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**History, Tradition & Aboriginal Rights:
A Harvesters' Support Programme for the Mushuau Innu of Utshimassits**

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
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degree of Masters of Arts,**

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Abstract / Résumé:

The Mushuau Innu of Utshimassits (Davis Inlet), Nitassinan (Labrador), are at present in the midst of several key shifts in their political, economic, socio-cultural and environmental relations. Involuntarily settled at the coast since 1967, the Mushuau Innu have been removed from their traditional way of life through the circumstances of sedentarisation, while concurrently being marginalised with respect to mainstream Canadian and global economies. Currently, they are in the late stages of settling a comprehensive land claim agreement, near completion of a new village settlement in Natuashish at Shango Pond, and involved in Impact Benefit negotiations over the Voisey's Bay mine. This thesis explores the potential for implementing a Harvesters' Support Programme for Innu hunters as a tool within the Mushuau Innu's emerging development contexts. It is concluded, based on considerations of tradition, social organisation, sensitivity to contemporary gender realities, and emerging social and economic realities, that a programme differing from any currently extant could be appropriately implemented.

Les Mushuau Innu d'Utshimassits (Davis Inlet), Nitassinan (Labrador) font face à des changements majeurs dans les domaines politique, économique, socio-culturel et environnemental. La communauté a été relocalisée sur la côte en 1967 et cette sédentarisation a mené à la fois à une coupure vis-à-vis la vie traditionnelle et à une marginalisation par rapport aux économies nationales et internationales. Les Innu en sont présentement aux dernières étapes des négociations de leurs droits territoriaux ancestraux. Ils sont aussi engagés dans un processus de négociations des bénéfices potentiels pour les Innu de développement de la mine de Voisy Bay. La construction du nouveau village de Davis Inlet, Natuashish, est presque terminée à Shango Pound. Cette thèse a pour objet d'évaluer, dans ce contexte de changement, la pertinence d'un programme de revenu garanti pour les chasseurs et cueilleurs Innu et d'explorer les modalités ainsi que les avantages d'un tel programme comme outil de développement. L'analyse montre que les modèles existants ne peuvent être appliqués sans modification car il faut tenir compte de la réalité Innu à savoir les traditions, les principes d'organisation sociale, les relations hommes-femmes, et l'émergence de nouveaux paramètres économiques et politiques.

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Introduction

The Mushuau Innu of Utshimassits (Davis Inlet), Labrador have faced challenges over the past generation that typify the histories and condition of Indigenous communities across Canada. After being involuntarily settled at the coast in 1967, the Mushuau Innu were confronted by the realities of settled life, replete with an erosion of identity and self-determination, disappearance of cultural practices – not the least of which was country-based caribou hunting – and the onset of hitherto unexperienced social and individual ills. Toward the end of the first decade of settlement, the Innu began to consider their inherent rights, including Aboriginal title and the right of self-determination. Canada had just recently begun to enter into comprehensive land claim negotiations with First Nations, and had reached its first settlement, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement, in 1975. The Innu had experienced nine years of sedentarisation and “cultural degradation” (MIBC, 1995), and felt that a claim settlement would at the very least afford them the cash, land base and socio-economic development programmes necessary to reverse their perceived downslide. Twenty-five years later, the claim remains unsettled, social and individual ills – including the world's highest suicide rate (Samson, *et al.*:1999) – still abound, and their land and caribou are threatened by industrial development.

At the start of the new century, the current challenges and opportunities facing the Innu are many and, to a great degree, interconnected. The 1993 discovery of rich nickel/cobalt deposits at nearby Voisey's Bay has made their land suddenly valuable to industry and to a Newfoundland government badly in need of economic development and industrial tax royalties. This has created the ambivalent situation experienced by

many remote and economically depressed Indigenous communities: great opportunity for economic development, coupled with potential for irrevocable damage to the land and its resources. In either case, the mineral discovery, and especially the Environmental Assessment Panel's ruling that the mine should not proceed without a settled Innu Nation comprehensive claim, have finally "fast-tracked" the claim process. In this case, however, fast-tracking has meant little more than more regular disagreement. To date, there is neither a claim settlement, nor a mine.

Concurrent with the comprehensive claim, and the negotiation of an Impact Benefit Agreement with Inco, the mine's major stakeholder, is the implementation of a community relocation plan, not dissimilar in scope to the Fort George/Chisasibi relocation of 1980 (Jacobs, 1998). The agreement by government to fund this undertaking is an outcome of at least six years of intense lobbying (and intensively negative world and domestic press) following a series of well-documented and highly publicized Davis Inlet tragedies beginning in 1992 (*cf.* MIBC, 1995). The project is well under way, and despite setbacks, should see the residents of Utshimassits relocating to Natuashish, on Shango Pond some twelve kilometres away on the mainland, by late 2002. In contrast to the Chisasibi move, which was forced by unwelcome hydroelectric development in James Bay (Jacobs, 1998), the Mushuau Innu see their community-initiated relocation as a positive step towards redressing the original mislocation of their settlement and the rebuilding of their community and their culture (MIBC, 1995).

Therefore, with the challenges and opportunities set out by the potential claim settlement, the mine and its impact benefit agreement and the relocation to Natuashish, the Innu are looking towards an immediate future ripe with the possibility of positive rapid change and potential for development. The major consideration among Innu

leaders is how to insure that these opportunities are fully exploited to create a future that would go a long way toward redressing the past thirty years of stagnation. A major development avenue is that of social programmes to be negotiated and funded out of the comprehensive claim process, and to a lesser extent from the mine impact benefit agreement. Such programmes may be designed, implemented and funded in perpetuity through federal or provincial legislation emanating from provisions of the land claim settlement; and they may be tailored to address particular social, cultural or economic development issues.

The ultimate purpose of this current research is to lay the groundwork for a Harvesters' Support Programme design for the Mushuau Innu of Davis Inlet, to be legitimated and funded as a treaty right under the imminent Innu Nation comprehensive land claim settlement. The people of Utshimassits are on the verge of potentially sweeping changes in all aspects of their physical, cultural, political and economic environments, and a window of opportunity now exists for the anthropological exploration of a small-scale society undergoing acute transformation in a relatively brief period of time. What effects will this have on their processes of identity formation, their relationship to their heritage, their situation within the Canadian state, and their aspirations for the future? I believe that looking at the place of caribou hunting and Harvesters' Support for Innu hunters affords a focus which will take into account all aspects of these imminent changes: aspects of identity, tradition, governance and self-determination, economy and subsistence, social and economic development, environmental management, and social relations.

This thesis concerns the cultural survival of the Mushuau Innu in the twenty-first century. It is also, however, about the survival of anthropology. Since the 1970's, which

saw emerging African de-colonisation, and waxing North American Indigenous political self-awareness, it has become increasingly difficult to justify *studying*, let alone acquire permission, to study a people or culture. This thesis, then, is about applied anthropology and the anthropology of political and economic development. Applied anthropology has always been a controversial discipline, and many have commented on the various ways in which ethnographic data can be *applied* to the detriment of the people from which it was collected (Hedican, 1995). But for anthropology to be morally and ethically justifiable, ethnography must be grounded in political consciousness, and the ethnographer must consider the end to which his or her work might be put (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992: 25). Ethnography with a focus on the economic survival of an Indigenous people facing possible cultural extinction is much easier to justify and condone, in ethical terms and in the eyes of contemporary, politically astute informants.

The programme design to be suggested by this study is based on three pivotal considerations, towards which the bulk of this thesis is dedicated. The first consideration is *tradition*, its production, circulation and contextualisation. Most Mushuau Innu differentiate between hunting and *traditional* hunting, where the latter, though largely undefined, becomes deeply implicated in contemporary narratives of how life "once was," and how life ideally "should be" (although these two sets of stories are themselves markedly different). The second consideration is gender. One may legitimately question the justification of a development programme whose ultimate goal is to see contemporary Mushuau Innu families primarily engaged, for a large part of the year, in economic and cultural activities centred around an institution of male power, prestige

and self-actualisation (Henriksen, 1973). "What do the women want to do?"¹ is a question given legitimacy by the relative lack of attempt to address it in the past. However, as will be discussed, I do see women finding meaning and value as full participants in contemporary country living. The third and final consideration is social structure, or at least social *organisation*. Any programme that is to see families spending large parts of their years, or even lives, living and interacting in a particular, specially defined milieu, must by necessity address issues of social organisation, social production and social reproduction. The programme design to be described is permeated by a particular view of Mushuau Innu social organisation, one centred around the multi-family hunting group and its paramount place as the location of Mushuau Innu economic and cultural production. In fact, I would characterise the multi-family as the critical level and institution in Mushuau Innu *traditional* barrens-ground culture and its social structure. Furthermore, I will argue that in this far north-eastern corner of the Algonquian continuum, the *band* is the outgrowth and structural analogue of the historical multi-family hunting group, in terms of its relation to land and resource rights and usage. This position requires detailed support, and my arguments are largely historically based. For this reason, a good portion of this discussion will be taken up in examining the history of the Mushuau Innu and how this specific history had led them, socially, to where they were at the time of sedentarisation in the late 1960's. This examination of history will also serve to support the argument that what has been termed the *traditional* has in fact been in constant evolution over a two hundred year period.

¹ This exact question was posed in separate conversations with two female anthropologists, both of whom felt that the issues of power and gender were not being addressed, let alone answered, with regards to a Harvesters' Support Programme (HSP).

And thirdly, this historical account will firmly situate the caribou as the overwhelmingly most significant cultural and economic resource in the Mushuau Innu worldview.

Once the foundation afforded by these three considerations of *tradition*, *gender*, and *social organisation* is laid, I will set out the economic, developmental, political and ecological underpinnings for considering intensive caribou hunting coupled with a Harvesters' Support Programme (HSP) as a viable tool for economic development. And finally, the rudiments of a specific programme design will be proposed and described, based upon all the aforementioned considerations. This design, by necessity, differs markedly from other HSP's across Canada, including its closest model, the James Bay Cree Income Security Programme.

Methodology:

Fieldwork for this research was carried out in Utshimassits between early February and late April, 1998. My investigation included interviews with several community members, some active in local government and administration, some not. I did not, however, conduct wide-ranging formal interviewing throughout the community. My time in the community was spent in participant-observation, in discussions with individuals regarding virtually all aspects of their lives, in accompanying them on day or weekend trips to the country, and in participating in wide ranging aspects of community life, including the week-long annual community Gathering, at Big Shango Pond. While in Utshimassits, I had access to reports and documentation vital to my thesis that are not available elsewhere; as well I had the opportunity to observe aspects of the Impact

Benefit negotiations that were being carried out at the time between Innu Nation and the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company.

The remainder of my data collection was in the form of library and data-base research of extant literature and government documents. I also made extensive use of Internet-based resources, especially government of Canada websites, various Band Councils' and Indigenous communities' websites, and the Innu-L mailing list, through which regular, timely information pertinent to Innu Nation is transmitted.

University ethics requirements have been satisfied through application to the Departmental Ethics Review Committee, fulfillment of their stipulations, and conformity to Innu Nation practices in regard to research protocol, including a letter of permission from the Mushuau Innu Band Council to come to Utshimassits to conduct my research.

Tradition

It is impossible to speak of "tradition" as a thing in and of itself, or of "the traditional" as an era or period of time, pre-dating the present. Cultures are not temporally static entities, but living, dynamic systems that are in constant evolution over time. As I will demonstrate for the Mushuau Innu, and as I believe to be the case in all cultural areas, a group or population can never be usefully described by the same comprehensive set of descriptors for more than a few years at a time, possibly never for more than a generation. But the concept of tradition, or of *the traditional*, is of currency among Aboriginal populations in their current economic and political lives. It is therefore a concept that cannot easily be discarded or disregarded in any discussion of Aboriginal self-determination. And this *tradition* differs from either the imagined *traditional* culture thrust upon Indigenous peoples by the remainder of society (Francis, 1992:8), or the jural *tradition* thrust upon them by the courts, through such rulings as Adams (1996), Côté (1996), Van Der Peet (1996), and even Delgamuukw (1998)². I will not, however, delve too deeply into the concept of tradition in the critical sense, but will defer the issue by talking not of tradition itself, but of the *regime* of tradition, its social production, transmission, uses and implications, much the same way as Foucault discusses the *regime* of truth, its existence as a system for generating and propagating positive statements, linked irrevocably with the social and political institutions which produce it and which it sustains (Rabinow, 1996:35-36).

² Where *Tradition* becomes solidified by a static notion of culture, viewing Aboriginal rights as largely limited to those rights practised by, or derived from practices of, claimants' ancestors at the time of European contact.

Tradition is also a narrative discourse. Innu individuals relate stories about their lives, or those of their parent and grandparents, from the pre-settlement era. some positive, some negative; some nostalgic, some of dire hardship. When informants tell stories about their former lives of intensive caribou hunting, they most often speak of by-events that occurred *while* caribou hunting, not necessarily of the hunting itself. It is thus consequential that the Mushuau Innu value *traditional* caribou hunting as a thing that differs from merely going out one afternoon and shooting caribou. and yet different individuals will relate different stories of what this traditional hunting actually is; and in any event, the descriptions are era-specific, and differ going back from Henriksen's account (1960's) to Duncan Strong's (1920's) to Turner's (1880's-90's). It is thus more pertinent to speak of hunting as either *incorporative of tradition* or not, where *tradition* becomes a political commodity, generated within the context of the Innu's current existence, post-sedentarization, and transmitted within the context of their political struggle to regain autonomy over their land and their lives.

Tradition is also incorporative of ideology and cognition and how these coalesce into behaviour. A prevalent sentiment among the Mushuau Innu was expressed with lucidity by one informant who stated, "respectful of tradition means that the hunter is conscious of how he handles the kill and the remains. He is careful to treat the caribou remains in such a way as not to anger the caribou spirit... which will ensure that caribou will give themselves to the hunters in the future."

Tradition is also a signifier that is put forth to stand for everything that the Innu wish to achieve through land claim and self-government negotiations, and is accepted as

such unproblematically by government and often the courts³. Therefore, it is less important to ask what *traditional* actually means, than to acknowledge that it does mean something to Innu as individuals and as a people, and that it is being actively propagated by the Innu and tacitly accepted by the encapsulating society, which has its own discourse and understanding of what tradition – and *Indian* tradition – might mean. Furthermore, *tradition*, as a modern concept, necessarily generated by the contemporary population, borrows elements from various eras of the past, and reconstructs them in the context of the present. Each of these elements is a real aspect of Mushuau Innu heritage. but often the combination of elements being constructed in the present at no time existed alongside each other in a given past historical context. We will see in our examination of Innu history, that the Innu led very different social and economic lives at various stages since crossing the tree line.

³ See footnote 2 above. Recent rulings reinforce the already prevalent trend towards legal models of static culture in Canadian Jurisprudence

The Mushuau Innu

How my conceptualisation of the Mushuau Innu – their history, *tradition*, and their socio-political context – was formed, is best illustrated by the recounting of a particular moment of my fieldwork experience. The event that first brought Utshimassits to world attention was a 1992 house fire in which six children lost their lives. During my stay in Utshimassits, I got to know the young couple who had been parents to five of the six children. Agathe and Gregory, through their stories, their tragedies, and their current lives, seemed to mirror the post-sedentarization story of the community and people as a whole. Gregory was born just before the community was settled at Davis Inlet, and Agathe just after. Both had grown up spending a great deal of time in the country with their extended families, but since had lived almost exclusively within the bounds of the community settlement, and had succumbed to the same social ills that have affected the lives of many of the Mushuau Innu since. When I met them, six years had passed since they had lost their children. Gregory was now the band council housing manager, responsible for all new housing construction both in Davis Inlet and at the new community site at Natuashish: Agathe was leading women's traditional skills camps in the country. Both suffered from the pain of their loss, yet both were adamant about their future and the future of their community.

