's like, oh my God, just turnoff the TV or turn off the radio because we don't want to hear it, because what they're saying is probably not even true, it's just they don't want to deal with the things that we're seeing or the things that are really happening within our regions.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Yeah I was thinking of the cod fishery too and Emmanuel mentioned it, and it's amazing there's so much scholarship and so much that's been written now on the negative aspects of having a

highly centralized, kind of cookie cutter approach to resource governance and conservation but, it does seem that this is what's happening here and it's almost like history is repeating itself.

### Inez Shiwak:

Well, that's the thing, like when you lump something in all together as under one umbrella, and you think everything is happening in the same region, like what's happening in one region may not necessarily be happening in another region, like you have to look at all these things and you have to believe some of the elders with their knowledge.

And when they tell you, like the caribou they've just moved or this is a cycle, or like, and this is my biggest pet peeve, I think, is that because we're not scientists and because we don't have all this research is that we're not believed, we're not taken seriously, like oh what do they do? They're just a person who just lives there, they don't know anything. But we need to get beyond this, and scientists need to get beyond this. We do have all this information, you just need to sit down and listen to us, and listen to what we have to say.

### Dr. Craig Johnson:

Right, and I think for me, certainly, this film does do that. It does communicate what you observed and experienced in a way that's different from, I think, what you might read in a Ministry of Environment resource assessment.

### Inez Shiwak:

Well and a lot of this that we've done too, like even working with David and traveling to the coast it's -and David had mentioned like a lot of this work was that it was done because I helped him, but a lot of it too was connection, like along the coast like, I'm either related to half the people we interviewed or there's some sort of connection between who I am, or who my parents are, or who my mom or mom's and dad's parents are.

Like, when we went on the south coast, I had connections to the South Coast like through my mom and through cousins living there. But to go to one community there was a connection because the older gentleman knew who my grandfather was, because he was a salmon collector at one point down here and he knew who he was, and then it was connecting with cousins on the North Coast because I have a lot of relatives who are in different communities, so, and the same thing like with them up in [audio distorted].

It was just a connection with everybody and being comfortable with who you are and where you're from, and trying to understand that. But in one community I think we went to, one gentleman thought that I was from Ontario and I was like what? No, no I'm not from Ontario. But that's one of the things you have to, if you want to make your research a success you actually need to work with community members who are comfortable with other community members and willing to travel to get your story across.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Yeah, it's such a great model, I think, of community-led and participatory research. David, I'll give the last word to you, we've got about five more minutes, but interested in hearing why it's important to you to get this word out and reach a wider audience.

## David Borish:

Yeah, I think, kind of what was mentioned earlier in that, you know, this is very much a story about caribou and Inuit, but it's also a story that is, you know, I think reflective of so many other experiences around the world and, you know, we're gonna continue to see declines in species, or changes in landscapes, and I think we need to, of course, be thinking about anything we can do to protect and recover these natural places and these species, but it doesn't mean that we can't think about what the implications are for people, and what the change in, say, an ecosystem means for the changes in a cultural landscape, or an emotional landscape, and the mental health and all of that is so, so interconnected.

So, I think you know coming from social science and a health science kind of background, I just hope that this film is an example and shows a glimpse into what I think is already happening for many people around the world, and it's going to continue to happen and we need to think about, you know, conservation in new ways that isn't just about the natural world, but about the connections between ecosystems and people. So, that's one of the things that I hope this film can do, as well as, you know, sharing Inuit voices within a very specific context.

## Dr. Craig Johnson:

Well, thank you so much and on behalf of GIDS and on kind of the wider IDS community that we have around us here in Guelph, just want to say how much I appreciate you sharing your work with us, David, Nicholas and Inez. It's been wonderful just to hear your thoughts on kind of how things have been changing, but also just to have this conversation and really appreciate the opportunity to speak with you. And thanks to everyone else who's joined in today, as I mentioned at the outset we've recorded the event and we'll be transcribing and uploading the screening and the discussion at a later point in time. But thanks once again for joining us and have a good day.

## Unknown speaker:

Thank you, bye!

[End of transcript]