

Native Women and their Homes

Gender, Housing and Identity

Case Study: Chisasibi, Northern Quebec

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Architecture**

Maïti Chagny

**School of Architecture
McGill University, Montreal
August, 1998**



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-50684-3

Canada

Abstract

Cree communities in Northern Quebec have been going through rapid changes since the first arrival of the Eurocanadians on their lands. Their customs, their houses and their eating habits have been deeply influenced by western living patterns. Today, the houses and the community designs remind more of the suburban Canadian landscape. Yet, Native social, cultural and natural environment still differs from non-Native communities in Canada.

Traditionally, women used to play an important role in the domestic area. Due to colonization, Native women have lost their status and are not part of the decision making process of their homes. Despite that, Native women have continued to play a special role in fostering a sense of identity in their communities. It is therefore important to involve them in housing projects in order to find designs more adapted to the needs of their families.

The case study took place in Chisasibi, a Cree village at the North of James Bay, which has been relocated 17 years ago, and been living in fully equipped houses based on western designs. This thesis aimed at revealing the opinion of Native women about their domestic environment and collect their suggestions for future improvements. The results showed that Native families' lifestyles have become more and more diversified: some want to incorporate traditional behavior patterns, other on the contrary, are more inclined in living the western way. Of course age and social background play an important role in their opinions. Still, the major critic concerns the inappropriate designs, the lack of space and storage which tend to influence the way people use the space in the house. The thesis pointed out the importance of defining housing layouts in accordance to the Native families' choices and sense of identity.

Résumé

Les communautés Cries du Nord du Québec ont vécu de grands changements depuis l'arrivée des Eurocanadiens sur leurs terres. Leurs moeurs, leurs maisons, leur nourriture ont été grandement influencé par le mode de vie occidental. Aujourd'hui, les maisons et les plans d'aménagement des communautés rappellent plus l'urbanisme des banlieues Canadiennes. Néanmoins, l'environnement social, culturel et naturel des Cris diffère encore grandement des communautés non-autochtones.

Traditionnellement, les femmes autochtones bénéficiaient d'une grande responsabilité au sein de la maison. Mais à cause de la colonization, elles ont perdu leur statut social et ne participent plus aux prises de décisions concernant leurs maisons. En dépit de cela, elles ont continué à jouer un rôle fondamental en renforçant le sentiment d'identité dans leurs communautés. Il est donc important de les impliquer dans des projets de logement de manière à trouver des plans plus appropriés aux besoins de leurs familles et plus adaptés à leur culture.

L'étude de cas a eu lieu à Chisasibi, une communauté Crie au Nord de la Baie James. Il y a 17 ans, ses habitants ont dû quitter l'île de Fort George pour aller habiter sur un nouveau site 9 km en amont de la rivière La Grande. Cette thèse a pour but de révéler l'opinion des femmes autochtones sur leur logement et de rassembler leurs suggestions pour des améliorations futures. Les résultats ont démontré que le mode de vie des familles autochtones s'est de plus en plus diversifié: certaines familles préfèrent vivre de manière plus traditionnelle, d'autres en revanche sont plus attirées par le mode de vie occidental. Bien sûr, l'âge et le contexte social de chacune des résidentes jouent un rôle important dans leurs opinions. Néanmoins, le plus grand problème concerne le manque d'espace et de rangements, ce qui influence la manière dont les habitants utilisent les espaces dans la maison. Enfin, les résultats de l'étude révèlent la responsabilité grandissante des familles autochtones dans leurs choix et décisions concernant les plans de leurs maisons.

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Vikram Bhatt, my professor and thesis supervisor, for his support, counsel and interest in my research.

I am grateful to Maureen Anderson and Vanessa Reid who helped me a lot in the editing of my thesis.

The financial assistance provided by the Women's Teaching and Studies Research Center of McGill Grant which enabled me to travel to Chisasibi and do my research, is indeed greatly appreciate.

My appreciation should be extended to all the Native women who answered my questionnaire and who gave so generously of their time.

To all my friends in Montreal who have given me so much support and love and made this experience unique.

Finally, my deepest appreciation to my father, Robert Chagny and to my grandmother, Maiti Kammerer, whose love, moral support and financial support have been constant and unreserved.

To my mother Michaëlla Chagny.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------------|--|
| CCC | Cree Construction Company (Chee Bee) |
| CHC | Cree Housing Corporation |
| CMHC | Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation |
| DAAI | Daniel Arbour and Associates |
| DIAND | Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (the acronym later changed to D.I.N.A.) |
| DINA | Department of Indians and Northern Affairs |
| HBC | Hudson's Bay Company |
| ISP | Income Security Program |
| JBNQA | James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreements |
| MAIN | Ministère des Affaires Indiennes du Nord |
| RCAP | Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples |
| SEBJ | Société d'Énergie de la Baie James |

Figures and illustrations

Chapter 1- Spatial order in the traditional dwelling

Fig.1.1. Basic layout of single-family dwellings

Fig.1.2. Social space in the single-family dwelling

Fig.1.3. Spatial contrast which reflect social contrasts

Fig.1.4. Organization of sexes within the multi-family

Fig.1.5. Organization of sexes within the multi-family dwelling (even number)
dwelling (odd numbers)

Fig.1.6. Male and female sides

Fig.1.7. Basic layout of the multi-family dwelling

Fig.1.8. Spatial transformation in the camp

Fig.1.9. Elevation showing the inside, the outside and the spirit world

Fig.1.10. Plan showing the inside and the outside

Chapter 3- Historical context of Fort George and Chisasibi

Fig.3.1. Chisasibi

Fig.3.2. Land categories in Chisasibi

Fig.3.3. Fort George

Fig.3.4. View from the island

Fig.3.5. Making camp stoves

Fig.3.6. Boys learning to shoot

Fig.3.7. Children playing in old truck

Fig.3.8. View over Fort George houses

Fig.3.9. The town checker game (outdoors)

Fig.3.10. Hauling water

Fig.3.11. Houses to be relocated and enlarged by ethnic group

Fig.3.12. Period of major community consultation and participation

Fig.3.13. Ground floor (DINA Model)

Fig.3.14. Basement floor (DINA Model)

Fig.3.15. Ground floor (Cedar Model)

Fig.3.16. Basement floor (Cedar Model)

Fig.3.17. Ground floor (Model A)

Fig.3.18. Basement floor (Model A)

Fig.3.19. Sketch of the group 1

Fig.3.20. Sketch of the group 2

- Fig.3.21. Sketch of the group 3
- Fig.3.22. Sketch of the group 4
- Fig.3.23. The final cluster layout

Chapter 4- Native women and their homes: case study

Fig.4. Plan of Chisasibi

- Fig.4.1. Ground floor (Inuit House, 1996)
- Fig.4.2. Ground floor (Cedar, renov., 199-)
- Fig.4.3. Ground floor (DINA Model, 1995)
 - Fig.4.3.1. Original layout (DINA Model at the time of the relocation)
- Fig.4.4. Ground floor (Inuit House, 1996)
 - Fig.4.4.1. Ground floor, original layout (Inuit House, 1996)
- Fig.4.5. Basement (Inuit House, 1996)
 - Fig.4.5.1. Basement, original layout (Inuit house, 1996)
- Fig.4.6. Ground floor (Model A, renov. 199-)
 - Fig.4.6.1. Ground floor, original layout (Model A at the time of the relocation)
- Fig.4.7. Ground floor (Cedar Model, renovation, 1996)
- Fig.4.8. Ground floor (Inuit House, 1996)
- Fig.4.9. Basement (Inuit House, 1996)
- Fig.4.10. Ground Floor (DINA Model, 1996)
 - Fig.4.10.1. Ground floor, original layout (DINA Model at the time of the relocation)
- Fig.4.11. Urban layout proposal
- Fig.4.12. House proposal 1
- Fig.4.13. House proposal 2
- Fig.4.14. Ground Floor (Cedar)
 - Fig.4.14.1. Ground floor, original layout (DINA Model at the time of the relocation)
- Fig.4.15. Basement (Cedar)
 - Fig.4.15.1. Basement, original layout (Cedar Model at the time of the relocation)
- Fig.4.16. Ground floor (resident's design)

Table of Contents

Abstract

Resume

Acknowledgment

Abbreviations

Figures

Introduction

Emergence of the project

Theoretical framework

Methodology

Structure of the thesis

External interest

Chapter 1- Cree traditions

1.1 The notion of space

1.1.1. The organization of the domestic space

1.1.2. Male and female space

1.1.3. Examples of traditional dwellings

1.1.4. The teepee construction in Chisasibi

1.1.5. The Mihigwam

1.1.6. The orientation of the dwelling

1.1.7. The organization of the camp site

1.2. The ritualization of space

1.2.1. Family composition in the hunting groups

1.2.2. Marriage

1.2.3. Extra marital relations

1.3. Social structure within the family unit

1.3.1. Traditions in Cree families

1.4. Behavior patterns in Cree society

1.5. Colonization and residential schools

- 1.5.1. History of residential schools
- 1.5.2. Traditional education and residential school teaching
- 1.5.3. Experiencing residential schools

1.6. The impact of residential schools on women

- 1.6.1. Fertility and identity
- 1.6.2. The impact of residential schools on childbearing
- 1.6.3. Governmental intervention and the role of women

1.7. Native women today

- 1.7.1. Native women's role in Native communities today
- 1.7.2. The triple role of women
- 1.7.3. Women and labor market indicators
- 1.7.4. Conclusion: women, labor market and family life

Chapter 2- Native housing

2.1. Housing, culture and identity

- 2.1.1. The building process in "traditional" cultures
- 2.1.2. Planning for Native communities
- 2.1.3. Building up one's identity

2.2. The social impact of housing

- 2.2.1. Interaction between house and identity in Native communities

2.3. Native housing: the present status

- 2.3.1. Houses in Native communities
- 2.3.2. Native housing issues in 1998
- 2.3.3. Native housing in Canada
- 2.3.4. Federal housing programs on reserve
- 2.3.5. The legal regime and tenure

2.4. Living conditions of Native People in Canada

- 2.4.1. Definition
- 2.4.2. Native families

- 2.4.3. Overcrowding
- 2.4.4. Housing and mental stress
- 2.4.5. Lack of proper services
- 2.4.6. Maintenance and repair

Chapter 3- Historical context of the case study

3.1. The James Bay Agreement

- 3.1.1. The parties to the Agreement
- 3.1.2. The territorial division
- 3.1.3. The integration of the Cree in the governmental structures
- 3.1.4. The Native economic and social development
- 3.1.5. The health services, education and other communal services

3.2. Chisasibi

- 3.2.1. The history of Chisasibi
- 3.2.2. The Chisasibi Agreement
- 3.2.3. The relocation study
- 3.2.4. The community consultation

3.3. The relocation

- 3.3.1. D.I.N.A. Model: 40 units
- 3.3.2. Cedar Model: 142 units
- 3.3.3. Model A
- 3.3.4. Problems with relocation and new designs
- 3.3.5. The new house model

3.4. Planning with the community

- 3.4.1. The community layout
- 3.4.2. Description of the land use in Fort George
- 3.4.3. Choosing the neighbors
- 3.4.4. Development of the layout
- 3.4.5. The final cluster layout
- 3.4.6. Conclusions about the community consultation process

Chapter 4- Native women and their homes: a case study in Chisasibi

4.1. Personal information

4.1.1. Area of employment

4.1.2. Origins and history of the interviewees

4.2. Interviewees' houses

4.3. Women and community participation

4.3.1. General comments on housing issues

4.4. The kitchen

4.4.1. Eating habits of the Cree in Chisasibi

4.4.2. Cultural appropriateness of the kitchen

4.4.3. Ventilation and window in the kitchen

4.4.4. Space in the kitchen

4.4.5. The sink

4.4.6. Kitchen door

4.4.7. General comments about the kitchen

4.4.8. Conclusions about the kitchen

4.5. The dining and the kitchen: space and separation of functions

4.5.1. Kitchen and dining room: conclusions

4.6. The living room

4.6.1. Importance of the living room in Native housing

4.6.2. Usage and tradition of the living room

4.6.3. Storage space in the living room

4.6.4. Size and design of the living room

4.6.5. Orientation and view of the living room

4.6.7. Interviewees suggestions for the living room

4.6.8. Location of the living room in the house

4.6.9. Materials and finish in the living room

4.6.10. Conclusion about the living room

4.7. The children's bedroom

- 4.7.1. Space in the children's bedrooms
- 4.7.2. Homework
- 4.7.3. The children's bedroom and TV
- 4.7.4. Location of the children's bedrooms

4.8. The parent's bedroom

- 4.8.1. Location of the parent's bedroom
- 4.8.2. The parent's bedroom: importance and use in Native houses
- 4.8.3. The parent's bedroom and storage facilities
- 4.8.4. The parent's bedroom: more than an extension of the living room?

4.9. The bathroom

- 4.9.1. Size of the bathroom and ventilation
- 4.9.2. Storage space and additions

4.10. The basement

- 4.10.1. The basement: an answer to Native traditional activities
- 4.10.2. Additions in the basement
- 4.10.3. Chimney in the basement

4.11. The entrance

- 4.11.1. Storage space
- 4.11.2. Orientation of the entrance

4.12. The stairs

4.13. General comments

- 4.13.1. Individual choice
- 4.13.2. The cluster layout: opinions
- 4.13.3. Vegetation

Chapter 5- Conclusions

5.1. Women and housing

- 5.1.1. Interviewees today

5.1.2. Women and participation

5.1.3. Women and Native culture

5.2. The house

5.2.1. The kitchen

5.2.2. Kitchen: suggestions

5.2.3. The dining area: suggestions

5.2.4. The living room

5.2.5. Living room: suggestions

5.2.6. The children's bedroom

5.2.7. The parent's bedroom

5.2.8. The bathroom

5.2.9. The basement

5.2.10. The stairs

5.2.11. The entrance

5.3. The cluster layout

5.4. Conclusion

Introduction

Traditionally, Native women in general, and Cree women in particular, played an important role in the life of their community. They shared their duties with their husbands and were considered as their equals. Following the European conquest of Canada, there was an erosion of the social status of Native women, slowly they became subordinated to men, a status not very different from that of the non-Native Canadian women of that time. Government regulations and residential schools destroyed the family clan system as the base-unit of the social order in the Aboriginal societies. With the construction of houses, directed by the Department of Indian Affairs, women were excluded from the designing and building process although they were - and still are - responsible of the setting up and taking care of the teepee, in which the whole community continues to celebrate and cook in the summer. Their responsibility within the household covers not only the domestic tasks, but also the education of the children and finally the teaching of cultural identity. Traditionally women represent the "center" of the family, therefore the need to involve women in the design process of their homes becomes relevant.

Under western influence, the social and economic life of the Crees underwent several changes. Not only did they move from a nomadic to a sedentary life style, but through the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement - which provided them with financial indemnities - they also became part of the Eurocanadian economy. The case of Chisasibi, a Cree community west of Radisson in Northern Quebec, is exemplary: the community moved only seventeen years ago from the Fort George island, where they still lived without running water or sewage system. The relocation provided them with fully equipped houses in a new community centralizing all communal services. Today, the houses on reserves are more closely related to Canadian suburban homes and have little to do with the traditional living patterns of the Native family or community. New units no longer integrate the usual extended family, most houses do not permit alterations, the separations in the homes have fostered a sense of privacy and individuality. Native families are thus trapped in living patterns that are not their own. "When culture is not a factor of creation of a built environment, the result is social disorder and loss of identity" (Hamdi, 1991).

The prevailing idea of this thesis was to link 3 issues together: the interaction of identity and housing, the relation of gender and culture; and, the role of women in the design of their home. The links between women's awareness of their household and the need to find appropriate housing designs become more relevant every day. The situation in Native

communities synthesizes most of the issues which exist in housing projects all over the world. These issues include cultural appropriateness, housing and identity, extended families, harsh climatic conditions and western influence in all areas of their society and particularly in their domestic environment.

Emergence of the project

The idea for this research began during the summer of 1997, when the author was invited to visit a friend living in Chisasibi. Once there, the author was invited to join a workshop offered to the Cree residents in search of inner healing. These group meetings lasted a whole week and enabled her to learn about aspects of Native lives and become aware of their personal problems. The workshop created special "bonds" leading to various discussions about housing issues and gender awareness.

Theoretical framework

Aware of the growing interest for women's participation in development, the author started to investigate about housing projects based on gender awareness. Emerging with the feminist movement in the 1970s, the World Conference for the United Nations Decade for Women meeting in Nairobi in 1985 and lately with the Beijing conference in September 1995, women's participation has been increasing in all areas of life. Mainly, the issue of women in Third World countries deals with poverty, subordination and discrimination due to patriarchal society. Whether from Hindu, Muslim or Christian religion, most women from poor households often suffer from abuse and exclusion from the education system and the labor market (Wekerle, 1980; Molyneux, 1981, Momsen and Townsend, 1987, Brydon and Chant, 1989; Adler, 1991). The purpose of this primary research served to understand how women's position is being considered and what types of development projects are implemented.

Architects and sociologists have been researching on specific issues concerning the household domain and seeing the importance of involving women in housing projects. Most of these studies deal with women and sanitation issues, upgrading and rehabilitation of their homes (Schmink, Bruce and Kohn, 1986, Panwalker, 1994), other focus on land tenure linking issues of gender, urbanization and environment (Larrison, 1994), analyzing "the transition to modern housing and its consequences for low-income people, especially for women". Todes (1994) expressed her concern about the fact that "gender planning procedure might have helped to identify spaces for action, and could have provided a more

systematic identification of needs". Dandekar in her paper Women and Housing: the Understated Relationship to Development, points out that the

changes in the composition and structure of families have changed dramatically throughout the world in the last five decades, yet professionals who design and regulate the built environment continue to plan and build homes for family types, predominantly the nuclear family, that are, or are about to become, the minority in some cultures (1993:4).

The appropriateness of the housing designs in regard to a given culture is a key element in finding the right answers to the growing needs of the poor populations. The role of women in the family and their input in fostering a sense of cultural identity in their communities are very important aspects which lead the author to consider their responsibility in discussing problems that affect their homes. Since Native women have been suffering from colonization and consequently lost their status within their communities, and because Native people struggle with houses that are not appropriate to their family size and to their culture, this thesis aimed at creating a framework of research which looks into aspects of gender, identity and housing.

Methodology

In all areas related to Native history and culture, Native customs, living and hunting activities, the author limited her literature review to the Cree communities of Northern Quebec in order to avoid generalizations and misunderstandings.

The first part of this thesis is a literature review. It explores Cree communities' way of life before their contact with Europeans. Finding information on Native people's domestic environments was difficult as most writers and observers during the last centuries were trade men or missionaries and therefore, not particularly interested in household affairs and women's role in the household. Moreover, their opinion was very much influenced by European culture and Catholic religion. The literature often tends to be biased and distant from reality. Fortunately, during the case study the author was able to interview inhabitants of Chisasibi and corroborate information found in the literature review.

Consequently, the role of women in the household was very poorly documented and then only in very general terms. Fortunately, Regina Flannery¹ and other female writers researched and documented the lives of Native women by recording and interviewing elderly

¹Flannery, Regine. *Ellen Smallboy. Glimpses of a Cree Woman's Life*, (1995).

Native women. In terms of housing, most of the review was based on anthropological literature such as Tanner's book Bringing Home Animals (1979) which describes the role and importance of rituals and symbols in every day life, or Salisbury A Homeland for the Cree (1986) which shows the evolution in Native villages in the years of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. Most information was found in government reports such as the Department of Northern and Indian Affairs, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs. The documents mainly focused on very precise aspects, such as technical issues, or women's need for shelter. Few reports addressed the problems between cultural appropriateness and housing issues in Cree communities.²

Literature review about housing issues written by Native people focused mainly on problems related to the Indian Act, which stipulate that Native women who married white men were therefore considered non-status Indians and not allowed to live on reserve. This issue hasn't been discussed in the case study because all the women interviewed were Status Indians.

Community participation in Native housing has been documented by governmental organizations, particularly in regard to technical building issues. CMHC developed self-help constructions programs to enable rural communities to build their houses themselves. The community participation in the relocation of Chisasibi has been analyzed by various scholars in unpublished Masters and Ph.D. thesis³. A successful project was implemented through the consultation of the community of Oujé-Bougoumou in 1994 and served as a model in many regards.⁴

The author developed a questionnaire focusing on distinct spaces in the home to uncover the problems affecting Native families. The questionnaire was based on studies about the community consultation process in Fort George and the resulting situation in Chisasibi. To

²-RCAP. *Gathering Strength*. vol.3 (1996).

- Reports CMHC.

- Young, Kue, et al. *Les effets du Logement et de l'Infrastructure Communautaire sur la Santé dans les Réserves Indiennes du Canada* (1991); McDowell, Kenneth. *Housing, Culture and Design: Housing and Culture for Native Groups in Canada*.(1989); CMHC, *A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Planning and Design with Native Canadians* (1984); CMHC, *Sharing Success in Native Housing. Highlights of the CMHC Housing Awards. Symposium on the Aboriginal Housing* (1995); Ghader, Afshari-Mirak. *Cultural Approaches to Native Canadian Housing: An Evaluation of Existing Housing Projects in Cree Communities of Northern Québec*. (1994).

³Shaw, Peter. *Town Planning in Consultation with and Participation from a Native Community. A Case Study of the Relocation of the Cree Indian Community of Fort George to Chisasibi, Québec* (1982); Tranchida, Daniel. *Relocalisation du Village Indien Cri de Fort George, Région de la Baie James, Québec*.(1980).

⁴Chicoine, Lucie. *Le Village Oujé-Bougoumou: Une Expérience de Planification Partagée en Milieu Autochtone* (1990).

understand the broad set of issues involved in the domestic environment, the questionnaire focused on physical aspects as well as on social parameters dealing with the interviewees' lives, their opinions about community participation and the relocation itself. The questions about each space in the house were also based on findings of previous studies on Native housing. Besides gathering aspects concerning the physical parameters of the house, the thesis aims at incorporating the resident's opinion and suggestions for future improvements.

Twenty women agreed to answer the questionnaire and eighteen completed it. The results have to be considered in a qualitative rather than quantitative way. The number of interviewees offered an interesting sample of the population of Chisasibi, showing the diversity of choices and points of view.

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter deals with Cree life before the colonization. All the areas of their lives were defined correspondingly to certain rules as Native people have a very rich cultural heritage in regard to their domestic environment. It is illustrated through different types of dwellings and the role and importance of rituals and symbols in every day life. The social parameters specific to Native communities which differentiate them from western societies such as the family structures in hunting groups, the division of tasks, the definition of space corresponding to male or female family members, as well as the tradition of marriage and education. Nevertheless the assimilation into western lifestyle caused specific behavior patterns such as changes in childbearing and marriage. Consequently, these aspects had a direct influence on the size of the families and the use and needs of the rooms. Similarly, residential schools were created to educate Native children and foster their integration into Eurocanadian society. The consequences can be witnessed in the way Native communities have accepted western houses and the living habits specific to the western layout. Finally we look at how women were affected by governmental laws and residential schools, and what role they play today in their communities, as they continue to be the care takers of their homes and their communities.

The second chapter discusses the different issues related to housing in traditional culture. For example the role and importance of identity and culture, how it affects the design and the spatial arrangement, the use of materials. It also highlights the relevance of community consultation in Native communities as it enables the community to build up its own identity. The actual housing situation in Native communities, in Canada as well as in northern regions, the federal housing programs on reserve and the legal regime and tenure are reviewed.

Overcrowding, bad sanitation condition, poor materials are common problems in Native homes afflicting directly the physical and psychological well-being of its inhabitants.

The third chapter, gives the historical context of the Cree communities of Northern Québec, their political evolution after the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement, the territorial division and their integration in the governmental structures. Effort is also made to explain the relocation process from Fort George to Chisasibi, including details of the community consultation process, the designing of the new layout and the construction of the houses.

The fourth chapter deals with the case study. First, the author describes the interviewees, their social background, their actual profession and their houses. The range of questions cover all the areas of their house as well as issues concerning women participation and community consultation. In parallel, illustrations of the houses drawn by the interviewees are incorporated together with plans found at the Cree Construction Company (Chee Bee) in Chisasibi to illustrate the questionnaire.

External interest

During previous community consultations on housing issues in other Cree villages, Native women seemed shy and reluctant to speaking and expressing their needs. The process and the findings of this thesis therefore come in a very important moment in Native housing history when community consultation has become a major tool in finding solutions to the existing problems. The interest of the participants themselves in this research, of administrators of the Band, of architects, and consultants working in Chisasibi and an other Cree community, of anthropologists and the Women's Teaching and Studies Research Center of McGill has nourished my faith and convinced me that the questions raised in this thesis addressed important aspects of Native people lives. It may open new horizons of research to enhance the quality of the domestic environment of Native communities.

Chapter 1- Cree traditions

The domestic environment of the Cree is intrinsically shaped by their every day life in the bush. This means that writing about Native housing, family roles and division of domestic tasks must take into account the traditional nomadic hunting system in which the Cree lived until the Europeans settled on their territories, and started influencing their economy. It is only in the last 50 years that the living conditions of James Bay Cree have undergone rapid changes.

Their first contact with the Europeans dates back to the 16th century, when the Native's economy was still based on hunting and fishing. The fur trade enabled them to improve their material conditions considerably: the new cutting tools were more practical and durable, the kettle was stronger, easier to transport (Bailey in Chance, 1969:45). But generally, their ways of living remained similar to what they were before the arrival of the Europeans. During the third or fourth decade of the 17th century, the fur trade began to decline, to the point that the Indians could not survive any longer from that commerce. Incapable of purchasing primary goods, the Cree had to accept Eurocanadian economic rules, and rapidly started to lose their "autonomy" (La Rusic in Chance, 1969:55).

Before discussing the political and material changes of the Cree society, it is important to understand the complex set of rules by which the Cree traditionally lived. traditional cultures rely on very well-defined social parameters and also on a perfect understanding of their natural environment. Their political and social network is mainly based on survival from hunting activities and living peacefully within a given community. Climatic conditions are extremely severe in Northern Quebec and any changes in the animal population can become life-threatening for those who are not well prepared. Helping and sharing within the family are basic principles that Native communities have respected and relied upon for centuries. The domestic realm is organized accordingly and adjusts to fit the needs of bush life.

1.1. The notion of space

Setting up camp fell into the ritual behavior of Cree communities, and followed certain patterns. First, the fact that hunting families were nomadic due to the scarcity of resources within one or two days travel, especially beaver, moose, bear, porcupine, hare and some species of fish. Families moved every second year at least and each time would build a new camp, in which new dwellings were constructed for the entire family. The canvas covering

the tent was carried from one camp to an other but its wood frame would be newly built. When natural resources were seriously reduced, such as dead trees for firewood, green boughs for the floor, and moss for insulation, communities would also leave for a new destination, which could include a new territory belonging to one of the family members or maybe an area belonging to a friend who would share it with them. The former harvest zone would take several years to develop again, therefore hunting groups had to wait between two, five or even up to ten years until they could come back to an earlier camp. But families tried to avoid going to the same camp site, as it

is proper for them to establish each time a fresh campsite on new ground, ground which is clean (*peycuu*). This term signifies that the place is free from garbage and clean in the sense that it is not offensive to the spirits of the game animals and to entities who aid in hunting. When the group abandons a campsite they must spend some time cleaning up, in order to avoid offense to the spirits, but this mainly involves seeing that the bones of game animals are properly disposed of. If the campsite is not left in a proper condition it is thought that the animals will not return to the area (Tanner, 1979:74).

1.1.1. The organization of domestic space

Hunting groups were formed by Cree families who settled in single units or gathered in a single dwelling, usually in a communal lodge between first frost and mid or late-winter, and also during the winter hunting and trapping season. In the summer though, the tents were more appropriate because they were lighter and easier to carry. These camps were places for celebrations, marriages and festivities. The spatial organization within a communal dwelling followed the same rules as in a single unit.

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show that in both single and communal dwellings, the fire was near the center, the door was on one side of the fire and the living area was situated opposite to the opening. The hatching in the drawings illustrate the living area. Each person had his or her private space in this part of the dwelling. The central area around the fire was used by the whole family, all members slept with their the feet next to the fire and their heads against the exterior wall. The notion of space and property was strictly defined for each member of the family. The bedding was either

hung to air outside or in a separate storage tent, or is rolled up at the rear of each sleeping place, and this leaves open the floor area, covered with spruce boughs, on which people sit. At meal times people move together slightly, in a semi-circle around the food, which is placed on a cloth laid out on the floor, but each retains his position relative to the others. Each adult keeps his or her own few items of personal property either hanging on the wall next to where his or her head rests at night, or in a container such as a bow along the same portion of wall. If we refer to the area of the

doorway and the stove as the 'front' of the dwellings space. we may state that there is a progression from front to rear in terms of a change from communally-used space to individually-used space (Tanner. 1979:76).

1.1.2. Male and female space

Figures 1.4. to 1.6. illustrate the spatial differentiation which occurred within male and female spaces in communal and single units: the line of division between sexes ran from the front to the rear of the dwelling space. The women kept the utensils on their side and the food supply located on shelves: "hunting and trapping items which are kept inside the tent (e.g. axes, fishing line, and articles in the process of construction like snowshoe frames, snow shovels and toboggans) are located on the same side as the men" (Tanner. 1979:77-78). Similarly, some parts of the killed animals were kept on one or the other side: small game meat was stored on the female side, whereas the male kept the pieces of larger animals. Generally, all the items stayed under the control of one person although every body had access to it, and the fire was controlled by both sexes. Women gathered the wood and men set the stove in every new camp.

The hunting groups living in one dwelling were separated by sex. Married couples were settled in the middle of the room opposite the entrance door: dependents of the same sex were set in order of increasing age, this can be observed in figures 1.2. and 1.3. This definition of space had to be respected due to the scarcity of space, which allowed its occupants limited movement inside. Belongings or personal space existed at the rear wall of the family space. In the multi-family dwelling, the families were set in relation to their relative status, but more importantly, adjacent families couldn't have members of the opposite sex adjacent to each other (Tanner. 1979:79).

1.1.3. Examples of traditional dwellings

The traditional teepee construction was generally performed by women and their daughters. In his book the Plains Cree⁵, Mandelbaum explained that only old women were capable of building teepees. If a family needed a teepee, the women, with her mother, her sisters, her daughters would find the hides and give them to the old women who would measure them, cut them in the desired shape and sew them together. During the preparation of the canvas she would be given a lot of food. When the canvas was finished, the group of women would set up the poles and the holes punched in the ears (at the top of the tent). The three teepee poles would be lashed together and hoisted up, two in the back and one in front.

⁵Even though Plains Cree have customs which differ from the Northern Cree, the procedure of the tepee construction is the same.

There were generally fifteen poles and two outside to close the flaps, but the number of poles depended on the size of the teepee. The woman who would put up the teepee would own it, but the teepee was known by her husband's name (Mandelbaum, 1940:52,53; Nabokov and Easton, 1989:151-156).

1.1.4. The teepee construction in Chisasibi

During informal interviews in Chisasibi, female residents explained that they were still building the teepees in that way and that it specifically remained a women's task. The procedure hadn't changed: the poles were taken from the bush and cut into the right size, cleaned so that they became white and reflected light. The canvas was bought and either sewn by the woman herself or given to an older woman. Instead of being paid with food, today the old woman was given a certain amount of money for her work. After the sewing, women from the same family would put up the poles together and cover them with the canvas. The teepee was either set in the middle of a group of houses, or in the backyard of a house and shared by different families. The teepee was used for cooking in the summer or for storage in the winter. Poles of the teepees were sometimes taken apart in the winter and kept aligned next to the shacks, but some were kept intact over the winter.

1.1.5. The mihigwam and other dwelling types

The type of dwelling most commonly used even today, the mihigwam, or tent-shaped log building was easily constructed in a day and suited to transitory inter-group residence. Built with a wooden frame, the structure was protected by a canvas and/or plastic sheets, and the floor was covered by spruce boughs, freshly laid several times per week. The size varied according to the family's needs. In Cree Trappers Speak (Joe Bearskin et al, 1989:59-60), the authors presented two other kinds of traditional hunting dwellings, both of which differ from the log house or the ordinary teepee:

- a muhtukan was a permanent sod house, it had a square or rectangular frame of split white logs, placed upright. Cracks between the logs were filled with compacted sphagnum moss. There was a second layer of sod on the outside of the structure, covering the entire house. Inside, the ground cover was cleared down to sand. Spruce boughs were used as disposable flooring. This style of building was common and differed from the log cabin (with the logs parallel to the ground).