I had first met the couple when they arrived one night at the house in which I was staying in order to "party" with my hosts. This event lasted far into the night, long after I had gone to bed. The next morning, I was formally introduced to Gregory at his band council office, where he asked me what I was doing in the community, what my project was, how long I would be staying, and if I would like to come and stay with him in the

country some time. We chatted politely for a few minutes, then went our separate ways.

It was the evening of that same day that I next encountered Gregory and Agathe. I will relate this encounter as I had documented it that night in my field notes:

It's now after midnight. At 10:30, Gregory and Agathe came back. This time they were inebriated. But they were not drinking any more for the evening. Herb came in with them, but went into the other room. Ted, Nora and the kids were all asleep. I was sitting in the kitchen in the dark waiting for a show to come on TV. Greg and Agathe sat down with me and started bombarding me with stories, names, Innu traditions, and invitations to join them in the country. Greg was telling me over and over that I should speak to his father, and hear his stories. Agathe told me a poignant story from her childhood. She and her brother were out at Natuashish with her parents and grandparents on her mother's side (John Poker, I believe, who Henriksen hunted with). Agathe was nine at the time. She's 29 now. All of them were starving. She only had milk to drink for a whole week. The weather was stormy and cold and hunting was bad. She and her brother went out and shot 5 partridges for the group. Later she and her brother snowshoed all the way back to Utshimassits alone. By the time they had arrived, the planes were coming in again. These were the supply planes. She says she will never forget the pain in her chest from the hunger. It's a big part of who she is. She emphasised many times that I should not forget this story. I asked her if she recalls it often when she is drinking. She says it's one of many. I asked if I could come another time and hear her tell it again in more detail, along with other stories. She was very enthusiastic about that. She asked me if I had a tape recorder, and if so to bring it. She will be teaching girls and young women "traditional skills" in Natuashish, in a bush camp program from a tent. This will start next week. She asked if I would come down with my camera and take pictures and record what they're doing.

Greg, who was less coherent than Agathe, was telling me little snippets of all sorts of things. It was a trying time for me, because they were both shooting stories at me simultaneously, interlocking like two combs. One sentence fragment from one, interrupted by the other, and so on. It was also very exciting, and I tried my best to keep it all straight. They both kept telling me to come with them to the country and hear and record all their stories. Greg repeated that I should "sleep with my [Greg's] father" in his home. Leon Rich (his father) will be out at the Gathering.

In many respects, Gregory's and Agathe's lives parallel the life of the settled community. Both they and the settled community of Davis Inlet were born around 1967. Each brought with them a history of barren-ground living and the stories of *tradition* that

accompany it, and each stress the importance of documenting and remembering these stories and their formative role in respect to present day life. In each case, for the early years of their lives, the barrens, with all its nostalgia and hardship, played a formative role, but later was overwritten by myriad social ills brought on by settled life in Davis Inlet. Agathe, Gregory, and the community as a whole, suffered many tragedies yet somehow survived them, never quite gave up hope, and are now striving for a contemporary existence that is both forward looking and incorporative of those *traditions* which they see as central to the Mushuau Innu way of life. At the same time, Agathe, Gregory and the whole community are struggling with these same ills that they cannot completely shake, yet are determined to master, and these issues frame their memory of their past life and evoke its stories. The life stories of Agathe and Gregory, and the fact that they were even younger than I was, humanised my conceptualisation of all that was Mushuau Innu and all that was Utshimassits. These were not events occurring in the newspaper; they were changing the lives and minds of actual people. What moved me the most was that this couple was still here now to relate these stories to me; it seemed to speak to me of how the Mushuau Innu as a people could continue to exist and strive towards a future based on what they deemed most important to their way of life, despite all the hardships they had suffered. In short, this experience made me *feel* what it meant to be attached to one's heritage, to the land, and to want to take control of one's future and redress the recent past while not turning away from it. These attachments, and the significance of *identity*, *culture* and *tradition*, are what the Mushuau Innu claim to value most, and any agreement, settlement, land-claim or development which may come must be incorporative of these, or will be rejected.

The Mushuau Innu, "People of the Barrens", are caribou hunters. This statement may seem misleading to an observer of the present welfare situation in Utshimassits; it is, however, how residents continue to define their cultural identity both among themselves, and in asserting their territorial rights and safeguarding their cultural heritage. Yet life in the contemporary Mushuau Innu community is markedly different from their previous existence (or existences), even inasmuch as the settlement itself is an externally imposed construction of the dominant society in which the Innu find themselves situated.

The present day community is one of two contemporary manifestations of the "Naskapi" of previous centuries, the other being the Naskapi of Kawawachikamach (near Schefferville)⁴. The Mushuau Innu ranged the heartland of the northern Labrador barrens from the late Eighteenth century until the early Twentieth century (Samson, 1975; Turner 1894). Although their ancestors had lived in this area, evidence suggests that the Innu lived the majority of the millennium prior to the 1700's below the tree-line. At several points between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (four of them well documented) they were forced to venture to the coasts at times of famine. In 1916, the catastrophic population decrease in the George River caribou herd caused the Mushuau Innu to migrate once again to the coasts to avoid starvation, this time to remain permanently (Henriksen, 1981:666). Until the middle of the twentieth century, the Mushuau Innu continued to pursue their annual nomadic round from their two coastal "bases of operation", Davis Inlet/Voisey's Bay in the East, and Fort Chimo in the North. In the late 1940's, the Department of Indian Affairs relocated the Fort Chimo band to

Schefferville, in an attempt to integrate them economically into its then booming mining economy (Meredith & Muller-Wille, 1982). After Labrador's entrance into the Dominion in 1949, Indian Affairs also attempted to relocate the Davis Inlet Innu to Northwest River as part of the same economic development and integration policy. Some Innu actually moved for a few months or years, but in the end the relocation attempt was unsuccessful, and the majority of those who left returned north (Henriksen, 1973). In 1967, however, on the advice of the missionary, the Innu agreed to be permanently sedentarised in Davis Inlet, where houses, jobs and a school for their children were promised to them. A village of modern, southern-Canadian amenities was to be built for the Mushuau Innu; however, as has been well documented⁵, the quality of life in those terms for the Innu in Davis Inlet was (and is) abysmal: housing was substandard, even for northern communities (INAC, 2000), the unemployment rate has remained many times the national average, and the education system has ill-prepared them for both the Innu and Euro-Canadian worlds⁶.

The Mushuau Innu are, however, yet again on the brink of change. Following the events of 1992 where six children died in a house fire, the Mushuau Innu Renewal Committee and the Davis Inlet Peoples Inquiry were formed (MIBC, 1995). The result was an overwhelming sentiment expressed by Innu of all ages that they must somehow regain control of their own situation and force change where there was only stagnation:

⁴ The Quebec Mushuau Innu have retained the appellation "Naskapi", despite its pejorative connotation, in order to differentiate themselves politically from both the Southeastern Quebec Innu (Montagnais) and from the Labrador Innu of *Innu Nation*. The Naskapi had already entered into a series of settlements and agreements before the political-identity movement of self-naming entered full swing in the late 1970's to early 1980's. As the identity movement and drives for land title and self-government go hand in hand, the former was no longer seen as pressing once the latter was settled.

⁵ Cf. MIBC, 1995 for the Innu's own account, or see <http://www.innu.ca> for a compendious archive of mass-media news items concerning the contemporary social situation in Utshimassits.

press the Crown to carry out what the Supreme Court had ruled to be its fiduciary responsibility⁷. A unanimous decision was reached to leave Utshimassits, and relocate to within their previous hunting territories. After three years of negotiation, the Federal and Newfoundland governments have agreed to underwrite such a move, and build a new community at Natuashish (Shango Pond) some twelve kilometres away on the mainland, which the Innu will begin to occupy over the next few years.

Along with the desire to leave Utshimassits emerged a strong consensus from Innu of all age groups that their ills stemmed in part from the departure from their traditional lifeways (MIBC, 1995). A reaffirmation of the tradition of nomadic caribou hunting, and a desire to reintegrate this into their present way of life were therefore asserted.

The imminent land claim settlement, which should be finalised and implemented concurrently with the creation and occupation of Natuashish in the near (yet indeterminate) future, will include provisions for self-government⁸ (including autonomous discretion over local or regional resource allocation), social and cultural development organs, and economic development organs. Economic development encompasses plans for long-term sustainable sources of revenue for the community and

⁶ To paraphrase La Rusic (in Salisbury, 1986) who is speaking of the situation among the James Bay Cree, but which applies equally well to the Mushuau Innu context.

⁷ In *Guerin v. R.*, 1984 (Rotman, 1996), the Court ruled that the Crown's responsibility towards Canada's Indigenous peoples was not political but legal in nature.

the region as a whole. One such organ is that of a system of harvester support supplements for those involved in animal harvesting as their primary vocation.

⁸ It is likely that the form settled upon will be what is termed by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* "Aboriginal regional government," modeled after the JBNQA structure implemented in northern Quebec.

A History of the Mushuau Innu

It is not a new supposition that the north-eastern portion of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula has been occupied by antecedents of contemporary Indian peoples for several thousand years (Samson, 1976; Loring, 1992). It is only within the last twenty-five years, however, that serious problem-oriented archaeological research has given this postulate long overdue depth and breadth. With Fitzhugh's (1972:127) identification of a unique cultural complex, the Pt. Revenge complex, and Loring's (1989 [cited in Loring, 1992]) description of the complex at Daniel's Rattle, near Davis Inlet, it was realised that the assumptions hitherto made concerning the relative homogeneity of the ancestors of contemporary Indian groups was in fact fallacious. It now appears evident that although all contemporary northern Algonquian groups share a common cultural predecessor, there may have been, previous to or contemporaneous with this, more than one distinct cultural group exploiting the coastal and interior regions of Quebec-Labrador, and that either all but one vanished, or they were eventually all amalgamated into a proto-Algonquian complex⁹.

Around 1000 AD, prolonged warmer temperatures and the clearing of waterways off the north coast of mainland North America, led to the eastward Thule expansion (Loring, 1992:13). By 1400, these direct ancestors of the modern Inuit had reached the Labrador coast and begun to supplant the existing Dorset peoples. By the time of the sixteenth century arrival of European whalers, the Thule had geographic domination of the whole Labrador coast, not only driving out the Dorset, but drastically affecting the

⁹ I hesitate to use such terminology as "Proto-Algonquian" or "Point Revenge Complex". These are academic terms of purely Euro-Canadian origin, and it has come to my attention that many Native individuals find them offensive as they seem to treat them and their ancestors as artefacts or mere objects

settlement patterns of the extant late proto-historic Indians (ibid.:14).

Although there were without doubt proto-historical Indian occupants of the Quebec-Labrador subarctic reaching as far back as 6000 years (ibid.:11), there is no archaeological corroboration for the idea that cultural groups directly preceding the Innu lived above the tree-line before the mid-to late 1700's (Samson, 1975:94)¹⁰. In other words, there was a hiatus of at least several centuries during which the northern interior was unpopulated; Samson (ibid.) approximates this gap as being between 400 and 600 years, where, one may speculate, those groups that had lived north of the tree-line must have moved south into the uplands, either merging with or hunting alongside the Lake-Plateau bands. Those groups referred to as *Naskapi* in early records are Innu from the Lake-Plateau region just below the tree-line and southward¹¹. Later ethnographers such as Leacock (1954) and Henriksen (1973) cite Le Jeune in relation to early contact with the Montagnais-Naskapi, especially his 1633-34 winter spent with a Montagnais band on the lower North Shore. Leacock (1954:14) states that there are clear statements about Montagnais socio-economic organisation in Le Jeune's and Lalemant's accounts in *Jesuit Relations*, including accounts of northern Naskapi social organisation. Beside the

of scientific enquiry.

¹⁰ Cooke (1976:39) also states that at the time of contact "Indians lived along the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, the coasts of James Bay and southern Hudson's Bay, and in all of the peninsula's interior *south of the tree line* [my emphasis]. Cooke does not site his source, however.

¹¹ The history of the term *Naskapi*, its origin and use by both Natives and Europeans, as well the history of conjecture about the name, is a study unto itself (cf., Hind, 1863:96, Turner, 1894:103; Mailhot, 1986b). At each step it is characterised by contradiction as to the term's origin and meaning and as to whom it is applied. Even as late as the 1930's and 1940's, the term was being used with respect to bands which were far separated, both geographically and economically, from those Innu living to the extreme north-east of the peninsula (cf. Speck, 1935; Lips, 1947). This, understandably, has caused much confusion in the literature. It has been asserted (Mailhot, 1986b) that the name *Naskapi* is a reflection of Innu projections of the 'otherness' of those bands which are always "away beyond their horizons," and that this is how southern and western Innu had always represented the remote northern bands to traders, missionaries and ethnographers. So until relatively recently, any literature which was pushing back the furthest northern boundaries of documentation, named its subject *Naskapi*. And in using the term, western writers hoped to add that dash of romanticised primitivism and exoticism to their works (e.g., Lips' *Naskapi Law*).

question of whether Leacock read the data correctly (or indeed of whether the Jesuits provide sufficient context for the data to be readable), it is virtually impossible that this account includes knowledge of Innu living north of the Hamilton River and the Lake Melville drainage basin. These more northern Innu had been trading, indirectly through the Montagnais, with Europeans for some time, probably about 100 years, since the end of the sixteenth century (Cooke, 1976; Speck, 1935; Leacock, 1954). It was not, however, until Radisson & Groseilliers' 1668-69 adventures, and the subsequent 1670 incorporation of the Hudson's Bay Company that Innu from the interior came into direct contact with Europeans, without the trade mediation of the lower north shore Montagnais (Cooke, 1976:43). It can be supposed that they valued this trade and the goods which it brought them, limited though they were at first: mainly metal arrow and spear heads, wire and tobacco (Turner, 1894:138). The arrival of Europeans, and the opportunity for trade (and raid), led to a period of accelerated cultural change in the region (Loring, 1992:14; Cooke, 1976:41), including changes in settlement and migration patterns.

For any of several possible motivations (Samson, 1975:ch.2.1.3, gives several ecological and demographic ones, including climatic changes, changes in the caribou population, and the out-migration of Inuit), the Lake-Plateau Innu began to divide their time between hunting and trapping below the tree-line, and caribou hunting above it in the barrens. This change took place around the 1770's (Samson, 1975). Over the next two generations these Innu were engaged in what could be termed a mixed-economy of seasonal nomadic caribou hunting above the tree-line, combined with trapping and hunting below the tree-line. It could be conjectured that at this point there would have been no inherent conflict between their lifestyle and participation in the European fur

trade. One can also hypothesise that it was at this point that the ideological significance of caribou began to coalesce among these Innu,¹² although not to a point which would have deterred them from engaging in pursuits other than caribou hunting. The above conjectures concerning the movements of the Innu during the late 1700's are based primarily on archaeological evidence and comparative socio-economic conditions. There simply are no historic records dating back before 1814 which deal with Indian inhabitants of the far northern interior. Cooke (1976) mentions the Moravian records dating to this period, but only in reference to Inuit inhabitants of the region. In 1814, the Moravians sought permission from the Hudson's Bay Company to build a station on the Koksoak River, but were denied (Cooke, 1976:46). The HBC, however, began to take a stronger interest in the area at about this time, but were forced to delay plans for over a decade due to their ongoing struggle against the North West Company, played out for the most part in western Canada (ibid.:46). By this time, if we go by Samson's estimate, Innu had been hunting in the north-eastern barrens for less than forty-five years, scarcely two generations; and as there was no European exploration of this area prior to 1814, there is no written historical record of this crucial transition period.

