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Co-management-led research

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Potential competing interests: I work in the field of fish and wildlife co-management. Specifically with the Torngat Wildlife Plants and Fisheries Secretariat, and influenced by roles outlined in the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement.

Co-management-led research (CMLR) is a study that is being led by a co-management board in a shared space with collaborating partners, and the primary focus is on research priorities determined by, for, and with Indigenous Peoples where land claim agreements exist.

This definition is intentionally concise as all co-management situations are context-specific so I have provided some attributes I consider critical to understanding this niche area of research.

Leadership and sponsorship

CMLR is distinguished by the leadership role of co-management boards. These boards are typically established through land claim agreements, which give them the authority and responsibility to oversee research that facilitates fulfilling their implementation mandates. Sponsorship from these boards implies not just financial support but also a commitment to guiding the research priorities, methodology, and applying the research findings when appropriate.

Community involvement and priorities

A cornerstone of CMLR is its focus on Indigenous knowledge and priorities. Research questions and objectives originate from the needs expressed by the Indigenous communities themselves, ensuring that the research is relevant and beneficial to those it intends to serve. This involvement can range from identifying research topics to participating in data collection and analysis, all the way through to validating and disseminating results.

Ethical practices

Ethics are paramount in CMLR, particularly as it involves Indigenous knowledge and societies. Ethical practices like obtaining Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), respecting intellectual property rights, ensuring mutual benefits, and following Indigenous research governance processes are integral to this research approach. These practices affirm the autonomy and rights of Indigenous Peoples to self-determination in research, and data sovereignty.

Policy impact

CMLR is conducted with the intention to inform co-management dialogues, and subsequently influence policy. By aligning research with the priorities of Indigenous Peoples and co-management board research needs, the findings have a direct pathway to influence consensus, and effect change in governance and management practices. This real-world

applicability and potential for impact are a significant feature of CMLR.

Interdisciplinary partnerships and mixed methods

The collaborative nature of CMLR is well-suited for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, drawing on a diverse range of expertise, methodologies, and perspectives. Partnerships can enhance the research process and outcomes, leading to more holistic understandings. There is an emphasis on using all the available knowledge and where possible or needed bridging Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous science with Western science to create thorough understandings.

Adaptability

CMLR is not a static approach due to the enduring and ongoing nature of land claim agreements and co-management institutions. The research can evolve in response to new insights, changing community needs, or research decisions made by adjacent government agencies. This adaptability is crucial for the research to remain relevant, responsive, useful, and fill the knowledge gaps that often exist and need to be filled so decisions can be made with less uncertainty.

Historical context and social justice

Understanding the history behind co-management boards and land claim agreements provides important context for CMLR. This historical background of treaties can explain the unique challenges and opportunities that shape research in these settings. CMLR may be considered a form of social justice because it involves modern-day treaties, and the implementation of co-management decisions based on this type of research is interconnected with the full implementation of treaties and honoring the spirit and intent of the agreements.

Differentiation

While there are similarities to other research approaches, CMLR is adjacent but fundamentally differentiated from community-based research (CBR)^[1], community-based participatory research (CBPR)^[2], Indigenous-led research (ILR)^[3], action research (AR)^[4], and participatory action research (PAR)^[5].

Case studies

To help illustrate the concept of co-management led research I have provided links to two specific project profiles that I have been involved with. I hope this is helpful and in the right context please use this precise definition to help bring awareness to the work of co-management boards, and the implementation of modern day treaties.

[Nanuk Knowledge and Dialogue Project](#) - A comprehensive CMLR project led by the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-management Board, the Nunavik Marine Region Wildlife Board, and the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board.

[Torngat Mountains Caribou Research Project](#) A comprehensive CMLR project led by the Torngat Wildlife and Plants Co-management Board.

References

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2. ^ Carolina L. Balazs, Rachel Morello-Frosch. (2013). The Three Rs: How Community-Based Participatory Research Strengthens the Rigor, Relevance, and Reach of Science. *Environmental Justice*, vol. 6 (1), 9-16. doi:10.1089/env.2012.0017.
3. ^ Linda Tuhiwai Smith. (2021). Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples. Third Edition.. Bloomsbury Publishing.
4. ^ Ernest T. Stringer and Alfredo Ortiz Aragón. (2020). Action Research. Fifth Edition.. Sage Publications.
5. ^ Marlyn Bennett. (2020). A Review of the Literature on the Benefits and Drawbacks of Participatory Action Research¹. *fpcfr*, vol. 14 (1), 109-122. doi:10.7202/1071290ar.