- a bush dwelling was built with the trees placed upright and bent at the top, tied together in an overlapping or interlocking manner, making a round roof. In present practice, this lodge

Social space in the traditional dwelling

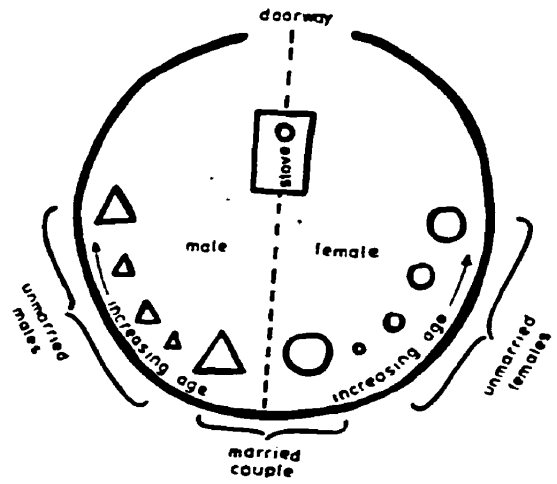
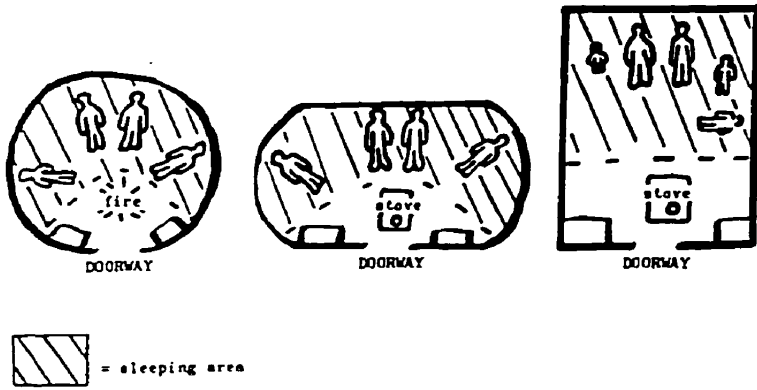


Fig.1.1.
Basic layout of single-family dwellings

Fig.1.2.
Social space in the single-family dwelling

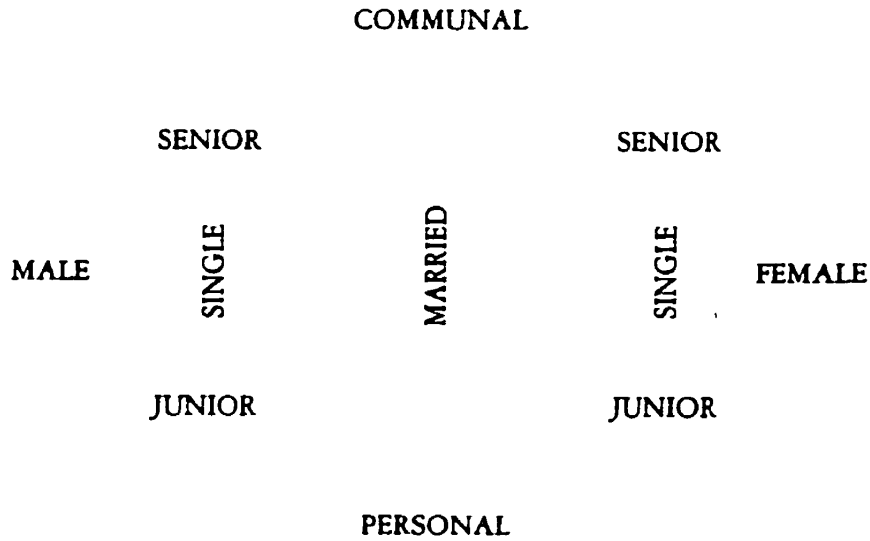


Fig.1.3.
Spatial contrast which reflect social contrasts

(Source, Adrian Tanner, Bringing Home Animals)

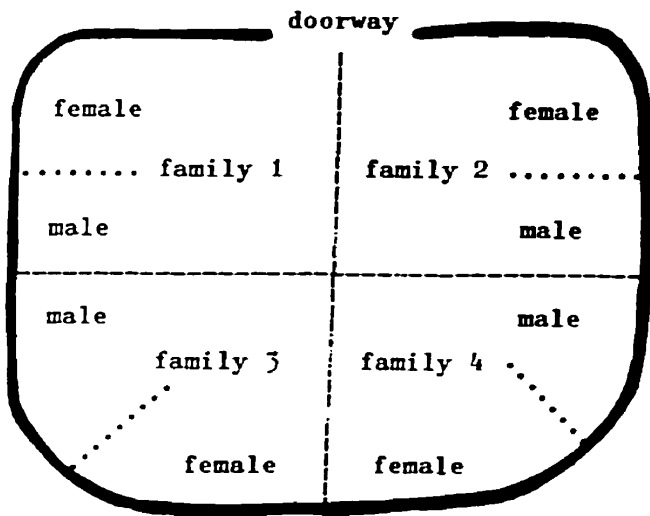


Fig.1.4.
Organization of sexes within the multi-family dwelling (even number)

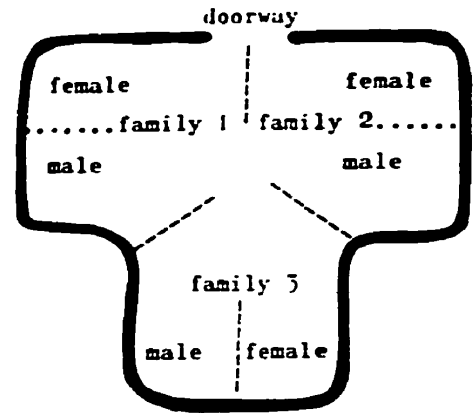


Fig.1.5.
Organization of sexes within the multi-family dwelling (odd numbers)

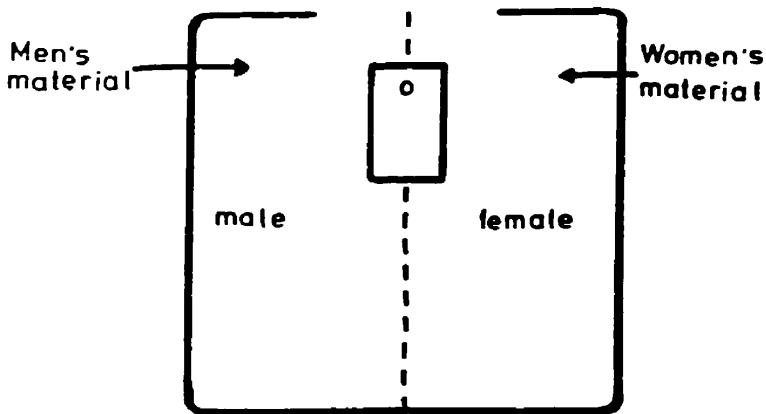


Fig.1.6.
Male and female sides

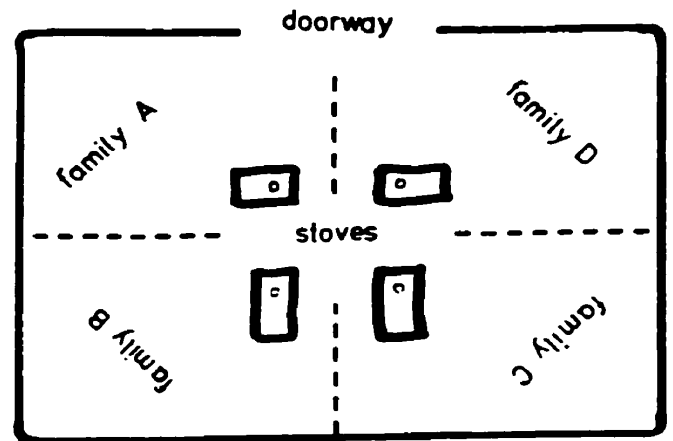


Fig.1.7.
Basic layout of the multi-family dwelling

(Source, Adrian Tanner, Bringing Home Animals)

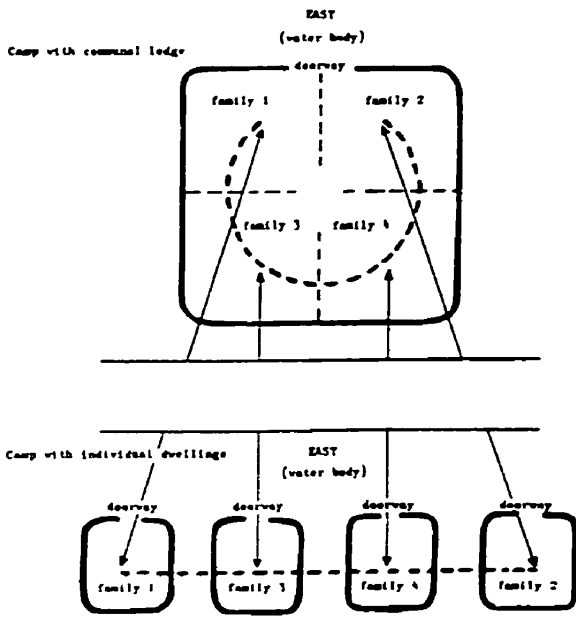


Fig.1.8.
Spatial transformation in the camp

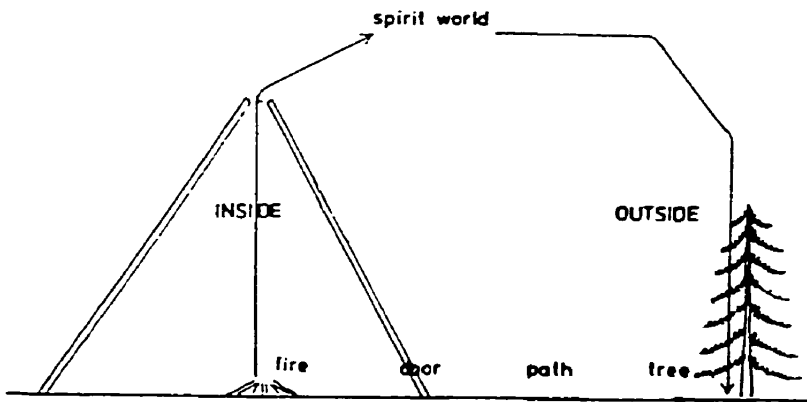


Fig.1.9
Elevation showing the inside, the outside,
and the spirit world

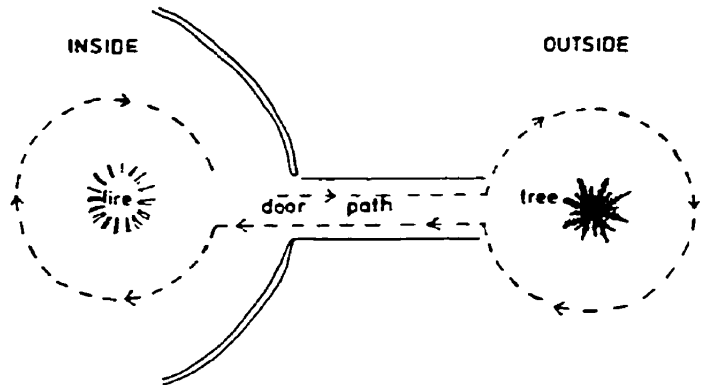


Fig.1.10.
Plan showing the inside and the outside

(Source, Adrian Tanner, Bringing Home Animals)

may be covered with canvas. This lodge called wigwam in Cree language, is shaped like a hemispheric or a half globe, comes from the special practice of treating a sick person by placing her in that small hemisphere structure which was heated with stones. The high temperature inside enabled the sick person to sweat the illness out. Nowadays, this kind of lodge is no longer used for this purpose.

1.1.6. The orientation of the dwelling

In Native life all choices were made in response to the natural environment in order to maximize chances of survival. Therefore, symbols and practical behavior patterns have common origins. For this reason the orientation of the dwelling always followed the rising sun and was located in front of a body of water which

provides the camp with its access route, so that, given a camp location on a western shore, the orientation of the door towards the water (and therefore, towards the rising sun) makes most ecological sense in terms of access to the dwelling (Tanner, 1979:101).

The door facing the rising sun was a way to look to the outside world. Two reasons were given for this orientation, the first, anyone sitting in the tent could see the sunrise, the second, the hunter could step outside the doorway and face the sun rise, ensuring him with a successful hunt:

The elders in Chisasibi, hunting men and their wives whom the author met, still respect this orientation when settling in the bush. Other residents from Mistassini explained that the eastern orientation avoided the spiritual entity, *Ciiwetinnssuu*. This entity was associated with the North and Northwest and carried the cold weather, snow and winter animals. Following this advice, the dwellers sat with their backs turned to the Northwest. The practical reason for this orientation was also to protect from cold winds (Tanner, 1979:100-105).

1.1.7. The organization of the camp site

In the winter, the location of the sun rise was more important to settle the location of the door, whereas in the summer camp organization, the circular pattern inside the lodge was transformed into an aligned arrangement, in which the orientation of the door was primarily determined by the water source nearby. Family dwellings were grouped together in the winter "with their doorways very slightly turned inwards to each other, to form a slightly curved line arrangement, while in the summer the line [was] quite straight", which you can see in figure 1.8. (Tanner, 1979:82-83).

1.2. The ritualization of space

The whole hunting activity was considered a journey, a circular trip from the camp to the bush and back. The hunting procedure was part of a whole ritualization and conceptualization of Cree hunters' religious beliefs. The perception of geographical spaces were part of the Cree culture, the main idea being a

concentric model with the camp space in the center, surrounded by geographic space, that is the forest and lakes, inhabited by the animals, at the farthest reaches of which, as well as above and below are located various spiritual entities with natural forces (Tanner, 1979:89).

The ritualization of space mainly determined the domestic and geographic or the spiritual domains, and enabled the hunter to control or to know about the events in the natural world.

To explain this conceptualization of space, Tanner took the example of other ceremonies in which the camp (*nipisikahiikan*) and the bush (*nuhcimiihc*) represented this world of symbols, defined also through the terms of 'inside' (*piihtakamihc*) and 'outside' (*wiiwiitimihc*). The so-called *Walking Out Ceremony* or *First Step Ceremony* (still existing in Chisasibi today) expressed the delineation between these two worlds "as a model for the successful establishment of relations between the two aspects of the world presented by these spheres" (Tanner, 1979:90). The *Walking Out* or *First Step Ceremony* took place after the child was able to walk for the first time, representing the transition between the inside and the outside world.

The path is normally made of spruce boughs laid on the ground. A boy child carries a toy rifle (or in some cases a bow and arrow), and a girl child a toy awl. With these toys the child is made to mimic adult activities symbolic of their sex. (...) The child is then made to circle the tree clockwise, and to carry or drag back what has been gathered, often in a miniature *niimuuaan* (decorated hunting bag). The child is led inside the tent where he makes a clockwise circuit of the dwelling, is greeted by members of the residential group, and presents the pack to the same-sex parent or grandparent (Tanner, 1979:91).

The doorway is important in defining the limits between the inside and outside realms. The tree standing alone outside referred to the possible ways of communicating with the spiritual worlds. The *Walking Out Ceremony* reveals the significance given to walking and to feet, which were considered very important. This is shown by the way moccasins were decorated as they had sacred significance, especially those worn by little children (Speck in Tanner, 1979:93 and Joe Bearskin et al., 1989:76).

1.2.1. Family composition in the hunting groups

Although hunting groups may follow an ideal organization pattern, very often these groups were based on convenience and situations. Some authors defined them as patrilineal or bilateral, but the layout of the hunting camps offered more insights towards understanding this social system. Speck in Chance (1969:85) explained that membership in the family hunting group followed a patrilineal order. Roger in Chance (1969:54) analyzed the ideal hunting group as concentrating the man and his married sons. As Preston noted

membership is actually bilateral and circumstances dictate more than ideal patterns (...) the membership in hunting, fishing, and logging groups, as well as in villages, is bilateral with a slight patrilineal emphasis. People join a group if they have relatives in this group, whether these relatives are on the father's or on the mother's side or relatives by marriage. However, there is a tendency for sons to stay with the father in the hunting, logging and fishing groups, and for brothers to line cutting together. But these tendencies are not pronounced enough to warrant calling the principle of membership 'patrilineality'(1967:40-41).

Turner and Wertman (1977:19) related the case of the son living in the house of his father when he marries, so that he can continue to access the tools necessary for hunting activities. The young couple is given a place on its own before moving to another location: "people moved back and forth between man's and woman's parents, lots of people did that. I did it too (...). I lived with who ever needed help. The things they couldn't get I got for them" (Stephen Redhead in Turner and Wertman, 1977:27). Ellen Smallboy - born in the mid-19th century - and who lived at Moose Factory and in other posts on the West and East coasts of James Bay, explained that marriage was usually arranged and that post-marital residence was virilocal - with the husband's relatives rather than the wives - but that situations varied according to different circumstances. When it was possible, young couples followed the traditional rules

conforming to the usual pattern, Ellen and Simon returned to his father's hunting grounds and set up their separate household, joining in feasts and occasional cooperative hunts with the other households in the winter hunting group. Ellen's relationship with Simon's family was a congenial one. She was grateful for the help of Simon's father in training the boys, and his father's mother in teaching skills to her daughter (Flannery, 1995:30).

1.2.2. Marriage

A seventy year old Native man in 1970, described what the tradition of pre-Christian marriage used to be. There was no wedding ceremony: the man killed a big game like a caribou, bear, or beaver. "while he was away a curtain of caribou hide was used to partition

off a part of the bride's parent's tent. The groom returned with his kill and took it to his tent. He gave it to his bride, behind the curtain." Then the women cooked the meat and a feast was given with that meat. The couple either continued to live together or decided to move to another tent on their own, as explained in the paragraph above (Tanner, 1979:94). Generally, there wasn't any rule about the marriage arrangement, nevertheless, parents had a strong influence on their children's unions.

Prior to residential schools and modern houses, the skills and qualities of a man or woman played an essential role in their chances to get married. Ellen Smallboy told how she had the opportunity to choose her husband.

just before I got married, I killed four otters and then 10 martens, and when I came back with the fur it was worth \$50. Then I went back to my traps and got a couple of beaver. That is why I could get a good husband, because he knew I could help him (...). If a woman is lazy and doesn't know how to do things she won't stay married long and will have a very poor life (Flannery, 1995:16).

1.2.3. Extra-marital relations

Monogamy was the rule, though instances of polygamy and polyandry have been reported in former years (Lips in Preston, 1979:46). Ellen Smallboy remembered that in times past, some men had more than one wife and her own grandfather had three wives, two sisters and a third one not related to the others. Each provided a portion of his meal. One of the wives, Nabeseck, was not the mother of Ellen's father, but she was the one who raised him (Flannery, 1995:30).

Preston mentioned many cases of sexual relations outside of marriage and also illegitimate children (1979:48). Pregnancy outside marriage has evolved considerably in Native communities. In her thesis, Continuity and Change: A Cultural Analysis of Teenage Pregnancy, Catherine James (1992) interviewed elders who stated how important both marriage and childbearing used to be for a girl's entry into womanhood. The phenomenon of bearing a child out of wedlock has changed only in the last twenty years which is why the number of girls having children in their earlier teens, between 13 and 17 years has increased

social pressure to marry has decreased and the stigma of out-of-wedlock has diminished (...) Childbearing in Mistassini is also symbolic of cultural generativity, and is a highly valued event marking the passage to adulthood for women and men. Literature about marriage is scarce due to the lack of ethnographic material for this period (James, 1992:5)

Similarly, the church had also a strong impact on marriage and tried to influence Native people's behavior. In her book, Flannery quoting John. S. Long, described the role of missionaries who attempted to change Cree social organization, especially arranged marriages and cross-cousin marriages, and encouraged women at Kesagami and Moose Factory to choose their husbands (Flannery, 1995:69).

1.3. Social structure within the family unit

Traditionally, the division of labor was based on sex, but as life in the bush demanded flexibility, there was no sharp division of labor. Generally, men were in charge of hunting and bringing back food to the home, this could require days or weeks of absence during which the wives and mothers were forced to cope with whatever they had left or to hunt to feed their children. First, women were responsible for the dwelling, renewed the spruce boughs as needed to keep a clean and nice smell, cleaned and cooked the game, cleaned, stretched and sewed the skins. They were also responsible of the heating of the tent, for which the children helped in cutting the necessary wood (Preston, 1979:54-55).

Mothers were fully responsible for the children. Ellen Smallboy explained that if anything happened to the children, whether through her own carelessness or that of an older sibling caretaker, she would be blamed by her husband. At the same time, mothers were entitled to discipline the children, and although sometimes the husband would speak up, they were never limited in dealing with their sons and daughters as they thought best.

1.3.1. Traditions in Cree families

After hunting, the men would bring back their kill which would be divided among the different families living in the dwelling. It was divided according to the size of their respective household, regardless of who had actually shot the game. Each man's wife then assumed control of the disposal of her husband's share, "it is up to the wife to decide because she knows best how much her family needs". However, some goods were shared according to gender: in sharing the food for example, certain parts of the animal were eaten by women and others by men, and the sharing was different depending on the animal: geese, black bear, beaver, moose, porcupine, fish (Joe Bearskin et al, 1980:60-70).

Gender differences played an important role in several behavioral patterns and responsibilities. For example, during their menstruation, women had to be cautious not to step over a man's stretched legs in the mihiwam, as it could bring bad luck to his hunting. Women were knowledgeable about medicine and healing . During the last centuries, non-

Native women appreciated and made use of Native women's medicinal skills, and asked for teaching or assistance in times of illness. Many elderly women proved to be quite adept at diagnosing and prescribing the correct herb-tea (Dion, 1979:114). Similarly, the account books of the European fur traders (...) showed that Aboriginal women were paid a certain amount for their 'doctoring'. Midwifery was also a highly specialized profession, because of precarious living condition in the bush, women had to give birth in any circumstances (Dion, 1989:6). Midwifery was passed from mother to daughter, or by any elder woman to younger girls, in the case of Alice Jacob, a Cree woman who spent her life between Nemaska and Rupert House, her foster mother taught her how to deliver babies, and she later became a midwife herself (Preston, 1986).

1.4. Behavior patterns in Cree society

Survival in the bush not only relied on hunting skills but also on a broad set of rules within the hunting society put in place in order to avoid jealousy, fighting and death. For example hunting groups had to be numerous enough to help those families who were immobilized by illnesses, accidents or lack of food, but the clan didn't exceed a certain size in order to avoid killing all the game living on the territory. Cree hunting groups had to define hunting territories in order to avoid conflicts. Similarly, sharing and mutual helping were elementary principles in order to avoid illness and starving. Security within the clans was based on a process of enculturation in which the competence and independence of the individual in the bush were the basic rules for survival. Solidarity between hunting men, especially fathers and their sons, was very strong; strategies for making decisions and for social control enabled the groups to refrain from aggressive behavior which was considered dangerous for the survival of the group (Chance, 1969:12 and Preston, 1986). Two cognitive characteristics of their social organization were: reserve and control in relation to each other and dependence upon "a supernatural" power governing all the living creatures in the universe. The non authoritarian aspects of their social organization were expressed by a very strong internal control over aggressiveness, fear, pain and hunger (Chance, 1969:14). Equally important was the respect for the Council of Elders. Cree people listened to the Elders because they ensured Cree tradition and knowledge. Generally, they were in charge of making the important decisions concerning the community, and were chosen because of their age. All their choices were signs of highest wisdom and expression of the Creators' wish.

1.5. Colonization and residential schools

Starting in the mid-18th century, colonization forced Native communities to leave their semi-nomadic life, and to adapt to a new social and economical environment. From then on, decisions took into consideration the community and then the hunting groups, time became regulated, moving became difficult as they started living in permanent dwellings or were employed. These differences created all kinds of social problems. As Pothier analyzed, although the Cree behaved according to Eurocanadian society rule, it didn't mean that they thought in those terms, this lead to severe personal conflicts and identity crisis (Chance, 1969:15).

1.5.1. History of residential schools

Before World War II, the Anglican Mission was in charge of educating primary grades in Fort George. Schools were rare, therefore pupils from coastal bands were sent to Fort George and those from the inland to Moose Factory. In the 1950s, the Department of Northern and Indian Affairs began building schools in Brandford, Ontario, and La Tucque, Québec and enrolling Native children. In 1964, the opening of a day school in Mistassini marked the beginning of local primary schools in that area. Then, the Sand Parlk school in Fort George offered increased number of grades, allowing more children from the Cree communities to delay their departure from their Cree-speaking community, until the first local high school was established at Fort George in 1972 (Salisbury, 1986:34-36).

Testimonies and life stories have helped to understand how Native people's sense of identity was affected by their experience in residential schools. The following stories were taken from the study: Les Cris du Québec (Chance, 1969:86-111) of Natives living in Waswanipi and Mistassini, as well as from the result of an interview done by the author with a woman living in Chisasibi.

1.5.2. Traditional education and residential school teaching

In traditional bush life, between the ages of four and six, Cree children were in charge of taking care of their siblings, carrying wood and water and spruce. They often accompanied their parents to fetch wood and check the traps. The older the children the greater were their responsibilities, and their pride about their increasing competence. Sharing food and tasks were also part of their learning. The ability to become self-sufficient and independent indicated their level of integration into the traditional cultural group, as autonomy was a requirement for survival. On the one hand, parents didn't impose patterns of behavior, and children were free to eat and to sleep whenever they wished, but on the other hand children

imitate their parents and elders, and were always complimented when doing so (Chance, 1969:87).

After the 1950s, children were taken from their parents and sent to residential schools far away from home. Summer holidays allowed them to come home every ten months. The different life style and teaching affected all parts of their lives, not only because of an alien environment but also a different language, a different diet, and rules of life opposite to their own.

1.5.3. Experiencing residential schools

Residential schools fostered a different sense of autonomy based not on independence but rather on individual success. Similarly, teachers encouraged competition by applauding answers given rapidly, by organizing games and sport activities in the school. Following the example of their white classmates who argued, scoffed at their professors, and refused to obey, Cree children learned to express their hostility, and disapproval towards their teachers and instructors (Chance, 1969:89).

Upon their return home, these children often felt uncomfortable with their family, and missed the facilities available at school, such as bathrooms, running water, electricity. Cree parents were very uneasy about the school system as their children were less capable of speaking Cree, less willing to help in the domestic tasks and generally became insubordinate and impertinent. Adolescents were developing mixed feelings towards their parents and their traditional way of life. They were caught in an ambiguous situation where they had to choose between a professional life either based on Eurocanadian values or stay with their families and renounce job opportunities (Chance, 1969:91).

During an informal interview in Chisasibi, a resident described a similar situation

first I went to school at Fort George, until grade 6 and then I was sent to a residential school in the south, to Val d'Or. It was a big change, before I had never seen television, only rudimentary telephone and radio. I was very afraid of the unknown, and I got into a very dominant system, where I had to conform to what they wanted. We were told that we were dirty, then I learnt to become cleaner and enjoyed showering every day. Before we used to sleep three people in one bed, suddenly I had my own bedroom with a pillow, it smelt nice. Food wasn't bad, and we integrated ourselves quite well. We enjoyed it, it became important to be clean, when we would come back home we would be defiant and answer back, also ask for privacy, always saying: 'this is mine' (Chisasibi, February 1998).

This new sense of privacy modified the relation to other members of the family and therefore to space. Before everything had been shared and visible to all members of the family, but after school experience, youngsters became aware of what was their own and claimed it. Their desire to conform to the norms of White society was more and more present, and by living in modern houses they found the opportunity to apply their experience and act more like people down south. Norman Chance stressed the influence of White culture on the sense of identity of Native Cree individuals

the clash of two or more technologically cultural systems is a worldwide phenomenon. And in the North, as elsewhere, the technologically less well-equipped peoples are prone to feelings of inferiority and self-disparagement.(...) As for the Menomini Indians of Wisconsin, adaptation to culturally-induced stress brought on by the confrontation of two divergent cultural systems may take the form of 1) rejection of either the old or new system; 2) segmentation of the two systems; 3) an undertaking to blend or synchronize the two (Spindler in Chance, 1968:18-19).

Brant specified essential rules in Cree society which differed from White cultural norms, such as Native's attitude towards gratitude and approbation. Native people are not used to congratulating a good professor, a good nurse, doctor, farmer, fisher or hunter. On the contrary, Native people do not acknowledge a task if it was performed in a mediocre way to avoid the possibility of embarrassing the person who performed the task. Expressing thanks for a good action is considered superfluous because accomplishing a good action embodies its own reward. In schools, these cultural differences cause problems because of the way children are gratified and the way they perceive and react to this. Because Western education is mainly based on rewards and competitive learning, children are confronted with different values than those commonly shared at home. In Native education, children were asked to follow the example of the parents; and in circumstances of misbehavior, rather than shouting or punishing, parents made use of ridicule and scared the children with the threat of spirits. In Brant's opinion, such education fostered a sense of humiliation and may develop into increased timidity, resulting in a reluctance towards challenging oneself in order to avoid blame. This humiliating feeling can also be coupled with a feeling of culpability (Brant, 1989:538).

These factors may appear foreign to matters related to housing issues, but the behavior of Native communities and the discrepancy between their mentality and the goals of white planners play an important role in understanding the current housing problem. This issue will be discussed in Chapter 2 in order to define the relation between identity and housing through experiences in Native communities and in Third World countries.

1.6. The impact of residential schools on women

1.6.1. Fertility and identity

Fertility and childbirth, in dominant ideology are linked to becoming a woman or a man, and are viewed differently in Cree and 'White' society. In a Cree woman's life, pregnancy and childbearing are crucial events in the construction of her identity, as her fertility is something highly valued, "childless couples are referred as 'poor' or 'unfortunate' and usually raise or adopt children of siblings of others" (James, 1992:84). Birth control and family planning are considered as being unnatural, as "the family planning was a White way of doing things and that it was not natural to try to plan for children, who were a gift to be gratefully accepted" (James, 1992:88).

From previous authors and testimonies, childbearing appears to have become more relevant than marriage, as the importance of an official union has decreased in the last twenty years. Before young girls had to be prepared before going into womanhood, and made aware of the importance of marriage and childbearing. Today's life makes traditional teaching more difficult and at the same time more and more mothers haven't had the chance to experience bush life themselves, in which "the young girl attaining the age of womanhood received special attention. A teepee was set away from the main camp where she spent at least two days with a wise old woman who by constant talk prepared her for life" (Dion, 1979:16). These changes in morality had strong consequences on the constitution and size of Native families and play a crucial role in housing issues in Chisasibi today.

1.6.2. The impact of residential schools on childbearing

The new skills taught at residential schools gave Native children a sense of independence and control over their parents and changed their attitude towards authority. Their feeling of independence became evident in aspects such as childbearing and adulthood. Many of the residents in Mistassini explained that after their high school years, having children had become acceptable for young girls, with marriage falling in second place. Although parental approval had been important to many, they had nevertheless kept their final decision for themselves. Several middle-aged women had temporarily estranged themselves from their parents by refusing to marry a man that had been selected for them. Interesting is to note that none of the female residents who had been sent to residential school had undergone an arranged marriage, whereas women who had arranged marriages had never gone to school.

Psychological and emotional problems resulting from colonization affecting the social structure of Native families had direct consequences on women's choices in regard to marriage; in her study James showed that teenagers appeared

wary of marriage, alluding to situations of abuse, or other situations where emotional needs of one or both spouses were not being met. They referred to single parents in the community as examples, concluding that it is possible for one parent to support a small family (James, 1992:66).

Women's behavior and sense of independence towards marriage and childbearing has therefore changed, insofar as they tend to have children with different partners without having to fear the problems of marital life. Consequently, this has affected the size and the structure of Native families today. Family size is a major element to be considered in the planning process of a house, and it seems that this element has not yet been incorporated in the housing designs.

1.6.3. Governmental intervention and the role of women

Presenting Pamela's White's Ph.D. dissertation Restructuring the Domestic Sphere - Prairie Indian Women on Reserves: Image, Ideology and State Policy, Carter explained how the Department of Indian Affairs developed a central strategy to restructure the domestic economy of women living on reserves, a measure seen as vital to the 'civilization of the Indian'. Efforts to restructure the reserve's domestic economy included the introduction of new housekeeping and cooking skills and more 'moral' living quarters. The state also intervened in areas of mothering and child care through the residential school system, which trained girls for domestic work (...).

By the 1920s, the state had become involved in virtually all aspects of an aboriginal woman's life. The high infant mortality rate and tuberculosis epidemic were all attributed to the supposedly 'slovenly' housekeeping habits and poor mothering and nursing skills of Aboriginal women (Carter in Miller and Chuchryk et al., 1996:54).

Around the same time, an Indian Affairs official stated: "our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that had not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and there is no Indian Department, and that is the whole object of the Bill" (The Nation, 1998:10). According to the legislation enforced in 1869 and 1951, the Eurocanadian social organization and the English common law stated that the wife was the property of her husband. It was assumed that women were dependent subjects who derived rights from their fathers and husbands. It was widely believed that dispossessed of nomadic habits, an

aboriginal woman would be mistress of her home, and not a servile, degraded beast of burden continually on the move from camp to camp. She would acquire discipline, modesty and cleanliness, virtues that non-Aboriginal believed were impossible in a nomadic society (Carter in Miller and Chuchryk et al., 1996:54).

The Indian Act didn't allow Native women who had married a non Native to be considered as a Status Indian anymore and therefore they lost their benefits, as did their children, such as the right to live in a house on a reserve (Carter, 1996:53). Women also suffered rapid loss of their power in the building process of the dwelling. In Canadian Indian Homes published in 1959 by the Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the distinction of the role of men and women was made clear

Indians have an important role to play in community planning and Councils and individuals must be encouraged to be actively involved in studies of the local community leading to the adoption of an over-all community plan (...). A project of this nature would see the people of the community banding together, the men forming a bee to do the actual construction and the women intersecting in serving lunches. This creates interest, imparts some knowledge of construction and creates a house for a worthy cause (1959:2).

Through western ideologies and assumptions about the role of women and men, in particular, about the male provider and the female dependent, women were deprived of the autonomy and influence they had in the past (Carter in Miller and Chuchryk, 1996:53-72).

1.7. Native women today

1.7.1. Native women's role in Native communities today

After many years of oppression and acculturation, Native women still continue to offer the members of their community a loving, nurturing atmosphere within the base family unit and put all their efforts into the building up of Cree society. They know, even today, that they have a sacred role to perform in order to help their communities

We must continue to do so. It is a matter of the right of female to be what we fundamentally are: insurers of the next generation. It is a matter of survival where genocide is an everyday reality. We find our strength and our power in our ability to do what our grandmothers were to us: keepers of the next generation in every sense of that word, physically, intellectually, and spiritually (Amstrong in Miller and Chuchryk, 1996: x-xi).

The role of women within the family and in the household plays a very important role in helping communities to define their sense of identity. But, since Native communities have

been colonized, women were excluded from the decision making process, therefore their input to find more appropriate answers was never considered to improve the housing problems.

1.7.2. The triple role of women

Caroline Moser explained that the role of women, in the family but also in the community can be divided into three categories: women's 'reproductive role' (childbearing, rearing responsibilities), her "productive role" (as primary or secondary income earners) in "rural areas and informal urban areas located in their home", and last women's "managing role organizing at the community level in relation to the provision of items of collective consumption"(Moser, 1987:13). The patriarchal hierarchy in Western society and throughout the world, the development of capitalism, rapid and uncontrolled growth have led to oversee these factors implemented in the triple role of women in Native communities: for example the "reproductive and managing work, because they're both seen as natural are not valued (Moser 1987:14): this leading to severe inequalities in the division of labor, income based wages, land tenure etc.... The home based nature of domestic work and child care also means that women become less visible to other household members (Brydon and Chant, 1989).

1.7.3. Women and labor market indicators

Women's role in the labour market is not to be underestimated either⁶. Women's participation in the labor market shows their input in community related jobs, such as teaching (15.34% compared to 5.51 for men); medicine and health (7.98% compared to 1.57% for men), social science (10.43% as opposed to 6.69% for men), clerical (25.54% as opposed to 6.30% for men), sales (5.52% as opposed to 1.57% for men and services (with 25.77% as opposed to 7.87% for men). The overall majority of women's employment in community services translates their natural inclination to answer the needs of their community. At the same time it might show their desire to help their community to heal itself and develop skills for a better life.

⁶The following data is taken from a governmental report of Employment and Immigration Canada, *Community Profile of the James Bay Cree* analyzing the population of Native inhabitants 15 years of age and over. Belonging to the labor force are the residents 15 years of age and over who are employed and unemployed, regardless of where they belong. The population 15 years of age and over without work and who are actively seeking employment correspond to the unemployed population. The participation rate correspond to the percentage of the total active labor force in relation to the total adult population, and the unemployment rate reveal the percentage of unemployed residents in the labor force (1991:58-59). The total adult population in Cree communities consists of 5 020 persons, or 62% of the total Cree population, whereas the whole adult population in Quebec represents 73.3% of the total population. The Cree labor force grew by approximately 23% between 1981 and 1986 to a total of 2 320.

Men on the other hand are more inclined to perform jobs related to traditional activities and physical tasks, such as farming, fishing, forestry and mining (9,45% as opposed to 1,23% for women), assembling and repairing (3,54% as opposed to 1,23% for women), construction (31,10% as opposed to 1,23% for women), transport (7,48% as opposed to 0,6% for women), material handling (8,27% as opposed to 1,23% for women) and other (8,27% as opposed to 1,23% for women).