When Fort Chimo was opened in 1830, these Innu saw the opportunity to move wholly above the tree-line and into caribou country, while at the same time continuing to trade with Europeans, now stationed further north. It may have been the very existence of Fort Chimo that convinced these northern groups to remain permanently in the barrens, but this does not imply that the opportunity for trade was the paramount

¹² Although the caribou culturally is the most important species to many northern Algonquian groups, I believe that it had become so to the northern Innu to a greater extent than was the case elsewhere. Loring (1992:20) asserts that ethnohistory of nineteenth-century caribou hunting Innu has been unproblematically transposed to other caribou hunting groups, and similarly, I believe that it would be a critical error to equate the cultural significance of caribou across the entire peninsula.

consideration in Innu decision-making. Erlandson reports that after setting up the post in 1830, he was obliged to wait a year for the Innu to discover his existence and come to trade (Cooke, 1976:47). As well, once the Innu arrived, they could not be persuaded to trap furs inland unless they were heading that way in search of caribou, which was not always the case. McLean, who succeeded Erlandson and Finlayson in 1837 as post manager, reports that during the time of his tenure (1837-42), the Innu could hardly be persuaded to head inland to trap fur-bearing animals "...so long as they can supply their wants by trading (caribou) leather and meat..." (ibid.:50). This implies that caribou were to be found in sufficient numbers along the northern coast about this time and therefore the Innu had no particular need to engage in seasonal inland migration during those five years. As the post closed in 1842 and did not reopen until 1867, there is little clear record during that period of either Innu or caribou movement.

Fort Chimo had been opened to intercept whatever scant furs there were in the area and prevent them from going to the Moravians (Francis & Morantz, 1983:135; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:13; Loring, 1994:195). The HBC had denied the original 1814 request by the Moravian mission for a charter to open a post at the mouth of the Koksoak; but this started the Company thinking about the prospects in the unexplored northern interior, and in 1819 they sent their first expedition overland from James Bay to map out the geography and river courses, and to catalogue the fur-bearing species of the region (Cooke, 1976:46). Trapping was indeed scarce in this region, but it was very important to the Hudson's Bay Company to maintain a tight relationship with the Indian inhabitants of the north (and not let the Moravians get a foothold instead), and this enticed them to set up this economically ill-fated post near the mouth of the Koksoak River (Francis & Morantz, 1983:135).

The reasons for the Northern Innu's lack of dedicated participation in the fur trade seem to be ecological. The Mushuau Innu were aware that their subsistence would be almost entirely reliant on caribou for a substantial portion of the year, and that this would make survival precarious if their efforts were not greatly devoted to the pursuit of caribou hunting, to the detriment of other pursuits. Perhaps the Hudson's Bay Company officers underestimated the harsh realities of barren ground subsistence economics (or the "unmalleable" character of the northern Innu) when they laid their plans; in any event the Innu could not efficiently divide their efforts between hunting for survival and trapping for trade. In short, the technology of the time was not suitable to allow a trade in furs to exist profitably in the barrens (i.e., that with the then current technology the Innu could not have successfully divided their time between hunting and fur-trapping to the extent that they could on the one hand survive and on the other provide enough furs to make the whole venture economically viable). Therefore the Fort Chimo post eventually closed, and the Mushuau Innu, just newly identified as such, were left "stranded" in the barrens. Stranded, in that they were cut off for the time being from a direct outlet for trade with Europeans, although, until the coming drop in caribou population, the life of caribou hunting was one of relative plenty and ease.

By the end of the nineteenth Century , the caribou population in northern Quebec-Labrador began to decline (Meredith & Muller-Wille, 1982:22; Turner, 1894:18; Kendrick, 1997:5; Henriksen. 1973:13; 1981:666). Although this must have affected many Innu groups further south, members of which also seasonally exploited the southern expanses of the herd (Low. 1896:161), the caribou failure was catastrophic to the northern groups' way of life. Turner reports that in 1889 the Fort Chimo Indians were forced to venture to the Atlantic coast in search of food following the failure of the

local caribou population. Strong documents that the Innu making up the later Davis Inlet and Barren Grounds groups did likewise in 1843, and between 1855-60 (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:58). Cooke (1976:91-2, 94) also documents starvation for the winters of 1843-44 and 1857-58, reporting that in the first instance, "nearly half of the Naskapis starved to death," and in the second instance, "more than 150 Naskapis died... when a variation occurred in the pattern of the caribou's migration." Cooke, with the benefit of the HBC archives, which Strong did not have, determined that (in 1843 at least, and partially in 1857) stinginess on the part of Company factor Donald Henderson who failed to extend to the Innu sufficient credit or give them adequate supply of ammunition, and not necessarily a lack of caribou, was the major reason for many of the deaths. Cooke (1976:90) cites Connolly, another HBC officer, as recording,

I would not be in [Henderson's] place for all the world, for he will assuredly have to answer one day for all this to that Divine Being whose creatures he has so harshly treated, in not supplying their wants last November. They only ate two otter skins and all the deerskins and tentings.

1916, however, marked an actual and drastic drop in caribou numbers. In that year the George River herds failed completely to turn up in the winter, and virtually all the northern Innu of the interior moved to the coasts to avoid starvation. Upon arriving at the Atlantic coast, the George River groups settled around the Davis Inlet post, while the Fort Chimo group settled some thirty miles further north at Voisey's Bay (Henriksen, 1981:666). Although these groups kept to themselves in terms of economic production, there were, as we shall see, frequent intermarriages between the two.

In 1928, the summer at the tail end of Strong's stay, a Roman Catholic missionary arrived in Davis Inlet, proclaimed Joe Rich "chief" (having nothing to do with the *Indian Act*) and asked him to gather all the Innu of the area together every

summer at the post (Henriksen, 1981; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994; Mailhot, 1997:92). Since then there has always been a permanent Innu settlement at Davis Inlet. In the 1950's the Canadian government attempted to persuade all the Labrador Innu to settle in Sheshatshit (North West River), and some of the northern Innu actually went south for up to a few years. Most, however, found the conditions unsatisfactory and returned north to Davis Inlet (Henriksen, 1973; Mailhot, 1997). Around the same time, the government began to settle the Fort Chimo Innu at Schefferville. Both of these moves were part of the nationwide attempt by Indian Affairs to move remote groups closer to regional centres for their better administration. In the case of Schefferville, the attempted integration of the Innu into the mainstream economy was a failure, leading to the formation of an Innu ghetto at Kawawachikamach (Loring, 1994:210). Since that time, the former Fort Chimo Innu and the Davis/Barren Grounds Innu have been politically sundered by virtue of being on opposite sides of the provincial divide. This has had a detrimental effect on the co-management of the George River caribou herd, which both bands still exploit (Kendrick, 1997). The Schefferville (Kawawachikamach) Innu continue to call themselves "Naskapi" to politically differentiate themselves from the Quebec Montagnais. They are in fact politically on their own, being distinct from Labrador's Innu Nation (whom they are ethnically closest to), as well as being distinct from both the Mamat Innuat and the Montagnais-Attikameqw associations in Quebec. Furthermore, the 1978 Northeastern Quebec Agreement (a substantial land claim settlement) applies specifically to them, driving deeper the political wedge between them and other Innu.

Although they had moved their "base of operations" to the coast, the Mushuau Innu still saw themselves as nomadic caribou hunters, setting up their tents at the coast

only in the brief summer months, and living and travelling inland for the rest of the year (Henriksen, 1973). It must be remembered, however, that although the Innu are great travellers, this statement refers to the movement of individuals in relation to trade and social interaction, not necessarily whole groups; and they could remain for years in one general locale if caribou were to be found in plenty in the region, as was seen in 1837-42. This fact serves as precedent for hunting behaviour in the modern era: since 1993, caribou have been coming right up to Iluikoyak Island on which present day Davis Inlet is located, thus leading to severe reductions in several key hunting statistics, such as average time spent in country, distance travelled, and size of hunting party, while not diminishing the overall number of caribou harvested. This pattern, however, is the exception rather than the rule, and caribou were generally only to be found in great numbers on the inland barrens in winter, and the large inland lakes in spring, thus necessitating the regular annual nomadic cycle (Turner, 1894; Henriksen, 1973; Cooke, 1976).

The Mushuau Innu remained involved almost exclusively in this "traditional" economic cycle much later than most other Aboriginal groups in mainland Canada. This, however, came to an end in 1967 when, on the advice of the then missionary, the Mushuau Innu (comprising the former Barren Grounds and Davis Inlet groups) were enticed to settle in Davis Inlet by the government. Since then, they have been living in permanent houses built for them by the government, and have come to rely heavily on the government store, and on government transfer payments for their sustenance and

well being (Henriksen, 1973; 1981; 1993).¹³ The economic and subsistence patterns characteristic of their pre-contact and post-contact/pre-sedentarisation existence have for all intents and purposes come to an end.

The Fur Trade Era and the Significance of Caribou Hunting

In contrast to the majority of other northern Algonquians of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula, the Mushuau Innu were never involved to any notable extent in the European fur trade. The reasons for this are as follows. First, sedentary fur bearing animals are not found to the same extent, or at all in the northern barrens above the tree line at 55° latitude. This fact was recognised by chroniclers of the nineteenth century such as Turner (1894:152) who reports that

The beaver is not plentiful in the Ungava district, and not until the headwaters of the Koksoak and the lakes near the source of George's River are reached are they to be found at all, excepting occasional stragglers.

The Indians have few of the skins of this animal to sell at the trading post at Fort Chimo.

And Clouston (in Francis & Morantz, 1983:120) reports,

When the Indians winter in the Barren Grounds they procure but little furs, not because their hunting grounds are narrowly limited, but because the grounds contain few Fur animals.

Furthermore, McLean (in Cooke, 1976:52) notes that the northern Innu

are not fur hunters nor is the mode of life they lead favourable to it, the Chase of the Deer leads them to the barren parts of the Country, while the Fur-bearing animals are only to be found in the woods.

¹³ The fate of the Mushuau Innu once settled at Davis Inlet is well documented (see footnote 5). Except for a few comments where relevant, I will not be discussing the contemporary conditions in which they have lived (they are now on the verge of relocation to Shango Pond, which will be completed by 2002).

The existence of beaver in large numbers was probably necessary for northern Innu's full involvement in the fur trade, as it was the only fur bearing animal that was also considered a meat animal. Other fur bearers, such as marten and mink and fox were not eaten (Henriksen, 1973:7; Cooke, 1976:42), so time would have to have been ineffectively divided between trapping these and subsistence hunting, a division which, as we shall see, the northern Innu would not gladly pursue, for reasons of both survival and choice. So although they did trade enough caribou produce and trap just enough fur to procure the bare minimum requirements in goods, especially tobacco and rifles (Turner, 1894:138;Cooke, 1976:52), the northern Innu remained otherwise apart from the northeastern trade. As mentioned previously, HBC factor Henderson kept a tight rein on "his hunters" after 1843, offering them only very limited credit and supplies. His mistreatment of the Innu must certainly have embittered them towards the Company and limited their desire to participate in its pursuits, especially in light of the meagre return it seemed destined to bring them from the likes of Henderson.

The second factor behind their lack of involvement in the European fur trade is the remoteness of the Mushuau Innu and the lateness of their contact with and reliance on missionaries, trading posts and government. By 1819, the Hudson's Bay Company began to explore seriously the northern interior of the peninsula (Cooke, 1976:46; Henriksen, 1973:11). As mentioned above, the HBC responded to Moravian exploration of the Ungava region in 1811, and their subsequent request for permission to build a trading station in the region (which the HBC denied), by sending the first of a series of expeditions from James Bay into the interior of the peninsula (Cooke, 1976:46). Fort Chimo was eventually established in 1830, and in 1831 a post was opened in Davis Inlet. Several posts were opened in the interior, but all closed due to lack of profitability

(ibid.). The ubiquitous complaint recorded far and wide by post managers and other Company officials was that the northern Innu cared to do little else besides hunt caribou, and most often could not be persuaded to trap furs with any great effort. The manager of the Fort Chimo post records in 1830, "their only talk is about Deer and deer hunting" (ibid.:52; Henriksen, 1973:12). And even from the Great Whale post in 1814 the verdict was,

Nothing but necessity or great want will ever produce a spirit of exertion, in such Indians as these; their dependence on us is very trifling, the Deer furnishes them with both food and raiment, and so long as they can procure a supply of Powder, Shot, Tobacco and a hearty swill of grog at times, their wants are wholly supplied (Henriksen, 1973:11).

By the late nineteenth century the better part of the northern Quebec-Labrador peninsula was finally brought in line with the southern regions in terms of its relations with the Hudson's Bay Company, which had bought up virtually all its competition, thus levelling the standards of trade. By this time, however, the European fur trade was dwindling, and trade in the Quebec-Labrador peninsula had long ago sunk to minor importance by comparison with parts of western Canada (Rogers & Leacock, 1981:172). So in effect the remoteness of the northern Innu kept them out of the fur trade until it was virtually over.

The final set of reasons why northern Innu remained aloof from the fur trade is conceptual and ideological in nature. This is to say it relates specifically (although not exclusively) to issues of cultural significance to northern Innu which were to a greater or lesser degree incompatible with their participation in the fur trade. These issues specifically are the cultural and spiritual significance of the caribou, and the value placed on the pursuit of individual prestige by Innu hunters.

The place of the caribou in northern Algonquian spirituality is well documented

(Speck, 1935; Henriksen, 1973; Savard, 1973; Tanner, 1979). Even among the inland Cree (Tanner, 1979) and the southwestern Innu (Jauvin, 1993) the caribou is a culturally and religiously significant animal (although for many inland Cree, the black bear is the most significant spiritual animal (Tanner, 1979)). Among the northern Innu (and to a certain extent their Whapmagoostui Cree counterparts) however, the ideological status of the caribou eclipses all else in their cultural universe. As an example, in other areas further south and west, the bones of animals besides caribou are treated with equal respect and disposed of in similar fashion (Jauvin, 1993; Tanner, 1979:171); however, this practice does not occur among the northern Innu. The Caribou Spirit.

Katipinimitaoch, is seen as the supreme spirit, who even governs the other animal spirits, and can be responsible for the daily and yearly survival of the Innu themselves (Henriksen, 1973:35). The significance that caribou plays in ritual life, and in ritual feasting, especially the communal *Mokoshan* (Turner, 1894; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994; Speck, 1935; Henriksen, 1973) ensures that this animal will be hunted first and foremost among other choices. As well, the northern Innu place a much higher value on caribou meat than on any other type of food. They will often complain that they have no "real" food if they lack caribou, even if other foods are in abundance and there is no risk of hunger (Turner, 1894:112; Henriksen, 1973). For all the above reasons, the northern Innu place a much higher value on the pursuit of caribou hunting than on any other activity. As a result it has historically been, and continues to be to this day, very difficult to convince the Innu to engage in pursuits which would take them away from the caribou hunt. Even when they have been engaged in commercial fishing, wage labour, or other economic pursuits not usual to their traditional culture (cf. Henriksen, 1973; 1993) they often drop what they are doing and head out onto the land if caribou have been sighted.

The value the Mushuau Innu place on the pursuit of individual prestige is also tied to the caribou and caribou hunting. What makes a man prestigious in Mushuau Innu culture is his ability as a caribou hunter, and his ability persistently and perennially to be named *Utshimau*, or “first man”, and lead followers out into the barrens. As Henriksen (1973:35-37) has illustrated, ability as hunter and *Utshimau* leads to one being placed in a position of spiritual leadership and positions one to be named *utshimau osken*, which is the “first man of the bones” for *mokoshan*, the ritual communal caribou feast¹⁴. This is an exacting responsibility, where every step in the process is wrought with opportunity for error leading to ritual contamination which could potentially anger the Caribou Spirit into not allowing any caribou to be shot for months. *Utshimauits* who acquit themselves in this task with skill and diligence are accorded great prestige, and are seen to be powerful contacts with the spirit world.

It can be seen then, that a caribou hunter’s ability translates into leadership prestige in both economic and ritual spheres of the barren-ground world of the Mushuau Innu. Through caribou hunting, Mushuau Innu men find self-actualisation and meaning in life. It is a pursuit which fosters pride and purpose, and generates the social roles and relationships between men and women, women and women, and men and men, which constitute Mushuau Innu lifeways. There has been very little allure in European products in previous centuries to draw Innu hunters away from this life into wholesale participation in the fur trade. Even up until the late 1960’s, the Mushuau Innu for the most part did not value Euro-Canadian goods to any great extent, except insofar as they

¹⁴ He is the specialist in the ritual who smashes the ends of the long leg bones of the caribou and grinds them until they are rendered to a coarse powder which is then boiled, separating the fat, or *pmin*, which is skimmed off the top and kept.

furthered and facilitated hunting pursuits, and they invested that minimum of participation that would afford them the few luxuries they desired, such as tobacco. Since sedentarisation (and the advent of mass communication in the North) this has begun to change. But after the events 1992, which represented but the latest blow after decades of tragedy, many Mushuau Innu, even teenagers who have grown up on satellite television, are beginning to wish for a return to the life of the caribou hunt, and define much of their misfortune as being related to a loss of respect for this pursuit and all it had meant to their culture (MIBC, 1995).¹⁵

¹⁵ It is yet to be seen if this sentiment will survive the potential influx of wealth which the pending Voisey's Bay mine Impact-Benefit Agreement and Innu Nation land claim settlement promises to bring.

Territoriality and Social Organisation

What has been presented thus far has been a more or less straightforward reconstruction of the prehistory and history of the Mushuau Innu and their economic life, including the extent of their involvement in caribou hunting and relations with the Hudson's Bay Company and its posts. From here, my intention is to attempt to describe the historical evolution of Mushuau Innu social organisation over the course of the same period, and show how this pattern of development, along with Innu relationships to trading posts, structured the way territoriality manifested itself in the far north. This argument is much more problematic than the more straightforward reconstruction presented earlier; but the more one attempts to absorb and come to terms with the extant data, the more apparent it becomes that something much more complex is going on than the simple "lack of family hunting territories" presented in all classic accounts. It seems that some attempt has to be made to propose at least a theory of territorial organisation which would account for this sense of inadequacy about the literature. What makes all this so highly problematic is the existence of such large gaps in the types of data that would be needed to build a truly solid argument. The data simply do not exist. Even the best historical reconstructions, such as Cooke's (1976), do not go back far enough, or deal only with a segment of the ancestors of the modern day Mushuau Innu. I will proceed in this argument with the full knowledge that it contains many gaps, but follows a logical progression that, I hope, justifies the attempt, at least to demonstrate that the notion of northern Innu territoriality is much more complex than is generally presented.

It would have been possible to argue for the non-existence of inherited family hunting territories among the northern groups of Innu simply from the standpoint that

they were caribou hunters. This reality could be said to underlie much of their social and cultural adaptations, if one is so inclined to see culture as adaptation in the ecological sense. By demonstrating that the one subsistence item that eclipsed all others in the Innu universe was caribou, as Armitage (1990) does, and that the migratory patterns of this species were not consistent from year to year (*Cf.* Kendrick, 1997; Meredith & Muller-Wille, 1982; Meredith & Martell, 1985; Turner, 1894), it is easy to conclude that the seeming absence of family hunting territories among the northern groups of Innu is nothing more than the logical result of this specialisation. If that which is harvested does not stay still, then neither can the harvesters. Fixed hunting territories are pointless if there is nothing in them to hunt. I believe, however, that this is an oversimplification of the matter, and unduly biased towards ecological and materialist determinants over social ones. Besides, there is evidence even in early accounts (such as Turner, 1896:112), that except for the times of herd failure, seasonal migration points were relatively predictable, as were river and lake crossings; and furthermore, although the caribou hunt could be considered *communal*, it was generally (although by no means always) carried out by a very small group: even the most intricate of the hunting techniques, such as driving animals towards the shore by canoe, or corralling them into deep snow drifts and shooting them with bow and arrow or guns, could be accomplished by a party of under half a dozen men (Turner, 1894:112; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:113). Therefore, territories *could have* formed around recurring migration points, where individual family-based hunting groups could have harvested large numbers of caribou, enough to last them through the winter. And in the odd years where the caribou went elsewhere, families could have relied on their highly inclusive "stretchable" networks of kinship to gain access to territories where caribou were (Mailhot, 1986;

1997:135). The boundaries of these hypothetical territories would fluctuate over the years as resources shifted, as such territories do in southern regions with sedentary resources (*cf.* Scott, 1991:39-41). Furthermore, the most significant secondary subsistence species was fish¹⁶, and Strong clearly records that families tended to fish in the same individualised spot each season:

Each family had a regular place where they were in the habit of setting their nets year after year, though these are shifted from time to time as the bottom conditions change (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:83).

So, based on (1) the relative predictability of the caribou migration in the majority of years, with the insurance that access to other territories could always be gained when the herd shifted, coupled with (2) the regularity of localised inland net-fishing by family, it can be seen that individual family hunting territories *could have* developed in the far north as they did in other areas of the peninsula. In the end, the realities of caribou subsistence cannot in themselves be the basis for the lack of overt family-based territoriality by the northern Innu. What then are the alternatives? I will here explore the possibility that the problem lies in how we have been defining our terms, and that a shift of perspective can lead to a very different view of northern Innu land tenure.

Preston (1986:43) defines territoriality as

The exclusive use by humans of one or more culturally identified and defined resources within a specified area by a specified individual or group.

Patterns of Innu territoriality are closely linked to the structure of their social organisation. In fact, territoriality *is* the intersection of space and social structure. In this

¹⁶ Although, as Armitage (1990) demonstrates, caribou far exceeds all other species combined as the primary dietary source. So, fish is not really a "close" second.

discussion, we are speaking of such concepts as "family ownership of hunting territories," or "band ownership of hunting territories," or other such postulates linking spaces (themselves culturally constructed) with culturally defined social groups. We may therefore approach the notion of territoriality from the side of the social, building up a model of northern Innu social relationships, and then from this deriving the basis of their spatial distribution and usage. We will begin by defining, from the northern Innu perspective, the concepts of *family*, *multi-family hunting group*, and the different levels of *band* organisation. The definitions provided herein are my own, emanating from a reading of the Innu literature, and I would consider them *humanistic* and *transactional*, in that they are derived from an endogenously Innu perspective and are based on what is in place "on the ground".

Speck (1931) puts forth a definition of the "family hunting group" as,

a kinship group composed of individuals united by blood or marriage, maintaining the right to hunt, trap and fish in a certain inherited district bounded by some rivers, lakes and other natural landmarks.

This definition is problematic in a number of respects. It is being universally applied to all northern Algonquian groups without regional differentiation, when we do in fact witness variation from area to area. This definition does not recognise the various levels of organisation inherent in the hunting group, of which we will speak in a moment. This definition does not deal with those members of the hunting group who are present for reasons other than consanguineal or affinal relationship. Friendship, for example, has always been a motivating factor in group adhesion (Henriksen, 1973; Mailhot, 1997). And finally, this definition inexorably links the concept of the family hunting group to that of the bounded territory. We will, however, use this as our starting point for the moment, and try to work through these issues to a better understanding of what has been

essentially the basic unit of economic production *and* cultural communication¹⁷ within Mushuau Innu society.

The concept of *family* is often seen as a contentious one, and I believe that it is not the basic unit of kinship appropriate to northern Algonquian social realities. Leach (1980:109) writes that "the orthodox tradition in functional anthropology is to start any discussion of kinship behaviour with a reference to the elementary family." However, just as the family or such dyads as husband-wife, mother-child, or even mother-child-mother's-brother, that served as *atoms-of-kinship* in structuralist and structural-functionalist literature (*cf.* Murdock, 1949; Levi-Strauss, 1969; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952), were made up of smaller units, *individuals*, so too does my preferred "atom" (hence to be defined) have a subatomic structure: the nuclear *family*, classically defined. In the context of northern Innu social structure, the *family* is at minimum an independent harvester, responsible for contributing to economic production and either acting as head of a local unit (i.e., living on his own), or living under the roof of another local unit's head for a fee (in labour, but possibly also in exchangeable goods or cash). More typically, however, the Innu nuclear family can be defined as a hunter-wife dyad, with or without dependants, living as a locally distinct independent household, and responsible for making a contribution to economic production. Henriksen (1973:55) states that an Innu man needs a wife to be fully independent in terms of his mobility between hunting groups and bands; and without a wife, a hunter must be a peripheral member of another's hunting group. In Strong's 1928 census of the Davis Inlet and Barren Ground Innu

¹⁷ By this I mean that through this social institution, the affinal relationships, sibling relationships and generational relationships, as well as those of friendship, are played out. Value, emotion, love, hate, in fact all aspects of daily existence, are played out within the framework of the set of social and economic relationships structured by this institution.

(Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:174-7), the leaders of hunting groups are always married men, and the heads of individual "households," tents, are with only one exception married men. It is the women who construct and maintain the tent (Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994); and although it was typical for other closely related northern Algonquian groups, such as the Mistassini Cree, to have multiple families sharing a tent in the winter (Tanner, 1973:76), this was not as typically the case among the northern Innu, or when it rarely was there were generally no more than two families per tent (cf., Riches, 1982:99-101 for discussion). So, a man needed a wife to take care of the tent, along with many other duties, in order to allow him to participate fully in hunting activities with other men of the hunting group – to be defined next.

In this definition I have used the phrase "responsible for *making a contribution to economic production*" and not "responsible for *their own economic production*" because I do not see the nuclear family as the proper unit of analysis for social interaction, economic production and residence. Although among the Cree there are instances of elderly couples, or couples with few children, or even individual bachelors living on their own on a portion of their extended family's territory (C. Scott, personal communication), the Mushuau Innu norm is for several above-defined families to group together to form *multi-family hunting groups* (Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994; Tanner, 1979; Riches, 1982). Two to five (sometimes more) families will tend to travel and camp together, often setting up individual tents within the camp, but sharing responsibilities in domestic life, including subsistence production, maintenance of the campsite, transportation of goods, and care of children (Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994). Within the multi-family, each individual is directly dependent on the group as a whole and its structure (Leacock, 1982). Because this *multi-family* group is

the normal unit of residency and economic production for life in the country, as well as for social and cultural/ritual interaction for the majority of the year, I see it as the proper focus of analysis in Algonquian social organisation.

Although others have used this *multi-family* distinction (e.g., Tanner, 1979; Riches, 1982), it has not before been put forward as the actual minimal functioning unit of social organisation (i.e., the basic interacting unit of kinship). There are two possible reasons for this which I wish to examine, before ultimately rejecting them. First, constituent *families* within this multi-family group are not internally related in any consistent way from group to group. This is to say that in one group, two families may be agnatically connected through two brothers, while a third family is that of a wife's father's brother. Yet in another multi-family group, the social relationships between family groups may be different again. Henriksen (1973:57) reports that the major factors taken into account in the formation of multi-family parties are (1) environmental conditions; (2) prestige and leadership; and (3) kinship and sentiment. I will not go further into a discussion of what Henriksen meant by these criteria; I simply repeat them here to demonstrate that factors other than the relationships between individual families play a crucial role in the formation of multi-family hunting groups.

Secondly, and closely related, there are no biological or social givens (from an *etic* perspective) to dictate who can and cannot be a member of the *multi-family hunting group*. For the *family*, membership is defined either through perceived descent, institutionalised and ritualised affinal union, or adoption; while for the *multi-family*, membership is determined through a continuing series of transactions and negotiations that vary in type from instance to instance.

I believe these two arguments are not enough to overcome the compelling reality

that the *multi-family* is in fact the normative minimal unit for residence, economic production and social and cultural interaction among the Mushuau Innu. I dismiss the arguments against the *multi-family* being the minimal unit of focus as being ethnocentrically based on our assumptions about the significance of group solidity and the need for legally identifiable rules of filiation; and in the case of the second argument, as being biologically determinate. Further, Turner and Wertman (1977) have shown how kinship can be seen as *incorporative* of the hunting partners from previous generations, and thus retroactively classifying *multi-family* members as direct antecedents: the men your father hunted with would be classified as your uncles, and subsequent generations would be aligned accordingly. Finally, as we shall see below, the multi-family group tended to be exogamous, and exogamy is a primary reason to consider the saliency of a kinship group.

The *multi-family hunting group*, not being rigidly defined, may lose members at any time throughout the year, or take on new ones. This social mobility of the members of multi-family groups exists within the *band*. Speck (1926, cited in Leacock, 1954:20) defines the band as,

A group inhabiting a fairly definite territory with a more or less stable number of families, possessing paternally inherited privileges of hunting within tracts comprised again within the boundaries of the territory...

Furthermore, according to Speck's definition, this group will often have an "elected chief", speak a similar dialect, have a unified material culture and manufacturing art, and maintain a norm of band endogamy (ibid.:20). As it applies to the northern bands of Innu, we will see that this definition is deficient in several aspects, most importantly in respect to the "fairly definite" demarcation of band territorial boundaries, the notion of

paternally inherited privilege, and the notion of band endogamy. Rogers (1981:26) gives this definition of the Algonquian band:

A loosely structured unit with a patrilineal bias, comprising seventy-five to a hundred and twenty-five people, inhabiting a drainage basin alone or in conjunction with other such groups, uniting during the summer on the shores... and dispersing for the winter in groups to hunting areas.

This view of Algonquian social organisation improves over Speck's in that it accounts for the group's differential spatial dispersion at varying times of the year, attempts to come to terms with the geographic demarcation between groups, and admits that patrilineality is a *bias*, not a prerequisite.

Herein I will be arguing that the *band*, as it stood among the northern Innu between the late eighteenth century and the early coastal era – up to about 1916 – is a demographic outgrowth of the *multi-family hunting group*, which emerged as population outgrew the proportions which could efficiently remain together as an effective unit of exploitation (*cf.* Riches (1982) and Ridington (1968) for ecological discussions of the ideal maintainable size of hunting groups for efficient subsistence exploitation). This is a diachronic argument, starting with the local unit and moving historically forward towards the larger unit, instead of the more usually encountered synchronic one, starting with the larger construct and then discussing its subdivisions.

For the purpose of progressing through our present argument, we will define the *band* as the regionally-centred web of multi-family groups who exploit a contiguous regional territory of land and which throughout most of the year evinces an internal flow of nuclear families within the context of multi-family hunting group formation. Furthermore, members of this *band* tend to seasonally congregate as a whole in the summer months, where multi-families will disintegrate in favour of individual

interaction, residence and production (Henriksen, 1973:73). This is not to say that there are hard and fast rules dictating who can seasonally settle where from year to year. Rather, it is to say that although northern Innu have historically spent the winter following the caribou from camp to camp in small multi-family groups, coalescing at one of several coastal spots each summer (clockwise from west to east, Great Whale, Fort Chimo, Voisey's Bay, and Davis Inlet), a family that decided to settle at a given coastal spot for the summer will *tend* to do so perennially, perhaps occasionally summering at another spot to spend a season with affinal relatives, or to trade at a different HBC post where an individual believed he could get a better price for his produce (cf. Cooke, 1976:95; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:43-9; Mailhot, 1986: 1997:134). There is evidence that a reason for temporarily summering at a different coastal site was to avoid paying debts to Company traders at a previous site, or to leverage new credit at the new one (Francis & Morantz, 1983:123). But in general, the core of any given group tended to return perennially to the same coastal site. Over a period of generations, this creates a level of distinction between *regional bands* and the northern Innu as a whole ranging the entire territory.