1.7.4. Conclusion: women, labor market and family life

Women play an important role in Native communities, not only as child bearers and care givers of the family but also as community workers. Their influence and role are considerable and should be regarded as highly valuable in all aspects of community life. Housing issues are the most important part of community life, especially when families are extended and villages isolated in harsh climatic conditions. The triple role of women empowers them by giving them the possibility of understanding the needs of their family and of the community as a whole, and therefore their participation in communal affairs should be fostered and acknowledged as being essential in the process of building up a sense of belonging to a culture.

This first chapter discussed the major aspects dealing with traditional housing issues in Cree society before colonization, the spatial order in regard to sex and the role of women in the home. It also pointed to the changes which have affected Cree women directly and their role in their communities and in their families. The second chapter will present the links between housing, culture and identity, describing the building process in "primitive" cultures and also the specificity of planning for Native cultures. It will also describe the present Native housing situation in Canada and Northern Quebec .

Chapter 2- Native Housing

The relationship between shelter and identity has been described in numerous books and in research all over the world (Hamdi, 1991; Rapoport, 1969; Turner, 1972 and 1976; Skinner, 1987), but its implications have not always been acknowledged and translated into reality. And, although several authors - among them anthropologists and ethnologists - highlighted the links between the social structure and the built environment, in reality, many planners and architects have not taken into consideration these issues until recently. Therefore it is important to explore the link between shelter and culture through a cross-cultural perspective, specially the social aspects of planning communities and try to explain why women are key elements in solving the problems affecting their houses and finding solutions to answer the needs of their families.

2.1. Housing, culture and identity

Still today, the attitude of western architects and planners towards traditional shelters reveals both a lack of understanding and very little desire to learn from them. Nevertheless, the prevailing idea that western technology and theories are able to solve the housing problems of aboriginal communities is starting to weaken, especially since architecture is being put into question by its users all over the world. Already in the 60s, Rapoport and other authors criticized the fact that architects had a "tendency to see mud hovels or insignificant grass shacks where there are, in fact, buildings of great quality with much to teach to us" (1969:1).

2.1.1. The building process in traditional cultures

In "primitive" cultures, life, labor, religion and space were interrelated. There was no differentiation because all these activities "permeate(d) other areas of life and thought. This allow(ed) a balance between man, the build environment and nature" (Rapoport, 1969:8-13). Rapoport states that materials in themselves did not seem to determine form (e.g. the plans of an igloo and a tent are the same) and on the other side, a change of materials did not necessarily change the form of the house (e.g. the example of Santorini where masonry replaced the traditional stone vaults and neither the form nor that of the vault changed) (Rapoport, 1969:25-26). The knowledge and control of builders in regards to their environment existed within their ability to work with limited resources of material, energy, and technology: "their margin for error and waste (was) correspondingly small" (Rapoport, 1969:86). The process of construction integrated patterns of cooperation within a community, or within a household, enabling the individuals to complete very difficult tasks. In Cree society, daughters were soon involved in the construction of the teepee to help their

In Cree society, daughters were soon involved in the construction of the teepee to help their mother and grandmother and for the log house. the frame was built by the men, but all the insulation and the finishing inside was done by the females of all ages.⁷

Physical values were nearly as important as cultural values in the dynamic emerging between the site and the shelter, because the site was considered in regard to the "goals, ideals and values of people or period, and choice of the 'good' site- whether lake, river, mountain, or coast depends on this cultural definition" (Rapoport, 1969:30). On the other hand, beliefs did affect the form, plan and spatial arrangements and orientation of the house as the example of Native layout and orientation of the dwelling illustrates.

The form of the settlement affects both the way of life and the house, because the relation between the house and the settlement is more than merely physical. It depends on the family structure, the way of life, the labor, the religion and landscape. The Navajo Indians,

who have a dispersed living pattern, were able to accept innovation when veterans came back from World War II, because it affected only the single household and did not disrupt the community . Houses, settlements, and landscapes are products of the same cultural system" (Rapoport, 1969:69-72).

The scarcity of building material or the climatic factors force communities to move and search for new sites. The Cree, for example, used to live in log houses in the winter which protected from the cold and in tents in the summer to meet around a camp and participate in festivities and celebrate marriages.

The interaction between the built environment and the social structure of a community - as described above - remain crucial parameters to analyze the changes and problems that continue to affect Cree communities. The Canadian government's wish to "emancipate" the Indians in all areas of their life was deliberate, but the reason why the Cree did not resist modernization could be, because the Indians had no reason to think that their culture was set apart during all these years, and second, it was only after Indians had experienced the negative effects of modernization on their culture that the issue of their cultural identity was first raised (McDowell, 1989:46).

⁷*Cree Hunters of Mistassini*. National Film Board of Canada, 1992.

2.1.2. Planning for Native communities

Considering the links between settlement form and social structure, McDowell addressed the very serious problems of implementation of community planning concepts in Native communities. One major barrier in understanding and translating the needs of the communities into reality was the overall desire of planners to deal with settlement patterns in terms of physical and financial dimensions only. One main problem was the lack of awareness of planners and architects about the complexity of Native society previous to Eurocanadian influence and the set of rules existing in their communities

the existing problem under which planners/designers are educated and the imposition of alien attitudes and values promoted through the planning process have caused a great share of the problems in Native communities. Unless the system is changed, planners (whether Native or non-Native) will continue to be taught culturally irrelevant planning procedures, and the same mistake will continue to be perpetuated. Indoctrinating Native planners into the methods of white planning is not a step forward but merely sideways in the quest for cultural relevant planning. Native people have been "planning" their own communities, in their own terms, long before the arrival of the white man. Native people had a system of community relations -social, economic, political, spiritual, and spatial - which served their needs and upon whose structure their culture was based. Unless allowed to reassert this base and adapt it to contemporary conditions, the problems of community planning will continue (Simon et al., 1984:56).

Similarly, John Turner's experience in Peru showed that

information and intellectual exercising does (...) reduce the schooled planner's ability to listen and learn about situations significantly different from his own social and economic experience - with consequences which can be tragic when he has the power to impose his solutions on those who are not strong enough to resist (Turner, 1972:147).

It is therefore difficult for any non-Native planner and architect to incorporate all the heritage from Native history and translate the needs of their communities into a built form. That is the reason why community participation is so relevant in today's planning process, it enables trained architects to articulate with modern means the desires and needs of Native communities and their sense of identity in an appropriate environment.

2.1.3. Building up one's identity

The process of healing in Native communities is growing parallel to their efforts to become independent from the government. The role of community participation in this process, their ability to speak out their concerns and make propositions will enhance the understanding of the different issues related to healing and self-determination.

The challenge to Native communities is to design community, political, economic, health and social service, legal and cultural structures that will move from the paternalistic structures that were imposed upon them (...). There is a way out but it must include participation of whole communities. All must be involved in the planning and healing in order to create a new infrastructure that will wipe away the pain and give control and strength to the people so that they become self-determining. (...) One of the most efficient ways of beginning the process is a comprehensive community survey in which people are asked what problems they see and how they would prefer to resolve them" (Christensen, 1995:24-26).

2.2. The social impact of housing

The awareness that housing issues are connected to broader problems existing in Native communities have opened new areas of study and research, such as the Cultural Design Award established by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to honor the most innovative and creative designs for Aboriginal housing. As Mary May Simon stressed during the CMHC Symposium

the quick transition has led to a general loss of cultural identity and with it, the loss of self-esteem that move with the feeling one has lost control over one's life.(...) By encouraging home ownership, by building better houses and developing a more responsive housing industry and workforce, and by looking after the complete housing needs of our communities we are doing much more than building houses. We are building communities (CMHC, 1995:18-19).

Aboriginal people believe that improvements in their houses will enable them to have more control over their own lives, to organize the housing programs better, to create employment, to maintain their ways of living and their culture and finally to improve health conditions and reinforce their sense of identity (RCAP, 1996:3:420).

2.2.1. Interaction between house and identity in Native communities

Responding to Native's cultural heritage, Young underlines the relation between the social, economic and cultural variables related to housing and the physical and psychological health of Native communities. Specific elements must be considered in order to allow a sane and constructive sense of belonging to a community and a loving and confident feeling in the individual home, such as:

- 1) the architectural qualities and esthetic of the houses which translate cultural values;
- 2) the physical location of the houses in the community which influences the modes of social interaction;
- 3) the aspects related to home ownership and to the cost of maintenance corresponding to the economical and cultural values in a given place.

Cultural references serve as a basis to define the physical context, such as:

- the spatial orientation of the dwelling in the east-west axis;
- the utilization of symbols and colors associated with Indian customs in the design of the rooms and their decoration;
- the roof architecture and exterior structures should follow traditional Indian housing models;
- development of a central area open in the interior for social meetings;
- the functional layout to allow cultural activities such as cleaning of the game;
- the layout of the bedrooms and the living areas in conformity with the cultural rules in regard to intimacy, respect and authority within families.

Thomas and Thompson in Young et al.(1991:83-86) stressed the importance of the quality of the houses to decrease the problems of mortality rates and infectious diseases. But also, they explained that new units were responsible for the increased stress caused by acculturation. Before, families used to live, work and sleep in one common space, but with the modern house arrangement they suddenly had to incorporate values of 'intimacy' implicit to houses designed with separate sleeping areas.

Young et al (1991:86) pointed out that, even if the western house style was generally accepted by Native people, one should reconsider the style and the conception of their homes for the sake of the protection of family life. Similarly, the issue of home ownership and maintenance remains essential in regard to the social and emotional well-being of Native people. Cross-cultural research has demonstrated that the domestic environment is generally a fundamental element in creating a feeling of security, confidence and self-esteem in individuals.

2.3. Native housing: the present status

As one approaches villages, however, dramatic changes appear, with roads upgraded and even paved. Entering any village there is an immediate sense of affluence, of almost every house being new, (...) of confidence and activity in band offices and of people who are busy and involved in matters of personal concern. Few signs of traditional way appear outwardly in the villages - no dogs or teepees, the old HBC store has given way to a modern construction of supermarket type, and few if any furs are to be seen, stretching on the drying frames outside the new houses (Salisbury, 1986:63-64).

2.3.1. Houses in Native communities

Salisbury in "A Homeland for the Cree" drew a very sharp picture of new Cree villages, underlining the elements of change, to which the new architecture and layout of the houses mostly contributed. With the inclusion of electricity, water supply, sanitation, all the houses offered southern comfort. Houses, though, remained crowded, with seven or eight people residing in a two or three bedroom house: "electric stoves, refrigerators and television sets were found in every household, and the furniture, stereos, fittings, decorations would not appear to be out of place anywhere in any southern Canadian town". The houses were owned by the band who guaranteed the mortgage, and the residents paid a form of rent to the band (Salisbury, 1986:63- 64).

Finding information about housing issues in a specific community is very difficult, mainly because the reports and researches done on Native housing tend to embrace all the aboriginal communities at once. The reasons are simple: it is relevant to have data and comparisons on the same issue on a wide range of examples. Similarly, financing studies is expensive and communities don't have the necessary resources or the administrative structure to undertake such census or research. The national research programs that the author has consulted are based on a variety of norms and standards generally accepted and used by the CMHC, Statistics Canada in the 1991 census and also by the Royal Commission on the Status of Aboriginal Peoples established after the census.

2.3.2. Native housing issues in 1998

In First Nations communities, 60% of the dwellings meet the needs of their occupants, in the opinion of the occupant. Among the occupants of these dwellings are those who have adequate incomes and finance their homes themselves or who, at their own expense, have made improvements to homes supplied by the band. Also in this group are households that have gained access to full range of available subsidies. But the other 40% are not so well provided for. In many First Nations communities, a small number of reserve residents are fortunate to secure a house each year but it may be poorly built and they must struggle to maintain it amidst depressed economic circumstances and insecure tenure. There are also a substantial number of people on waiting lists for band-supplies housing (RCAP, 1996:3:370, 371).

All Native communities don't face the same problems. For example, there is a big difference between the financial conditions of the villages living on the west coast of James Bay and the community living on the east coast. In our case study, the example of Chisasibi cannot be

compared with its neighbors in Ontario, across the Bay. Even if the two communities belong to the same Cree culture, the village in Ontario didn't benefit from the financial agreements of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, discussed previously (Lachance, 1998:56-60). Comparatively, the James Bay Cree of Chisasibi were very fortunate; first they were given new fully equipped houses after the relocation, and since 1985 the Band with outside funding from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and CMHC, made a effort to answer the constant housing demand. At the same time, the community displayed efforts to improve the defective sewage system and since 1993, started renovating all the relocated houses as well as those built in 1981. This means that today's housing stock is satisfactory compared to what it was only 5 years ago. The community started expanding on the west side in 1992, incorporating new housing models such as the Inuit House which will be addressed in the case study (see figure 4.).

Nevertheless, social problems and housing needs are still a major concern in Native communities. Funding and administrative structures are still lacking to respond to the residents' expectations. The inadequacy between the cultural identity and the domestic environment, poor quality of the materials and overcrowding in the houses create acute problems. For a general understanding of the housing needs of Native people in Canada, the author will summarize the problems afflicting Native people in general before presenting the case of Chisasibi.

2.3.3. Native housing in Canada

The combination of a sense of crisis and the inadequacy or failure of past policies has contributed to demands to transfer both authority and resources for housing and community services to Aboriginal governments. For some years, organizations representing First Nations have contended that housing is part of compensation owed to them in return for giving up effective use of the bulk of the Canadian land mass, either through formal treaties or by other less formal means.

For instance, in a submission to the standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs in 1992, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) asserted that

housing is a federal responsibility which flows from the special relationship with the federal Crown created by section 91 (24) of the British North America Act of 1867 and treaty agreements themselves".⁹ In its Brief to this Commission, the AFN called

⁹Assembly of First Nations, Presentation to the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on First Nation's Housing, 18 February 1992, as quoted in *Time for Action*, Standing Committee in Aboriginal Affairs.

for a process to address housing rights: "The federal government must work jointly with First Nations to establish a forum for bilateral discussion to resolve issues relating to Aboriginal and treaty rights to housing (RCAP, 1996:3:373).

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations stated that

Shelter in the form of housing, renovations, and related infrastructures is a treaty right, and forms a part of the federal trust and fiduciary responsibility. [This disposition derives] from the special Indian-Crown relationship dating back to the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, enhanced by section 91 (24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867* and sections 25 and 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. (RCAP, 1996:3:373-374).¹⁰

Other official modifications to the Indian Act had great consequences on the housing stock all over Canada: the Bill C-31 project, Act modifying the Indian Act, adopted by the Parliament in June 1985, returned Indian status to women who had previously lost their Indian status - because they married a non Status Indian - and gave them the right to belong to the band. In June 1990, the number of status Indians had increased up to 19% in only five years because of Bill C-31. Eighty percent of the bands experienced a growth of 150 members in their communities after the adoption of the Bill (Young et al., 1991:7).

2.3.4. Federal housing programs on reserve

The government provides assistance through two agencies, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the CMHC:

- Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development provides funding for housing on reserves in the form of subsidies for capital costs (construction of dwellings and renovation), certain operating costs for persons on welfare, and program administration costs borne by First Nations communities. It does not make loans for housing, but it guarantees loans by private lenders insured by CMHC and also loans made directly by CMHC.

- CMHC's on-reserve rental housing program provides First Nations with a subsidy up to an amount that would bring the interest rate on housing loans down to 2%. First Nations borrow from private lending institutions for the cost of construction minus Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development capital subsidies, at prevailing interest rates and with a typical repayment period of 25 years. The loans are insured under the National Housing Act and guaranteed by the minister of Indian Affairs. First Nations enter into agreements with CMHC that stipulate the levels of rents to be charged and the maintenance

¹⁰Assembly of First Nations, "Reclaiming our Nationhood, Strengthening Our Heritage: Report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1993), recommendation 92.

regime to be followed. Also available from CMHC is the homeowner residential rehabilitation assistance program (homeowner RRAP), which provides loans up to \$25, 000, of which a maximum of \$5, 000 to \$8,250 can be forgiven, depending on the income and geographic zone (RCAP, 1996:3:384).¹¹

The problem is that many Native communities don't participate in the CMHC social housing program. Certain First Nations residents living in social housing subsidized by the CMHC for years refused to pay their rent because they believe they have the right to live for free in homes delivered by the government. There is therefore less funding for housing on the reserve and also fewer houses built every year (RCAP, 1996:3:423).

2.3.5. The legal regime and tenure

Formal authority for virtually everything associated with housing and residential development on reserves remains in the hands of either the government in council or the minister of Indian Affairs. The minister's responsibilities under the Indian Act include ownership of land and real property and control over their use, regulations concerning housing conditions, and financing and programming relating to housing and community services. First Nations lack the legal capacity to regulate land use, dwelling possession and use, landlord-tenant relations, buying and selling site servicing and a host of other matters taken for granted by provinces and municipalities (RCAP, 1996:389).

At present, band members can gain possession of a house and use a defined portion of reserve land according to custom of the band or by being allotted a portion of land by the band council and given a certificate of possession or occupation by the minister. Many reserves in British Columbia and central and eastern Canada have opted to use these certificates, which amounts to deeds. Among First Nations like the Dene, the Crees of Quebec, the Algonkian and the Six Nations, individual ownership is common, with positive results. Even so, certificates are generally used for only a fraction of the houses in the community. Other residents live in band-owned dwellings, without defined rights and responsibilities. Certificates of possession are not widely used in northern Ontario and the prairies provinces, where the occupants' rights are defined by custom. Customary rights have not been legally treated and remain uncertain. For the majority of houses on reserves, the rights of the occupant and the band are vaguely defined (RCAP, 1996:3:390).

¹¹Tony Côté, director, Saskatchewan Indian Housing Corporation, in House of Commons, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Issue No.23 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1992), p.9. in RCAP, 1996, vol.3.

2.4. Living conditions of Native People in Canada

2.4.1. Definition

First of all, a family is considered in pressing need of housing if its dwelling does not meet all the norms set by the CMHC and if this household has to spend 30% or more of its income to pay a average rent. The norms are based on two main variables: one is that any family should be able to have access to an affordable home and that this house should be of a reasonable size and qualitatively acceptable;

- a dwelling is considered inferior to the qualitative acceptable norm if the residents see the need for major repairs (for example the replacement of the plumbing or electrical installation, repair of wall, floor or ceiling), or in the absence of a reasonable and functional bathroom;
- a dwelling is considered inferior to the norm of acceptable size if it is overcrowded, if the members of the household have to live in a number of rooms inferior to the number prescribed by the National Occupation Norm;
- a dwelling is considered inferior to the norm of affordability if the household has to spend 30% or more of its income on housing (Ark Associates, 1996:3).

2.4.2. Native families

The fertility rates of Native people can be transcribed through a pyramid with a large base, typical of developing countries or similar to those existing in Canada 50 years ago. During the 1986 census, 37% of Native Canadians were below the age of 15 (compared to 22% of all Canadians), whereas less than 3% were over the age of 65 (compared to 10% of all Canadians) This predominantly young population has important consequences on health care, housing and socio-economical development (Young et al, 1991:17).

2.4.3. Overcrowding

The living conditions of Aboriginal households is on a different scale than the living conditions of non Aboriginal households:

- 52% or 123 360 households (out of 236 575) live in homes that do not answer one or more norms defined by the CMHC (whereas this percentage doesn't exceed 32% in non-Native families)
- 31% of Native's household are overcrowded;
- Native families are generally large and are mostly composed of children and young adults, especially young couples and single parents.

When compared to other non-Native households in Canada, Native families:

- have larger families with an average of 3,5 persons compared to 2,7;

- tend less to be composed of only one to two persons;
- tend generally to be composed of 6 persons or more (Ark Associates, 1996:5-6).

Housing on reserves and Inuit houses present an average of 5,5 and 5,4 rooms for families composed by an average of 4,3 persons. In comparison, non-Native households are constituted by an average of 6,1 rooms and composed by families of 2,7 members (Ark Associates, 1996:13).

2.4.4. Housing and mental stress

Researchers have demonstrated that overcrowding presents more danger for mental illness than for physical illness. Actually, sociologists differentiate the density - which represents the number of people by unitary area - from the congestion - which corresponds to the simultaneous need to utilize the available space. That is why, on reserves, the negative effects of overcrowding on mental health are more related to the lack of personal control over the available space, rather than to the restricted space itself (Young et al, 1991:39).

2.4.5. Lack of proper services

One household out of 4 living on reserve doesn't have access to a complete and functional bathroom:

- 25% of all households on reserves don't answer the standard norms because they don't have a complete and functional bathroom;
- 19% have water supply interruption;
- 7% don't have any access to a properly treated water source;
- 10% don't have electricity or face electrical problems;
- 31% have heating systems which do not respond to their needs (Ark Associates, 1996:5).

In northern regions, families living in band housing say that they don't have access to the normal services;

- more than 35% don't have a complete and functional bathroom;
- 9% don't have access to a drinkable treated water;
- 11% don't have electricity or the electrical system is defective;
- 37% have a heating system not answering their expectations.

Generally, more household members in the northern regions tended to believe that their houses did not answer their needs (Ark Associates, 1996:16).

During the CMHC symposium on Aboriginal Housing in 1995, CMHC highlighted problems such as moisture as a factor of poor indoor air quality and building deterioration, especially evident in remote colder regions of the country. Discussions included more environmentally friendly and cost effective house foundations (such as "space frame", slab-on-grade shallow basement and stubwall systems which can meet most, if not all, climatic conditions across Canada) (CMHC, 1995:79-80).

The quality of the surface water is mediocre and very polluted mostly due to garbage, boat gasoline and defective sewage systems. Some people still prefer to drink water from the source, instead of using the tap water (Young et al., 1991:9).

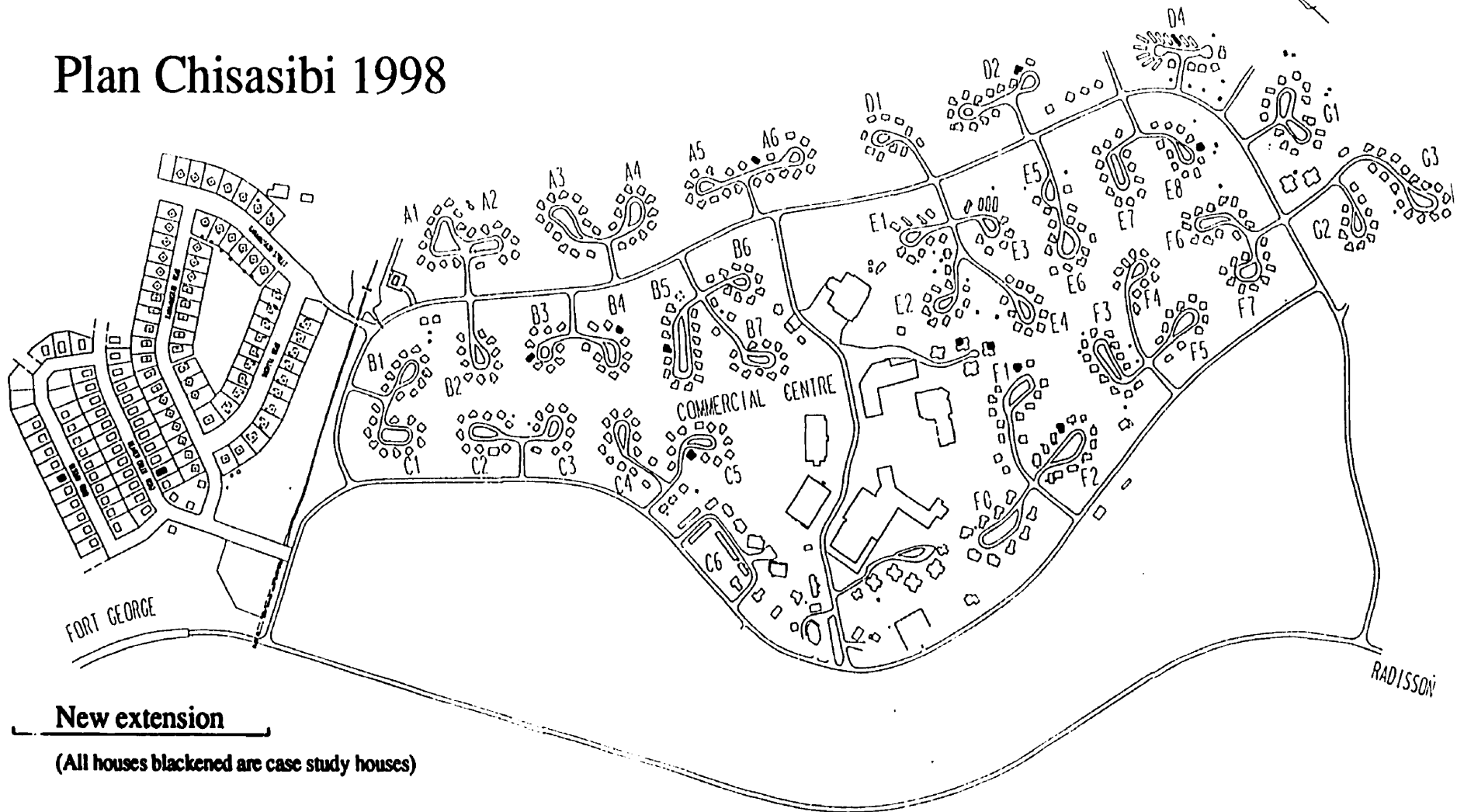
2.4.6. Maintenance and repair

On reserves and in rural areas, the extreme climatic conditions, the bad construction, overcrowding, high costs, lack of income and sufficient competence in terms of repair are some of the reasons responsible for the short life of the housing stock. This also explains why even the new housing stock consistently needs repairing, even though more than half of the residential stock on reserve has been built in the last ten years and 78% is less than 20 years old. In rural areas, 61% of Native homes are 20 years old or less, compared to 52% of non-Native homes (Ark Associates, 1996:13).

Generally, maintenance and renovation are paid by the band or other governmental organizations. This procedure tends to weaken the residents' sense of responsibility towards their house and therefore their pride and desire to take care of it. As Turner wrote

When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to the design, construction and management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over, no responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfillment and a burden to the economy (Turner, 1976, pref.).

Plan Chisasibi 1998



- 1- Hospital
- 2- Community Center
(shopping center, Band administration, Hotel...)
- 3- Sport Center

- 4- Cree Health Board
- 5- Migwam
- 6- Cree School Board
- 7- Women's shelter

- 8- Anglican church
- 9- Catholic church
- 10- Day care

Fig.3.1. Chisasibi
 (Source C.C.C., 1998).

Chapter 3- Historical context of the case study

The construction of the La Grande Project by Hydro-Quebec forced the Cree to abandon their rights on their territories. The James Bay Agreement indemnified the Native communities with financial compensations and new rights. With these indemnities, the Cree developed administrative services and structures corresponding to their needs and culture.

3.1. The James Bay Agreement

The impact of the James Bay and the Northern Quebec Agreement caused major changes in the Cree way of life. Therefore it is important to go through the different points of this Agreement and try to understand how the Cree territories and their traditions, their political autonomy have been affected.

To fully comprehend one of the salient realities of the Agreement, it is appropriate to consider the vastness of the territory involved, which extends from the 48th to the 62nd parallel north. Until the signing of the Agreement, the Territory was for all practical purposes devoid of structures and institutions, through which it might have been possible to communicate, transact and develop their economy in unison with Quebec society, the territory comprises some of 6,7 million people living mostly south of the 48th parallel.

The lands in question were part of the domain granted by Charles II of England to the Hudson Bay Company in 1670. That domain, known as Rupert's Land, was ceded to Canada in 1870. In 1898 and 1912, with the consent of the Quebec National Assembly, the Parliament of Canada delimited portions of the territory to form part of Quebec. Today, the territory covers 1 082 000 km², or 69% of the present area of Quebec.

In short, it is a vast expanse sparsely populated (less than 12 000 in 1975) by once nomadic but now sedentary people (Cree, Inuit, Naskapi, Montagnais, Attikamek and Algonkian) who originally derived their subsistence from hunting, fishing and trapping wildlife. In addition to their traditional economy, these people have now espoused a mode of consumption centered on the market economy of commodities and services (Beauchemin, 1992:30).

3.1.1. The parties to the Agreement

Seven parties executed the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement on November 11, 1975. These signatories included two associations representing the larger Native

communities living in the Territory. The James Bay Cree, represented by the Grand Council of the Cree (of Quebec) and the Hudson Bay and Ungava Bay Inuit called "Eskimos" were represented by the Northern Quebec Inuit Association.

In Chapters 28 and 29, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement showed a clear desire by the signatories to favor the traditional way of life but also to promote the community development of the Native people and their participation in the economic development of their Territory. Today more than half of the Native population is sedentary and is seeking work in the labor market. The other half of the population is continuing its traditional activities. The Agreement didn't try to impose a model, Native people were considered free to choose between their traditional activities and new activities (Beauchemin, 1992:24).

The Agreement was the culmination of negotiations among diverse parties and an expression of the successful reconciliation of their opposing positions. The Native people claimed rights to the entire Territory; the governments claimed the contrary. Legally, the status of the Cree and the Inuit was vague and ill-defined; the limits of federal authority had never been clearly established, and Quebec jurisdiction was fraught with ambiguity.

The signatories took a straight-forward approach to the issues at hand. The Cree and the Inuit agreed to relinquish all claimed rights and to have them extinguished through legislation of the Parliament of Canada. In return, they obtained recognition of clear, well-defined rights and benefits, as well as lands and monetary compensation.

- Quebec's jurisdiction over the entire Territory was recognized by all the signatories, and the amendments to the 1912 Quebec Boundaries Extension Acts were adopted.

- Quebec entrusted the tracts of land comprising the Cree villages (Category I lands totaling 3299.7 km²) to the federal government with the express will of the Cree to remain under federal jurisdiction. The Inuit opted for Quebec jurisdiction, thereby maintaining only indirect links with the federal level.

- Over and above the rights and benefits set out in the Agreement, Cree and Inuit entitlement to the same rights and benefits as all Quebec and Canadian citizens was confirmed.

3.1.2. The territorial division

Land is the very basis of the Cree and Inuit cultures. Native needs and interests dictated the establishment of an equitable land regime that satisfied the needs of both the Native people

and Quebec. The signatories therefore agreed to divide the Territory into three categories of land which, for the sake of simplicity, were called "Category I lands, Category II lands and Category III lands" (Beauchemin, 1992:31)

- Category I lands are lands set aside for the exclusive use of the Cree and Inuit settlements. They comprise the areas in and around the villages in which the Cree and Inuit normally reside.

- Category II lands are adjacent to category I lands. These are public lands that may be developed for other purposes, provided that the tracts used for development are replaced.

- Category III lands are public lands on which Native people have no exclusive right of occupancy, but may without legal constraint pursue hunting, fishing and trapping activities the year round, as in the past (Beauchemin, 1992:32).

- Categories of land IA and IB are under the authority of Cree and Naskapi communities (see figure 3.2. Land Categories around Chisasibi).

To enable Cree trappers to pursue their activities, the Income Security Program for Cree Hunters and Trappers (ISP) was created as "a regional body (...) distinctive to the Cree unparalleled not only in Quebec but possibly world-wide" (Salisbury, 1989:72). The trappers "should be guaranteed a measure of economic security" (James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, Section 30). The \$5 million grant provided a payment averaging about \$5 000 to each of 1 000 "beneficiary units", enabling them to pay the monetary costs of a winter's hunting in the bush, during which time they may kill game providing them with meat worth another \$7 000, not to mention fuel and housing. Since they also earned another \$5 000 from casual employment in the summer, the program acted as a major support for the Cree economy. In exchange for the records of their catches, the hunters received quarterly cheques from the administrator who was known as a good hunter and been recommended by the community to manage the ISP (Salisbury, 1989:72).

3.1.3. The integration of the Cree in the governmental structures

Reorganization of the lands south of the 55th parallel is complementary to the territorial organization stemming from Quebec's Bill 50, passed in 1971, which had placed that region under the administration of the Société de Développement de la Baie James (SDBJ) and a twin organization, the Municipality of James Bay.

The Agreement prescribed the delimitation, survey and description of Category I and II lands. Quebec instituted a new judicial regime to establish the rights of used and private and public ownership applicable to each category. Specific federal legislation, the Cree Naskapi

(of Quebec) Act, applicable to **Category IA** lands in replacement of the federal judicial regime stemming from the Indian Act, granted broader local powers to the Cree and Naskapi bands. Quebec passed a Bill providing for the establishment of Native municipalities on **Category IB** lands. It also passed a Bill establishing the Cree Regional Authority (CRA), comprised of Native municipalities. The CRA became an entity responsible for representing the Cree under the Agreement (Beauchemin, 1992:32).

3.1.4. The Native economic and social development

Sections 28 and 29 of the Agreement clearly set out the intent of the signatories to promote not only the traditional way of life but also the community development of Native people, as well as their participation in the economic development of the entire Territory. To assist the Cree in achieving their economic and social development objectives, Section 28 provides for the following:

- Establishment of the James Bay Native Development Corporation
- Establishment of Cree Trapper, Native arts and crafts, outfitting and tourism association
- Measures to promote vocational training, employment and participation in projects within the Territory
- Community services for the Cree communities
- Assistance to entrepreneurs
- Continuing negotiations to provide access roads for the three Cree settlements on the shores of James Bay (Wemindji, Eastmain, and Chisasibi)
- Establishment of the Joint Economic and Community Development Committee (Beauchemin, 1992:33).

3.1.5. Health services, education and other communal services

The Agreement has led to the creation of a School and Regional Health Board which were no longer under federal jurisdiction:

- the new Cree School Board had to administer the school system in Chisasibi and also in the other Cree villages. The School Board was able to develop special programs in accordance with Cree tradition and education, to recruit the professors, to maintain the provincial standard norms in regard to education, and was also responsible of the maintenance and construction of the school buildings.
- the Regional Cree Health Board administered independently the health services given in each village.

- two bodies of police were created with one regional unit of the "Sûreté du Québec" and one service of "special constables" able to act as agents of conservation or as police agents.

3.2. Chisasibi

Chisasibi means big river in Cree language. Chisasibi is located on the south shores of La Grande river, on the east side of James Bay. This community is approximately 900 km north of Val d'Or, 1 200 km of Montreal. January and February's average temperatures reach -22.6°C and -21.2°C. The months of July and August are the warmest with daily temperatures about 12.3°C and 11.2°C. The frost period lasts approximately 230 days compared to 150 days in the Montreal region (Tranchida, 1980:71).

Its actual surface covers for the Category I lands 1 308, 6 km² and for the Category II lands: 16 928,2 km². The population is composed by 3112 Cree residents and less than a 100 Inuits.¹² The Common language spoken in the village is Eeyou (Cree) and the second language is English. The James Bay Eeyou School offers classes from pre-kindergarten to secondary V. The teaching language is Cree from pre-kindergarten to the third year of primary school. Later, parents register their children in either French or in English instruction classes.