This pattern of division and distribution is a relatively recent construct, however. Until well into the twentieth century, even later than the 1916 caribou decline when coastal settlements began to coalesce about Davis Inlet and Voisey's Bay, there were only about 100 Mushuau Innu exploiting a 30,000 square mile territory (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:17).¹⁸ These Innu travelled in multi-family hunting groups typically comprised of members from the various regional bands, but usually linked together

through some agnatic¹⁹ filiation (*ibid.*:35-6). Their territorial mobility was such that individual families did not necessarily attach themselves to one particular summer site year after year, even though HBC officials actively attempted to persuade them to do so (Cooke, 1976:95; Mailhot, 1997:134). As well, the varying paths of migrating caribou from year to year caused differentiation in not only who would travel and hunt where, but also for how long, and would determine which part of the territory they would be in come spring time (Henriksen, 1973:58). This too, must have had an effect on decisions as to where to head for the summer, and in turn, where one spends the summer will determine whom one negotiates with the next autumn for the creation of the coming winter's multi-family hunting groups. Therefore, the entire northeastern portion of the Quebec-Labrador peninsula formed one expansive, culturally continuous area that only began to fission into regionally centred bands as numbers grew and families began to return to the same coastal spot with a greater degree of regularity.

The last step in creating these permanent regionally centred bands was probably the cooling of the fur trade and the closing of many of the trading posts. With one less reason to make for a different post every few springs, groups that hunted together in the winter would now be more likely to summer together as a whole each year. The strongest evidence for this supposition is that the degree of fluctuation in band composition evidenced by Strong's 1928 data is virtually absent in Henriksen's data from 40 years later. (It is also absent from Honigmann's (1962) study of social organisation in

¹⁸ Although there were anywhere up to 400 northern Innu in the whole region north of the tree line, from Atlantic to Hudson's Bay (see Cooke (1976:87) for detailed breakdown). I am here dealing only with the eastern groups who later settled at Davis Inlet and Voisey's Bay.

¹⁹ Although friendship was (and is) as good a reason to join a particular hunting group as any other (cf. Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994; Mailhot, 1997)

Great Whale in 1948-9 – 20 years after Strong – although this comparison is more problematic, because the Innu on the west coast were also engaged in trapping sedentary fur-bearers, and because Honigmann spent most of his efforts on Inuit social organisation, and did not gather very much Innu data).

It is possible that the entire discussion of regional bands prior to sedentarisation in the middle of this century is nothing more than an analytical construct imposed by ethnological observers to account for the fact that they enumerated Indian groups at various coastal locations, with vast "empty" spaces separating them. Strong records that of the 36 members of the Davis Inlet band with which he wintered, 11 members were in fact from other bands (seven women, four men) although the group as a whole maintained a self proclaimed identity as "Davis Inlet Band" (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:46). Strong was only there for one season, and the membership of this group would likely have differed somewhat from year to year.

Considering that there were under 100 Mushuau Innu exploiting the whole northeastern region at the time, and that the evidence is that they had only been above the tree line for just over 100 years by the time of Turner's late 1880's visit (by Samson's estimate of circa 1770's for the move northward), it is likely that little in the way of cultural differentiation had seriously taken place within this group. Consider that even at the time of Strong's 1928 sojourn with the Mushuau Innu, each so-called band he documents was comprised of just five or six families who described themselves as emanating from one of the particular coastal summering regions, and who frequently switched "bands" for multiple seasons at a time. By the time of the creation of permanent settlements in the 1950's and 60's, regional bands had become a reality, reinforced by the political, legal, administrative and second-language linguistic divisions

provided by the Quebec-Newfoundland border. Even now, however, the entire peninsula is overlaid with a web of kinship linking regional bands in both provinces (Mailhot, 1986).

Yet it is true that men born in one region *tended* to take wives born in other regions, but even this was not always the case (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:174-7). Strong (1929) finds evidence for the existence of preferential cross-cousin marriages among the northern Innu, an assertion furthered by Graburn (working with Naskapi data in 1965, cited in Mailhot, 1997:115). If the Innu did in fact *tend* towards patrilocality, not in terms of multi-family formation, but in terms of band association, then a tendency towards cross-cousin marriages would point to a proclivity for selecting spouses from different regions, the region from whence one's father's sister's husband came, or one's mother['s brother] came. In this assertion I am careful to use the phrase *tends to* quite liberally. As has been demonstrated, group composition was very flexible, and, as Rogers pointed out, patrilineality was a bias rather than a rule, and more than one patriline could be present within bands or even local multi-families, mitigating the necessity or desire to marry out. Furthermore, in light of Turner's and Wertman's (1977) view of incorporative kinship, strict adherence to such categories as patriline becomes problematic when dealing with northern Algonquian social realities. Therefore, it is perhaps more appropriate, for at least the period up to Strong's visit, to consider the different regional groups as internal exogamous sections rather than distinct regional bands, because a tendency towards exogamy with regard to one's local group was really the only distinction in the minds of actual individual Innu. But even these regional distinctions are relative, as they vary from year to year. As has been shown, members of one group defined themselves as such because they were there at the moment, as we saw

from Strong's 1928 census. They might not have been there in the past, and they might not be there in the future. Group composition was renegotiated each fall amongst those who found themselves together at the coast. There was a tendency towards cohesion based on the fact that other potentials were quite far away, but people could and did join other parties in other regions of the territory (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994; Henriksen, 1973; Mailhot, 1997).

So, one may associate himself with a particular group based on whom he remembers growing up with, and select a spouse from another group because the others your age from your own group would have been your playmates, in fact your defined or actual siblings (Mailhot, 1997:103). What has been termed the regional band, and what we are now admitting may be better viewed as exogamous sections within such bands. can in fact be described as nothing more than the *multi-family hunting group* writ large. and this group, as the minimal unit of social organisation. where children considered each other siblings and incorporatively named those of the generation above them siblings of their parents, had a normative tendency toward exogamy: choosing spouses from other multi-families. It was only a couple of generations later, when there were more people, more families, and therefore more multi-family groups.²⁰ that more than one group began summering together at the same coastal spots. This would naturally lead to more varied options for negotiating the subsequent year's hunting parties, thus the emergence of a regionally centred flow of families between multi-family groups from year to year. Even though people could join groups emanating from any coastal

²⁰ There have been ecological arguments made for why 20-25 people is the optimal group size for effective subsistence exploitation (Ridington, 1968). It may have been that this seemed like an agreeable number to a people who liked company but avoided conflicts, and who valued autonomy above all.

spot, proximity over the summer would tend to make those around you the likely candidates for negotiation, and therefore a tendency would emerge for seasonal multi-family groups to come from the same coastal regions. Hence the emergence of the *regional band*.

Today, *regional bands* maintain distinct cultural identities based upon a variable combination of such factors as common dialect, historical occupation of land, and common perceived descent. The *cultural band* as a whole (Riches, 1982:109), the *People*, the *Nation*, is comprised of the sum of regional bands with their intertwining web of kinship relations and territorial conjunctures. Today we find people in Utshimassits, Sheshatshiu, Kawawachikamach, and the communities of the Lower North Shore and Lac St. Jean regions, even the Mistissini Cree (*cf.* Mistissini People's Website²¹, 1998), calling themselves Innu, proclaiming cultural unity across great distances and political divides, while at the same time claiming regional and historic distinctiveness and boundedness. But even the boundaries between these larger units and others like them are permeated by countless kin connections, such as between the Mushuau Innu of Utshimassits and the Moisie Innu of Sept-Iles (Mailhot, 1986: 1997:134). The ultimate sense of boundary lies in the perceptions of cultural identity constructed by individual members based on a varying combination of factors such as where they were born or grew up, where their parents may have been born, or where they have hunted most of their lives, as well as through emotional attachment for any number of deeply personal reasons.

If there can be said to be "band ownership" of territories (Leacock & Rothschild,

²¹ <http://www.nation.mistissini.qc.ca>

1994:88), and the *regional band*, if not in total, then no less than moieties thereof. is itself nothing more than the *multi-family hunting group* in origin; and if in turn this latter is the actual minimal kinship unit for all economic, social and ritual activities, as well as being the exogamous unit of northern Innu society; then one must admit that there is a "family hunting territory" of sorts among these northern groups. or at least there once was at a time when each so-called band was properly one and only one multi-family group. What has been referred to as *band territory*, has for these most northerly Innu become the structural equivalent of the family hunting territory as it exists further south. So we can now look at the issue of family ownership of hunting territories not on the continuum of existence vs. non-existence from region to region, but on the continuum of expanded or restricted minimal level of kinship units. There are owned family hunting territories everywhere, but the definition of family itself is not universal among all northern Algonquians. As populations increased, and more than one multi-family was needed in each territory to ensure that not more than a sustainable number were hunting in any given area, the ideology of territorial ownership was stretched to the new unit, the *band*.

Among the northern Innu, this sense of territoriality was limited to restriction on resource use at particular named sites (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:88). A particular band would claim possession of a particular caribou water crossing, or inland fishing area, and other groups would recognise and abide by this claim. For example, the Barren Ground people were recognised as the "owners" of Indian House Lake on the George River (ibid.). Strong reports no sense of trespass through these regions, anyone could pass by or through these named sites, but required permission to harvest from them. Territories, then, are regionally centred clusters of sites, without hard boundaries at fixed

points. This system can be compared to that of inland James Bay Cree territories. Tanner (1986:29-31) considers the Mistassini territorial system as usufruct, not private property *per se*, and there is ample evidence from Leacock (1954) through Tanner (1979:186), that the southwestern groups did in fact make a conceptual distinction between subsistence hunting and fur harvesting for trade. One could pass through another's territory, and hunt food if need be, but could not touch another's trap or take his pelt (Feit, 1982). In Mistassini country, a sense of territoriality emerges where there exists a string of owned fixed sites, i.e., trapping sites, which as a whole demarcate a general territory. These fixed sites are nodes of exploitation for sedentary resources (although migratory resources, such as caribou, are harvested as well), and as such are claimed by individuals or individual families. Compare this to the situation among the northern Innu, where fixed exploitative sites were claimed by particular regional bands (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:88), who themselves were individual multi-family hunting groups in origin. A cluster of such sites would equate to the northern Innu version of a (multi-)family hunting territory, where usufruct rights would be held by senior hunters, *utshimauits*, on behalf of the whole group. The difference between the two cases, then, is not in degree of territoriality, which remains more or less constant, but in level of social organisation and the definition of the minimal social unit of kinship and economic activity: among the northern Innu, the regional band as a whole is the structural analogue of the multi-family among the Cree and southwestern Innu.

Among the Mushuau Innu, there were named spots for winter fishing, which families within multi-families tended to return to year after year (Leacock & Rothschild, 1994:88). The entire group would return to a site, and individual families tended to set up nets where they did the previous season. Yet, still a sense of individual family

territoriality did not emerge. So-called "band territoriality", Tanner's usufruct right to the site by the multi-family as a whole, did emerge, with an associated sense of use-trespass (ibid.). Was the lack of family fishing territories a result of an ideological refusal to consider themselves "fishermen" (or vice versa)? Or was it simply that fish were a reliable food source? Strong (ibid.:90) postulates that stringent economic "rules" are absent when there is no competition or ecological pressure to necessitate them: so plentiful supply would tend to preclude territoriality. Certainly fish were important to the diet. Innu would gladly resort to fish once caribou stores were depleted (Turner, 1894; Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994), yet caribou was always the preferred food, and if it were plentiful, it would be eaten in abundance, and cached for future use. Fish, by comparison, was not cached. Fish were not harvested in excess of immediate need, while caribou would be, and preserved for later in the season, or even for subsequent years (Henriksen, 1973; Leacock & Rothschild, 1994).

Social organisation and territoriality as set out above have come to shape the present-day Mushuau Innu's ideas about who they are as a people and as individuals. It has formed the socio-historical basis of their identity as caribou hunters, and the rightful heirs and stewards of the land on which they live. This conceptualisation will be the starting point for consideration of Harvesters' Support Programme design. We will now turn our attention to the third and final basic consideration, gender.

Notes on Gender, Mystification and the Space of Tradition

One potential criticism of Harvesters' Support as a development tool is that it is based around a pursuit that is primarily to do with male activities and male institutions of power and self-actualisation. The danger that an HSP could involuntarily pull unwilling women (and children) into country living, should the male household head desire to enter the programme, must be addressed. The resolution of this problem is, on the one hand, theoretical and on the other, strategic. The theoretical lies in a re-examination of space, power and institutions of prestige and self-actualisation in light of the contemporary realities of Mushuau Innu life. And the strategic solution will emerge through the actual proposed programme design, discussed in the next section. As my data gathering did not focus on gender issues, the intention of this section is to highlight the potential dangers for Mushuau Innu women, to address them by proposing that any programme design must incorporate women's views and expectations, and to suggest that programme implementation remains sensitive to these throughout.

Approaching the semiotics of Innu life seems at first glance to reveal sets of oppositions that serve as a "false contextuality," obfuscating or mystifying the gender inequality between hunters and their wives (Moore, 1996:5, 205-6). The values placed on "traditional" pursuits, especially country living and caribou hunting, in many ways serve to hide the fact that women's values, needs and roles are marginalised with respect to those of male hunters. Traditional gender divisions of labour in subsistence production seem to stress the equality of gender roles by placing emphasis on the amount of time and labour involved in women's tasks as well as their important relationship to the overall endeavour of hunting. Here, again, Leacock (1982) cites Le

Jeune in his assertion that women possessed a level of autonomy unfamiliar to seventeenth century French society. This, however, highlights certain aspects of gendered relations in the control of and decisions over the means of subsistence, while hiding others.

For example, the assertion that "a man needs a wife to be a complete hunter" (*cf.* Tanner, 1979, Henriksen, 1973), attempts to reflect the significance of women in the subsistence economy, based on the social criteria of creating an independent household dyad, separate from parents or other more senior hunters, responsible for making, and having the human resources to make, its own living; contribute fully to multi-family production; and having the ability to reproduce the next generation. From Moore's (1996) perspective, however, this assertion mystifies the relationships as it obfuscates the fact that what the hunter also needs his wife for is to free him of tasks that bear no relationship to the pursuit of male social and political prestige or individual self-actualisation.

As another example, the assertion that women have great control over where their husbands will travel (Henriksen, 1973), is a reflection of women negotiating their power relationship to male hunters within the discourse of traditional subsistence economics. The satisfaction that wives achieve in steering the travel plans of family or multi-family hunting groups, masks the fact that wives maintain a marginal relationship to the overall means of production, and travel destinations will inevitably be ones where men will find "good hunting" or some other means of fulfilment. Leacock (1982) calls attention to the fact that an apparent preference for matrilocality was replaced by the norm of patrilocality at the onset of the fur trade. If men could influence this distinctive

shift, founded on a male-oriented economic pursuit, then arguably they possessed. in this sense at least, a discernible political sway over their wives.

The contemporary context in which Mushuau Innu would return to country-based caribou hunting under HSP differs geographically, economically and technologically from previous eras. in ways that directly affect women's positions. In terms of division of labour, several key tasks traditionally assigned to women have become much less significant in terms of hours spent and overall contribution to production. For example, women no longer make their family's clothing of necessity, although some still make mitts, hats and snowshoe-moccasins (which do not wear out as frequently, as most people wear 'Sorels' for all activity other than snowshoing), do embroidery and adornment, and most carry out small repairs – although extensively damaged garments are usually replaced via mail-order purchase. In fact, most of the small-scale clothing creation in Utshimassits, such as production of hats, mitts and even adornment and beadwork, is today done by a few women (such as my host) who then sell their products to the others in the community as part of the informal local crafts economy. In short, the time and energy that most women allot to these tasks, and their contribution to overall subsistence, is greatly diminished. The same holds true for construction and maintenance of tents, which are for the most part purchased whole from a Newfoundland manufacturer who produces them today, based on the design of tents constructed by the Innu over the last century.

In geographic terms, within the context of contemporary provincial boundaries, and in light of the present day fixed village settlements, travel decisions are greatly reduced from what they once were. In the pre-sedentarisation era, women would persuade their husbands to travel to certain areas in with the hope of meeting up with

siblings, relatives or friends whom they had not seen since previous seasons (Henriksen. 1973). As well, a woman could persuade her husband to travel or camp with others from their own band with whom she wished to be (*ibid.*). Although this latter is still an option, the former is no longer a viable possibility due to the solidification of band and village since sedentarisation; its near total reduction in intermixing of families from various bands (such as Sheshatshiu) into contemporary hunting camps, and the fact that the political separation of Utshimassits and Kawawachikamach by provincial boundary has reinforced the social isolation of these two sectors of the historic Barren Grounds Innu. Women, therefore, have lost the ability to steer strategic travel plans, those plans that suggested which general portion of the barrens the family might pursue, and towards which settlement they may consider returning in the spring. In balance, however, men have clearly lost this power as well.

Although there remain many other examples of women's subsistence tasks which persist into the modern era, not the least of which are child care, cooking and general maintenance of the campsite, women's roles are greatly diminished in terms of time and responsibility. This is not to say that women will not fill this gap with other valued activities (some which may not even be predictable at this time, such as maintaining a private enterprise venture by means of the Internet, portable computers and mobile communication). What must be considered, however, is that traditional roles and the value and esteem derived from them have shifted. Any programme based on country-based caribou hunting, in which men's roles have changed to a much smaller degree than women's, must account for this shift and give women the opportunity to work out their contemporary place, which will necessarily be different than it was in the past. A 1998

report on the Nunavut Hunters' Support Program (Qikiqtaaluk Corporation and Consilium, 1998) suggests that,

by interpreting harvesting in a broader, more culturally appropriate way, the "Recommendation to the Board of Directors of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. on the Nunavut Hunter Support Program," does not ignore the predominantly female activities associated with harvesting, such as the processing of skins. The report recommends that sewing machines be added to the list of subsidised items and that research be undertaken "... into the current situation and needs of [women as] processors of harvesting products to determine what aspects of current programs or what new programs would best meet their needs and provide appropriate support and benefits.

In the contemporary context, there will emerge a new complementary relationship between husbands and wives, with new roles being negotiated. If a programme design limits women's expectations and assumptions, then it will fall short in various respects: young women may not want to get involved, women who do participate may drop out due to lack of opportunity for self-actualisation, or lack of voice, or by virtue of feeling dominated by their husband or other male leader. One must look at women's everyday lives and experiences and their views on their emerging roles in the contemporary family and community. A well-designed programme will provide the space for these roles to emerge or be incorporated. It would provide a new milieu for the renegotiation of the husband-wife complementary partnership in the contemporary era.

Tradition, space and power priority: the realignment of gender relations

There are levels of narrative discourse in the negotiation of power within any system (Foucault, 1976), in which differing narratives come into conflict with each other. Through this conflict and negotiation, different actors work out a power relation

for themselves, in which they can find meaning in their lives. Critics may argue that this, again, serves to mask or obfuscate the fact that the relationships are still unequal, and the power that the marginalised feel obscures the fact that they are just as marginalised as before. The power felt by the marginalised is permitted within the structure because it placates the marginalised, and serves to reinforce the connection between the enfranchised and true sources of power (Gramsci, 1988). On the one hand, it may be argued that women's belief that they are empowering themselves through a link to or rediscovery of tradition tends to keep them out of the quest for real power in relation to control of resources. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the fact that in their daily lives, women are finding life meaning in the pursuits that they have re-appropriated from their perceived traditions. The traditional skills camp, run by Agathe, was to include women and girls of all ages, and represented the sole organised country-based programme in Utshimassits (for either men or women) at the time of my fieldwork. Furthermore, the programme was able to garner funding (albeit meagre) from Community Social Services, thus placing a political and economic value on the programme and its endeavour.

The community space has been associated with the narrative of disempowerment of the Innu people as a whole, while tradition and country space have been associated with the narrative of cultural and individual wellness (Degnen, 1996). Women have appropriated tradition, as the metaphor for healing, ahead of men. Because healing and wellness play a dominant narrative role in present day Mushuau Innu life (along with political empowerment *vis-à-vis* the dominant society), the "resource" to which power is related has shifted somewhat from hunting prestige. Therefore the ideological space that

women have carved out for themselves, through this discursive negotiation, may be emerging as dominant.

Healing and wellness are now of prime concern in the community, not male prestige through hunting and provision. Hunting for survival is no longer an issue, and consequently, the male prestige-garnering activities surrounding strong hunting ability are necessarily downgraded in social and ideological discourse. Possession of hunting skills is still deemed prestigious and still relates to power in both the social and spiritual realms, as it does in other regions, such as in James Bay, where social services have mitigated or abolished the survival aspect of men's roles, yet the paramount place it enjoyed prior to sedentarisation may have eroded.

If Harvesters' Support brings men and women into a discursive power negotiation where appropriation of *tradition* is involved, what once served to further marginalise women's access to power, may now strengthen it. Women have taken possession of the hunting life *qua* tradition. Therefore, men's and women's power realms are becoming more balanced, paving the way for the negotiation of a new complementary relationship.

If Harvesters' Support comes into effect, country living will recentre the discursive space to beyond the settlement, to the narrative place of tradition, which is in the barrens. In that case, the gap in gender power realms narrows. Women would be engaging life on Harvesters' Support for self-actualisation in contemporary terms, with a new set of priorities and a new sense of meaning, while men would be entering the programme with perhaps slightly diminished expectations of power and prestige.

Settlement space has become associated with the modern, and with the struggles against the dominant society (and against suicide and substance abuse). Those who are

politically active are politically dominant in the settlement. These individuals find high paying employment in the settlement through local government and administration.

Those who are not politically active, have less political power, and are therefore less likely to be employed in the community, are those who are the most likely candidates for Harvesters' Support. These individuals may be furthest removed from the discourses of political empowerment and community healing (which in recent years have gone hand in hand). They may seek Harvesters' Support involvement as their mode of power and meaning seeking.

Husbands and wives are not the "dyads" they once were, however. While a disempowered man may have stagnated for years in the settlement, his wife may have been actively involved in "traditional" activities, through which she was appropriating meaning and power. This may transform in the country context. Therefore, the decision to return to country-based caribou hunting under Harvesters' Support would see a different set of assumptions and relationships negotiated between husbands and wives than in the past. And today the power balance may favour women more than at any time previous.

The Political and Economic Contexts for Harvester Support

Harvester support, simply put, is a programme of payments and benefits which would allow those Innu hunters who so desire to continue or return to caribou hunting as their primary way of life, and make a living doing so. It is based on *Guaranteed Annual Income* (GAI) programmes that were being studied at the time of the proposal of the Cree ISP programme in the early 1970's (La Rusic, 1982). This type of program satisfies a number of cultural, economic, and political needs, both for the government, and the Indigenous people in question. First, like its GAI model, it is a type of social support favoured by government as it is often less costly to administer than other forms of transfer payment such as welfare or unemployment insurance (La Rusic, 1982). It eliminates the incentive to remain unemployed or inactive that is often predicated on welfare payments (ibid.). It has potential for much larger spin-off socio-economic and cultural benefits for the recipients, and produces added economic value through harvesting, which conventional social welfare benefits do not. And it is preferred by government for putting funds directly in the hands of individual hunters or families (Scott & Feit, 1992). To the Mushuau Innu, harvester support represents a socio-economic institution for infusing revenue into the community without any associated loss of social or cultural self-determination. Individuals do not need to leave the area for prolonged periods of time to pursue industrial wage employment in other regions, and do not become the non-contributing members of the consumer market predicated on welfare dependency.

It is also arguable that this system of support can in fact be considered "people's sustainable self-development" (Rahman, 1993) and not merely reliance on transfer

payments and external support, because all benefits would be received through the comprehensive claim settlement on lands and resources, assets which by right are the Innu's to exploit. It may be argued that Innu land and resources are unalienated assets to be exploited for their national development. The Innu may develop them on their own in order to generate national revenue, or, by provision of a settled comprehensive claim, may "licence" these development rights out to government (or to third parties through Impact Benefit Agreements) in return for royalties, which in turn would fund in perpetuity such development programmes as Harvesters' Support. It is also important to make a clear distinction between this sort of programme and such transfers as welfare payments. La Rusic (1982) points to the fact that Cree ISP is not a universal benefit for all regional inhabitants, but is established to provide special benefits to those individuals who meet specific criteria. La Rusic makes an analogy to veterans' programs where, by virtue of an historical distinction, programme members are entitled to certain privileges. As well, the programme is a *quid pro quo*, where the *quid*, the programme, is for the *quo* of historical distinction. In the case of veterans, it is for participation in the nation's wars. For Aboriginal hunters, it is for having demonstrated a commitment to the life of harvesting, at the individual level; and for having treaty rights emanating from a settled land claim, at the collective level (La Rusic, 1982:4).

Harvester support is also representative of the type of development program that is compatible with the political and economic context in which the Innu are situated. This specifically refers to Innu progress in settling their land claim, and the fact that the Voisey's Bay mine undertaking will in all likelihood only provide a limited number of wage jobs and peripheral enterprise opportunities (such as catering or maintenance contracts), and those for only a finite amount of time, until the mine is

decommissioned²². In the wake of the pending land claim settlement, the growth of local and regional government entities will create civil services jobs for a portion of the population. The size and scope of regional government, however, will be considerably smaller than that which emerged in James Bay from the James Bay Agreement, and will likely not produce the jump in employment opportunities it did for the Cree in the mid-1970's. Largely due to policy developments over the ensuing years since the JBNQA, pre-land-claim-settlement local government in Utshimassits is at present much more extensive than it was in the James Bay region in the early 1970's. The JBNQA gave the Cree Regional Authority local administration of health, education and social services, that until then had been directly administered by either the provincial or federal governments. Policy shifts during the ensuing twenty-five years have meant that the Mushuau Innu have been able to enjoy much of that administrative autonomy without having come to any formal self-government arrangement. At present, there exist the Mushuau Innu School Board, Mushuau Innu Social Services, Mushuau Innu Health Commission, and several other commissions directly or indirectly funded through government transfers, mostly funnelled through the Band Council.²³ Therefore, it is likely that the pending agreement would not create an exceptional number of new offices and jobs.

²² The life span of the mine has not yet been finalised. The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company (VBNC) sidestepped the issue in its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). When asked to come up with alternate time frame contingencies for production-years (i.e., a ten-year mine employing 1000 people producing x tons/day, or a twenty-year mine employing 500 people producing y tons/day, etc.) it did not answer, but instead described how many months it would operate out of any given single year. Critics feels this was done intentionally to avoid the issue, even though this is a crucial element to the EA procedure. In the end, however, it is unlikely that the mine will operate for more than twenty years.

²³ Although, because Utshimassits, and in fact all Newfoundland and Labrador Aboriginal communities, do not as yet fall under the *Indian Act*, transfers may go directly to the service organisation, bypassing Band Council altogether.

Employment opportunities will therefore persist over the next couple of decades, stemming from local government opportunities and direct and indirect involvement in the Voisey's Bay mine. As well, the life span of the mine will give those interested the opportunity to develop skills exportable to other developments in the region, gain professional and union certification, and develop enterprises geared to serve the industrial sector. However, the life-span of the mine – if it is ever actually developed – is finite, and long-term economic security is needed for the region which would incorporate the wishes and needs of that sector of the population that does not wish to leave the area, cannot find jobs in local government, or has no interest in full time industrial employment. Innu could benefit through the funding of long-term programmes, such as HSP, which would ensure economic benefits while not tying them directly to any of the aforementioned options.

At present, there is employment in Utshimassits for virtually everyone who wants it, through opportunities related to the relocation project, mostly in carpentry and construction. These are temporary, however, and many Innu will find themselves unemployed at the completion of the relocation project in 2002. Simply put, there are not many employment opportunities in this corner of Canada, as is the case in much of the North. The Mushuau Innu economy is a mixed economy, relying heavily on the availability of goods harvestable in-country, but also, as with most other Northern economies, on public spending from various federal and provincial agencies. There simply are not enough employment or other alternative sources of revenue in the region. HSP allows for the articulation of the two aspects of the Innu mixed economy, subsistence production, and cash commoditisation, in such a way as to tie necessary public spending to harvesting activity, country living, and culturally significant lifeways.

It also ensures the stability of the local economy by maintaining the viability of extensive animal harvesting, which has been shown (La Rusic, 1982) to contribute significantly to the cash-equivalent incomes of all community members in terms of the cash replacement value of country produce circulated between hunters and non-hunters. For those who are not in full-time employment, this cash replacement value may account for up to 50% of a hunter's annual income (ibid.: 30). In short, the community economy may not be able to buoy itself without the existence of extensive cash-equivalent country produce; the replacement value of store-bought foods is much too high. Infusion of cash into the system in the form of a Harvesters' Support Programme may, in the end, be less costly than permanent government support of an insolvent employment based economy, particularly as the population booms over the coming years²⁴.

Regarding the atmosphere for negotiating their land claim, the difference between the Innu situation and that of the James Bay Cree in the 1970's is essentially a political one. The hydroelectric development in James Bay was being carried out by a Quebec crown corporation, of which the Province is the majority shareholder. Therefore, the government was in a position to merge the project's impact-benefit agreement and the land-claim settlement into one negotiated agreement, where all benefits gained the status of treaty rights, as defined by Section 35 of the 1982 *Canada Act*. In the current case, however, the mine proponent is a third party industrial developer, which is negotiating IBA settlements with the Innu and Inuit, independent of either level of government. And, the government is negotiating its land claim settlement independent

²⁴ As in many northern communities, the Utshimassits population growth rate is several times the national average. At present, two-thirds of community members are under the age of 20, and the population is projected to double by 2020 (MIRC 1995).

of the mine undertaking. At present, the only links between the two are that the Environmental Assessment Panel has recommended that the mine should not proceed without all outstanding land claims being first settled; and that the Innu are negotiating a percentage of the government's take on mine revenue tax royalties. This will not in itself be a substantial amount, not nearly large enough to fund long-term or permanent social or economic programs²⁵. An HSP program could appropriately be funded directly from the IBA, or through a combination of IBA and government transfer payment, under the claim agreement. This, however, would require a new level of negotiation between government and the mine proponent, and a financial commitment from the latter which would outlive the mine itself.

There are a variety of forms which a harvester support program can take, exemplified by those programs in place in James Bay (La Rusic, 1982; Scott & Feit, 1992), among the Inuit of Nunavik, northern Quebec (RCAP, 1996: v.4. s7.4), in northeastern Quebec among the Naskapi of Kawawachikamach (Meredith & Muller-Wille, 1982), and in the territory of Nunavut (NTI, 1998). Each has been negotiated and created around the cultural, social, political and economic contexts of the people and region in question. These four programmes can be divided into two categories: both the James Bay and Nunavut programmes fund individual intensive hunters in carrying out their livelihoods within the context of extended country-based living; and both the Nunavik and Northeastern Quebec Naskapi programmes fund "community hunters" who are few in number and supply country produce for the community at large. Each

²⁵ The LIA reached an agreement in principal which included a 3% share of Newfoundland's royalty tax. Innu Nation, with less than half the represented membership of the LIA, will likely get closer to 1.5%. Not a substantial sum.

programme provides for the supply and circulation of country produce at a level where all in the communities can benefit, but only the first two, those of James Bay and Nunavut, also work to support hunters as a segment of the population, their particular traditional way of life, its values and social institutions. The Nunavik and Naskapi programmes primarily operate as economic and subsistence units as a function of local community social service, not as guaranteed income replacement programmes aimed at supporting individual hunters. The Naskapi programme, in fact, is not even listed by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* as an extant harvesters' support programme (RCAP, 1996), thus situating it as a community service, rather than an income security programme proper.