The community has one regional hospital with 32 beds. Care is given in geriatrics, general medicine, obstetrics and pediatrics. Professional laboratory services, radiology, pharmacy and dentist services are offered as well. For surgical needs, the patients are sent to Val d'Or. The police of Chisasibi is responsible for the management and the supervision of its force in the lands of Category I (Hydro-Quebec, 1997).

3.2.1. The history of Chisasibi

In 1803, the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post on the Ile du Gouverneur, at the mouth of the Grande River, where the North West Company, its competitor, had already set up a trading post at the end of the 18th century. First named Big River, the Hudson's Bay Company trade post was then renamed Fort George in 1837. Its main commerce was based on oil extracted from beluga, whereas the Inuits and the Coastal Cree contributed to the fur commerce. Similarly the Inland Cree traded furs and settled themselves for longer periods on the island. The first Anglican missionary arrived on the Ile du Gouverneur in 1852. In 1903, the Revillon et Frères company established a trade post on Fort George.

¹²information noted during an informal telephone talk with an administrator from the Band Council from Chisasibi, august 1998.

Chisasibi

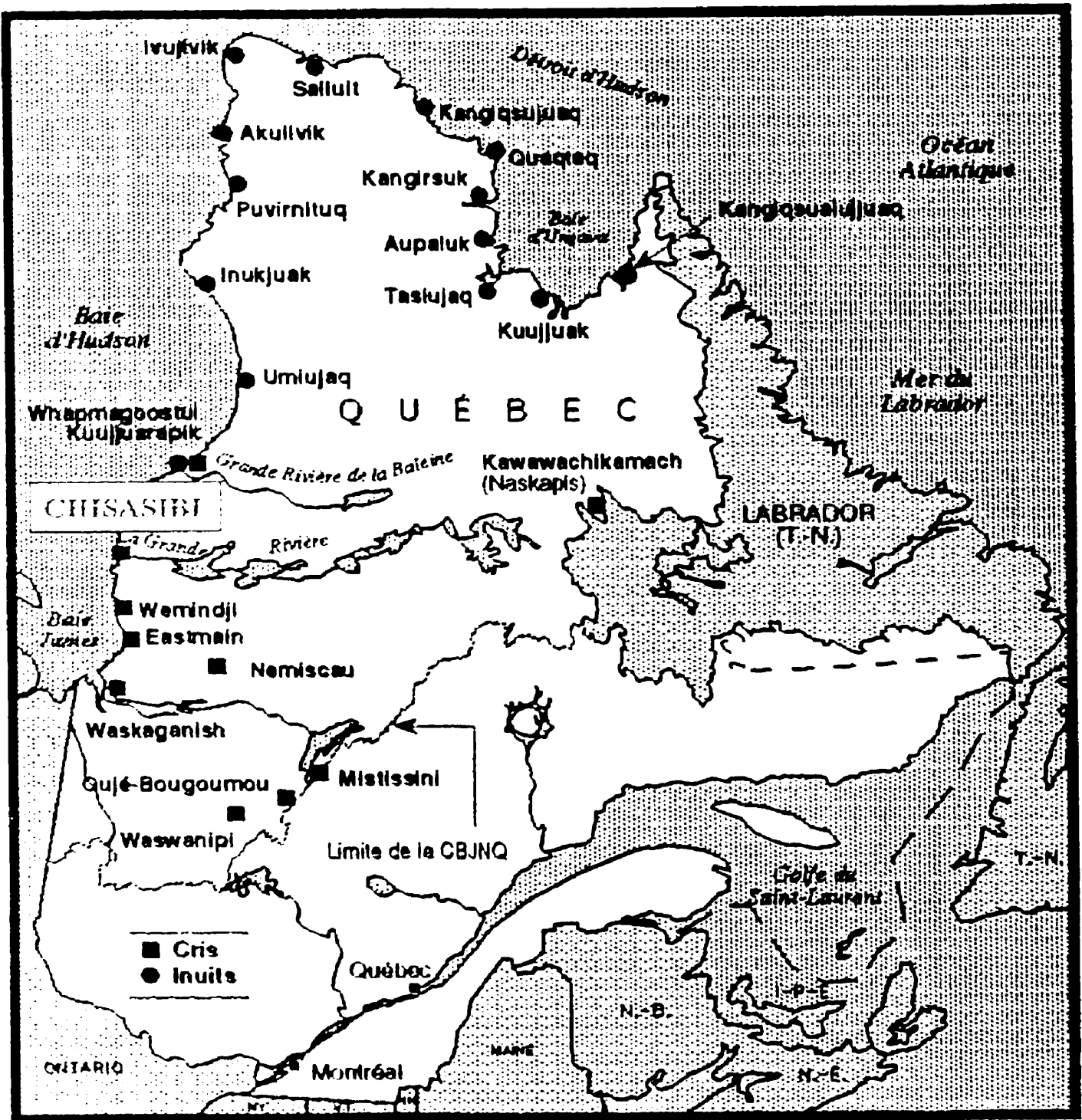
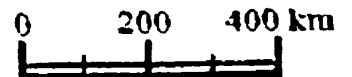
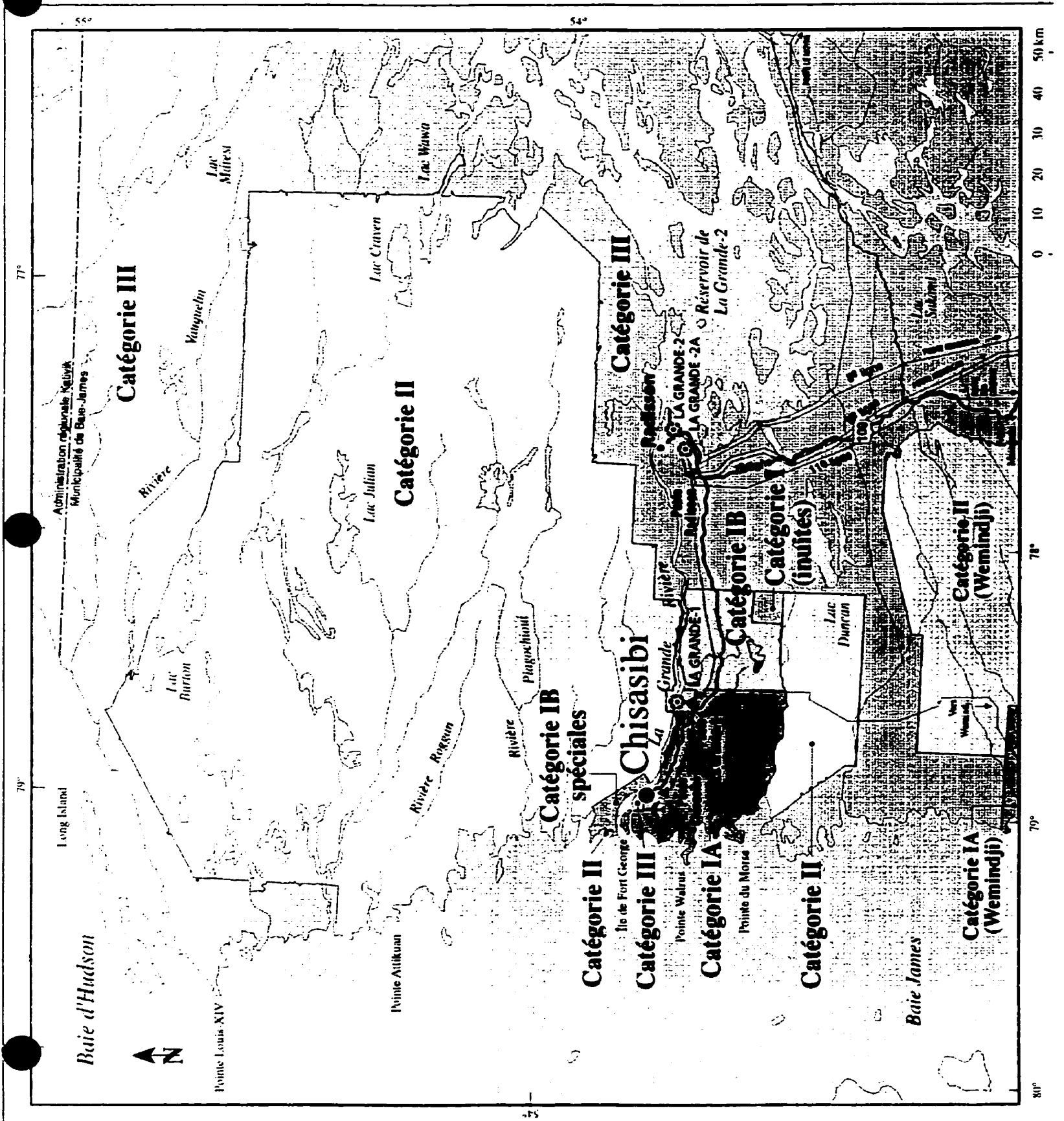


Fig.3.1.

(Source, Hydro Quebec, Feb. 1996)



Chisasibi: Land Categories Fig.3.2. (Source, Hydro Quebec, Feb. 1996)



Some missionaries from the Church Missionary Society came in 1907, and opened the first school in 1927 and later a hospital. During the 20th century, Fort George became the first community where the population lived there on a semi-permanent basis. There were already 750 inhabitants in 1940. In 1951, Inuits from the Cape Hope, from Eastmain and Wemindji joined the original population. After the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975 and the Chisasibi Agreement in 1978, the population of Fort George moved from the island to the new site of Chisasibi, 9 km north on the shores of the La Grande River. The La Grande Agreement (1986), ratified in 1986 by Hydro-Quebec, the Société d'Énergie de la Baie James and the Cree, concerned in particular the Cree of Chisasibi. The signatories agreed on measures of correction and mitigation concerning the projects of La Grande-1 and La Grande-2, Brisay and the line Radisson-Nicolet-Des-Cantons. The Opimiscow La Grande Agreement (1992) was signed in 1993 between Hydro-Quebec, the SEBJ, the Grand Council of the Cree (Of Quebec), as well as the Cree of Wemindji and of Chisasibi in order to anticipate environmental measures and additional remedies in regard to the projects implemented by this Agreement.

3.2.2. The Chisasibi Agreement

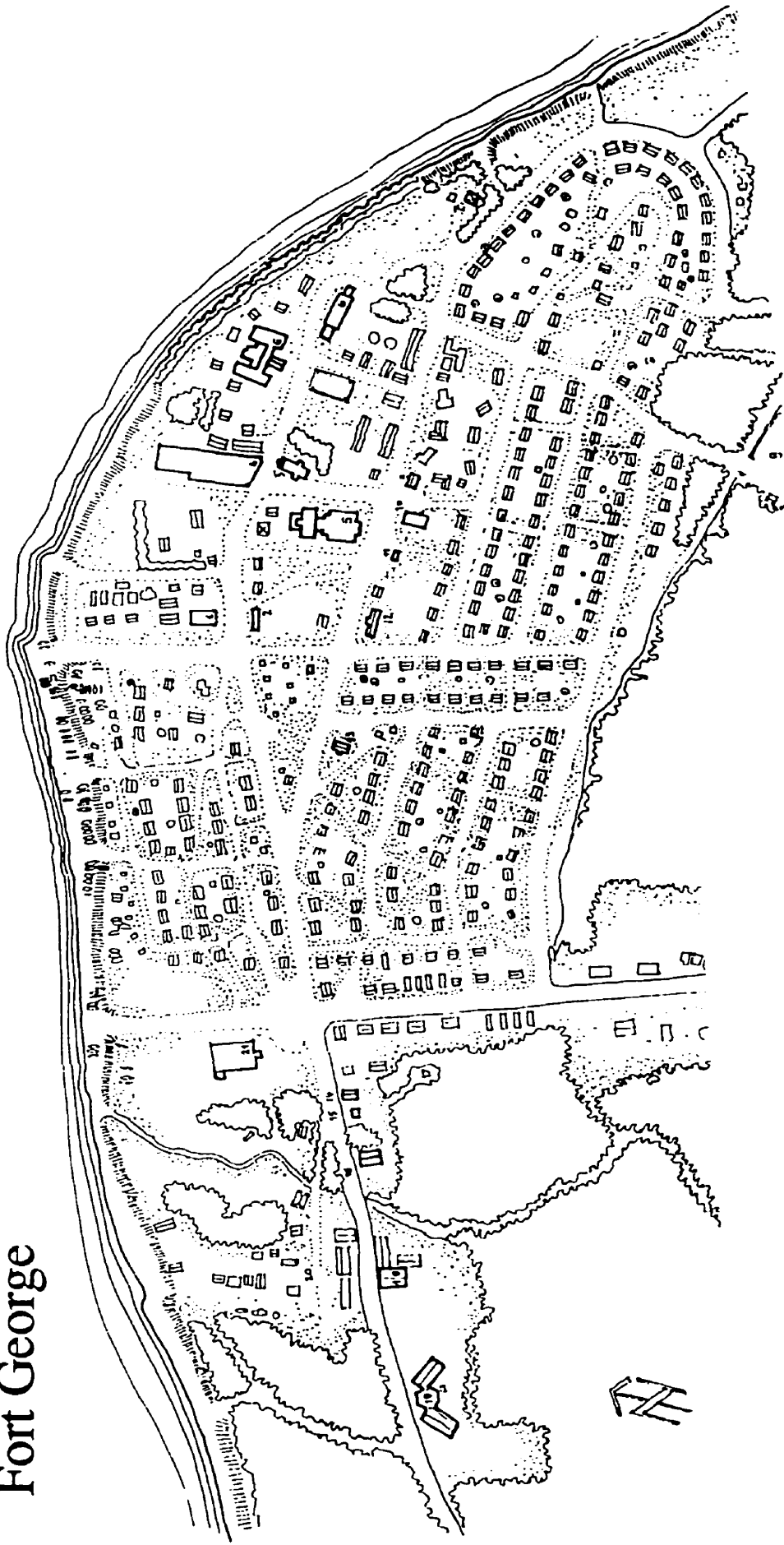
The Chisasibi Agreement was meant to provide the community with a better environment. After analysis, the costs to renovate the old houses of Fort George didn't offer as many advantages than the relocation would, in the long term. The Chisasibi Agreement proposed :

- 1- creation of the Fort George Relocation Society which was in charge of the relocation of the community.
- 2- commitment of the different cultural groups (Inland Cree, Coastal Cree, Inuits) in the design process of the urban layout and the houses of Chisasibi.

As Tranchida (1980) explained, the agreement of the inhabitants of Fort George to move to a new location reflected the general context of the James Bay Cree: their desire to change environment was due to their increasing dependence since the creation of the Hudson's Bay Company, and also the lack of proper services and the poverty of their houses. These were major reasons for the community to move to Chisasibi where they could live in modern houses. Consequently, the new village offered a number of material advantages :

- a better location next to the LG-2 road without the risks of isolation of the island
- complete municipal services
- new or renovated houses better adapted to the climate and to their way of life
- land resources for future needs

Fort George



- 1- Hudson Bay Store
- 2- Handcrafts Coop
- 3- Anglican Church
- 4- Cemetery
- 5- Primary school
- 6- Secondary school
- 7- Nursing station
- 8- Air stop
- 9- Band Council Office
- 10- Webb's Lodge
- 11- Gas station
- 12- Sureté du Québec
- 13- Rosie's store
- 14- Coop store
- 15- Post Office
- 16- Catholic church
- 17- Cemetery
- 18- Ecole Ste Thérèse
- 19- Résidence Couture
- 20- Mission St Joseph
- 21- Hospital

Fig.3.3. Plan of Fort George drawn by the author after David Covo
 (Source: Fort George, David Covo, Bruce Anderson; David Corsillo)

Images of Fort George before the relocation



Fig.3.4. View from the island



Fig.3.5. Making camp stoves



Fig.3.6. Boys learning to shoot



Fig.3.7. Children playing in old truck

(Source: Fort George, David Covo, et al)

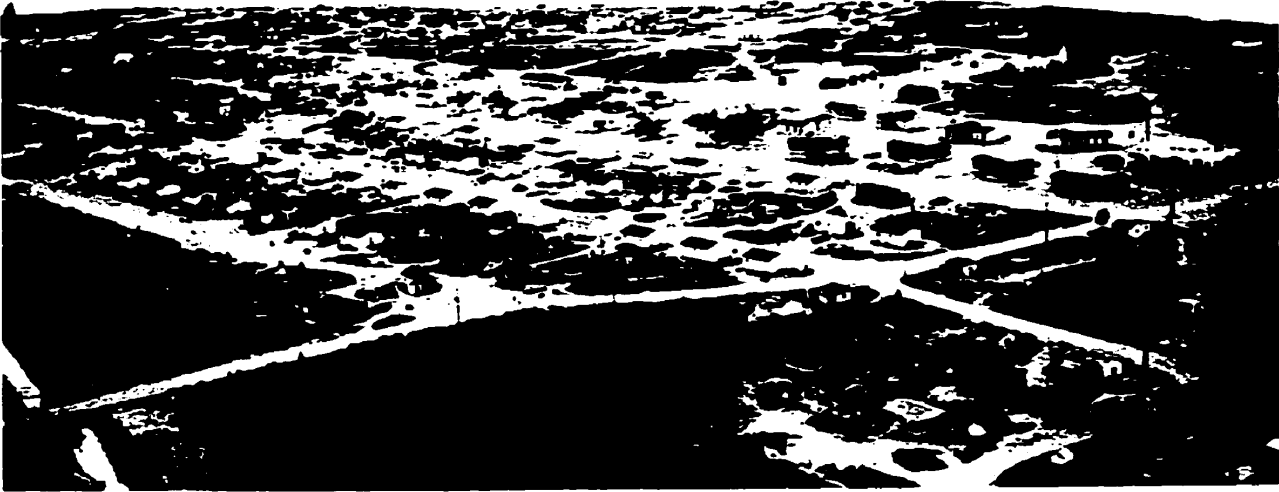


Fig.3.8. View over Fort George houses



Fig.3.9. The town checker game (outdoors)



Fig.3.10. Hauling water

(Source: Fort George, David Covo, et al)

3.2.3. The relocation study

The urbanists and engineers in Montreal (Daniel Arbour and Ass.) were managing the relocation of the community and designing the new layout and the houses. The Fort George Relocation Society was in charge of

providing the Cree community of Fort George with social improvements, to build up Chisasibi and to relocate the population of Fort George to the Chisasibi village, in consultation with the Band of Fort George, its members and the inhabitants of the village of Fort George (...) (Convention, Art. 3-3, quoted from Tranchida, 1980: 105).

The Relocation Committee was responsible for collecting information from the population and transmitting it to the Fort George Relocation Society, as well as to the persons in charge of the planning and execution of the project.

3.2.4. The community consultation

The community consultation encountered severe problems as there was little similar experience between Native communities. Before the move, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development had completed the construction of 209 units in Fort George and didn't want to abandon the newly built houses on the island. Moreover, the Fort George Relocation Committee demonstrated that it was cheaper to relocate the old houses instead of building new ones. During the summer of 1977, a survey was conducted in order to define the needs of the population in terms of living conditions and number of bedrooms desired:

- in the community, the Cree people had the greatest need for improved housing conditions. Numbering 1,693 persons, they lived in 222 houses with an average of 7.6 persons per house and 2.6 persons per bedroom. Their satisfaction level was 25,2%;
- the Waskahegan Corporation had built 21 new houses for the Non-Status Indians. They represented 26 units housing a total of 154 Non Status Indians, with an average of 5,9 persons per house. Their housing satisfaction level was 57, 7%;
- somehow in between the Cree and the Non Status Indians, the 41 Inuit resident living in 7 houses with an average of 5,9 persons per house and 2,2 persons per bedroom had a satisfactory level of 43% (D.A.A.I in Shaw, 1981:85-88).

The main problem was the lack of space: the Inuit wanted 4.3 bedrooms per home, the Cree 4.4 and the Non-Status Indians 5.0, instead of the existing average of 2.2 bedrooms per house, and 1.6 persons per bedrooms. Of the total of 285 Native houses, 209 were considered suitable for relocation with 40 D.I.N.A type, 142 Cedar type, 6 Mission type and 21 Waskahegan Corporation (The D.I.N.A and the Cedar models, representing the large

majority of the housing stock in Chisasibi will be described and analyzed in the following paragraphs).

Houses to be relocated and enlarged by social groups

| Ethnic Group | No change required | To be enlarged | To be abandoned | Total |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Cree Indians | 74 | 108 | 71 | 253 |
| Non-Status Indians | 20 | 1 | 4 | 25 |
| Inuit | 4 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| Sub-total | 98 | 111 | 76 | 285 |
| Total | 209 to be relocated | | 76 | 285 |

Fig.3.11. (Source: D.A.A.I. Community Consultation, preliminary report in Shaw, 1981:90)

3.3. The relocation

3.3.1. D.I.N.A Model: 40 units

Forty D.I.N.A house models had been constructed before the relocation. They were built on a concrete spread footing 1.5 meter under ground level, with a wood siding, covering 71.4m² (7.3 m by 9.75 m).. The basement covered the total surface of the house, reaching 2.4 m, without the basement slab. The basement walls were constructed with unreinforced concrete blocks, waterproofed from the outside by a coal emulsion and a layer of polyethylene film. The floor of the basement was backfilled with sand.

In most houses, the main floor was made of wood planking on 51mm x 152mm joists, while 51mm x 203mm joists were used on the other houses. The roof was carried on wood trusses and was covered with asphalt shingles. The internal partitions subdivided the house into three bedrooms, a living-kitchen area and bathroom. Since the houses were not connected to water and sewers, no bathroom fixtures were installed. All houses were provided with electric power and heating (Shaw, 1981: 91-92).

Period of major community consultation and participation

| Date | Purpose |
|-------------------------------|--|
| June to October 1976 | The fort George Relocation Study |
| August 1977 | Preliminary community consultation Household survey - household requirements - community facility requirement - neighbor and house site preferences Housing group design sessions |
| May 1978 | Meetings with community, government and Hudson's Bay representatives to establish facility requirements |
| July 1978 | Community consultations in community facilities options Preliminary housing group list adjustments presented to the community |
| July to September 1978 | Period of housing group list adjustment |
| August 1978 | New upgraded housing plans submitted to the community |
| September 1978 | Community consultation on general village plan options Community facilities implementation study submitted to the community |
| December 1978 | Preliminary village plan options presented to the community |
| January 1979 | Consultant visit to Fort George for evaluation and consultation on the model house program |
| February 1979 | Village plan presented to the community |
| March 1979 | Approval of the Band Council of the general layout of the houses |

Fig.3.12. (Shaw, 1981:75)

3.3.2. Cedar Model: 142 units

In the 142 Cedar house models built on the island before the relocation, the materials and the size were in many regards very similar to the D.I.N.A house models, except that the outside walls were covered with 41 mm cedar planks placed vertically on the outside and horizontally on the inside, with insulation sandwiched in between. The layout and the shape were different from the design of the D.I.N.A model.

The inhabitants mainly lacked space in the bedrooms and for storage. Some unheated storage space had been built by the inhabitants themselves. The basements, accessible only from the inside of the houses, were usually damp, mostly without concrete floor and inadequately heated, ventilated and lit, foundation walls were often cracked and leaking. Entry doors opened directly onto living spaces. Doors and windows were so badly built that it was impossible to control heat and air flow. The situation was made worst by the lack of proper vapor control and inadequate roof space for ventilation.

3.3.3. Problems with relocation and new designs

In regard to the design, several problems emerged by relocating the DINA and the Cedar houses: to avoid jealousy or discord, the planners weren't allowed to develop different housing designs but also had to adjust the same materials for all the units to reduce the required skills and to lower the range of stock needed for repair. The surface left (2.8 m²) was too little to incorporate the bathrooms in the houses. The basement windows were subject to breaking because close to the ground. Furthermore, the relocation of the houses had disastrous effects on the survival of the trees in between the houses, the maneuvering of large trucks destroyed most of them especially those in front of the relocated houses.

3.3.4. Model A

After relocating the houses from Fort-George, 100 new houses had to be added to answer the demand. Familiar with the recommendations, three alternative new houses were designed by the consultants in consultation with the Band. Previously to the consultation, a model house had been built in Fort George which took into account the needs of space and necessary improvements. The model house was occupied by one family each and opened to the whole community in order to define its advantages and disadvantages. One of the model was based on the cedar model, the second on the D.I.N.A model and the third was based on a new plan, and if accepted by the community, would serve as the definite model for Chisasibi. Each house was equipped with different heating systems, and several tests controlled the

temperature, and energy consumption so that the architects could adjust to the needs and consider the input from the residents.

3.3.5. The new house model

The new house plan underwent many changes, for example all the rooms and walls had to be modified. The entrance was changed and one bedroom was added. In the three houses, most of the transformations dealt with the layout of the kitchen and the protection of the entrance door from the wind and snow. At the same time, technical problems arose in the three models: the thermal insulation couldn't cope with the high level of humidity, this was mainly due to the constant use of the washer and dryer, which were new to the residents and attracted all the members of the community who wanted to use it. In the kitchen, the ventilation was incapable of evacuating the humidity and the fumes exuded from the traditional boiling and frying activities common in Native families.

3.4. Planning with the community

3.4.1. The community layout

The grid layout existing on Fort George was a major element of discontent. The Band Council and Band members during the early stages of the relocation study expressed their desire to live in a more culturally appropriate surrounding, Native hunting groups usually settled in groups of four or five families together.

3.4.2. Description of the land use in Fort George :

- the notion of private outdoor space was alien to Native people. Previously there had been no fences, only pedestrian paths around the houses while storage space and teepees were located in the neighbor's "property";
- the area surrounding the houses were crowded with wood for teepees, skidoo or sleigh construction, empty oil drums, canoes, etc.;
- teepees were shared by three or four households;
- children's play areas were not confined to the immediate surroundings of the house but mostly to the roads (this was considered unsafe by the parents);
- during the summer months Native men repaired canoes, and made snowshoes outside the houses;
- car, trucks, skidoos were parked close to the houses, and garbage fit into empty oil drums next to the road (Shaw, 1981:113-114).

Relocation: DINA Model

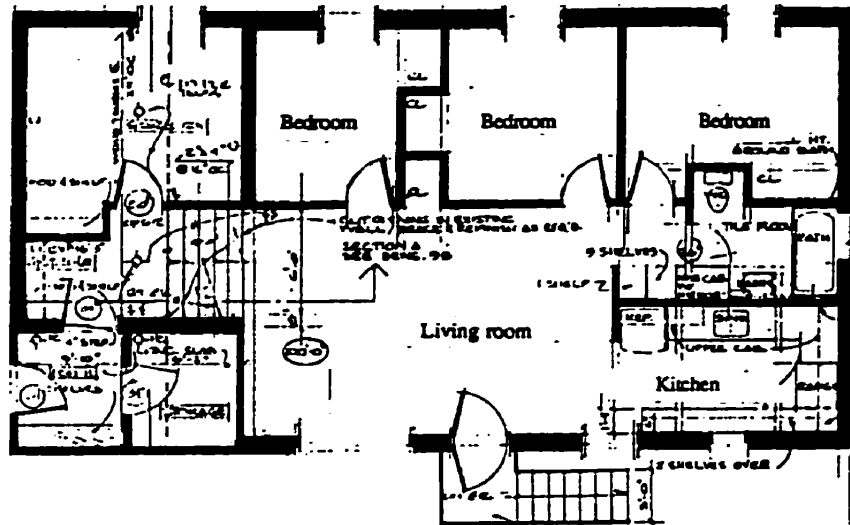


Fig.3.13. Ground floor (DINA Model)

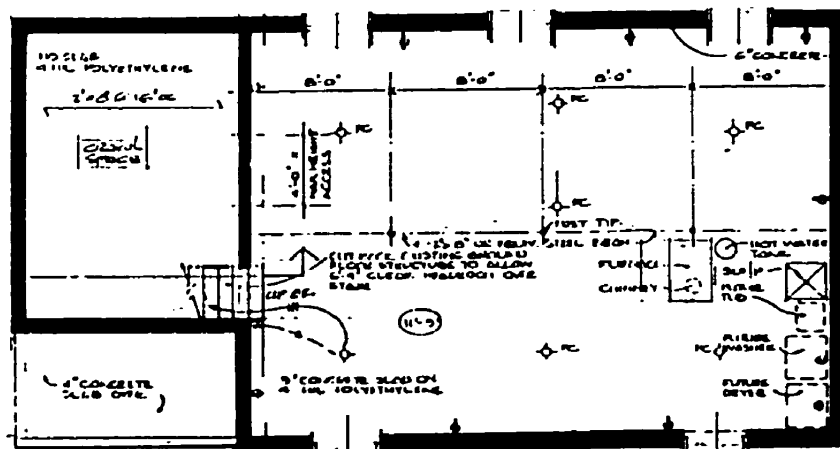


Fig.3.14. Basement floor (DINA Model)

(Source D.A.A.I. in Shaw, 1981)

Relocation: Cedar Model

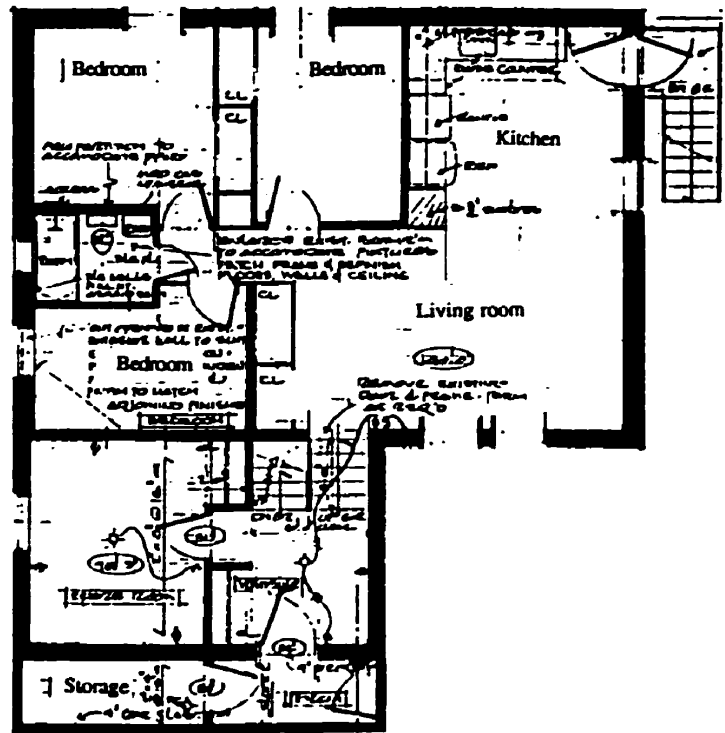


Fig.3.15. Ground floor (Cedar Model)

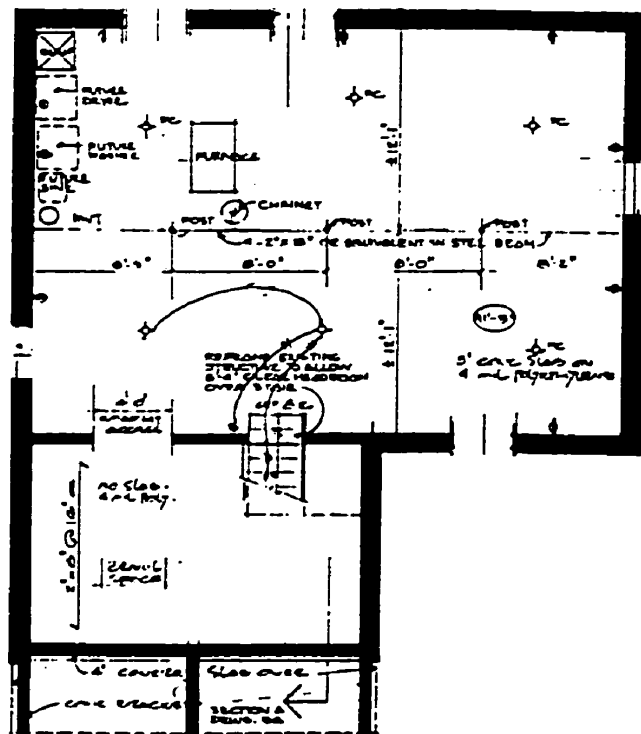


Fig.3.16 Basement floor (Cedar Model)

(Source D.A.A.I. in Shaw, 1981)

Relocation: Model A

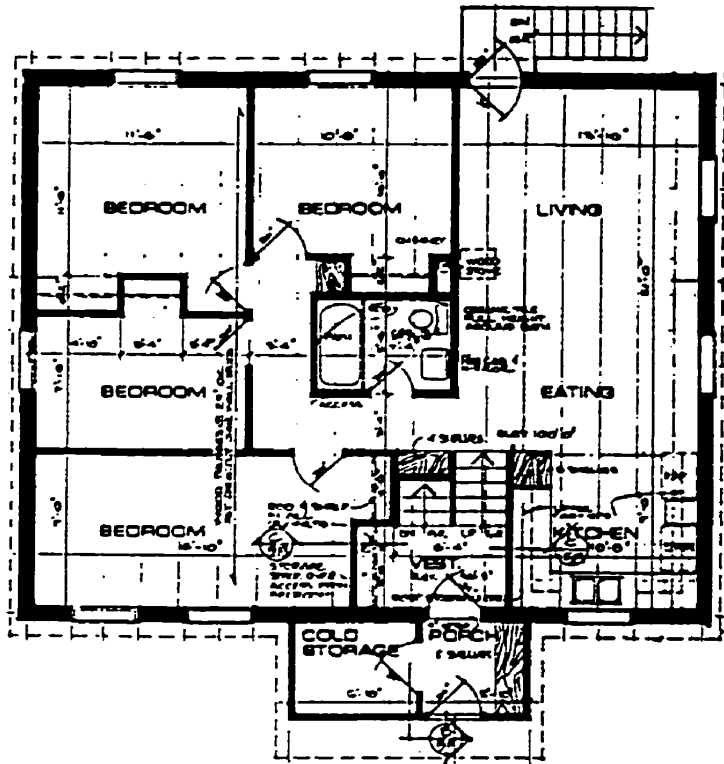


Fig.3.17. Ground floor (Model A)

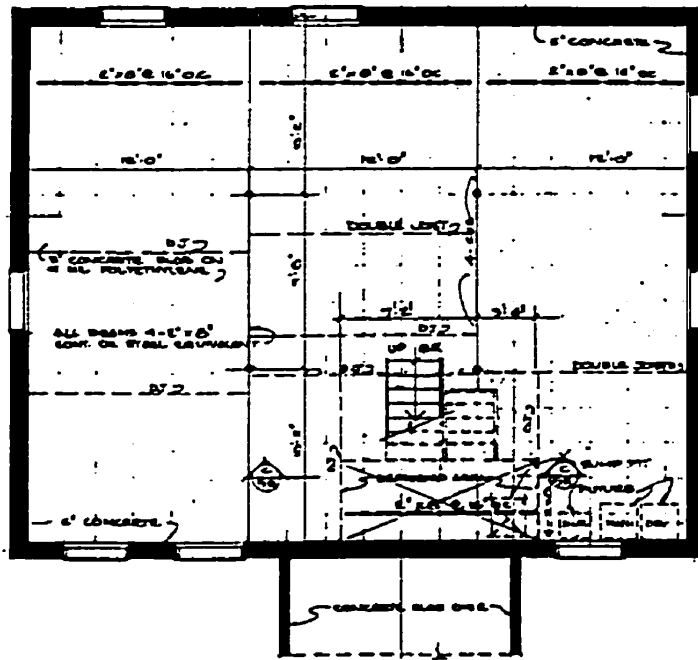


Fig.3.18. Basement floor (Model A)

(Source D.A.A.I. in Shaw, 1981)

3.4.3. Choosing neighbors

Because of the grid system and the unplanned layout in Fort George, the family clan system hadn't been considered. It was therefore important that this newly planned community integrated those social parameters. A community consultation was organized to translate the expectation of each family: half of them chose three families to be part of their close neighbors, others chose up to ten families, and some didn't have any preference. Due to the amount of information collected, the data had to be processed by computer and core units were formed through mutual choices:

- family "A" chooses family "B" which chooses "A" and "C";
- whereas "C" chose "A" and "B";
- the core "A, B and C" are formed, even though "C" hasn't been chosen by "A".

Thirty cores were formed and gathered 41% of the families. The final list showed 32 groups with 5 to 19 households (groups of 14, 15 and 19 are exceptions). This list encountered several changes due to physical constraints and also because families decided to move to another group. Most of the groups (20 out of 32) were bi-ethnic, 4 were mono-ethnic and 8 tri-ethnic. The majority of the groups were representative of the numerical importance of the ethnics: 15 groups were mainly composed by Coastal Cree, 12 of Inland Cree, 1 by Inuit, 4 by Metis and none by White people. The inter-ethnicity followed the family ties between two or several groups but most of the groups were family groups (Tranchida, 1980:169-171).

3.4.4. Development of the layout

Groups of residents were invited to participate in a simulation model exercise. Four groups, from 2 to 6 persons each, enrolled in this exercise. With the 1:100 model, the participants were able to locate the houses without the interference of the urbanists. The results showed a deep understanding of space, a sense for scale and great facility to manipulate forms.

Participant's designs for the group layout

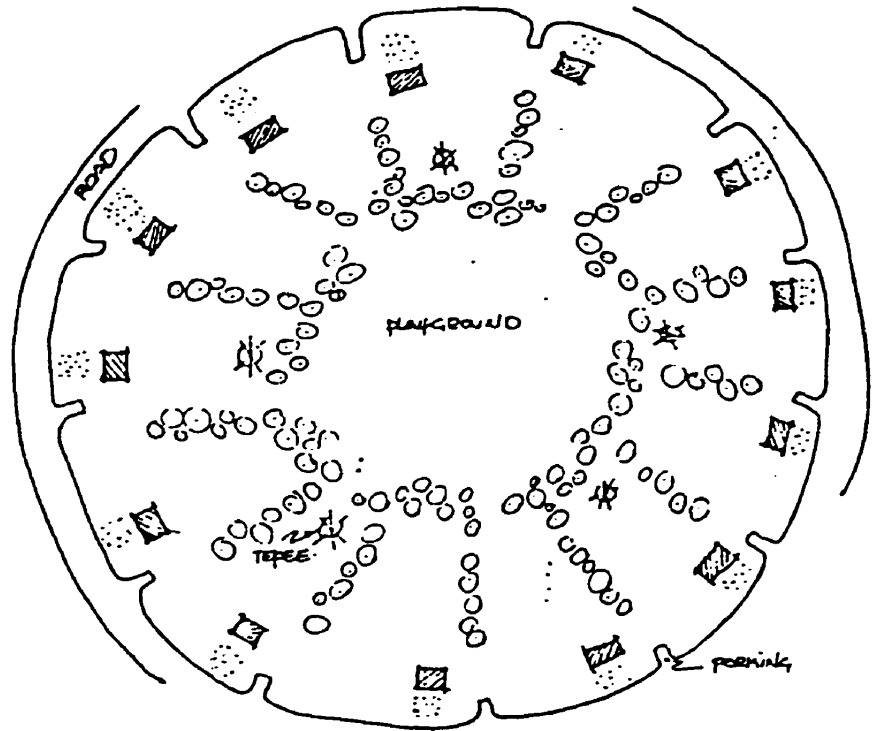


Fig.3.19. Sketch of the group 1

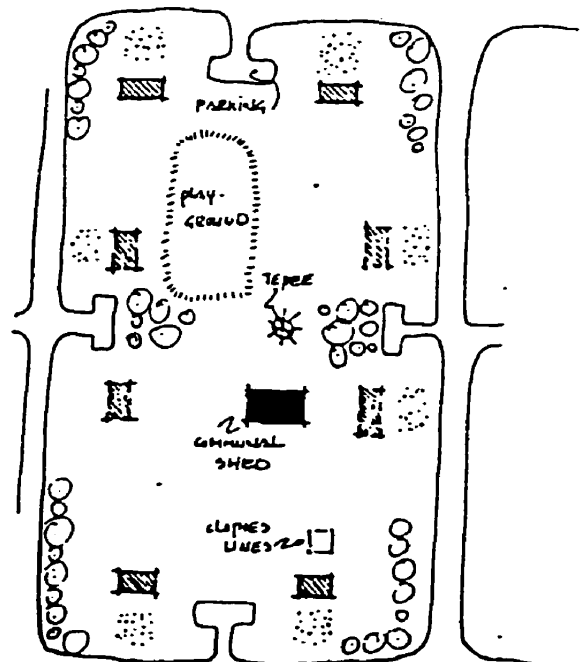


Fig.3.20. Sketch of the group 2

(Source D.A.A.I. in Shaw, 1981)

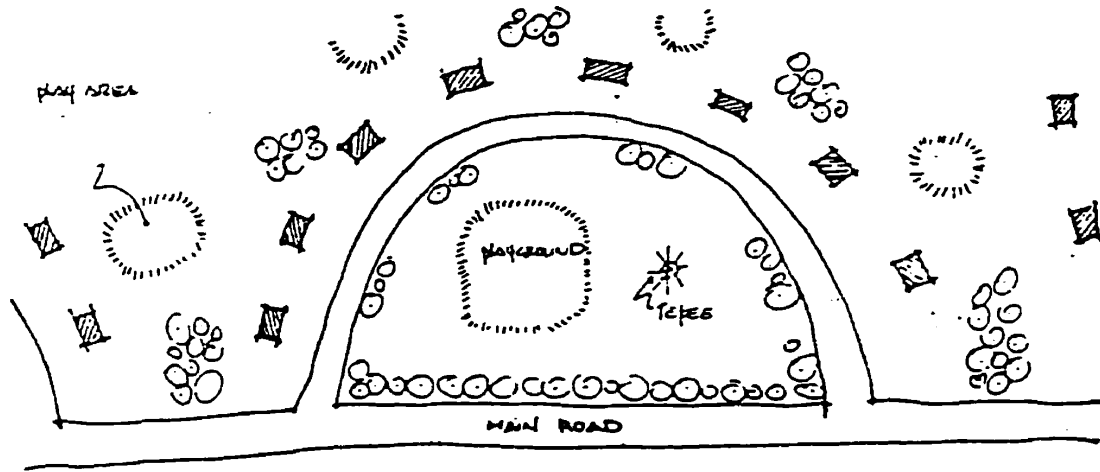


Fig.3.21. Sketch of the group 3

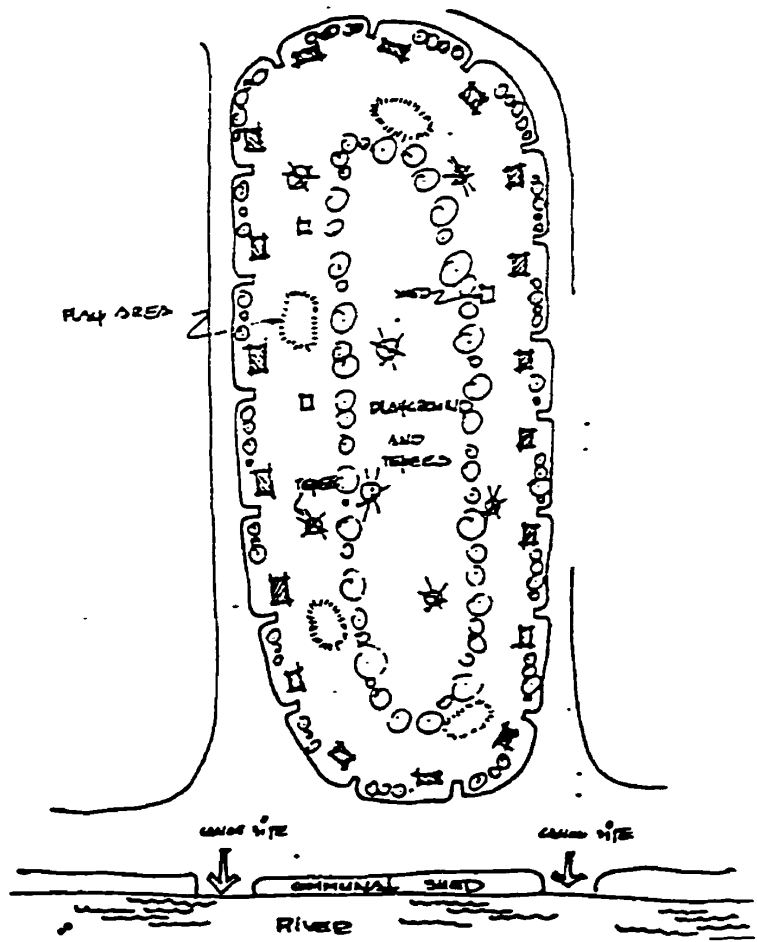


Fig.3.22. Sketch of the group 4

(Source D.A.A.I in Shaw, 1981)

Final design of the group layout proposed to the Band Council by the planners and the architects

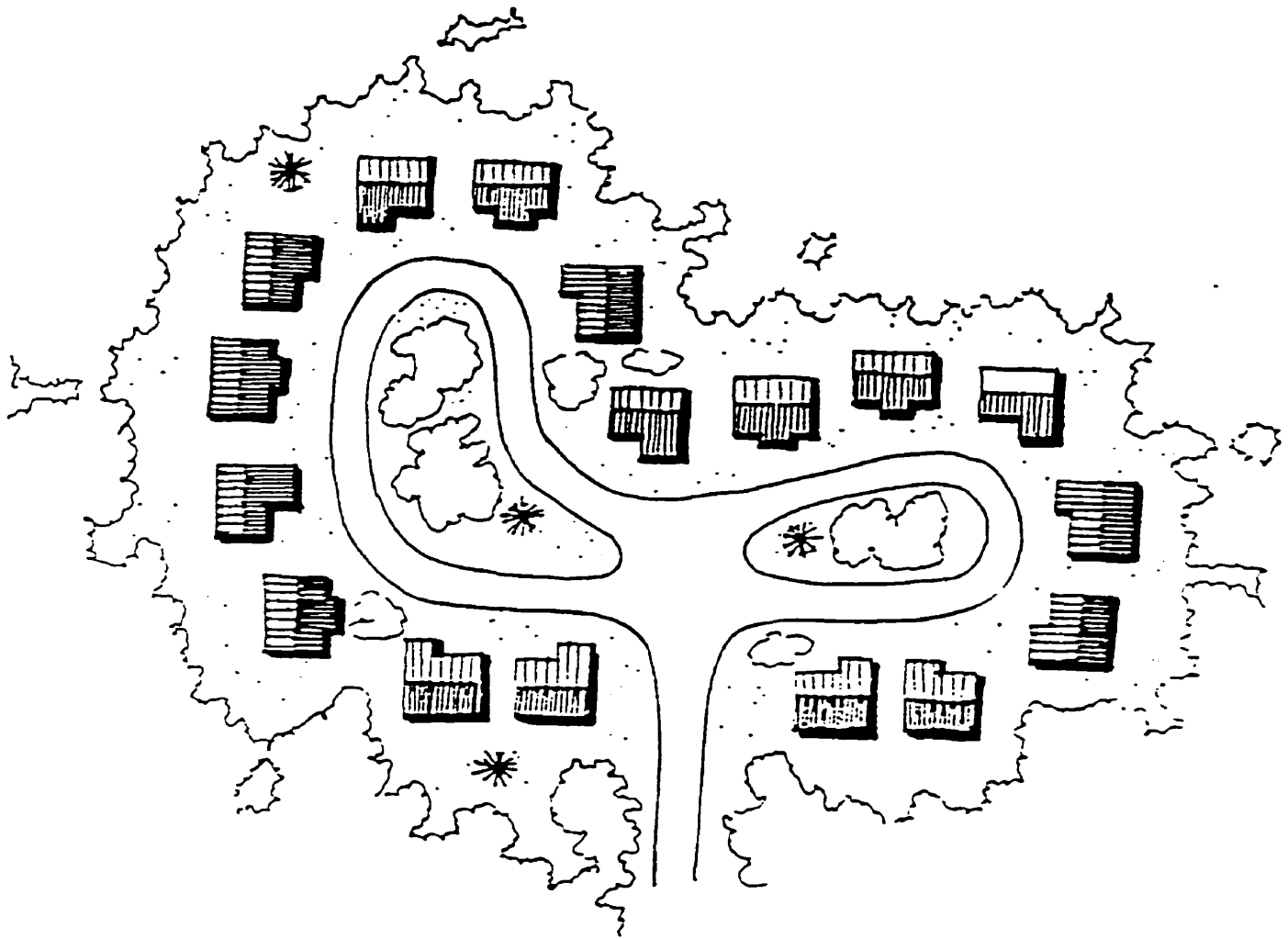


Fig.3.23. Layout plan

(Source D.A.A.I. in Shaw, 1981)

The first group

One group organized 15 houses on a circular pattern with three distinctive spaces. As the plan demonstrates in figure 3.19.:

- a private space within a close perimeter around the houses, for parking for the truck and the skidoo, and for the drying of the clothes, etc. This space was bordered by trees, nevertheless the visual relation between the houses was very important;
- a semi-communal space between the houses and the center of the grouping was used for teepees, gardens, shacks either for individuals or for a group of households.
- a communal central space surrounded by trees was used as a playground and a meeting place for all the families (Tranchida, 1980:176).

The second group

The figure 3.20. shows the second group's plan using a grid layout; 4 houses edged a large communal space in which they put the teepees, the communal shack, and space for four additional houses. They specified their desire for pedestrian paths through the lot, side walks along the roads and grass in front of the houses.

The third group

The figure 3.21. illustrates the third group's design with ten houses in a semi-circle which was served by a street distinct from the main street. The space in between the private road and the main road was used as a playground and for the teepees. Little play areas for small children were shared by different houses part of different clusters. Behind the houses, they designed a garden and a shack. The front of the house had to be kept clean and green (in contrast to Fort George) to increase calm and intimacy as the houses were protected from the main road by a wall of trees.

The fourth group

The figure 2.22. shows the fourth group's layout next to the river in which there were approximately twenty houses, with a parking and a shack for each house. A teepee and a play area were shared by two or three families. The central communal space could become a play ground, and had room for occasional teepees. Trees were located on the back and on the front of the houses but not in between them; the shore was used as a communal area for the canoes. Outside activities related to the domestic environment such as play areas, drying of the clothes, gardening and storing, were located very close to the house. A certain hesitation emerged between a desire to share a communal space and to define a private area: the influence of southern way of life was manifesting itself.

3.4.5. The final cluster layout

The Native group drawings served as a starting point to design the general layout. Nevertheless, the urbanists presented a major modification: in the original design the road was encircling the houses (in 3 of the 4 propositions), instead the road became a "cul-de-sac" inside the cluster. The reason, they explained, was the high costs of a peripheral road which would only serve houses on one side. The negative aspect is that the cars could access the main areas, but the positive aspect is that the "cul-de-sac" excluded the transit traffic.

The residual spaces in the center would remain as a play area for the children or a space to erect teepees. Clothes drying areas and the shacks had to be located at the rear of the houses. Trees were planned between the houses to reinforce a feeling of intimacy.

As Tranchida (1980:215) noted, the proposition of the urbanists, even though accepted by the Cree, totally inverted the principles of the original layout designed by the inhabitants which can be seen in Fig.3.23. The central common space, green area in each cluster, would no longer serve for multiple communal activities:

- the communal activities were moved to the periphery, whereas the cars would use the central space.
- the green spaces were located on fringes in between the houses instead of creating a centrality.

In the end, the urbanists presented their sketches, a model and a development of the "cluster" layout which was accepted by the community. The band, though, criticized the lack of space in-between the houses. The response was that, due to the costs of construction of the infrastructure, the distance between the houses couldn't exceed 7.9 m to 9 m and similarly, a area of 10m free land behind the houses was necessary to build the individual septic tanks.

3.4.6. Conclusions about the community consultation process

It is essential to carefully analyze the different points in which the Native designs were not considered and which as a result, lead to irreversal situations because:

- the "cluster" layout played a decisive role in the acceptance by the residents of their new environment.
- the issues addressed such as central playground, trees, and a common area for the teepee were not met and created a sense of frustration and dissatisfaction leading for a majority of the population to a rejection of this pattern.

At the time of the relocation, residents of Fort George were on the whole, enthusiastic to move to fully equipped houses. Their awareness about the negative effects of this move emerged after the relocation. The community is today still struggling with the lack of space and overcrowding. They are uncomfortable because the cluster layout is saturated by the newly built houses and new cars and consequently they are unhappy with the quality of their houses.

Chapter 4- Native Women and their homes. A case study in Chisasibi

The actual housing situation in Chisasibi links several issues together: first the evolution of a community relocated 17 years ago, their experience of community consultation and their transfer into an unfamiliar urban layout with fully equipped houses, and second, the adaptation of families to a new domestic environment. As the author demonstrated in the earlier chapters, women played an important role in the control of the domestic environment until colonization modified their responsibilities and removed them from the decision-making process in their homes and in the community. In helping their community to develop a sense of identity and belonging, women are more likely to have developed the skills to understand the housing problems concerning their community. These problems could be caused by the changes that affected their domestic environment, which refers to the house layout and the separation of the rooms and other elements such as the bathroom, the basement, the staircase which were new to this community.

The study aimed at stating where Native people stand today, at defining their critics and expectations, from the standpoint of women. The objectives of the case study were to investigate all the physical areas related to the domestic environment. The questionnaire was therefore long and exhaustive but interviewees showed a great deal of patience and interest which enabled the whole process to be completed on time and in response to the authors' expectations. Due to the size of the study group, this research is not based on quantitative data, but on the contrary aims at considering the present housing situation with qualitative information recorded with the help from a group of 18 women. This case study is subjective and based on a pragmatic experience over three weeks consultation with the residents of Chisasibi.

The first part of the questionnaire focused on information related to personal issues such as birth place, type of house the residents lived in during their childhood, the language spoken, their current employment and age in order to define their background and present situation.

4.1. Personal information

The interviewees were mainly women, with the exception of a married couple and one single man who answered the majority of the questions. Ten women out of 17 were married, the others didn't mention any companion. The youngest woman was 27, the oldest was in her late 40s. Seven women were over the age of 40, six women were between 30 and 39, and

four women between 27 and 29 years old. The oldest women had lived in the bush but also in residential schools, whereas the younger interviewees stayed in Chisasibi during their school years. Their experience in previous years plays a major role on their acceptance and point of view about their domestic environment today.

The size of their families were analogous with the general statistics on Native families over Canada. Four families comprised 8 members each, 2 had 7 members, 5 had 6 members, 1 had 5 members, 3 had 2 members and 1 single man.

The size of the families was a result of two main factors:

- 1) due to long waiting list to get a house, the children aged 20-25 were more likely to stay with their girlfriend/boyfriend at the parents' house.
- 2) because childbearing out of wedlock has been accepted by Native people, parents host their unmarried daughters and their children.

As family ties remain very strong, members tend to stay in the same house for financial reasons, this leads to the cohabitation of two or three generations in one house. Out of a total of 7 extended families, 3 of them lived with their unofficial daughter-in-law and the grandchild, 2 women lived with their sisters and their children, 1 single mother lived with her child and her parents and sister, and a mother of 3 children with her niece and her daughter, 6 households were composed of a single core family with children, and finally two couples were without children.

Other family characteristics:

Two families had physically handicapped members:

- 1 being the interviewee herself;
- one woman's 3 brothers.

4.1.1. Area of employment

All the interviewees were employed except one woman who had given birth 3 weeks earlier and was a housewife. As presented in Chapter 1, women are more involved in employment related to the community than in building activities or in traditional hunting activities such as fishing and trapping. A majority of women were involved in services, health and teaching.

The employment repartition in this case study reveals a similar situation. Seven women were working at the Cree Health Board, mainly dealing with community issues such as drug, solvent and sexual abuse, alcohol problems, and family violence. Two of them worked at

the hospital, in charge of community education and social issues related to health. Six women worked at the Cree School Board, and four women worked as educators and two as administrators.

4.1.2. Origins and history of the interviewees

To understand the complexity of the domestic sphere, it is important to know where the interviewees were born and the kind of education and surroundings they have experienced. The type of houses they have lived in influence their actual attitude and point of view. Generally, most of the interviewees had experienced bush life as children, then residential schools as adolescents and modern housing facilities as adults. Three interviewees of Fort George were born in the bush, 9 women were born in Fort George (they may be born in the bush and later lived in shacks). The usual physical environment on the island was one big room for the whole family without running water or electricity. Electricity came later, during the ten last years before the relocation in 1980.

Interviewees' place of birth varied, 12 were originally from Fort George, 1 from Moose Factory, 1 from Waskaganish, 1 from an Inuit village north of Chisasibi, 1 from Temiscaming and another from Manitoba. During their childhood and teenage years, most of the women lived in places far away from home, and most of them in an urban environment. All of them went to high school college down south, in Ottawa, Montreal, Hull, Sault-Ste-Marie, Moose Factory, Mistassini. Their skills in English are excellent, and some speak a little French. All women, except the youngest ones, have experienced traditional life, bush life and the evolution in modern society. Throughout their years in residential schools, they became active participants of these changes, enjoying the evolution and introduction of modernity into their lives. Since the relocation, children were more likely to stay in Chisasibi and only later leave for distant schools. This lead to different experiences and needs: 10 women lived in shacks as children without any electricity or running water, whereas the youngest interviewees had lived in one of the first houses equipped with electricity but still without running water or a sewage system.

4.2. Interviewees' houses

Since the relocation, the community has continued to build new houses until the cluster layout was saturated. Then, in 1992, the Band has made a new extension on the west part of Chisasibi and started building different types of houses. The very first models in 1992 were called Inuit Houses because they were given to the Inuit population living in Chisasibi. Case studies of the Inuit house will be presented to illustrate the changes that have occurred since

the first models built in 1980. At the same time, apartment units, duplex, triplex and fourplex have also been built in the community. The author preferred to focus on the house models to enable a better understanding of the evolution since the relocation.

The number of different houses showed the diversity of models existing in Chisasibi. Four families were living in a DINA Model, 4 families were living in a Cedar Model, 3 families were living in a Model A House, 3 families lived in apartments, 2 families were living in an Inuit House Model, and 1 couple was living in a Mobile Home. At the time of the case study, all of the relocated DINA and Cedar Models and Model A houses built in Chisasibi in 1981 had been renovated during the past 4 years. Generally, the interviewees didn't have a chance to choose their house model, but with the renovation, the residents were entitled to express their needs. As explained previously, most of the houses needed extensions and were remodeled by the families themselves according to their budget and the amount of money provided by the Band Council.

4.3. Women and community participation

Women agreed that it was their role to participate in the design of their homes and all of them accepted the idea of working with an architect if the possibility was given to them. On the other hand, community participation was welcomed by only 5 women out of 9, the other women didn't consider this option possible. Four women preferred the idea of participating with the help of their husband because, they say, they both share the responsibility of the household, 5 accepted the idea of working only with women, 1 said it would be impossible to be working only with women, 6 women didn't answer.

Women felt responsible for and capable of being involved in the design process of their homes, but traditional culture in which men and women shared most of the tasks fostered their desire to consider men as equally involved in the domestic sphere. Similarly, western structures have given men more responsibilities in the public area, and therefore it seems that women wouldn't want to offend them by taking too much power in a community based consultation process. Two interviewees pointed out the complementarity of men and women, with women in charge of the design of the home and men in charge of the construction and all activities requiring physical strength.

4.3.1. General comments on housing issues

The comments of the residents on housing issues reveal the broad scope of problems afflicting Native housing. The biggest complaint dealt with overcrowding and the

consequent problems such as lack of privacy, bad ventilation, materials of poor quality, shortage of storage, bad layout of the cluster, the costs of the alterations in the house, the long waiting list for housing.

Their general comments and suggestions about improvements varied but generally showed an acceptance of modern life style and strong needs for larger houses. Eight persons out of 16 expressed a desire for larger units, either larger individual rooms or extensions of the houses, all the women stressed the need for more storage room, except for those who had just moved into newly built houses; 6 women out of 14 wished to have a second washroom, 3 wanted a recreation room for the children (a pool table); two women indicated a desire for a separate laundry room; all the women required a bigger kitchen and 3 women wanted a covered garage.

Political issues were addressed in regard to the way the Band Council and the Housing Department dealt with the housing demand, and their monopoly in all the domestic issues. Inhabitants were aware of the scarcity of houses but criticized the band's lack of interest in the population's needs and opinions. None of the interviewees had been asked their opinion about their houses before answering this questionnaire. The women also complained about home ownership programs which were not accessible yet.

The second part of the questionnaire addressed the physical issues of the house. Different sections covered all the areas of the house: the kitchen, its mechanical and practical aspects, its appropriateness to culture and tradition; the living room, its location in relation to the kitchen, the dining room, and the other parts of the house, the storage space as well as the orientation and usage; the bedrooms in regard to use and size, storage and light; the staircase; its appropriateness to culture and usage; the entrance, the need for a porch and storage space and finally issues concerning the layout of the cluster, compared to the grid layout and also the opinion about the esthetic of the houses and the new proposed designs. These questions aimed at giving a voice to peoples' opinions about their needs and requests but also at encouraging peoples' expression about their dreams and very personal concerns. The number of answers on that last part, concerning the improvements of every single room in the house, was quite small, but nevertheless the few answers offered some clues to propose ideas and recommendations.

4.4. The kitchen

The kitchens analyzed and discussed in this paragraph are all based on a similar design with the same materials. Nevertheless differences occurred in those kitchens which hadn't all been renovated. They were all equipped with cupboards, some with a window and a door leading to a backyard. The fridge and the stove did not come with the kitchen. Comments and criticisms regarding lack of space, lack of storage and bad ventilation were constant in the different types of dwellings.

4.4.1. Eating habits of the Crees in Chisasibi

First, to understand the eating habits of Native people it is important to explain how and where they purchase their food items. Native families still eat occasionally wild meat from the bush or fresh fish from the river and also participate each year to the traditional goose hunting. At the same time, Chisasibi has two big food stores, one store belonging to Northern supermarkets and one Co-op. They both have similar goods to Southern Canadian stores but their prices are much higher. The Co-op sells wild meat when available. Today, Native people have very much adopted the North American diet, therefore their consumption of processed and manufactured food has increased rapidly in the last twenty years. Originally, life in the bush, surviving in the cold required large amounts of food, and family members ate whenever they felt hungry. Sharing food was and still is a common habit as a way to welcome and spend time with family members or friends.

As presented in the previous Chapter, Native families are large and therefore need more space for food storage than the average Southern Canadian family. Even though they adapted to the western kitchen and its life style, some aspects do not meet their expectations: the size is not satisfactory and the problems of ventilation and lack of storage are evident. Eleven interviewees were not satisfied with their kitchen but 3 were happy (2 of them lived in newly built houses and the third one lived with her husband in a Trailer Home).

4.4.2. Cultural appropriateness of the kitchen

Native women continue to prepare traditional meals, even though they do less than before because hunting activities have diminished. As a result, some of the questions raised the issue of appropriateness and space for traditional cooking activities in the kitchen. Eight women responded by saying it was difficult to prepare traditional meals in their kitchen, because they lacked enough counter space for cutting big game (they used the basement for that purpose). Similarly, roasting big game was difficult because the ovens were not designed for that purpose. Some of the households had a wood stove in the basement but

still lacked the required space or equipment to cook in the same conditions as in the bush. Eleven families had an oven and a microwave, mostly using the microwave for heating up and the oven for cooking, 2 of them had only an oven.

4.4.3. Ventilation and window in the kitchen

The ventilation was more problematic. At the time of the relocation, the engineers had noticed the hazards of limited ventilation capacities given the cooking habits of Native families. This led to severe problems of humidity and moisture. Despite those known problems, some kitchens are without fans and the rest didn't have large enough fans to cope with the high level of humidity and grease produced by traditional cooking. Lack of repairs and maintenance are partly the cause of the poor quality of the mechanical fans.¹³ Three families didn't have a fan in their kitchen, 5 said that their fan didn't work well, and 6 had a fan which worked. On the other hand, the majority of interviewees had at least a window in their kitchen (11 out of 14), but still, the windows were difficult or impossible to open in the winter and 2 families didn't have any window at all. Generally, women preferred a bigger window above the sink for natural ventilation and also to look out on the backyards.

4.4.4. Space in the kitchen

The third aspect criticized by practically all the interviewees concerned the need for more space in the kitchen: space for cooking, eating and moving. The drawing in figure 4.1. shows a 1996 design in which the kitchen opens on the dining room. This design was adopted by the architects after the relocation, and has barely changed since. During the community consultation, families were confused as to whether they wanted an open or a closed dining area, finally choosing the open design which seemed more in line with their traditional eating and living habits.

Today the question raised would be: is that design still appropriate and satisfying? With the exception of one interviewee, the women criticized the lack of space for cooking and for eating. The majority expressed their frustration because the counters were too small for cleaning and cutting big game; they lacked space for big cooking pots; storage space was not adequate due to the needs of big families and space was too scarce to allow a person with a wheelchair to move around easily. The drawing in figure 4.3 illustrate the need for more space and open areas to move easily. The layout of the kitchen, dining room and living room

¹³see Chapter 2, maintenance and repair.

show the desire for larger living areas interrelating to each other. With less walls, this family managed to make use of the available space to answer its needs.

4.4.5. The sink

Due to the large size of Native families, the questionnaire focused on the size and location of the sink. The design of the sink was approved by 7 women out of 14, but they preferred the location below the window. Yet the sink was inappropriate for wheelchair users; the sink was too small for the size of the family; too small to clean big pots and to cope with the amount of dishes used by big families.

Actually, the residents used the basement sink which was larger and more suited for big items. In fact, women wanted to keep their kitchen and dining area clean from traditional game refuse. It seems that although members dissociated the activities in the kitchen from those in the basement, they still preferred to have the adequate appliances in the kitchen as well. It is not clear whether they liked the situation in the basement or in the kitchen.

House type: Inuit House

Date of construction: 1996

Positive aspects:

- 1- closet by the entrance
- 2- sink above the window

Negative aspects

- 3- no vestibule
- 4- counters too small for cutting big game
- 5- no visual contact between the kitchen, living room and the entrance
- 6- living room is planned like a corridor, difficult to create any centrality
- 7- bathroom in the middle of the house
- 8- no window in the bathroom
- 9- small bedrooms

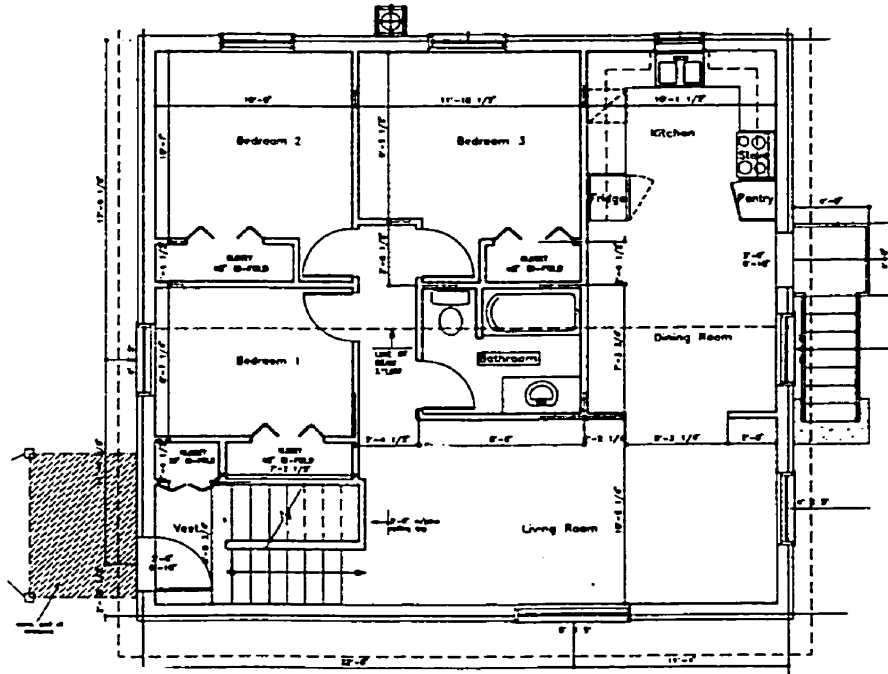


Fig.4.1. Ground floor (Inuit House, 1996)

(Source C.C.C, 1998)

House type: Cedar

Date of renovation: -

Positive aspects:

- 1- closets in the entrance
- 2- kitchen close to the entrance
- 3- kitchen open on dining area, more space to move around
- 4- separation between dining and living room
- 5- large living room
- 6- window and closet in the bathroom
- 7- good size of the bedrooms

Negative aspects:

- 8- no vestibule and no porch
- 9- space wasted in the center of the house due to the location of the doors and passage way
- 10- no privacy, direct view from the living room on the toilet

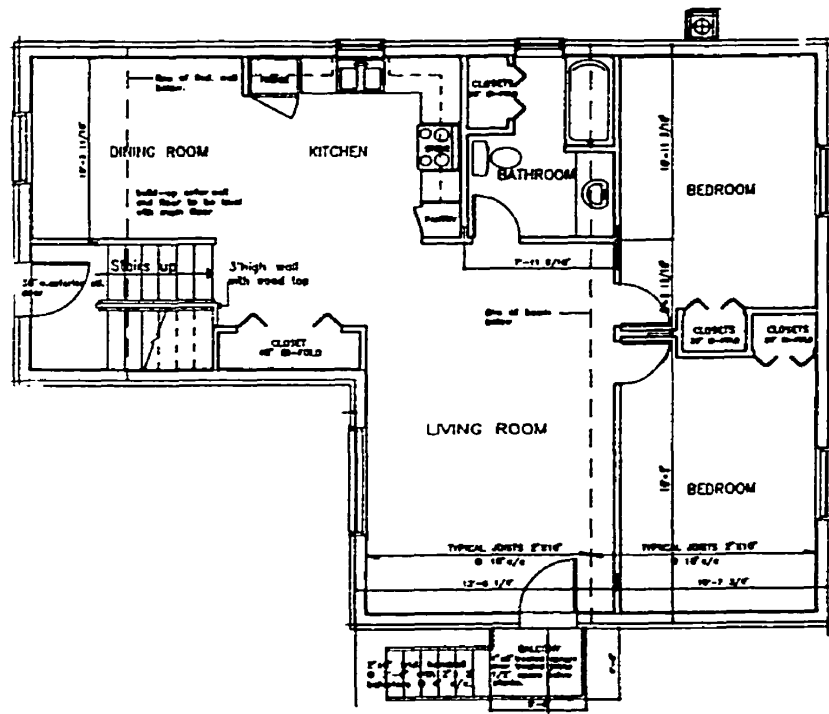


Fig.4.2. Ground floor (Cedar, renov., 199-)

(Source C.C.C, 1998)

4.4.6. Kitchen door

In the early designs, most kitchens have been provided with backyard kitchen doors. The door leading to the "back" of the house which is an undefined area in-between the houses. In some cases, the stairs leading to the exterior ground floor have been extended into terraces. Even so, 9 out of 14 houses didn't have a kitchen door. Interviewees explained that most of the kitchen doors offered little resistance to the cold weather and therefore were generally only used in the summer. Only 2 interviewees were happy with their kitchen door because they used it every day to smoke outside (they both lived in recently built Inuit Houses in the west extension, see map).