Both the James Bay and Nunavut models support individual intensive hunters, but in different contexts. Whereas the James Bay model encourages families to participate as "Beneficiary Units" within the programme, allowing both hunter and spouse, as well as dependent children, to be issued benefits, the Nunavut model supports a maximum of one hunter from each household. Levels of support are of a similar magnitude per individual participant in each of the two models, yet higher per family in James Bay as it supports entire households as beneficiary units. In 1997, the Nunavut programme funded up to a maximum of \$15,000 per hunter, at one hunter per household (NTI, 1998); in 1996, the James Bay ISP funded a maximum of \$12,881 per hunter, the same amount for the hunter's spouse, as well as a basic amount of \$1,351 per child and another \$1,351 for the household unit (Cree Hunters and Trappers ISP Board, 1997).

I will be using the James Bay model as a starting point for describing a potential Utshimassits programme; however, the final proposed programme will necessarily differ in form from any of the models now in existence. Although a harvester support system

would be integral to any economic development-oriented caribou hunting, no research has hitherto been carried out in Utshimassits among the Mushuau Innu concerning exactly what form the programme should take in their particular situation.

A program of income supplements for Mushuau Innu harvesters should be seen as an institution for drawing younger generations back into lifeway pursuits seen as traditional by the community. It should not be seen as merely a means of buoying existing hunters, often elders, who do not see themselves finding alternatives within the industrial or wage economy. It is an institution of cultural reproduction, allowing articulation with the dominant economy by directly linking traditional pursuits with the consumer market economy; through linking with the delayed return of cash (and therefore purchasing power, for long term reinvestment in capital equipment as well as in non-subsistence oriented commodities) along with the immediate return of subsistence goods (Woodburn, 1991:34)²⁶; and by linking traditional social organisation

²⁶ Woodburn (1991) makes an analytical distinction between what he calls immediate-return systems and delayed-return systems. An immediate-return system is one in which activities oriented to the present are stressed. This system is characterised by a deployment of labour to produce food for immediate consumption, or consumption over the next couple days; in which material culture includes simple, utilitarian, replaceable tools, which although made with skill, do not require much labour to create; in which people do not hold valued assets representing a return on labour over time; and in which people are systematically disengaged from assets, from the potential in assets for creating a dependency (1991:32).

A delayed-return system is one in which activities are oriented towards the past and the future, as well as the present. In this system, people hold rights over valued assets which either represent a yield, a return on labour applied over time, or are held and managed in a way which has similar social implications to delayed yields on labour. (1991:32)

According to Woodburn (191:32), delayed-return hunter-gatherer systems are characterised by four main types of assets:

- 1) Valuable technical facilities used in production, which are the result of considerable labour, and by which food yield is obtained over a period of months or years;
- 2) Processed and stored food or materials usually in fixed dwellings;
- 3) Wild products which themselves have been improved or increased by human labour; this includes wild herds which are culled selectively, and wild plants which are tended;
- 4) Assets in the form of rights held by men over their female kin who then are bestowed in marriage on other men.

Woodburn is attempting to show that certain immediate-return hunter gatherer societies may be seen as formed as the result of violence or coercion from the encapsulating society in which they are found. This hypothesis, however, is based on the notion that hunter-gatherers are encapsulated within the

and patterning with the dominant political system, through the administration of the program itself, and its decision making process from the hunter, to the local committees, upwards to the board itself, and the provincial and federal governments.

As a development tool, harvester support allows for the continuation, or reinstitution, of traditional modes of economic production (not just subsistence production, see Ingold, 1991:272), as well as traditional patterns of social organisation and transactive process. At the same time, it situates these within the contemporary political and economic environment, the state of Canada. Harvester support, as an institution, allows for the evolution of Mushuau Innu culture from within, while allowing it to be receptive and incorporative of structures of the dominant society in which it is encapsulated. Therefore, harvester support can be seen as a sort of filter through which, or catalyst by which, structures of the dominant society can be incorporated into Mushuau Innu society while allowing them to be articulated in a manner that does not conflict with other aspects of the Mushuau Innu cultural order. This is to say, it allows aspects of the dominant society to be put in place within Mushuau Innu life, but in a context which is culturally relevant to that life. It allows

bounds of pastoral or agricultural societies, and does not account for the fact that many if not most hunter-gatherer societies today are in fact encapsulated within the bounds of industrialised and commoditised states. It is therefore possible to observe what would otherwise be considered immediate-return systems developing characteristics of delayed-return systems, such as the possession of valuable technical goods used in harvesting, such as rifles or snowmobiles among the Mushuau Innu, which represent a reinvestment of a yield on labour insofar as cash reward for labour over time needed to be purposefully accumulated in order to acquire such goods. More generally, immediate-return societies are becoming (have become) delayed-return systems as a result of their contact with or colonisation by encapsulating industrial states. They have almost universally become commoditised, insofar as part of their production is now geared towards external trade, such as Australian Aboriginal or Inuit art production, or Ju/'hoansi craftwork, and that in virtually every case at least a portion of their labour investment is met with a cash return instead of an immediate return of food. This even applies to production of goods for sale within the community, which is met with cash to be at least partially reinvested in capital equipment for future production. An example of this is the Innu informal crafts economy, where clothing items are produced by a few women who sell them in to the community, using a portion of the returns to reinvest in bigger or better crafts-making implements, such as sewing machines.

these structures to be input in ways pertinent to the realities of Mushuau Innu, and develop from there.

It must be stressed that the institution of Harvester Support will not be implemented in a vacuum. Nor will these structures of the dominant political economy be introduced for the first time in Innu society. The Mushuau Innu have been submerged in the commoditised economy for at least the last thirty years. Before then, they had been involved to a varying degree with the commoditised economy for at least 200 years, through exchange within the larger context of the fur trade, with missionaries, and with other Aboriginal groups who themselves were involved in trade activities. Therefore these institutions of the dominant society are not new to the Mushuau Innu cultural system, but are already clearly articulated by all of their population, nearly all of whom presently hold cash jobs of one sort or another, and many of whom are in administrative positions, having experience with the forms of bureaucratic procedure, resource management and allocation present in the dominant society. So, these structures will be articulated through harvester support in ways already familiar to the Mushuau Innu from their previous experience. At the same time, an opportunity exists for the implementation of these structures to be redirected within a traditional milieu. This is accomplished by allowing those directly involved in traditional pursuits to produce, allocate and alienate wealth through the production and redistribution of country produce in ways which are consistent with the structure and process of traditional lifeways, while at the same time allowing these same "traditional" producers to redirect their activities, where needed, towards ends more directly linked with the dominant society such as production purely for cash sale, and purchasing gear and transportation

to aid in production activities (and it must be remembered that some of these, too, have been a part of Mushuau Innu culture for over 150 years).

In this way, harvester support allows for the articulation of two separate systems, while allowing Mushuau Innu structural relationships to dictate the pattern of implementation, and allowing the point of articulation itself to be in dynamic equilibrium, as opposed to being fixed rigidly in one place. Therefore, a harvester support program allows for articulation of two separate economic systems in a way that asserts the dynamic quality of any cultural order, and militates against any view of culture as static, or locked into an historically referenced mode. This is to say that the Mushuau Innu are not trapped in a system which only allows them to generate wealth through pursuits practised by their ancestors from time immemorial, or from the time that the Crown "asserted its sovereignty" over Mushuau Innu territory. Instead, it is a system which allows these structures to change, to evolve, adapting to the contemporary environment – physical, economic and political – while at the same time remaining "traditional".

Harvester support, therefore, is predicated on a view of Aboriginal rights that does not see culture as static, but that allows for the fact that cultures and societies do in fact change from generation to generation, while allowing their cultural identities to evolve in relation to their given context. The uniqueness of each culture can therefore be said to lie not in the practice, or implementation thereof, but in the *process* of implementation of practice, and in the process of how a culture incorporates new structures and changes existing ones as a form of innovation (for its own sake), or as a response to conflicting value positions between individual Mushuau Innu, or adaptation

to its physical, social, economic and political environments. Harvester support, as an institution, facilitates this process.

The economic, social and political environments internal to the Labrador Innu Nation come into consideration in programme design. Although I am here primarily dealing with the Utshimassits programme design, certain comments should be made concerning the distinctiveness of Innu Nation's two Labrador communities. Utshimassits and Sheshatshiu cannot be grouped together culturally. In terms of cultural heritage, they each have unique histories. As well, each of these two communities faces differing contemporary realities in terms of the ecological, political, social, and economic conditions in which they are situated. Although a programme, or programmes, of Harvesters' Support might be implemented for each community, the design for each would be quite different, particularly as the Sheshatshiu design would of necessity involve more intense trapping activities, exploiting sedentary resources as well as migratory ones. Although the overall bureaucratic operation of the program could, and should in fact, be unified, the pragmatics of implementation should reflect the very different realities of each community. For example, criteria for qualifying for HSP benefits should reflect the realities of hunting patterns and economic opportunity in each community. While this may involve more extensive bush living in Sheshatshiu, for example, it may involve more community-based hunting in Natuashish.²⁷ In the latter case, a different set of qualifying criteria needs to be worked out. Caribou numbers and range will, as well, continue to fluctuate, most likely continuing to drop steadily over the

next couple of decades (Meredith & Martell, 1985). A set of dynamic criteria must therefore be devised, indexed to herd numbers and ranges.²⁸ It must also be considered that, unlike Cree ISP, the Mushuau Innu HSP Programme will be centred upon the harvesting of a migratory resource, not a sedentary one.

The administrative structure of a Harvester Support Program should start with an umbrella group, working for both communities. The mode of disbursement to beneficiary units should be unified for the two communities, as should the amount of support relative to individual need. This last item, however is based upon the particulars of the final implemented program in each case, and therefore is a relative term, not a fixed amount per person. Therefore, a fixed per diem cannot be established which will cover hunters in both communities, and these can only be established for each community once the minimum participation time is worked out for each model, based on wider local economic criteria such as what other development or employment is available in or around either community. In the end, however, the program should assure that all beneficiary units, from both communities, receive similar support relative to their

²⁷ I will go into further detail later concerning criteria of qualification and participation. They are mentioned here to illustrate how categories must be differentially defined for each of the two communities in question.

²⁸ However, as will be elaborated below, Scott & Feit (1992) point out that the Cree ISP Programme increased the carrying capacity of the land by encouraging hunters to exploit smaller species that they otherwise would not have. This would aid in securing subsistence at times when caribou are not plentiful. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the section on history, fish have always been an important secondary resource to the Innu, and could as well be exploited during times of caribou decrease.

concentrated involvement in hunting, and the existence of compatible economic opportunities in each community.

Hunting and Harvesters' Support: James Bay vs. Utshimassits

As stated above, I will be using the James Bay Income Security Project model as a starting point for discussion of an Utshimassits programme design. A discussion of the James Bay model, its context and its implementation are necessary at this point in order to demonstrate how and where the Utshimassits model will necessarily differ. There are several issues which must be addressed in any attempt to translate the success James Bay Cree have had with hunting and ISP to the Mushuau Innu context. These issues centre on the differences between the Cree and Innu realities in the areas of demographics, patterns of hunting, political and legal success in establishing their Aboriginal rights as a bargaining asset, differences in geography and social economics, as well as differing social and cultural considerations. As well, there is much to be learned from the Cree success with their ISP programme over the past twenty five years, and this knowledge should be incorporated into the planning of any Mushuau Innu programme design.

The Cree, in the mid-1970's, successfully negotiated a major treaty with the province of Quebec: the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA, 1975). This treaty can be seen as a result of the Cree's successful assertion of their Aboriginal rights to land on which Hydro Quebec, the provincial Crown utility, wanted to develop multi-billion dollar hydro works. It is from the fact that the Quebec government had aspirations for northern Quebec, and from the fact that Quebec wanted to create jurisdictional and legal certainty by extinguishing any potential vestige of Aboriginal title (Asch, 1997:213), that the Cree were able to negotiate a comprehensive compensation package. This included the creation of an indigenously staffed Cree Regional Authority representing at the regional level the various departments of

government affecting the Cree, such as the Ministry of Health, or the Ministry of Education; and an income security program for those Cree who wished to continue hunting as their full time vocation (Salisbury, 1986:56-8).

Although the Innu have been very vocal, and indeed highly visible both domestically and internationally, and are in the midst of a large and complicated land claim incorporating much of northern and eastern Labrador, they have not yet had the political and legal success that the Cree have had, and therefore are in a much weaker bargaining position. However, the existence in the area of one of the world's richest nickel deposits, and the prospect of a \$20-40 billion mine, have highly politicised the claims process, and given it an unprecedented urgency. The 1998 recommendations of the Voisey's Bay mine Environmental Assessment Panel, that Inco should not commence exploration and exploitation of the nickel deposit until both the land claim and an impact benefit agreement are finalised, and the success of a series of court injunctions curtailing Inco's development of the mine, have helped place Innu Nation the most secure bargaining position they have been in over the twenty-five year history of the claim proceedings. For the first time the Innu are in a real position to demand permanent social benefit programmes on top of any fixed cap on the dollar value of the claim settlement. It is this historical position that makes possible the discussion of Harvesters' Support. For hunting to be viable for a sizeable proportion of the population, a programme of Harvester's Support is probably a minimal necessity, as has been demonstrated for the Cree (Scott & Feit, 1992). For Harvester's Support to be attainable, the Crown, or those acting in its interest, such as the Newfoundland government, must acknowledge the Innu's Aboriginal title to their traditional lands, and pay compensation in various forms in order to use it (or to allow industry to exploit it).

When comparing James Bay Cree data to those of the Mushuau Innu, one must not compare the harvesting on a species to species basis in the assessment of participation in harvesting activities. Rather, we must compare periodic or seasonal intensity of harvesting activity. For example, fall goose hunting among the Cree is more correctly associated with a combination of fall goose and fall caribou hunting among the Mushuau Innu, because in each case a similar proportion of harvesters is involved in each activity, and for a comparable amount of time. And furthermore, the produce of each such harvest has comparable consequences for each local economy.

For the greater part of the 1970's (1972-1979), caribou kills for the entire James Bay region represented a mean of 4.6% of the beaver harvest, or one caribou killed for each twenty-one beaver. Whapmagoostui, however, which is situated above the tree line, and is most comparable to the Mushuau Innu community in terms of production economics, harvested caribou much more intensely, representing 53% of their harvest of beaver, or over one caribou for each two beavers taken. The percentage for the region as a whole without taking Whapmagoostui into account is 3.6% caribou to beaver, or twenty-eight beaver harvested for each caribou. There is wide variation from one locality to the next, ranging from less than one percent in Wemindji and Waswanipi to 7.5% in Mistassini, to above 50% in Whapmagoostui.