4.4.7. General comments about the kitchen

Four interviewees asked for a bigger kitchen, more space, and asked for an island counter that would answer all their expectations. Several interviewees asked for a wood stove (some people already had wood stoves in the basement where a chimney had been built and designed for that purpose); bigger cupboards were needed to store pots and groceries and also more drawers.

4.4.8. Conclusions about the kitchen

Women criticized the size of their kitchen, the overcrowding and the poor ventilation. Important was the window for natural ventilation. An open roof in the teepee enabling the smoke to be evacuated and the condensation to evaporate still remained a dream solution to the kitchen problems. In fact, one could say that modern kitchen designs are still inadequate to meet the needs of large Native families.

4.5. The dining and the kitchen: space and separation of functions

The answers about the way the kitchen and dining area should be connected vary depending on the individual taste and size of the families: 3 persons expressed their desire to have the kitchen/dining room separate from the living room, and even to separate the kitchen from the dining area. An increasing number of people wanted a separation between all the public areas, a separation with a wall and a door. The answers show that there is a strong desire for a separation between the dining area and the living room today than at the time of the relocation. Conversely, the residents that we could call 'traditionalists' preferred an 'open kitchen, dining and living' area. Their ideal set up would be a mixture between the teepee qualities incorporated into a modern kitchen. The younger population, more influenced by modern houses and television, have adopted the modern lifestyle and North American comfort, even though it means less and less traditional behavior. Yet, this younger

population enjoys traditional activities with their elder's parents or extended family during weekends and holidays. But less and less children experience traditional bush life. In that way, the modern kitchen has influenced their way of living by separating the areas of preparation from the area of eating and interacting.

4.5.1. Kitchen and dining room: conclusions

The kitchen belongs to specific areas which are more likely to undergo different changes. On one hand some families want to combine traditional activities with modernity, but still want to incorporate the kitchen to the dining area and create one big room whereas others - mostly younger ones - prefer to evolve to a more modern way of life and prefer to separate the different functions from each other. The future design will have to consider these differences and not treat all the Native families in the same way.

4.6. Living room

The answers in response to the living room indicate that Native families have changed their habits in regard to the communal and public areas of their home. The living rooms are designed to be open to the dining room and to the kitchen. Residents mostly criticized the fact that the living room was also open to the entrance and to cold winds. On the one hand, some had developed a sense of intimacy and privacy within the different areas and, on the other hand, some were reluctant to dissociate these areas from each other. As a matter of fact, all inhabitants from Chisasibi had adopted activities such as watching TV, listening to music and playing video games.

4.6.1. Importance of the living room in contemporary Native housing

Concerning the living room, the answers showed the diversity of living habits but also characteristics specific to family life in Cree society. For all the interviewees, except one, the living room was a very important room in the house, as it provided space to meet and get together. For three of them who belonged to the younger age group, and living in smaller families (2 couples and one family had 5 members, and 2 of the families lived newly built houses), intimacy in the living room was also important. For one family living in the new Inuit House (1996), the kitchen was more important than the living room, because, maybe, the living room was designed lengthwise and therefore difficult to furnish; problems similar to the house drawn in Figure 4.1. and Figure 4.3., the living room doesn't allow intimacy and protection from the other public areas of the house (entrance, kitchen and dining).

House Type: DINA

Date of renovation: 1995

Family: 8 persons (2 parents, children age: 13-30, 3 persons in wheelchair)

Positive aspect

1- storage space available from outside

Negative aspects:

2- this living room is a passage way between the entrance and the dining area and kitchen, bedroom doors take off space for furniture

3- little space to have furniture in the living room(considering the size of the family, at least 4 persons, + guests)

4- the bathroom door could be more protected from the dining area

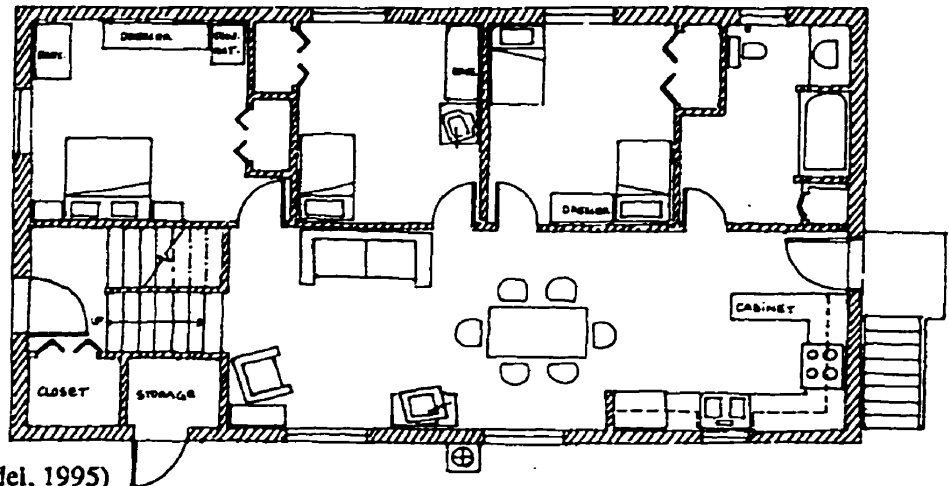


Fig.4.3. Ground Floor (DINA Model, 1995)

(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

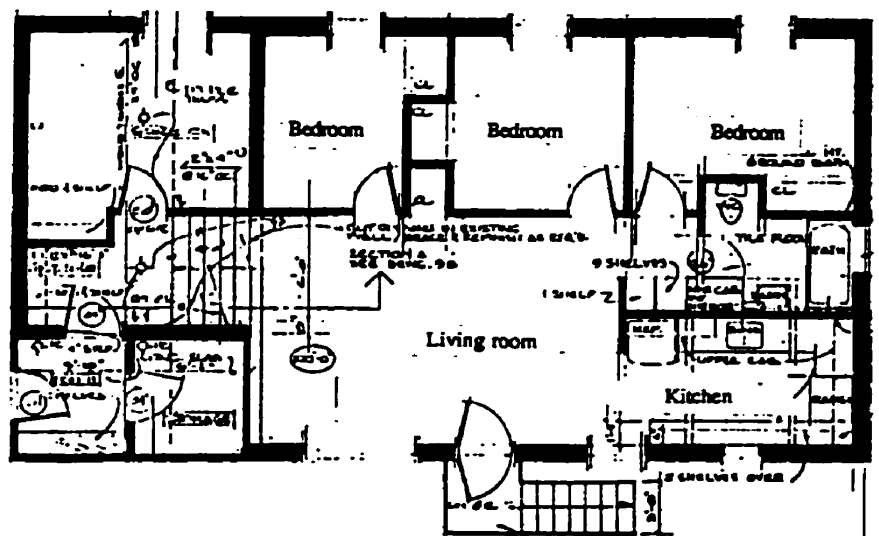


Fig.4.3.1. Original layout (at the time of the relocation)

Still, the living room allows families to meet, but its usage is often limited by its size and inappropriate design. Even though watching TV and playing video games have become popular activities, parents and children still enjoy spending time together in one common room.

4.6.2. Usage and tradition of the living room

Results show that Native people are using the living room in the same way as non-Natives: to watch TV, see friends, but also to play, learn, take part in professional and traditional activities. Seven women used the living room for all these purposes, and also as a guest room; all subjects watched TV in their living room; 4 used the living room as a work place to sew, make arts and crafts and to read.

4.6.3. Storage space in the living room

From the beginning, the living rooms in the DINA, Cedar and Model A houses were designed without any storage space. In his Master thesis (Afshari Mirak, 1994), showed that inhabitants of different Cree communities in Northern Quebec were forced to build storage space in the living room for their arts and crafts, hunting and fishing material, because it was the area in which they did most of their work such as repairs. In the case of Chisasibi, basements and outdoor shacks offered storage space for those items, "junk" (the usual word used by interviewees) as well as traditional items. Nevertheless, the designs in the new house types (e.g.: Inuit house) didn't offer any storage, the only place designed with storage was the basement (which is a large open area) and a closet by the entrance. Consequently, most interviewees complained about the lack of storage in the living room, and asked for more bookshelves.

It seems that the problem is not only the lack of storage space but also the inappropriate size of the living room given the number of members per household, this can be observed in all the drawings presented in the case study. If the living room was larger, people could create some storage space themselves and also use the space in accordance to their needs. As a result, residents have to store their different items in locations available around the house .

4.6.4. Size and design of the living room

One major complaint about the living room was the lack of space. The size of extended families implies not only more living and storage space but also flexibility in the usage of the room because all members of the family used the living room differently. The cold and long winters require appropriate living spaces in terms of size and comfort: five of the

interviewees complained about the lack of space; two indicated that the size was appropriate (one lived alone with her husband and the other woman had just moved in a new house with her family); five interviewees expressed their desire to see the living room open to the kitchen and dining area; two considered that living room had to be central in the house. Nevertheless, 8 respondents preferred that the living room be separated from the eating and cooking areas, whether only by visual separation or by building walls. For some, the living room was too close to the entrance and bedrooms, creating noise and lack of privacy for the users; one interviewee was satisfied because the living room in the "Inuit house" was almost the size of her previous Model A living and dining room together.

Answers show a wide variation in the population's opinion, and can be divided into two groups: the first group wanting an open space in the house related to all the other rooms, and the second group preferring the living room separated and protected from the other functions (kitchen, entrance and bedrooms).

4.6.5. Orientation of and view of the living room

The questionnaire tried to understand whether Native families were sensitive to the orientation and the location of the living room in the house, specially since the orientation of the dwelling was important in traditional living. As discussed in Chapter 3, the design for the cluster layout though didn't take into consideration the role of symbols in traditional dwelling. Interviewees expressed their concern about the cluster layout mainly because of the bad orientation of the houses and the lack of view: all the houses follow different directions and the panorama is limited on all sides due to the tight construction of the houses next to each other. All the interviewees expressed their need to have a nice view; four of them wanted to face the river; two wanted to see more trees; two mentioned the importance of the entrance and view from the living room facing east. For more practical reasons, some wanted the living room to face the main road so that they could watch their children play and see who is walking by.

4.6.7. Interviewees suggestions for the living room

Eleven interviewees out of 16 had ideas about their ideal living room: all the different answers enabled the author to understand the kind of lifestyle Native families were aiming at and what changes had occurred since the relocation. One 'traditionalist' (women who kept a certain nostalgia of the life in the bush and wanted to incorporate some aspects in her modern house) expressed the wish to have her living room 1/2 below ground level - just as the teepee - with the kitchen and dining room radiating around (see figure 4.13). The living room

should face the north east and/or the river; 2 interviewees mentioned the need for shelves and closets in the living room, which could serve as a separation between the living room and the dining room; another women needed more storage for camping material and space for a wood stove and one women needed space for her computer.

4.6.8. Location of the living room in the house

Generally, interviewees were more concerned by the lack of space than other aspects. The wishes as to where the living area should be located were very different depending on the family: some wanted the living room at the front of the house, others at the back, separated and closed because of the constant noise of the TV; some wanted the living room away from the entrance and others preferred the living room next to the entrance.

Preferences about the living room, taste and living patterns vary from a traditional to a North American lifestyle. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to discuss and work together with groups of women in order to incorporate aspects and habits from the teepee/log house design into the new houses. For example, locating the wood stove in the living room would not only give a centrality to the house but also help to heat all surrounding rooms. Actually, a majority of Native people preferred natural heating to electrical heating, therefore the solution of the wood stove in the living room would be a good compromise.

In opposition to the traditional large open room in the log house, teepee or shack, the building of small sized rooms has led the inhabitants to the western way of life at the expense of their traditional system of social interaction. Nevertheless, the sense of the family is still very strong and people like to chat and spend time in each others houses, it would then seem appropriate to reconsider the size and the design of the living room in the future in relation to cultural and practical aspects of the Native people.

4.6.9. Materials and finish in the living room

Most of the interviewees showed a feeling of dissatisfaction in regard to the materials used in the living room: the quality of the walls was not strong enough and the color, the materials didn't always meet their expectations; several women expressed their desire for natural materials such as wood (one interviewee had removed the original walls and replaced them with cedar wood) but the plastic tiles used on the ground floor were considered practical because they were easy to clean.

4.6.10. Conclusion about the living room

Traditional and professional activities didn't all take place in the living room. Some interviewees used to sew in their living room and others in their bedroom, but activity such as ironing was often performed in the bedroom: part of the choices were due to the scarcity of space and the separation of the different areas in the house. By splitting the activities into different rooms, families had adapted their needs in relation to the available space. If they had been given the choice to define precisely how they wanted to use the rooms, perhaps, the design of the whole house would be different and evolve around a specific living pattern. On the one hand, one could note that Native families have adapted themselves to western living habits, but on the other, they perpetuate traditional ways of interacting which cannot be easily defined and translated into enclosed spaces. Research and community participation will be necessary for residents and planners to synthesize the needs in order to adapt the design of the living room to the present situation.

4.7. The children's bedroom

The move from the Fort-George island to Chisasibi has disrupted the traditional way of educating children. Pictures from the island show how children used to play outdoors and interact with adults along the river bank (see figures 3.3. to 3.10). As explained in Chapter 2, traditional education was based on imitating parents and adults. This was possible because of the natural location on the island, with the long river banks. Likewise, the scarcity of services in the houses and the lack of electricity fostered more interactions and sharing outside the home, in the natural world. Nowadays, Native children live in an environment which is based on western living habits. With the relocation, the new community layout, the new houses, the school system, TV and traveling opportunities, children's environment is very different from their older siblings' and their parents' and therefore requires a deep insight into their actual needs.

The evolution of their environment has affected the children's interest in daily activities. The time spent indoors has increased, as well as the needs for outdoor "planned" activities, such as sports and games. Native children, like western children, have their own activities and perform them individually, this new independence creates a different behavior within the domestic environment, especially in the bedroom area. The questionnaire attempted to discover if there were problems such as overcrowding, lack of space in the children's bedrooms. The plan of the Inuit House in figure 4.4. show that each child has his individual room and that space in the basement has also been used for that purpose. There is also a

bedroom for the guest. This family has therefore adapted its needs to the space available. The interviewee showed a very high satisfaction about her house.

4.7.1. Space in the children's bedrooms

Overcrowding in the children's bedrooms wasn't an issue for this group of interviewees. Out of 14 households, 8 households counted one child per bedroom; 1 family with 4 children had one bedroom with 2 persons; another family had one bedroom shared by 1 adult and 2 children, 1 adult alone, and one room shared by 3 teenage boys; 2 families didn't have children and the 2 last interviewees didn't answer that question.

4.7.2. Homework

All the children in the different families were going to the local school at the time of the case study, except one who had already graduated. The questionnaire tried to understand where the children were doing their homework and if they preferred to work in their bedrooms. If yes, did they have enough room for a desk? Did they prefer to work on the kitchen table, or in the living room? Answers varied from one family to the other, but the majority of the children used the different areas of the house depending on their moods. From the parent's point of view, the reasons why children did not stay in their bedrooms was due to two factors: the lack of space, and/or the need to be close to other members of the family. The children of 6 families (out of 16) used their rooms to do their homework; the other children tended to use more the kitchen table; 6 mothers assumed that their children had enough space to work in the bedrooms. In contrast, four said that the rooms were too small for that purpose; 9 persons out of 10 said that their children didn't have their own desk, although it was important for them that their children have their own desk. For only one interviewee, to have a desk in the bedroom wasn't very important.

4.7.3. The children's bedroom and TV

Surprisingly, half of the children had a TV in their room, even though some of them hadn't reached the age of 10. This situation had nothing to do with the financial status of the parents, but rather showed how Native families had incorporated western life style into their own: all children in 6 families (out of 12) had their own TV in their room (independently from the communal TV in the living room); in one family, 2 children out of 4 had their own TV; in the other family, 1 child out of 2 had his own TV and only the children from the last 3 families didn't have a TV in their bedroom.

House type: Inuit House

Date of construction: 1996

Family: 6 persons (single mother, 2 parents, children age: 12, 17 and 8)

Comments: family had just moved in: functions and space were used in accordance to the original design. Bedrooms already existing in the basement.

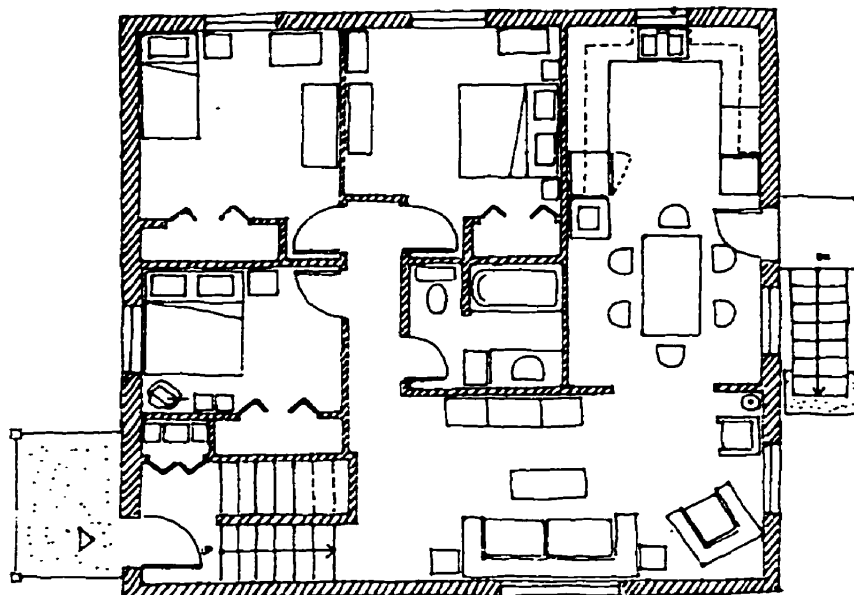


Fig.4.4. Ground Floor (Inuit House, 1996)

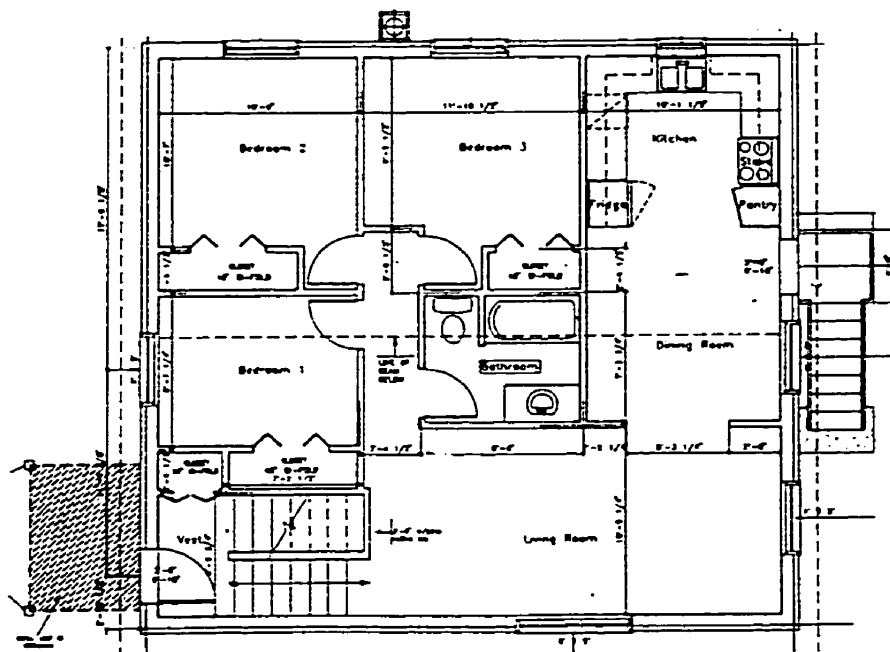


Fig.4.4.1. Ground floor, original layout (Inuit House, 1996)

(Source C.C.C., 1998)

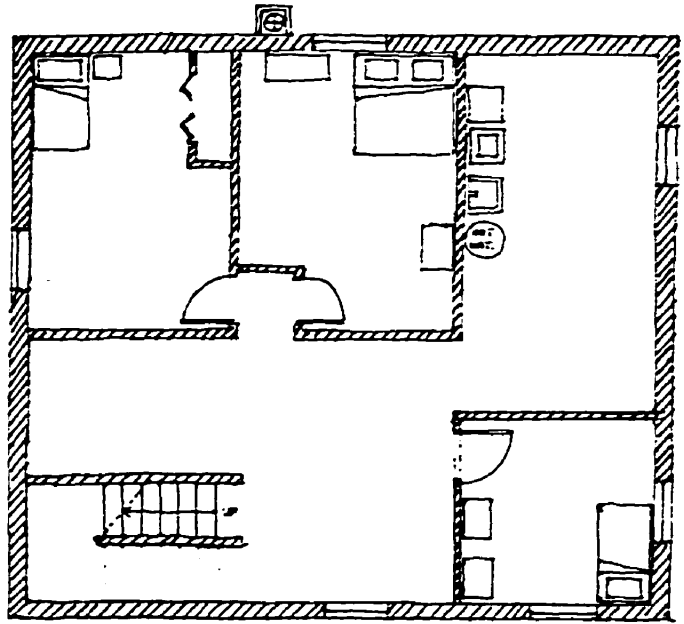


Fig.4.5. Basement (Inuit House, 1996)
(Author's illustration after interviewee's drawing)

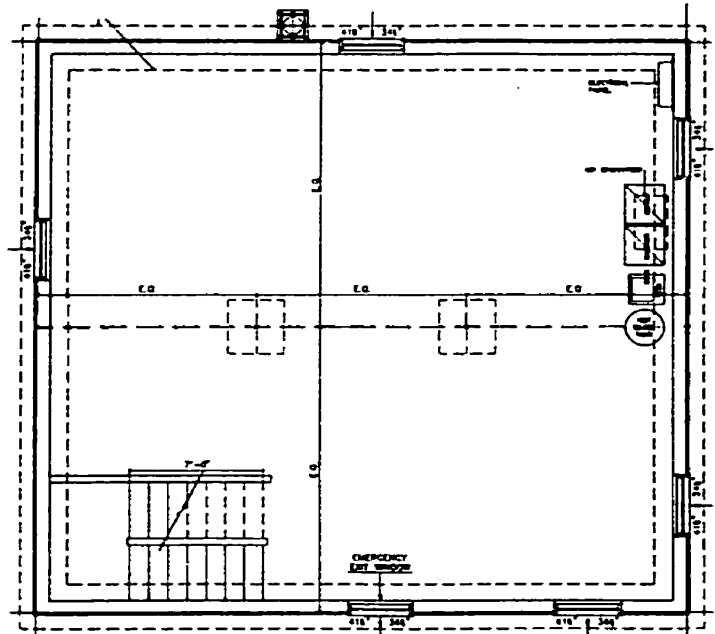


Fig.4.5.1. Basement, original layout (Inuit house, 1996)
(Source C.C.C., 1998)

4.7.4. Location of the children's bedrooms

On the one hand, the location of the bedrooms on the ground floor wasn't a problem for most of the interviewees, but on the other hand, they preferred to have the children's bedrooms upstairs and not downstairs in the basement because it was considered dark and unhealthy. As children became more independent, and asked for more privacy and peace, they appreciated having their bedroom in the basement in order to be away from their parents and from the living room.

In which way should architects consider this evolution and how do family members want to use the bedrooms? These questions should be considered and raised between the families and the planners in future projects, given the fact that the situation is complex: Native families still have many children but want to have one child per bedroom. Similarly, the problem remains due to the small size of the bedroom and the little room left for other types of activities.

4.8. The parent's bedroom

Traditionally, babies slept in hammocks next to their parent's sleeping area. Some mothers addressed that issue because this habit had been partially lost, due to the poor quality of the walls (not allowing that kind of installation). But generally, babies and small children were still sleeping with their parents in a separate bed: three parents shared their bedroom with one child; one 13-year-old girl was still sleeping with her mother but claimed that she wanted to have her own room now; three other mothers shared their bedrooms with their children from time to time; three parents didn't share at all.

The sharing of the bedroom continued mainly because of two reasons: 1) due to tradition and 2) because of lack of space in the houses.

4.8.1. Location of the parent's bedroom

Parents have different opinions about whether they want their bedroom downstairs or upstairs. The main reason for having bedrooms downstairs was overcrowding in the ground floor and for some the need for peace and more privacy.

4.8.2. The parent's bedroom: importance and use in Native houses

The questionnaire focused on aspects such as comfort and importance of the bedroom. As space in the living room was scarce, the questionnaire tried to find out whether parents would use the bedrooms for other purposes besides sleeping. With the exception of 2 interviewees,

House type: Model A

Date of renovation: not indicated

Family: 7 persons (2 parents, 20 and 22, 1, 13 and 18)

**Comments: family adapt the house to meet their needs without changing the whole layout.
Shows flexibility and control over space.**

1- two bedrooms changed into 1 big room for the young couple with a child (desire to have larger bedrooms and more closets. See the difference with the original Model A design).

2- closets inverted and removed

3- bathroom closet added

4- closet added in the corridor

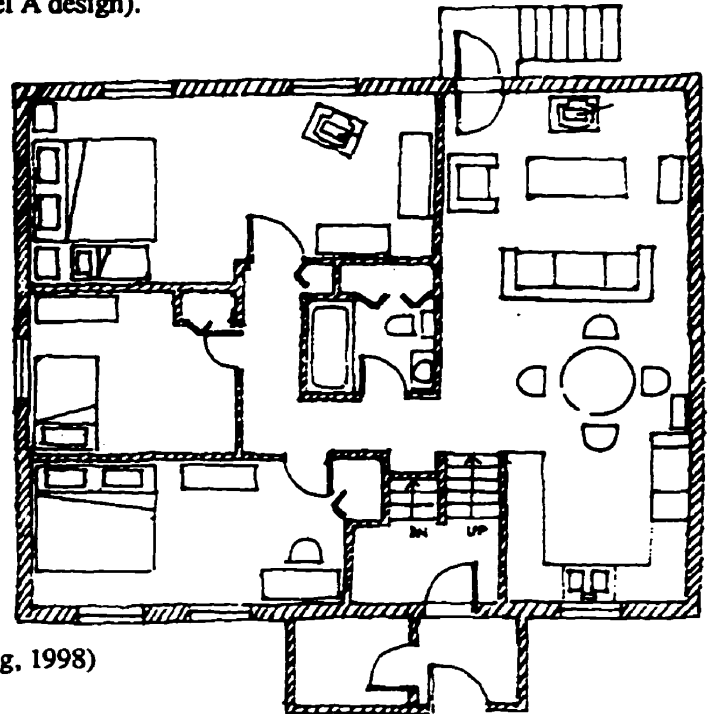


Fig.4.6. Ground floor (Model A, renov. 199-)
(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing, 1998)

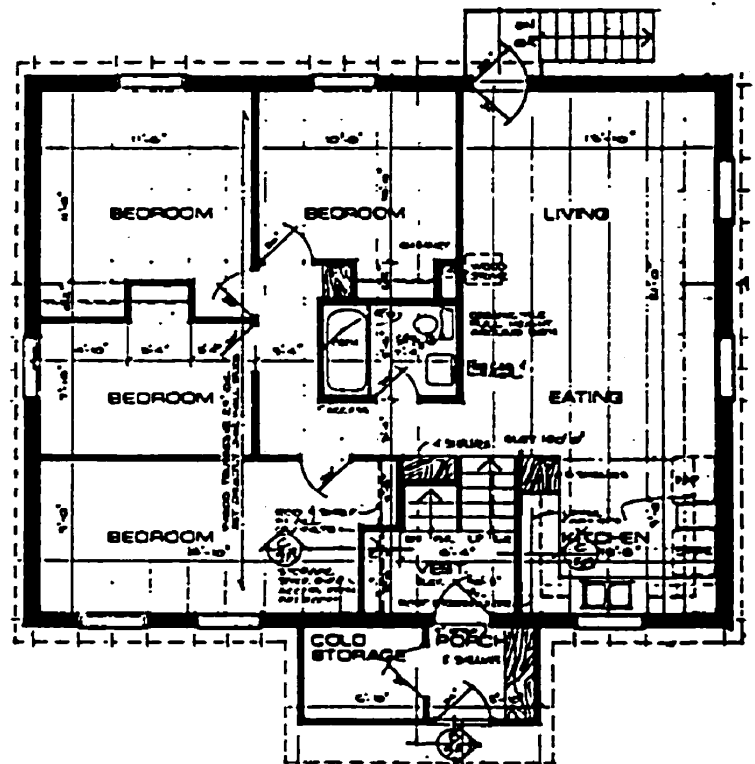


Fig.4.6.1. Ground floor, original Model A layout
(Source C.C.C., 1998)

the bedroom was an important room, not only for personal activities, such as reading or sewing and making arts and crafts but also as a place to interact and chat with the whole family. Some mentioned that they needed more privacy and intimacy; 50 percent of the women complained about the lack of storage in their bedrooms and the other half felt satisfied. The drawing in figure 4.6. show clearly the desire of the family to have larger rooms.

4.8.3. The parent's bedroom and storage facilities

The shortage of storage in the parent's bedroom was a problem for large families, this wasn't the case when the families were smaller (independently of the type of house they lived in) or when families had just moved into a new house: mainly all women lacked storage in their bedroom (most of them stored items other than just clothes, such as blankets, sewing material, cameras, toys, etc.).

4.8.4. The parent's bedroom: more than an extension of the living room?

Different activities take place in the bedroom such as reading, sewing, ironing, writing, making arts and crafts, social and professional work, and relaxing. When women were asked which changes they would like to bring into their bedroom: most of them complained about the size; two interviewees preferred a bedroom of the "size of a hotel room", so that they could do all the "stuff" they needed to do while also mentioning the need for more storage and closets.

One question to be raised: if the living rooms weren't so small, would parents want to do arts and crafts, ironing and other activities away from the common areas? Have Native families decided that they want this separation of functions or is it because of the physical separations of the rooms that activities are performed in different areas of the houses whereas they could be performed together in a big common space?

4.9. The bathroom

Since the sewage system was installed in 1996, the community in Chisasibi felt satisfied with the quality and actual services related to sanitation: they all had enough running water, yet large families had to schedule their baths and showers to have warm water.

4.9.1. Size of the bathroom and ventilation

The size of the bathrooms was not adequate to answer the needs of large families. Interviewees said that the poor quality of the materials and the lack of natural ventilation were

House type: Cedar

Date of renovation: 1996

Positive aspects

- 1- wide storage space by the entrance
- 2- flexibility of usage in the dining and living room
- 3- kitchen enclosed and separated from dining area
- 4- window above the sink
- 5- big bathroom
- 6- washer and dryer in the bathroom
- 7- bathroom door a little protected from the public areas

Negative aspects

- 8- space not used in an optimal way due to the location of the bedroom and patio doors
- 9- too little storage space in the bathroom

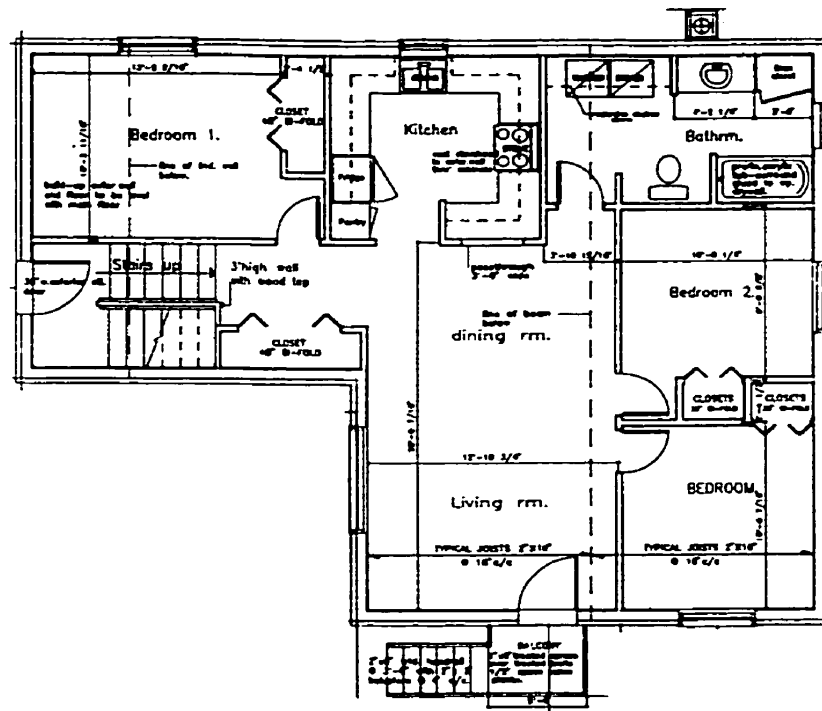


Fig.4.7. Ground floor (Cedar Model, renovation, 1996)

(Source, C.C.C., 1998)

common problems in the bathrooms. Similar to kitchen problems, the bathrooms were prone to problems of humidity. Several bathrooms had no windows and in others the mechanical ventilation was either deficient or not strong enough to cope with the large number of showers: 10 bathrooms out of 16 didn't meet the interviewees expectations because of the poor construction, their small size and the lack of natural light. Four interviewees were satisfied with their bathroom: one women was living in a newly built Inuit house, one was disabled and her house had been built correspondingly to her needs; one lived alone with her husband in a Trailer Home; and, the last interviewee lived with her husband and 4 children in a 1984 Model house.

4.9.2. Storage space and additions

Generally, Native families lacked storage space for towels because there was no specific space designed for that purpose. Large families did not only need to store the towels but also to dry them out. Where was there room for that purpose? Seven interviewees out of 16 had built additional shelves.

4.10. The basement

As explained in Chapter 2, the basement was originally planned to answer the increasing need for space, in an attempt to provide Native families with sufficient bedrooms and storage. The basements fulfilled different purposes: the main purpose for the basement was storage, laundry and sleeping but many interviewees who complained about the bad air in the basement appreciated its coolness during the very hot summers months. Generally, families used the basement in very different ways, depending on family size, the age of the children and the occupation of the parents.

4.10.1. The basement: an answer to Native traditional activities?

Native families appreciated the basement as a space in which to perform traditional tasks such as cleaning game and cooking on the wood stove (see paragraphs about the kitchen and the sink). Because the stairs had direct access to the basement, families brought the game and cleaned it there. Since their construction after the relocation, the basements have become the principle area in the house in which to perform traditional cooking activities.

House type: Inuit Houses

Date of construction: 1996

Family: 6 persons (2 parents, children age: 7, 6, 2 and 0,3)

Comments:

- 1- parents sleep with the 2 year old child and the new born baby in one room
- 2- the two eldest children sleep together
- 3- one bedroom is used as storage room for toys
- 4- the basement is used as a workshop for carpentry activities
- 5- the space in the basement allows the children to play indoors during the winter

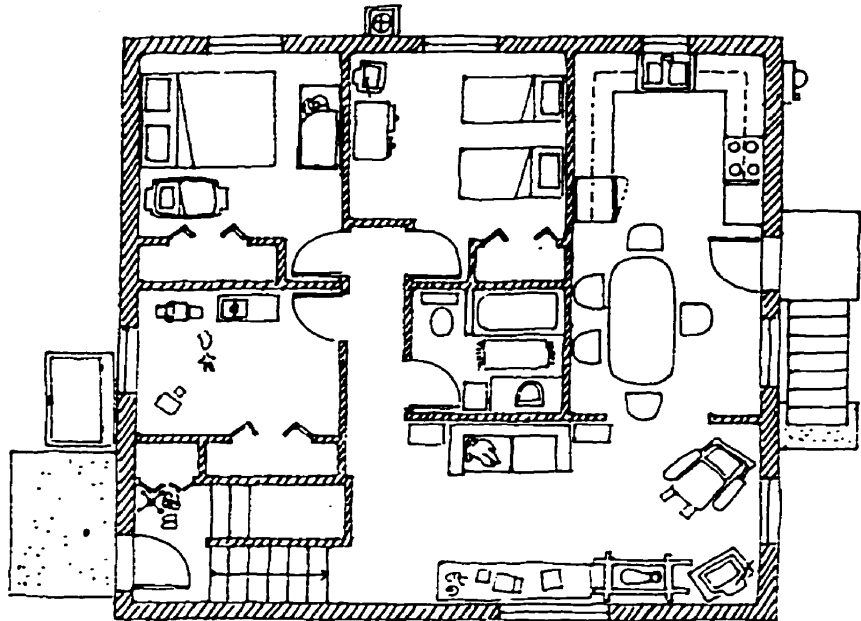


Fig.4.8. Ground Floor (Inuit House, 1996)

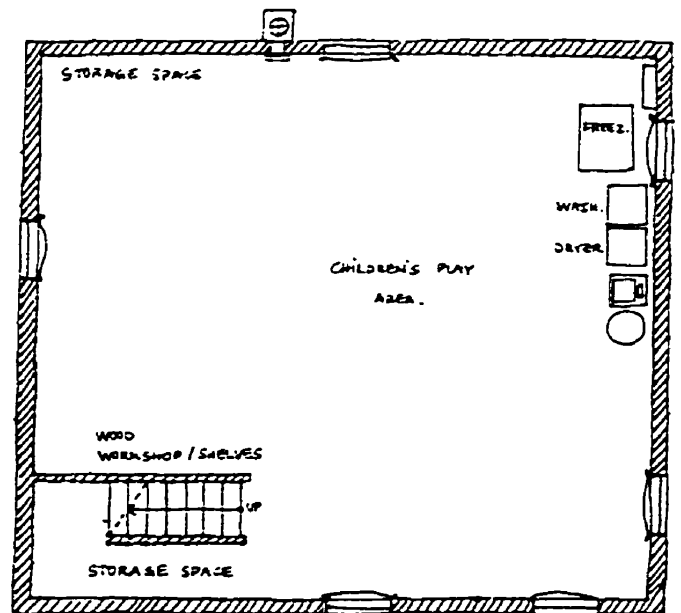


Fig.4.9. Basement (Inuit House, 1996)
(Author's illustrations, 1998)

4.10.2. Additions in the basement

The basement enabled families to accommodate their needs mainly in terms of space regardless of their specific expectations for that space. Every house was provided with a basement but families had to pay for all additions. For each family, the transformations were very different, some built walls for bedrooms, play areas or space for recreational activities, and others space for handy work and arts and crafts. Seven interviewees added some bedrooms, either for themselves or for their children; one interviewee used one of those rooms for guests and relatives; one interviewee's basement had been completely remodeled and showed the input of her family in the house as they needed space to perform traditional crafts and therefore a great deal of storage space (see figures 4.14. and 4.15); one interviewee had only 2 windows in her basement (instead of 5 commonly built) and therefore didn't use it much. Other families with young children or teenager appreciated the space downstairs because the children could play, or listen to music and play pool and one interviewee's husband used the basement to store his carpentry and other handwork tools (see figure 4.9.).

4.10.3. Chimney in the basement

All the basements were built with an outside chimney enabling families to purchase the wood stove and use it for traditional cooking. As mentioned in the earlier section about the living room and kitchen, some women wanted a wood stove to cook upstairs. Designs should consider the alternatives of a wood stove in the houses, where it would serve for cooking purposes but also to heat the house or at least some rooms, enabling the families to control the temperature and enjoy the smell and natural warmth.

4.11. The entrance

4.11.1. Storage space

Due to large amounts of snow, different items are necessary for shoveling snow, cleaning the front of the house, storing snow shoes, winter boots and all kinds of the other accessories. The storage place at the entrance is, in the resident's opinion, inadequate to fulfill all these requirements, moreover, additional storage space can't be build because the cluster layout is too tight and limits extensions. The figure 4.10. shows clearly the lack of storage space in the entrance, little concern for storage facilities in all parts of the house as well. There is no vestibule to stop the cold wind from coming in and no closet for coats and shoes.

Type of house: DINA
Date of renovation: 1996

Comments: flexibility of the design show the input of the resident's. Lack of space particularly for the dining room and for closets.

Positive aspects:

- 1- kitchen has an open counter
- 2- window above the sink
- 3- light in the living room
- 4- window in the bathroom

Negative aspects:

- 5- no double entrance door and no porch
- 6- no closet at the entrance
- 7- no visual connection from kitchen or living room to the entrance
- 8- dining room is very small due to the passage way
- 9- bathroom very narrow
- 10- children bedrooms very small
- 11- small closet in the children bedroom
- 12- no closet in the corridor

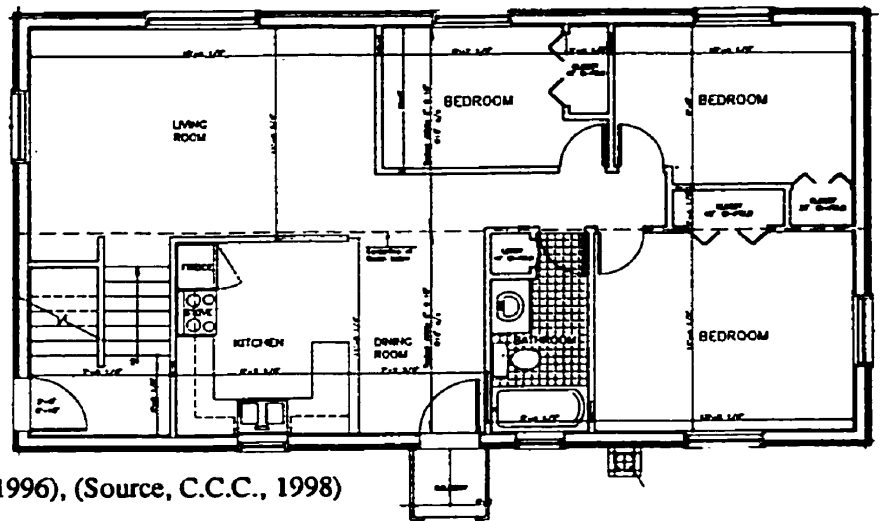


Fig.4.10. Ground floor (DINA Model, 1996), (Source, C.C.C., 1998)

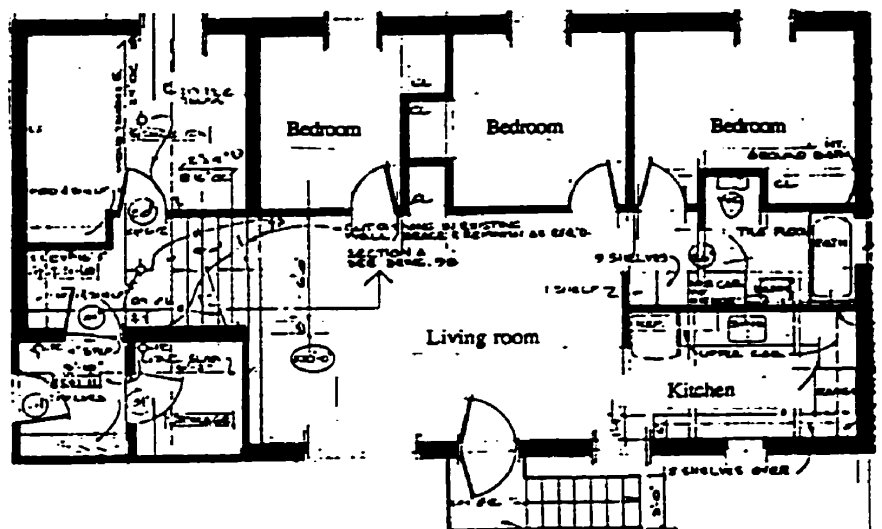


Fig.4.10.1. Ground floor, original layout (DINA Model at the time of the relocation)

4.11.2. Orientation of the entrance

In Chapter 2, the author pointed out the importance of the orientation in the traditional dwelling, and how it played an essential symbolic and practical role. As the layout of Chisasibi didn't take into consideration these aspects, the questionnaire aimed to understand whether the inhabitants had been affected by that element, and if they were satisfied with the location of the entrances of the houses in the cluster layout.

One interviewee mentioned the importance of the entrances facing the east "where life begins", and criticized the absence of orientation to the east and planning in general; five women said that the orientation was bad and that their family suffered either from cold winds, doors freezing in the winter and draft coming in, or bad insulation and no protection from the neighbors; three interviewees liked their layout: one lived in the new west extension of the city (grid pattern) and the two others in the cluster layout.

Generally the cluster layout is problematic due to the increasing number of cars and the difficulty to build extensions to answer the growing needs of storage space indoors. Future designs could focus on parking and outdoor storage as families continue to grow and their purchasing capacities too. Not only are they buying goods in the same way as non-Native populations but they also need space for items related to hunting and fishing activities.

4.12. Stairs

Most of the time, architects or planners stated that Native people didn't like multi-story houses because it didn't correspond to their culture, because they were more attached to the earth than western people. So far, considering the interviewees' responses, the basement didn't create cultural problems. On the contrary, people appreciated its coolness and privacy; only two interviewees didn't enjoy sleeping downstairs, and preferred to be living in a house 1/2 meter below the ground level. Focusing specifically on the stairs enabled the author to approach the issue and see whether the subject group felt confident about living on different levels: from twelve answers, six considered that the stairs were not a problem for them; 4 felt that they were a problem and two didn't answer that question.

4.13. General comments

The last section of the questionnaire dealt with general issues such as an esthetic of the house, the convenience of the cluster layout, people's suggestions to improve the layout, vehicle access, trees, safety, interaction with neighbors and women's opinion about community consultation at the time of the relocation, and their opinion today. In a way, this

section attempted to cover different issues addressed during the community consultation in 1980.

4.13.1. Individual choice

At the very beginning of the construction of the houses in Fort-George, Native people purchased the building materials themselves and therefore decided for themselves about the size and the arrangement of their houses. Whereas today, families are totally dependent on the band's choices. In the last 17 years since the relocation, designs were imposed, the result being that a majority of the interviewed residents didn't like the outside of their house, and looked forward to changing and covering it with other materials such as wood or bricks.

4.13.2. The cluster layout: opinions

The opinion about the cluster layout illustrated well the gap between the request of the community 17 years ago and the actual built environment. All the aspects proposed by Native people during the community consultation and which had not been taken into consideration have arisen again during the case study. The only difference was that, for some interviewees, the disappointment was so strong that they had turned their back to the actual cluster layout and favored the grid system. Very few interviewees proposed a different layout: one interviewee asked for a circular layout with a central playground; one interviewee proposed a circular layout, with hierarchy of spaces: in the inside public buildings, and radiating to the outside, houses, with circular roads (see figure 4.11); one said that the cluster layout was too complicated, too crowded and too tight; one woman didn't like the cluster layout at all; two expressed a very direct response such as "I don't like it", or "I don't mind the cluster, I have never known anything different" and one interviewee said that the cluster answered her needs.

At the time of the relocation, Native families expressed their will to live in a layout which would respect their clan system. Furthermore, their suggestions and drawings for the cluster layout were very clear and relevant: their objectives were to manage a central play and gathering area, to create intimacy and peace in each cluster and to respect trees and greenery (in Chapter 3, the author explained why the new cluster did not answer their expectations). Today, choices are confused and tend to privilege the grid layout which at least offers order and more space in between the houses: 5 interviewees out of 14 preferred the grid layout to the cluster, "it's less messy and looks cleaner"; 1 interviewee explained how absurd the planning was compared to the way Native people used to relate to the land (which she illustrated by the discrepancy between the huge land in which Native people live and the

narrow space left in between the houses): "before people were closer to the land, after the relocation, people seemed to be stuck inside; before we used to walk by and go into the houses. After the relocation, people didn't move anymore". At the same time, the small distance between the houses didn't allow a sense of privacy, people didn't feel comfortable and tended to ask for fences and protections from each other. Furthermore, the skidoos were threatening the safety of the children and pedestrians.

4.13.3. Vegetation

All the interviewees complained about the lack of trees surrounding the houses, which would act as natural fences. One interviewee explained that trees in the backyard "would protect us from the winds, bring more birds". Generally, Native people were very sensitive to natural beauty and used outdoor spaces to work or play. Before, men and children used to gather and play chess next to the river bank, now they meet in the shopping mall which is artificially lit and lacks any kind of connection to the outside world. These issues should be discussed with the population in order to find some solutions and ideas.

In general, people missed the physical activities that they used to perform on the island. One interviewee acknowledged that she felt spoiled because of the artificial heating but still preferred the natural environment of traditional life. A lot of traditional habits have disappeared since the community moved: "I like to feel the cold, I turn the heater down over night, so I feel the cold in the morning and I let the heater warm me up (...) Life is made out of a lot of different details, such as body temperature, water, cooking, interacting".

Chapter 5- Conclusions

5.1. Women and housing

Conclusions about this case study have to be considered within the broad scope of all the aspects analyzed and discussed previously. Therefore, the life experience of the women interviewed, the history of the relocation, the type of cluster and the houses are all important elements to consider to draw an objective picture of the contemporary Native housing situation in Chisasibi. For all the reasons mentioned earlier, the author believes that women are an important target group to incorporate in the conceptualization of housing projects.

5.1.1. Interviewees today

First, it is very important to bear in mind that the actual population aged 30 and older is still aware of traditional activities performed in the bush during their childhood years. Younger people today don't relate in the same way anymore to bush life because their education and environment was different from that of their parents'. At the present moment, the community and architects still have a chance to address the needs of a population at an important turning point in Native history, because this population might be the last one to carry the heritage of authentic Native traditions. Unfortunately, the relocation accelerated the modernization process, therefore the community didn't have time to adjust to this new environment which disrupted behavioral patterns in several areas of their lives. Moreover, due to new job opportunities created by the different institutions based in Chisasibi (School Board, Cree Health Board, Band Council and Hospital) the inhabitants were able to access modern appliances and services that fostered their rapid integration into western society. Nevertheless, today elders and middle-aged people feel the need to respect and reactualize their traditions and develop an awareness about aspects of Native society. Meetings with elders are being held by women in order to define the different issues and aspects of Native tradition that are important and essential to reinforce a sense of identity and survival in the community. Yet, younger women and their families are progressing towards other lifestyles and tend to be more attracted by the North American way of life.

5.1.2. Women and participation

Even though the results of the questionnaire showed clearly that women were inclined to participate in a community consultation, some cultural aspects, such as shyness, reluctance to be different from others, or to become a leader or to take responsibilities in public affairs could slow the participation process at first. But generally, women were aware of their role in the house and architects and planners could foster their input by finding means to include

them in different types of group meetings. This could be done with the help of a questionnaire targeting small groups of people.

5.1.3. Women and Native culture

In regard to aspects specific to Native culture, interviewees showed feelings of confusion. In a way, all the changes that occurred in the past fifty years, either through residential schools or after the relocation had such large consequences on aspects of their lives that it was difficult for them to express their opinion. These changes have deeply affected the community in the last 17 years, but in particular because the traditional family structure has had to adjust to modern houses and to a different community layout. From one day to the other, their living environment changed completely and their only choice was to adapt. Native women, and communities in general, were increasingly aware of the need to define their position in regard to White society and culture.

5.2. The House

5.2.1. The kitchen

First of all, kitchens in Native communities are definitely too small. The size of the kitchen is more appropriate for western families with 2 or 3 children than for 6 or 7 children. Then, the specificities of Native eating habits, even though they have been influenced by the North American diet, demand serious attention to ventilation. Not only do Native people fry and boil a lot, but they also have different eating schedules than western families. This means that a kitchen has to be available all day long and has to consistently answer the needs of people of different ages. All these aspects have a direct impact on the maintenance and resistance of a kitchen through time, and also in the way the residents behave in, and take care of it.

5.2.2. Kitchen: suggestions

Different points have been considered in the design:

- kitchens designed with a window to enable more natural ventilation, even though they tend to freeze in the winter;
- the sink built below the window to enable the users to look out and benefit from the view;
- kitchens open to the dining room but separated from the living room.

Elements that should be considered in future designs:

- the need for more space. Either by extending the surface which is less likely to happen due to high costs, but by developing different designs;

- incorporating a wood stove to cook traditional meals in the kitchen (and not separate in the basement)
- creating a bigger counter to enable women to cut and clean the bigger pieces of game.

This space is very important in all communities with large families. Native people are very sensitive to eating and spending time around food, it is therefore important to offer them the means to organize their space in accordance to their priorities. In the traditional dwelling, the cooking area was central to sit around and share. The modern kitchen could incorporate some of these traditional characteristics.

5.2.3. The dining area: suggestions

Depending on the kind of family, some prefer the dining area separated from the living room and others prefer all of the cooking and dining functions concentrated in one open space.

Nevertheless some aspects could be questioned, such as:

- the size of the dining area, which is definitely too small for big families. This problem could be improved with different designs, especially for those families who want the rooms enclosed. If the living room was open to the dining area, options could be proposed.
- the role and importance of the dining area in relation to the living room. Is it only a place to eat and what does eating mean in Cree culture? As presented in Chapter 4, eating and sharing are still very important elements in Native society, and should therefore be considered under that aspect instead of being considered with North American behavior patterns.

5.2.4. The living room

The living room plays a very important role in Native houses. Native families spend a lot of time together, and children like to meet with their older siblings and parents. The TV is turned on most of the time, and due to the large number of members in the families, this place becomes very noisy and overcrowded. The biggest problem in the living room is the lack of space and the bad design. Native families need more centrality and space for furniture and storage. The example of the Inuit house shows that the design is not appropriate because the living room is very narrow and doesn't allow any centrality.

Interviewee 1. Urban layout proposal: concentric model and hierarchy of functions

- 1. Public housing
- 2. Houses
- 3. Roads

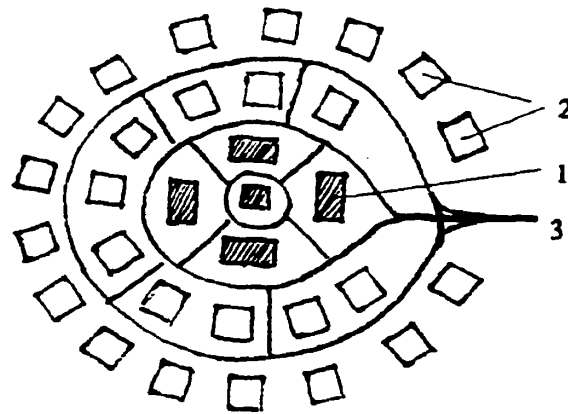


Fig.4.11. Urban layout proposal
(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

Interviewee 2. House layout proposal: traditional and modern layout

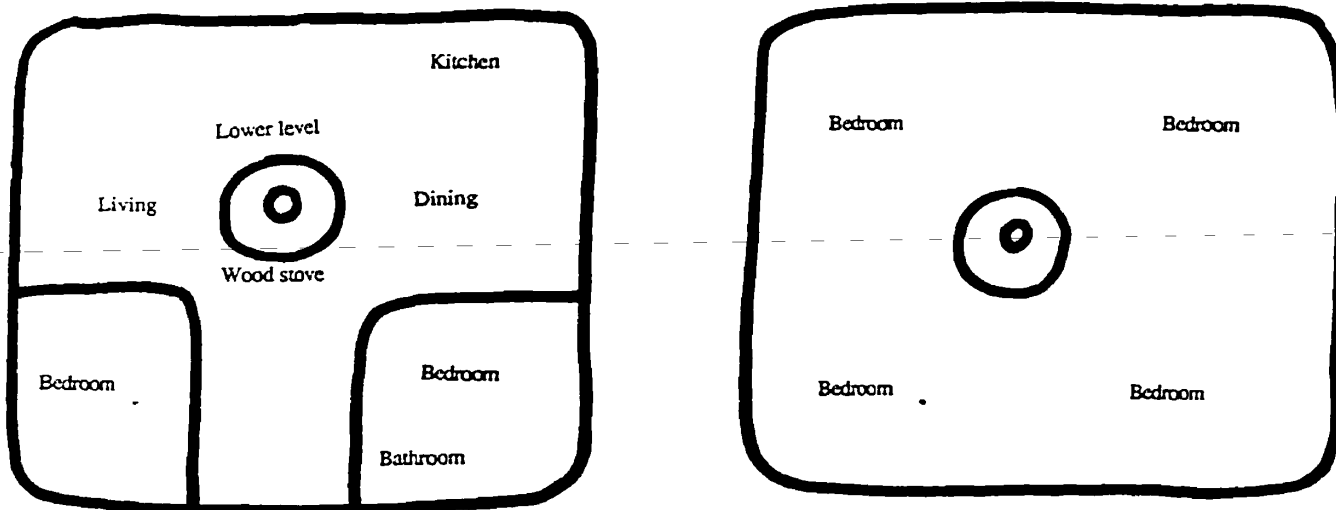


Fig.4.12. House proposal 1
(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

Interviewee 3. House layout proposal: traditional and modern layout

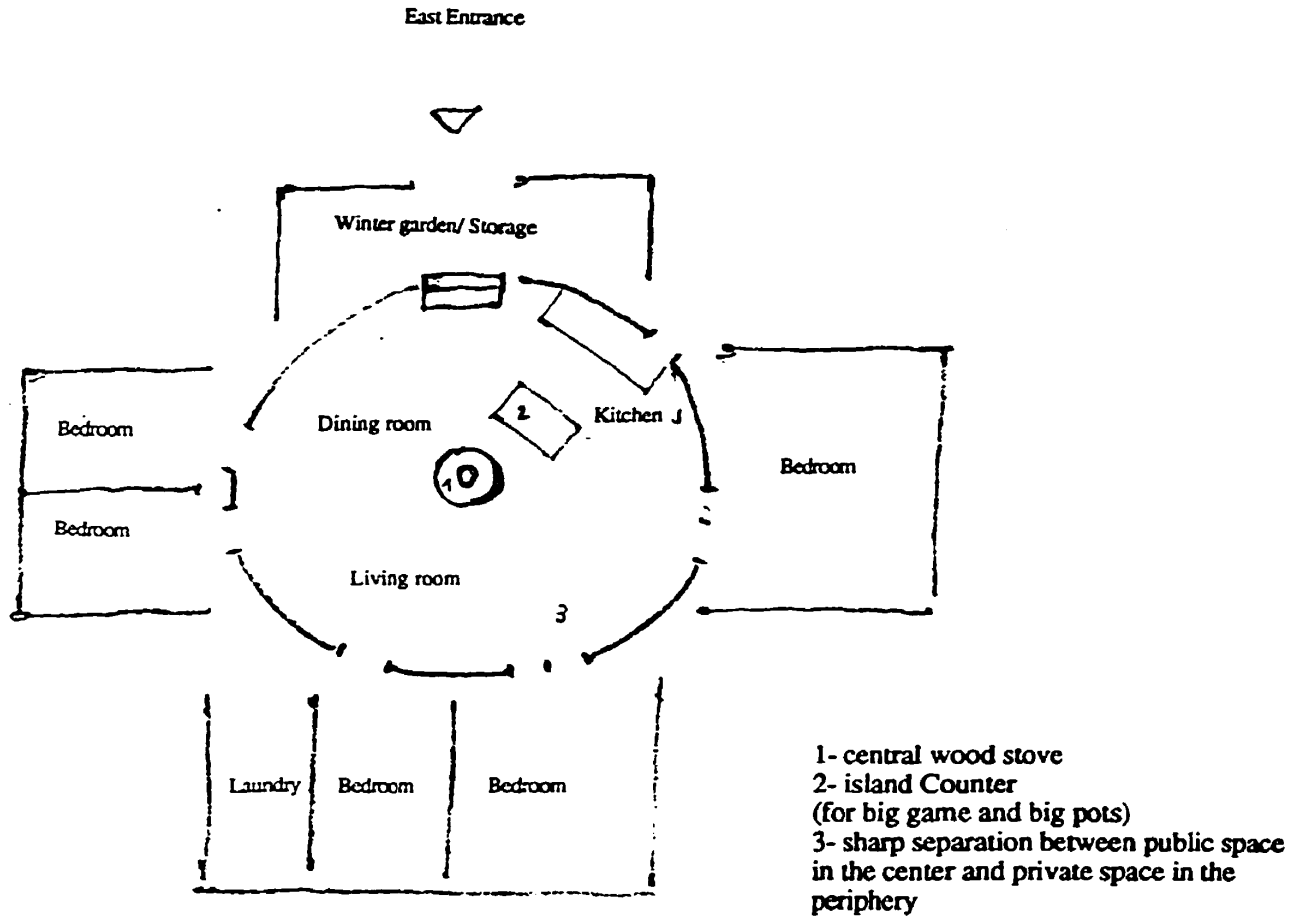


Fig.4.13. House proposal 2

(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

The second aspect is the lack of storage. By not allowing people to store what they need in that area, architects force them to store them in other areas such as their bedrooms and basement. It may save space, but on the other hand, it goes against the needs of the families. Most of the interviewees still perform traditional activities in their bedroom because the living room is too small and too noisy. In the traditional dwelling, people used to sit and remain around the fire, which allowed a large number of people to stay in a small space. Today due to TV, music, children playing, fewer outdoors activities, families tend to feel overcrowded in the living room and have to find refuge in their bedrooms. These consequences foster a sense for intimacy and privacy which wasn't evident in traditional dwellings.

5.2.5. Living room: suggestions

It is not only the physical limitations of the living room and the lack of storage that force the household members to leave that area of the house, but also a large range of cultural and environmental changes that have affected their needs. Nevertheless, it is the residents' responsibility to decide how they want to use their living room. The size is one aspect, to enlarge the living area is one possibility but, due to the high costs of construction, enlarging all the rooms is not the right and only answer. Therefore, families have to express their priorities, whether they want a large living room and other smaller areas. It is a difficult choice as houses are already very small, but one answer would be to categorize the space and define what is more or less important in regard to traditions and culture.

5.2.6. The children's bedroom

The answers concerning the use and size of the bedroom show a diversity in the cultural patterns of Native societies. On one side, the majority of children own their TV in their bedroom, meaning that this element of western culture has been totally integrated in every day life. On the other side, their relation to homework and studying in their bedrooms is less rigid.

Of course, the major problem was the lack of space and storage in the children's bedrooms. One can notice that the behavior in regard to the bedroom has changed a great deal compared to when families were living in one room shacks. Today, the priority is one bedroom per child. Even though this is achieved in most of the cases (see Chapter 4,) mothers still complain about the lack of space; the problem therefore might lie in the fact that Native families not only want privacy and intimacy in their bedrooms but also other activities which require more space. Native families have to consider this point carefully. As stated in the earlier paragraph about the living room, it's not only by having more space that people will

feel more comfortable, but due to the fact they have been integral in making choices in how to organize and structure the layout of their house.

The problem is that Native families are integrating different cultural behaviors under one roof, leading to severe problems in the use of and need for space. On one side, children like to be in the living room and dining area with their parents and to spend time all together. The living room then should incorporate 6 to 9 people but, on the other hand, families and children want to each have a bedroom and their own privacy. Yet, the number of children per family is far more important than in Western society, therefore it creates a strong need for space per individual. Native houses have to then handle a difficult situation where choices have to be met in order to find designs that will answer the needs for space and usage.

5.2.7. The parent's bedroom

Parents also suffer from the lack of space and light as they perform different activities in their bedrooms that they normally could do in the living room. Traditional activities tend to be performed in the parent's bedroom because the living room is too small or too noisy. The lack of space tends to separate people and split the activities in different areas of the house. The constant need for space forces children to seek more room downstairs as they can not play together in the living room.

One important aspect that modern houses have brought in Native lives is the possibility of withdrawing from the sight of the members of the family. This has played an important role in the notion of authority and respect towards the older family members. As some interviewees were explaining, before, when somebody was angry or upset, the only possibility to avoid fights and altercations was to go out in the bush, come back and deal with it in the presence of the members of the family. This means that the whole notion of respect for the parent's authority and the rules to cope with conflicts has fundamentally changed due to the existence of enclosed bedrooms.

5.2.8. The bathroom

The bathrooms represent a very important problem in Native houses. Due to the large size of the families, there is a need for at least one more toilet per house, and similarly, when bedrooms are split over two stories, a little bathroom with a shower in the basement would be welcome. This would decrease the demand and therefore enable the bathrooms to cope with the high humidity level due to the large number of showers and baths taken every day. It is also necessary to plan a window for each bathroom to allow natural ventilation. Quality

of the materials is not appropriate in regard to the large number of showers, and therefore difficult to maintain and protect from infiltration and moisture. A second bathroom could help to solve partially that problem.

5.2.9. The basement

The basement was originally planned to answer the increasing needs for space of Native families. Today, considering the interviewees' opinion, Native families have accepted this room but criticize the bad air and the consequences of this on their health. Some interviewees would prefer to live 1/2 meter below the ground level and not have any basement.

The basement allows a great flexibility in the use of the house and gives Native families freedom to articulate the space in relation to their needs. The case study drawings show the diversity of the designs and additions executed by the different families. Depending on the attitude of families in regard to traditional behavior, they tend more or less to change original designs to answer their needs.

The acceptance and appreciation of families about the basement are different and families should be given the choice to decide whether this design is appropriate or not. Other options could be considered, as the questionnaire shows, because Native families tend to accept living on different levels. As the basement has been accepted, it would require better insulation. Furthermore, Chisasibi has a very high water level, leading to severe problems of infiltration. This design should therefore be adapted to the site and to the living standards of Native families.

5.2.10. The stairs

As opposed to the common belief that Native people don't like multi-story houses, the questionnaire found out that today, in Chisasibi, residents were very open and also very attracted to different types of houses. Different options could be discussed with the inhabitants.

5.2.11. The entrance

Since the relocation, the needs for a double entrance door are still acute. Depending on the year of construction and of the financial possibilities, not all families have been given a house with a porch and a double entrance. This should be a basic requirement considering the climatic conditions and also the need for storage space that can be provided within that space.

This room can also become a real protection against cold air and strong winds and provide additional storage space which is so badly needed.

5.3. The cluster layout

The cluster layout problem is crucial in understanding the whole evolution of Chisasibi and the new choices of extension of the community. Considering the answers in the questionnaire, interviewees showed with the exception of a few, that the cluster layout didn't answer their expectations at all. During the case study, inhabitants acknowledged that the original propositions made by the Native groups during the community consultation in 1980, before the relocation, were still considered appropriate. Unfortunately, the final design fostered a feeling of frustration and disapproval; instead of having developed a design which would have enhanced a sense of belonging for the community and a feeling of identity, the layout has, on the contrary, created a violent rejection of the cluster arrangement. Even though the residents are generally quite negative about the cluster layout, it would be worth trying to develop a community layout that would be more appropriate to Native culture considering their actual needs, and incorporating new aspects such as a sensibility towards propriety and privacy.

5.4. Conclusion

The relocation, the influence of residential schools, employment and modern appliances, many parameters of the home have changed in the Cree families of Chisasibi. The whole set of rules and habits rooted in their hunting society has been put aside due to modern life style houses. This study aimed at understanding the present housing situation in Chisasibi through the opinion of a group of women.

The literature review in the first chapter about the Cree traditional dwellings showed that the spatial and social order were very well defined and respected for many reasons. Some interviewees said clearly that the modern layout had affected the social structure of their families, especially concerning the authority of the parents. In the author's opinion, it is very important to remember that before colonization, Native dwellings reflected the spatial and social organization existing in the hunting groups. It would be important to define how Native families consider their social organization today, and how they would like to reflect this organization in their lives and in their houses. This is intrinsically linked with their feeling of identity therefore it will require time and work between anthropologists, architects, planners and residents in order to develop layouts which will meet the actual needs of the population.

On the one side, the interesting results from this case study mirror a very complex situation: the acceptance of western life style is today integral to Native lives. On the other side, Native communities are aware of the necessity to develop a sense of identity, to foster people's self-confidence and pride about their cultural heritage. This building-up of their communities is happening through the help and dedication of individual and group work which may offer the premise for new discussions and designs of houses.

The questionnaire revealed that the community was split into two groups: those who are nostalgic about traditional life and the others who strive for a more western lifestyle. Future planning should consider these differences and try to find the answers based on a consensus of both parties. It is important to incorporate elders and people who are aware of traditional culture and know the land. Also, to enhance their sense of pride and confidence, it would seem appropriate that Native people be trained as architects and planners, in order to develop their own skills and parameters in response to their needs.

The author succeeded in approaching Native women, gaining their confidence in order to answer an exhaustive questionnaire. Their patience and critical position in expressing their opinion show that it is possible to develop consultation projects concerning their houses. The input of women in the design of their homes may become a reality. The questionnaire has demonstrated their ability to answer and define their needs, and also their will to work with an architect and be involved in projects including the consultation of the community. This may take some time to be introduced in real practice. In the community, there are still a large number of residents who lived in the bush and can share their experiences with the younger generations; it is crucial to benefit from their experience in time and encourage a common memory to develop a physical environment adapted to their history. As presented in the first chapter, due to colonization, Native women have lost their principal role in all matters related to the design and the construction of the houses. The author hopes that this thesis will enable more women to be involved in the design process of their homes to give them a chance to redefine their position within the domestic and the public area.

This research taught the author many lessons. The questionnaire might be considered incomplete for some aspects which were neither visible in the previous studies or not were not included in the cross cultural researches. This means that this questionnaire serves as a first step to understand the needs of Native families, but will require several other attempts to come closer to the real demand. It will take time for Native families to come in touch with their concrete and legitimate requirements. Since the relocation, their opinion on the

problems affecting their houses has been ignored, they need time to define their wishes and expectations with more precision, and make their choices.

The overall experience in Third World countries could serve as a guideline to avoid mistakes that are performed repetitively all over the world. When architects and planners are asked to help to define appropriate designs, several aspects should be considered in order to avoid unhappiness, mental stress and illnesses due to the bad housing. Even though Young gave important advice (see Chapter 2)¹⁴ to answer the minimum cultural standards for Native housing, the results of this case study show that the situation is more complex than before: now we are confronted to a variety of needs and expectations. The researches and answers will have to deal with this growing diversity between a traditional lifestyle and a western lifestyle.

Drawings 4.14 and 4.15 are very different from 4.16 but they both show how the residents would like to use the space. The first example follows the needs for traditional activities and illustrates a very strong independence from the original layout. The second example (figure 4.16) illustrates a deliberate desire to adjust the standard layouts. Considering the requirements of the interviewees, this house layout answers almost all of them. It is therefore very interesting to keep in mind that both proposals offer a good view of the richness and variety of skills and capacities of Native families. This doesn't mean that either the one or the other is the answer for future designs, they only serve as reminders and guidelines for future consultations.

Generally, all the drawings in the case study show very little room in the public areas. The size of the bedrooms tend to be more acceptable insofar as all the members of the family have their own. Especially the new layouts (Inuit House) don't offer the space required for big families and for meetings and gatherings with friends. New designs should consider the

14) the architectural qualities and esthetic of the houses which translate cultural values;
2) the physical location of the houses in the community which influences the modes of social interaction;
3) the aspects related to home ownership and to the cost of maintenance corresponding to the economical and cultural values in a given place.

Cultural references serve as a basis to define the physical context, such as:

- the spatial orientation of the dwelling in the east-west axis;
- the utilization of symbols and colors associated with Indian customs in the design of the rooms and their decoration;
- the roof architecture and exterior structures should follow traditional Indian housing models;
- development of a central area open in the interior for social meetings;
- the functional layout to allow cultural activities such as cleaning of the game;
- the layout of the bedrooms and the living areas in conformity with the cultural rules in regard to intimacy, respect and authority within families.

House type: Cedar

Family: 3 persons (parents, daughter: 27)

Date of renovation: (?)

Comments: house layout totally redesigned and adapted to the residents needs, shows independence from western housing design principles. Adaptation and control over space seems to be stronger when inhabitants continue to perform traditional activities.

- 1- kitchen in the basement
- 2- big dining area in the basement
- 3- bedroom converted into a storage room with a handy man counter
- 4- big bathroom with a shower
- 5- special enclosed room for washer and dryer

- 6- big storage space by the entrance
- 7- separate working area
- 8- living room on the ground floor
- 9- big master bedroom with wide closets
- 10- bathroom with closet
- 11- storage room

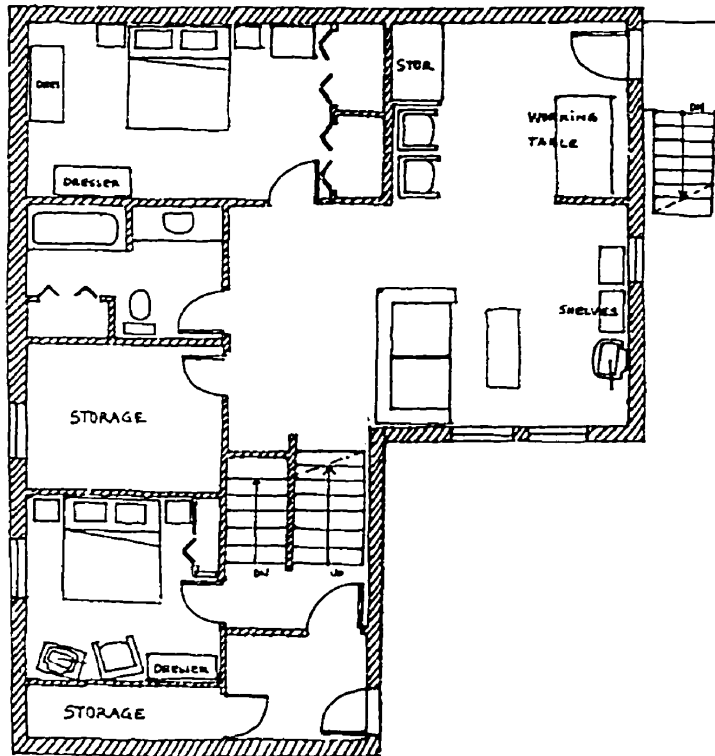


Fig.4.14. Ground floor (Cedar)
(Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

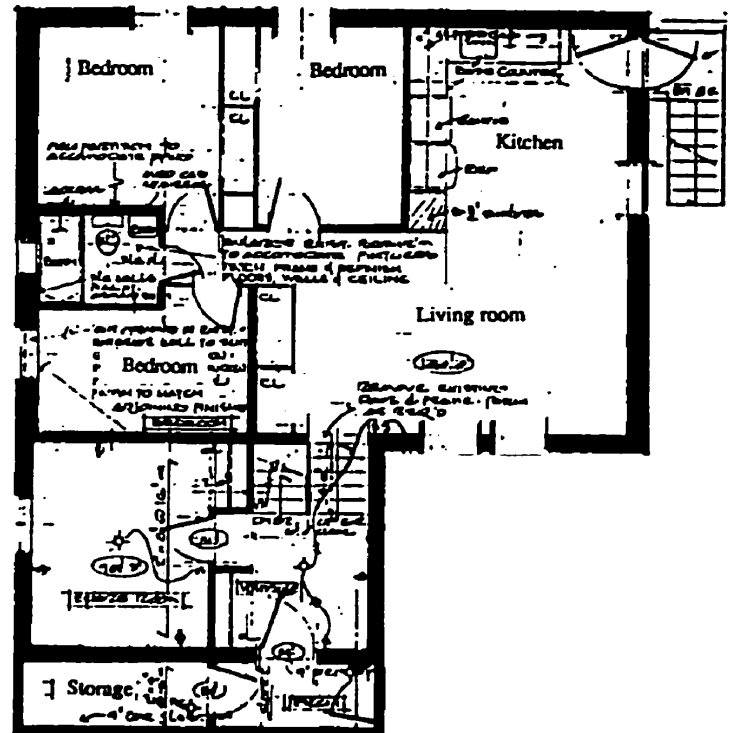


Fig.4.14.1. Ground floor
(Original layout at the time of the relocation)

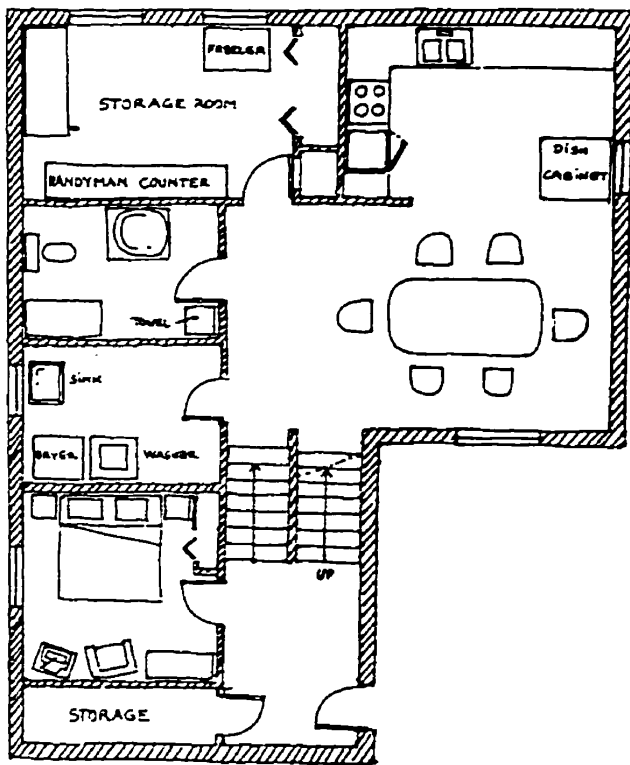


Fig.4.15. Basement (Cedar)
 (Author's illustration after the interviewee's drawing)

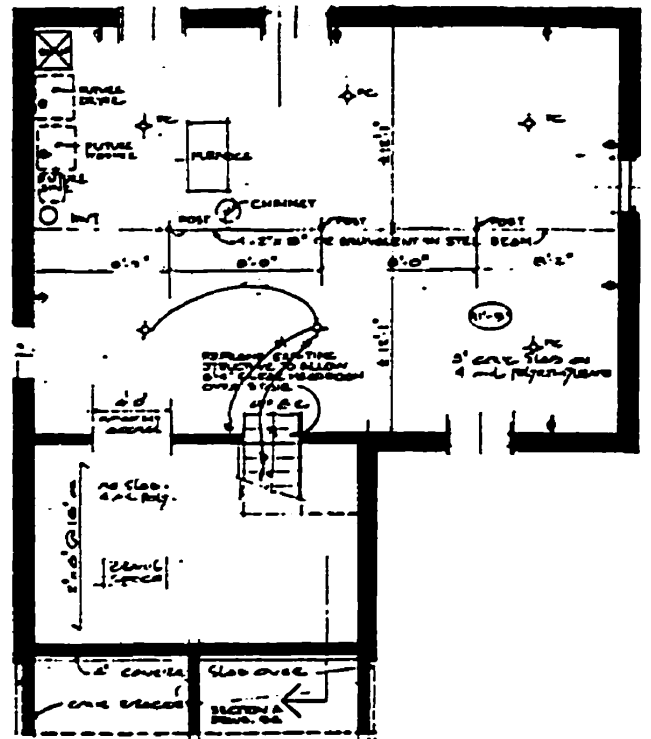


Fig.4.15.1. Basement, original layout
 (Cedar Model, at the time of the relocation)

House plan designed by a women resident:

Date of construction: 1996 in the new west extension

Comments: this plan offers mainly all the responses to the residents' expectations:

- double entrance with storage space
- entrance open in living room, view on the entrance from the kitchen and living room
- passage way on the margin of the living room so that the living room is free for furniture and creating a centrality (as opposed to the Inuit House)
- living and dining room are separated by a wall delimiting the 2 functions without enclosing them totally
- the "patio" door opens on the dining room and kitchen
- stairs are central in the house and make a transition between the public and the private area
- space on top of the stairs is not wasted, and the corridor is kept small to gain space
- kitchen is similar to standard kitchens: the corner made by the fridge and wall allows a good rotation and use of space (as opposed to the Inuit House)
- bathroom's surface is similar to other bathrooms; has a window and a closet
- there is a closet in the corridor (which can be used as an extension of the bathroom closet or for other items)
- little bedroom with closet for children (similar to standard bedrooms)
- very large master bedroom appropriate to the informants' expectations; good natural light due to two large windows and wide storage space
- bathroom door opens on the corridor, protected from the living room and dining room

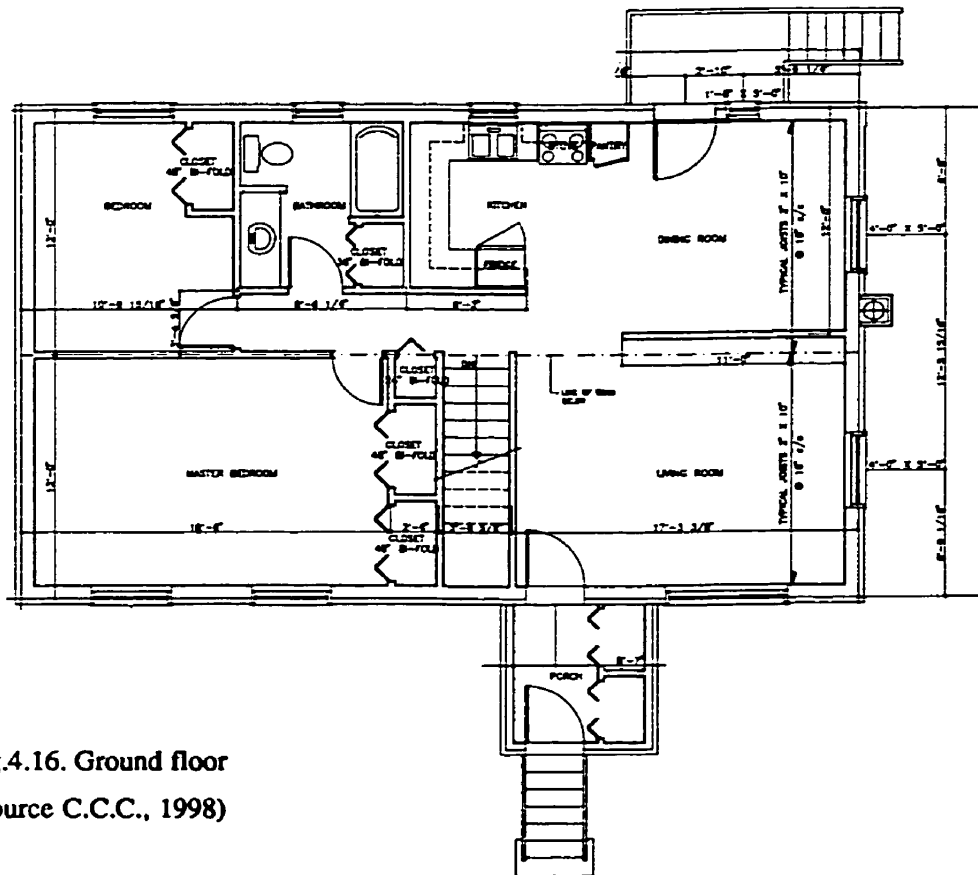


Fig.4.16. Ground floor
(Source C.C.C., 1998)

need for more space and a more appropriate layout to enable a certain centrality.

Other important aspects should be considered:

- a vestibule and a porch
- a storage space by the entrance
- a central wood stove in the common living area and/or the kitchen
- rooms radiating around the living room
- a kitchen open on the living room with space and a big counter
- storage space by the kitchen
- a bathroom (with toilet) on the ground floor (for app. 2 to 3 bedrooms)
- a staircase next to the wood stove (to combine the two vertical elements of the house)
- second floor: three bedrooms or more depending on the needs
- a second bathroom (with toilet)

and:

- houses that can be built in different stages depending on the size of the family (ground floor only, and then second floor)
- houses 1/2 meter below earth level

A very important aspect concerning Native people in particular, is their gift for art and creation. This gift could be integrated in architectural designs and decisions about the community layout and the houses. The community consultation in 1979 showed clearly that the residents of Fort George had a precise idea of what they expected from the new layout and were able to translate their ideas into plans and models. The author hopes that any future propositions from the residents will be considered with more respect and care in order to avoid frustration and uncomfort.

The author hopes that this thesis brought more insight into the Native housing problems and that consultation projects involving women will become a reality soon, as they offer the most relevant information and input in matters related to their homes and to their environment. These findings are only the first step in order to define the need of Native people and it will require more work to find appropriate answers to their housing. However, this study gives already an idea of what can be achieved and opens a new horizon about consultation and community participation in Native communities.

Questionnaire: Gender and Native housing

Section 1: Personal and family information

1.1. List all persons, including children now living in the home, by relation to the head, list their age categories (years: 0-14, 15-19, etc....65+)

Where were you born?

Where was your father born?

Where was your mother born?

1.2. You are:

A. Employed - B. Unemployed - C. Retired - D. Student - 5. Other

1.5. Where did you live most of the time while you were growing up?

On reserve, country, small town, suburb, city

Where was that?

1.6. During the time where you were growing up, what kind of housing did you mostly live in?

1.7. What was the language commonly spoken in your family while you were growing up?

1.8. When did you move into the home you're now living in?

1980, 1981, 19821997

1.9. Do you own a car, a truck, a skidoo, a canoe?

1.12. How far are you from the center of Chisasibi?

School, Hospital, Office, Church, Groceries, Neighbor, Women Shelter

Section 2: Native women and their house

2.1. Overall, how do you like your dwelling?

Very much, indifferent, don't like it; Why?

2.2. Have you made any changes to your home since you moved in? (Painting, flooring, walls, cupboard, closets, etc.)

Why did you make these changes?

Who made these changes?

2.3. If you could what (other) changes would you make to your unit? Why?

2.4. Do you feel crowded in your unit? Why?

2.5. How easy is it to get a bigger unit and what conditions does it require ?

2.6. Are different generations living together in your house? Does it cause problems? Why?

2.7. Can you list the activities of the home which you think require a separate room (e.g. Sleeping, eating, cooking, socializing) Why?

2.8. Do you think the houses you live in have been designed for your needs? Yes / No.
Why?

Section 3: Gender issues

3.1. Could you imagine yourself working with an architect and telling him what you need in your unit?

Yes / No. Why?

3.2. What do you think about the cluster layout of Chisasibi?

Good Average Bad Why?

3.3. What do you think about community participation and Native women's role in the design process of their homes?

Community participation

Possible Idealistic Impossible

Women's role in the design process of their homes

Possible Idealistic Impossible

Section 4: The house: physical aspects

5.1. The kitchen

5.1.1. Is there enough space for all the activities?

for cooking

for eating

for working

others

5.1.2. Is the kitchen easy to clean?

5.1.3. Is the sink adapted to your needs (cleaning game, size of the pots)?

5.1.4. Are the cupboards easily accessible for you?

5.1.5. Is it difficult to prepare traditional or common meals in your kitchen?

5.1.6. Is there a good ventilation?

5.1.7. Do you have a window in the kitchen?

5.1.8. Is it big enough

5.1.9. Do you use an oven / a microwave?

5.1.10. If you have a kitchen door, for which purpose do you use it?

5.1.11. In general would you say that you are satisfied by the design of your kitchen?

5.1.12. If you had to design your kitchen, how would you imagine it?

5.2. The living-room

5.2.1. Is it big enough?

5.2.2. How do you use it?

TV

Friends

Playing with children

Children learning for school, others

Hand working (traditional activities)

5.2.3. Do you use the living room in the same way in the winter and in the summer?

5.2.4. Do you use the living room as a guest room when friends or relative come to visit you?

5.2.5. Is it a very important room in the house?

5.2.6. You prefer the living room open to the kitchen or separated?

5.2.7. Is it an area more related to the kitchen or to the dining room or both, or other parts of the house?

5.2.9. Do you store articles in this room?

5.2.10. Is there enough storage?

5.2.11. Is it practical to clean, in the winter and in the summer?

5.2.12. Is intimacy in your living room important?

5.2.13. Is the orientation of the living room important?

5.2.14. Is the view important for you?

5.2.15. If you could design your living room, how would you organize it, where would you locate it in the house, and how much storage would you need?

5.3. The Bathroom

5.3.1. In general would you say that your bathroom answers your expectations?

5.3.2. Do you have running and hot water?

5.3.4. Are the material and the furniture in your bathroom resistant and easy to clean?

5.3.5. Is there a good sanitation system?

5.3.6. Are there problems of ventilation and humidity concentration?

5.3.7. Do you have a window in your bathroom. If not, would you like one?

5.3.8. Do you have a washing machine in your bathroom or next to it?

5.3.9. Do you have a bath, a shower, or both?

5.3.10. Which do you prefer and why?

5.3.11. Did you build any additional elements on your own?

5.3.12. Is your bathroom safe for children and for elderly persons?

5.3.13. Would you need more storage in the bathroom. If yes how much and for what purpose?

5.3.14. If you could design your bathroom, what would you make it look like and where would you position it in the house. Explain.

5.4. The children's bedroom

5.4.1. How many children live in each bedroom?

5.4.2. How old are they?

5.4.3. Do they go to school?

5.4.4. Do they do their homework in their room?

5.4.5. Do they have enough room to work?

5.4.6. Does each child have a desk?

5.4.7. Is it important for you that each child owns his desk?

5.4.8. What is the children's opinion to that?

5.4.9. Do they prefer to work on the kitchen table or in the living room?

5.4.10. Is it important for them to stay close to their parents?

5.4.11. Do they have a TV in their room?

5.4.12. Do they have a hi-fi system?

5.4.13. Do they play an instrument, or have to practice at home? Does it cause problems with other members of the family?

5.4.14. Is there enough light in their room?

5.4.15. Are there enough closets?

5.4.16. Is the location of the rooms intelligent and practical in your opinion? Do you know of a better location?

5.4.17. What kind of priorities would you list concerning the children's bedrooms?

5.4.18. If you could design the children's rooms, where and how would you design it?

5.5. The parents' bedroom

5.5.1. Is it big enough?

5.5.2. Do you share that room with some of your children? Is it inconvenient? Why?

5.5.3. Do you feel comfortable in your bedroom?

5.5.4. Is it an important room for you?

5.5.5. Do you have enough closets

5.5.6. Do you store other things than just clothes?

5.5.7. Is there enough light? Is light in your bedroom important for you?

5.5.8. Do you do any kind of work in your bedroom: professional work, arts and crafts, sewing...etc.?

5.5.9. If you could design your bedroom, how would you arrange it and why?

5.6. The basement

5.6.1. What purpose does your basement fulfill?

5.6.4. Do you use your basement a lot?

5.6.5. Do your children use it a lot?

5.6.6. Are there special activities that can only take place in the basement? Which ones and why?

5.6.7. Is it well ventilated? Are there problems of humidity? In your opinion why?

184. Do you store many elements in the basement? Why?

5.6.8. What kind of qualities does the basement have that you don't find elsewhere in the house?

5.6.9. Could the basement be better designed?

5.6.10. If you could design the basement how would you arrange it?

5.7. The entrance

5.7.1. Do you have a double entrance door, a protected porch?

5.7.2. Is it sufficient to stop the cold? If not, why?

5.7.3. Is there any storage room by the entrance? Is it enough?

5.7.4. Do you need separate storage rooms, some for little items and some for vehicles, car, snowmobile, etc.... Explain.

5.7.5. Is the entrance well oriented, protected from the winds?

5.7.6. Are the entrances well planned in regard to neighbors, access of the cars, ... etc.?

5.7.7. If you could design the entrance, where and how would do you imagine it?

5.8. Stairs

5.8.1. Are your stairs safe?

5.8.2. Do you think that stairs are not appropriate to your culture:

5.8.3. Are the stairs well located in the house?

5.8.4. If no, where would you put them?

5.8.5. If something could be changed about the stairs what would you propose?

5.9. The exterior of the house

5.9.1. What do you think about the esthetic and global architecture of your house? Do you like it?

5.9.2. Do you sometimes imagine how it could be changed or improved?

5.9.3. What are your feelings about the "cluster" layout? Does it answer your needs?

5.9.4. Would you have preferred another layout for the houses?

5.9.5. Is the access by car, foot, skidoo easy? In the winter and in the summer?

5.9.6. Do you have trees around your house?

If not, would you like to have more, say why.

5.9.10. Are there some physical elements that you would like to change in the outside of your house?

5.9.11. If you could draw yourself a house what would it look like?

5.9.12. Is there a specific place for the garbage collect?

5.9.13. Did you build any additional construction to your house?

For which purpose? Who built it?

Did you need more storage room?

5.9.14. Do you think that your children are safe outside of the house? Is there a playground for them?

5.9.15. As the main person responsible for the household, would you consider yourself satisfied with your house?

5.9.16. What do you think about the location of the houses inside the cluster?

5.9.17. How do you interact with your neighbors? Are they relatives, friends, none of them?

5.9.18. Would you say that the original planning of the clusters does/ does not correspond to your life style? Why?

5.9.19. If you participated to the consultation before the relocation, what was at that time your wish concerning the layout of the houses?

5.9.10. Do you think differently about it today? Why?

Additional comments :

Bibliography

- Adler, L. L. Women in Cross Cultural Perspective. Preager: New York, 1991.
- Afshari-Mirak, Ghader. Cultural Approaches to Native Canadian Housing: An Evaluation of Existing Housing Projects in Cree Communities of Northern Quebec. Unpublished Master Thesis. Montreal: McGill University Press, 1994.
- Bailey, Alfred. G. The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures 1504-1700: A Study in Canadian Civilization. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969.
- Bearskin, Joab, George Lameboy, Robbie Matthew, Sr. et al. Cree Trappers Speak. Ottawa: T&H Printers, 1989.
- Beauchemin, Georges. "L'Univers Méconnu de la Convention de la Baie James et du Nord Québécois". Forces (1995): N°97:14-28.
- Bibliography on Native Housing. Bibliographie sur le Logement pour Autochtones. Canadian Housing Information Center. Ottawa: CMHC, Jan. 1988.
- Boserup, Ester. Women's Role in Economic Development. New York: St.Martins Press, Inc. :1974.
- Brant, Clare. C. "Native Ethics and Rules of Behavior." Canadian Journal of Psychiatry. Aug. 1990: 534-536.
- Brydon, L.and Chant, S.(eds). Women in the Third World. Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas. Rutgers University Press : New Jersey, 1989.
- Canada. A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Planning and Design with Native Canadians. Ottawa: CMHC, 1984.
- Canada. Ce qu'on a Entendu/ What we Heard. Report on the Rural and Native Housing Consultation Process. Rapport de la Consultation Relative au Logement pour les Ruraux et les Autochtones. Canada: CMHC, 1991.

- Canada. Client Information Guide. Rural and Native Housing Program. Home Owner.
Canada: CMHC. 1991.
- Canada. Client Information Guide. Rural and Native Housing Program. Lease/Purchase.
Canada: CMHC. 1992.
- Canada. Comité Permanent des Affaires Autochtones. Le Logement des Autochtones. Le temps d'Agir. Ottawa: 1992.
- Canada. Cris et Inuits. Catégories des Terres de Chisasibi. Vice-Présidence Environnement et Collectivités. Hydro Quebec. Février 1996.
- Canada. Fiche de renseignements. Direction Principale. Communication et Environnement. Hydro-Quebec. 1997.
- Canada. Indian Participation and Consultation in the Review of the Summary Report of the CMHC on-Reserve Housing Program Evaluation. Ottawa: CMHC. (?).
- Canada. Les Conditions de Logement des Peuples Autochtones au Canada. Prepared by Ark Associates. Ottawa: CMHC. 1996
- Canada. Maximizing Community Benefits from Self-Help Housing. Ottawa: CMHC. 1994.
- Canada. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Gathering Strength. vol.3. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. 1996.
- Canada. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Perspectives and Realities vol.4. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada. 1996.
- Canada. Sharing Success in Native Housing. Highlights f the CMHC Housing Awards. Symposium on the Aboriginal Housing. Ottawa: CMHC. 1995.
- Canada. The Rural and Native Housing Demonstration Program. Canada: CMHC. 1991.

- Celik, Aliye Pekin. Women's Participation in the Production of Shelter. In: Shelter Women and Development: First and Third World Perspectives, edited by Helmata C. Dandekar. Ann Arbor: George Wahr. 1993:199-207.
- Chance, Norman. Conflict in Culture: Problems of Developmental Change among the Cree. Document:2. Ottawa: Canadian Research Center for Anthropology Saint Paul University. 1968.
- Chance, Norman. Les Cris du Québec: Etude du Développement chez les Cris (McGill Cree Project). Ottawa: Department of Regional Economic Expansion. McGill University. 1969(?).
- Chicoine, Lucie. Le Village Oujé-Bougoumou: Une Expérience de Planification Partagée en Milieu Autochtone. Unpublished Master Thesis. Montreal: McGill University Press. 1990.
- Christensen, Erling, V. "Self-Government: A Community Based Approach". Native Issues Monthly (March 1995): 3-2
- Cree Hunters of Mistassini. National Film Board of Canada. 59 mn. 1/2 in. 1992.
- Dandekar, C., Helmata. Women and Housing: The Understated Relationship to Development. Review Article for Women and International Development Annual, vol. 4: Dec. 15, 1993.
- Dandekar, C., Hemata. Shelter Women and Development. First and Third World Perspectives. Michigan: Ann Arbor. 1996.
- Dankelman, I. and Davidson, J. Women and Environment in the Third World: Alliance for the Future. London: Earthscan Publication. 1988.
- Diary of a Residential School. Nation (February 1998): 5-7.
- Dion, Joseph, F. My Tribe the Crees. Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute. 1979.
- Duncan, James, ed.. Housing and Identity. New York: Holmes & Meier. 1982.

- Engeland, John. The Housing Conditions of Aboriginal People in Canada. CMHC: 1996.
- Flannery, Regina. Ellen Smallboy. Glimpses of a Cree Woman's Life. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1995.
- Frideres, James, S. Native Peoples in Canada: Contemporary Conflicts. 4th ed. Ontario: Prentice Hall. 1993.
- Hamdi, Nabeel. Housing Without Houses: Participation, Flexibility, Enablement. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold. 1991.
- James, Catherine. Continuity and Change: A Cultural Analysis in Teenage Pregnancy. Unpublished Master Thesis. Montreal: McGill University Press. 1992.
- James, Irene. "Women's Concerns About Treaty Process". Native Issues Monthly (March 1996): 4-2
- Kuptana, Rosemarie. "Keeping the Circle Strong in the North. Solvent Abuse, Alcohol, and Drug Strategies for the North". Canadian Woman Studies. Les Cahiers de la Femme. (Fall 1994): 14-4.
- Lachance, André. "Du Mauvais Côté de la Baie". Actualité. (Février 1998):56-60.
- Larrison, Anita. Gender Contracts, Housing Conflicts and Women's Strategies: the Case of Lesotho. Paper Presented at the International Seminar on Gender, Urbanization and Environment 13th-16th June, 1994. Nairobi, Kenya.
- "Le Réveil des Femmes Autochtones". La Gazette des Femmes. Conseil du Statut de la Femme. (Janvier, Février 1993):14-3.
- Mandelbaum, David, G. The Plains Cree. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center. University of Regina. 1979.
- McBride, Catherine and Ellen Bobet. La Santé des Femmes Indiennes. Ottawa: Ministre des Approvisionnements et Services Canada. 1992.

- McClain, Janet, Doyle Cassie. Canada. Women as Housing Consumers. Ottawa: CMHC. 1983.
- McDowell, Kenneth. Housing, Culture and Design: Housing and Culture for Native Groups in Canada. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 1989.
- Miller, Christine, Patricia Chuchryk, eds. Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom and Strength. Winnipeg: The University of Manitoba Press. 1996.
- Molyneux, Maxine. "Women's Emancipation Under Socialism: A Model for the Third World". World Development 1981: 9:9/10, 10/19-37.
- Moser and Linda Peake, eds. Women, Human Settlements and Housing. London: Tavistock. 1988.
- Moser, Caroline. Gender Planning and Development. Theory, Practice and Training. London: Routledge. 1993.
- Nabokov, Peter and R. Easton. Native American Architecture. London: Oxford University Press. 1989.
- Oliver, Paul ed. Shelter and Society. London: The Cresset Press. 1969.
- Panwalkar, Pratima. Gender, Urbanization and Environment: View from below a Narration of Two Experiences from Bombay, India. Paper Presented at the International Seminar on Gender, Urbanization and Environment. 13th-16th June. 1994. Nairobi, Kenya.
- Papanek, Hanna. Women in Cities: Problems and Perspectives. In Women and World Development, edited by Irene Tinker and Michelle Bo Breamsen. Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council; New York: Praeger. 1976.
- Prentice, Alison, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt et al. Canadian Women. A History. Tilly Crawley ed. Toronto: Harcour Brace Jovanovitch. 1988.

- Preston, R. J. Reticence and Self-Expression in a Cree Community: A Study of Style in Social Relationships. Polycopié. 1967.
- Preston, Sarah. Let the Past Go: A Life History. Narrated by Alice Jacob. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization. Mercury Series. 1986. Paper N°104.
- Quebec Native Women. Femmes Autochtones du Québec. Assemblée Annuelle Régionale. Annual Regional Meeting. Montreal: 1989.
- Rapoport, Amos. House Form and Culture. Toronto: Prentice-Hall. 1969.
- Salisbury, Richard. A Homeland for the Cree. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1986.
- Shaw, Peter. Town Planning in Consultation with and Participation from a Native Community. A Case Study of the Relocation of the Cree Indian Community of Fort George to Chisasibi, Quebec. Unpublished Master Thesis. Montreal: McGill University. 1982.
- Simon, J., C. R.R. Forster, T. Alcese et al. Canada. A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Planning and Design with Native Canadians. Ottawa: CMHC. 1984.
- Skinner, Reinhard, J., John Tailor and Emiel, A. Wegelin, eds. Shelter Upgrading for the Urban Poor: Evaluation of the Third World Experience. Manila: Island Publishing. 1987.
- Tanner, Adrian. Bringing Home Animals: Religious Ideology and Mode of Production of the Mistassini Cree Hunters. London: Memorial University of Newfoundland. 1979.
- Tinker, Irene. Global Policies Regarding Shelter for Women: Experiences of the UN Center for Human Settlements. In Shelter Women and Development: First and Third World Perspectives, edited by Hemala C. Dandekar. Ann Arbor: George Wahr: 1993a.

- Todes, Alison. Gender in Metropolitan Development Strategies: The Case of Durban. A Paper presented at the International Seminar on Gender, Urbanization and Environment 13th-16th June, 1994, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Tranchida, Daniel. Relocalisation du Village Indien Cri de Fort George, Région de la Baie James, Québec. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Laval: Université Paul Valery, 1980.
- Turner, David, H. and Paul Wertman. Shamattawa: The Structure of Social Relations in a Northern Algonkian Band. Ottawa: National Museum of Man. Mercuries Series, 19. Paper N°36, 1977.
- Turner, John, F. C. and Robert Fichter. Freedom to Build. Dweller Control on the Housing Process. New York: McMillan Company, 1972.
- Turner, John, F. C. Housing by People. Towards Autonomy in Building Environments. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.
- Vance, Irene. More than Mortar: Women's Participation in Self-Help Housing in Managua, Nicaragua. In Women, Human Settlements and Housing, edited by Caroline Moser and Linda Peake. London: Tavistock Publications, 1987.
- Wekerle, G.R. Peterson, R., and Morley, D.. New Space for Women. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980.
- Wiesenthal, David, Frederic Weizman and Susan Mockler. Canada. Housing Needs of Single Mothers and their Children. Ottawa: CMHC, 1991.
- Young, Kue, T., Bruce, L., Elias, J. et al. Les effets du Logement et de l'Infrastructure Communautaire sur la Santé dans les Réserves Indiennes du Canada. Finances et services Professionels. Affaires Indiennes et Nord Canada: Août 1991.