In order to assess the eventual effect of HSP on harvesting statistics, a pilot study should be initiated in Utshimassits to begin to track and record harvesting levels for key species to form a baseline for comparison for harvesters' support activities.²⁹ This type of data was assembled in detail by Scott & Feit from various primary and secondary

²⁹ While in Utshimassits, I had proposed such a project to both Innu Nation and the MIBC, and had even sketched out its rudimentary design. Politically, however, they were not in a position to address it at the time.

sources for the James Bay study. A study should also be implemented on the impact of different levels of employment activity (seasonal versus permanent, etc.) on harvesting patterns. The opportunity now exists in the Mushuau Innu community to undertake such studies. Harvesters' support will in all likelihood not come into being here for the next few years, so the opportunity exists to look into current pre-HSP levels. Of course, it must be taken into account that one of the reasons for this delay is that the community is involved in its relocation project, which has created employment opportunities for the vast majority of the community, both generating wealth for the community and its members, and taking them away from more intensive harvesting opportunities. Conversely, we must also consider the fact that most of the jobs are not permanent, but last for a number of weeks or months and then leave a hiatus before subsequent projects begin. As well, many of the jobs are part-time. Put this information together with Scott & Feit's (1992:111) assertion that in many areas of the North, it is those who are seasonally or intermittently employed who are the most intensive harvesters, by virtue of the fact that they can afford the expenses of outfitting and transportation. It therefore could be anticipated that harvesting levels in Utshimassits for the few years prior to HSP, may be found to be either higher or lower than previous years. Higher, if people have used their added income to finance the spending of greater periods in the country. Lower, if people are spending their money elsewhere, or if it is those who were the most intensive harvesters who now find themselves in the more permanent employment situations (as is the case with a few otherwise intensive harvesters I know). Again, baseline studies should shed light on these patterns.

Finally, among the James Bay Cree, harvesters' support altered the carrying capacity of the land; or at least it showed that this is in part socially defined, and it

redefined it (Scott & Feit, 1992). Carrying capacity defines the maximum number of hunters who could live on the land in the region and is also based on biological factors such as animal population and population regeneration. Harvesters' support in James Bay encouraged the exploitation of previously under-exploited species, especially small game, by providing hunters with increased outfitting power and ability to bring purchased food into the country. According to hunters, this made it more attractive to them to more intensively hunt small game. This small game was more intensively redistributed throughout the communities in fulfilment of social obligations, bringing prestige and mutual respect to those involved (Scott & Feit, 1992:114). The overall effect of this shifting of harvesting efforts was that it increased the carrying capacity of the land by expanding the utilisation of species which had not previously figured as heavily in calculations of capacity. It can therefore be seen that biological constraints had different effects under altered socio-economic factors: harvesters' support leads to more harvesting of under-utilised species, which in turn leads to increased carrying capacity of land and therefore an amelioration of the effect of biological limits.

Salisbury (1986:vii) has described the economic conditions upon which James Bay Cree life stood at the time of the negotiation of the JBNQA:

The hunting economy of the communities was under threat, and the wage earning of the Cree was mainly that of short term unskilled labour. They were turning "from hunters to proletarians," in La Rusic's (1968) words. Their educational system was preparing them badly for both "white" and "Indian" worlds, and psychological studies showed that this involved psychological conflict.

This description of the socio-economic conditions among the James Bay Cree up to the mid-1970's is applicable to the Mushuau Innu by the mid-1990's, with the caveat that

the Mushuau Innu's hunting economy, as a subsistence economy, was in much worse shape than even that of the Cree in the early 1970's. Some major differences between the Cree and Innu social, political, economic and legal situations, which will bear on the eventual success or failure of any attempted re-instituted *traditional* hunting practice, hinge on the issues of economics and hunting patterns, and demographics and social relations.

Economics and hunting patterns. Mushuau Innu and James Bay Cree hunting patterns are markedly different, and most importantly, prior to the inception of ISP, the Cree country-based hunting and trapping economy was still very much alive, with the early 1970's seeing 80% of Cree families deriving the majority of their livelihood from harvesting activities, and 40% deriving their livelihood exclusively from it (Salisbury, 1986:20). In Utshimassits, however, intensive country based hunting is not nearly as pervasive an aspect of local economics as it once was. Whereas in the pre-sedentarisation coastal era (1916-1967), virtually the entire community would head off into nomadic camps in the fall, not to return to the settlement until the following spring, save some who returned at Christmas time (Henriksen, 1973), the post-sedentarisation era has seen an ever diminishing number of households heading off into the country, and for ever diminishing spans of time. By the 1990's, very few individuals were spending more than a couple of days at a time in the country, and those who did travel out to the barrens seldom remained there for more than a couple of months at most.

Cree hunting is divided into a number of "seasons" including spring and fall goose seasons, intensive winter harvesting from bush camps, and sporadic hunting of other water fowl as well as coastal fishing during the summer and throughout the year (Salisbury, 1986; Scott & Feit, 1992). For many of those most intensively involved in

the Cree ISP programme, this pattern has changed very little in the ensuing years, and although the programme demands that individuals spend at least 120 days per year engaged in harvesting activities, many of the most intense hunters remain in the country for well over the 240 days which is the maximum payable under the programme (Scott & Feit, 1992). These days may not be contiguous, however, and may be broken up along the lines of the various hunting "seasons" and punctuated by either brief or extended stays in town.

Mushuau Innu traditional patterns, as stated above, were much less structured. After leaving the community once the ice first locks up in mid-fall, most Mushuau Innu would remain in the barrens, either in the same multi-family hunting group, or moving between several, for up to three months before most would return to the coast around Christmas to re-provision, tend to minor emergencies, and to meet people they had not seen since first departing in the fall (Henriksen, 1973). After spending a short time at the coast, usually no more than a few days, small groups of families at a time head back out towards the barrens. If caribou were plentiful in the early season, then all but the very old will depart; if not so plentiful, then some younger individuals, especially unmarried men, may stay behind as well (ibid.). Barren-ground life would continue for the remainder of the winter, and into the spring, with families moving between multi-family hunting groups, or occasionally striking off on their own. Late in the spring, just before the ice begins to break up, camps would begin to pack up their belongings and head back to the coast, often coming in as late as mid-June, ice permitting.

During the course of this cycle, often exceeding nine months in the barrens and less than three in Davis Inlet, the primary hunting activities centred around nomadic caribou hunting, patterned by herd movements. At the same time, smaller animals were

harvested, especially fish, when camped near frozen lakes or streams, porcupine when found (considered a delicacy), and ptarmigan (partridge) were hunted. Other animals, such as black bear were hunted when encountered, but constituted a much lower proportion of harvesting production. The caribou and its hunting, however, remained the predominant part of Mushuau Innu diets and lives, with all other activities being relegated to mere by-products of this reality.

In the post-sedentary era, especially from about 1975 onwards, this cycle has ceased to be a part of Mushuau Innu life. Today, most families stay in their homes in Utshimassits all year round, with a few spending some little time out on the land on occasion. Caribou continued to circulate in the community, but shared its once predominant place in Innu diets with store bought meat and processed foods. By the mid-1990's, however, caribou numbers were at such a high, and with herd migrations bringing them right up to within a few miles of the settlement, that hunting levels were returning to pre-sedentary levels without any increase in time spent on the land by Innu hunters or their families. This level of caribou availability is temporary, however, as most estimates agree that herd levels have peaked some years ago, and are actually now in decline, as a normal part of their 70-80 year cycle. Therefore, in order to maintain high levels of caribou meat, which is still valued above all other foods, much more extensive time will have to be spent out on the land in the future.

The differences in hunting patterns between the James Bay Cree and the Mushuau Innu may suggest differences in design and implementation of a Harvesters' Support program for Utshimassits. Minimum time spent involved in harvesting activities need not differ markedly from the Cree model. Within the James Bay programme, hunters are eligible for ISP if they spend at least 120 days involved in harvesting and

related activities, at least 90 of which are spent away from the settlement (Scott & Feit, 1992:7); but as stated above, many of the most intense harvesters remain on the land for anywhere up to seven or eight months of the year (although not necessarily in one stretch). Innu traditional patterns are no less country-intensive, even if they are less structured by the various "seasons" evinced in Cree annual cycles. As Harvesters' Support should function optimally when supplemented by occasional part-time employment³⁰ or other income sources, and not as a sole source of income, a stipulated minimum time involvement should not be set much higher than it is in the James Bay programme, although some minimum is required in order to limit involvement to those who are committed to "career" harvesting. Naturally, more time is spent hunting, and less in wage labour or other income generating occupations, and the added economic burden this places on the HSP system would need to be accounted for. As well, it is likely that in the present day, the Innu would not need to spend the entire time in the barrens, and this should be reflected in the criteria for HSP eligibility. Where in the past, all travel was done on foot with supplies being towed by dog teams, thus discouraging trips back to the settlement, a reintroduced practice would rely on snowmobiles as the basis of transportation, and to a lesser extent on air-lifting. Since the 15,000 square mile hunting territory is in actuality an area 150 miles from east to west, and 100 miles north to south (Henriksen, 1973:5), and since this is a relatively easy commute for most Innu by snowmobile, it is likely that many more trips to the coast would be possible.

According to Scott and Feit's (1992:6) report on the state of the James Bay

³⁰ Scott & Feit (1992:337) provide data from 1976-7 where overall 85% of beneficiary units received income from fur harvesting, and 67% received employment and related income. These are in addition to pensions, social aid, and band relief. More recent data is not reported.

Income Security Programme, the hunters' connection with the cash economy and with other institutions of economy and state are vital to the success of ISP and hunting. A hunting practice backed by income security cannot exist in an economic vacuum. It is set up to work alongside other economic structures. From the JBNQA, the elaborate Cree administration and Cree Regional Authority was set up which created myriad employment opportunities for the Cree. This created an economic and social baseline within the communities from which hunting could take place. For hunting and HSP to be successful among the Innu, some similar infrastructure must come out of the land claim, where the community and regional economy as a whole is able to support and functionally incorporate an HSP sector. As stated in earlier sections, the scope of Innu local and regional government structures will probably not increase dramatically from their present size following a settled agreement. Therefore, if sufficient part-time wage employment opportunities do not present themselves (through professional employment, enterprises or community projects and programmes), the Mushuau Innu HSP may have to account for this in the form of added paid benefits to participants, or participants should be eligible for limited unemployment insurance benefits during the brief summer months.

Demographics and social organisation. An important question to ask is how will the added purchasing and outfitting power provided by ISP transform the structures of hunting within Innu culture? Scott and Feit (1992:36) posed the question of how added mobility in the bush created by the existence of snowmobiles and gas affected Cree social patterns. It was concluded in the Cree case that the added mobility did somewhat alter social patterns, but that these were within the range of change and variation of Cree society. It is arguable that among the Innu as well the added mobility will alter

traditional social patterning, but that this too will be an extension of existing social patterns. The idea of increased mobility fits well with the concepts of Innu hunter autonomy. As it is normal for hunters to switch hunting groups mid-season if they feel that this will better serve their family's immediate or long term needs, the mobility offered by the snowmobile will offer the hunter the option of joining a more distant group at shorter notice. In all this, added mobility may lead to an increase in the frequency of group-switching, and in the distance between groups switched to and from. As with the Cree, however, this can be seen as an alteration of the manifestation of certain social structures, but not a fundamental transformation of the relationships which underlie them.

Scott and Feit (1992: 47) report as well that sharing and distribution of bush meat in the communities to non-hunting families increased as a result of ISP. This is mostly the result of shifting proportions. While greater numbers of hunters are in the bush involved in intensive animal harvesting, and thus producing more meat, fewer non-hunters are left in the communities who proportionately receive a greater share of distributed meat. This effect would be less marked among the Innu as the total population is much smaller, and perhaps a higher percentage of the population would be involved first-hand in harvesting. Furthermore, if instituted in the near future, HSP would allow more intensive country-based hunting to keep the circulation of produce at its current level, despite the anticipated drop in caribou population on the horizon. At the moment, all freezers in Utshimassits are well stocked with caribou, although not everyone participates in hunting activities. HSP would provide the context for keeping levels as they presently are, but there is no room for augmentation without waste.

In all, the effect of ISP on James Bay Cree social organisation has been that

Apparently minor adjustments are occurring in roles in the division of labour in response to altered technological and demographic circumstances. These adjustments, however, seem to occur within the range of possibilities held out by pre-existing social and ideological structures, and do not seem to be moving towards fundamental transformations at the level of social domestic relations. The Program seems to have drawn the young at all ages more heavily into hunting camps and, by direct implication, into an improved knowledge of those considerable components of Cree culture whose historical and present meaning lie in the relations of humans to the natural environment, in the context of hunting as a way of life (ibid.:56).

It is probable that these statements will hold equally true for the Mushuau Innu. If the social changes were seen as acceptable within the pre-existing structures of Cree society, they would likely be at least as acceptable within Innu society due to the high value placed on caribou hunting and its intensive traditional involvement in country-based hunting and its similar, perhaps greater, emphasis on hunter autonomy.

In terms, therefore, of purely ideological considerations, it seems fair to say that an income security program similar in its rudiments to that of the James Bay Cree would be appropriate in the context of the Mushuau Innu. However, in consideration of differences in demographics, social organisation, geography, and hunting pattern, some programme design structures will necessarily differ. Major points of similarity between the James Bay programme and a proposed Mushuau Innu programme lie mainly in the areas of minimum participation time required in the programme, and proposed level of community participation in the programme as a function of the overall local population and economy. One significant point of difference is the potential higher level of support for individual participants in the latter programme, in light of extant employment opportunities or, as we shall discuss below, the need to alter the form of the beneficiary unit in order to create a flexible participation system within family and multi-family

units, in order to accommodate the regional economic realities that will exist at the time of implementation.

HSP Beneficiary Units

Although the proposal of an HSP design for Utshimassits is taking the James Bay model as its starting point, there are aspects of the institution of the James Bay ISP *Beneficiary Unit*, the administrative participatory unit in the ISP program within the context of which individual participants are paid their benefits, that do not translate well to the Utshimassits socio-economic context. James Bay ISP Beneficiary Units are not *production units*. They are artificially constructed administrative units reflective of the philosophy that a domestic production unit or residence unit should have one key provider or head, with the possibility of one consort, and one or more dependants. In James Bay, the head of the beneficiary unit must be an adult over 18, but the gender of this head is not specified. This is more a reflection of the doctrine of gender equality in Quebecois and Canadian society than anything else. Unit heads, therefore, may be female, but the limited cases of this are generally those of a single mother, or of a widow harvesting her late husband's trap-line.

Success as a beneficiary unit is not directly linked to success as a production unit. The traditional unit of intensive harvesting production in Mushuau Innu culture is the multi-family hunting group. This group averages four or five families living together in a winter hunting camp, from which single or multi-day excursions are launched. The composition of such a group is fluid, commonly changing several times over the course of a season. The core of the group is generally stable, being centred around one particular strong hunter (the group's *utshimau*) and his wife. There may or may not be an agnatic core to such groups, stemming from the *utshimau* himself, or from his father or wife's father, for example. But even this core is unstable, and even the *utshimau* himself

may leave the group mid-season, allowing another head to emerge. Henriksen (1973) enumerates several reasons for group fission, not all ecological. One main impetus for group fission is conflict resolution, or conflict avoidance; another is personal preference; and a third is aspiration of individual hunters to lead their own groups, or at least not be subsumed within a group in which he they have little say.

Success as a production unit entails adequate provision for those residing in the camp. There are subjective factors to this success as well, from the individual's point of view, which involve the contentedness of hunters, or individual hunter/wife dyads, with the level of provision they feel they are receiving relative to what they expect or feel they could procure in a different group or on their own; and satisfaction that individuals or dyads experience within the group with respect to their own autonomy or freedom to express their own will as to the direction the group as a whole should take. This last point is tricky in Innu culture, as it is unacceptable to press your will on others, while at the same time individuals desire to have others hold them in esteem and follow their lead. Therefore, if one does not receive the esteem he feels is his due (a relative term in itself) then he may be tempted to leave the group and find satisfaction elsewhere.

Therefore, there are criteria other than success in procuring subsistence needs which go to determining the success of the production unit, the multi-family hunting group. If the group cannot sustain itself, it cannot be said to have been successful. As has been mentioned, there are social factors, linked to the realisation of individual ambition, which may have an effect on the saliency of the hunting group. Even if the group is successful as a producer of subsistence goods, it may fission as a result of interpersonal conflict or mere incompatibility. This is in fact the common pattern observed in seasonal composition of multi-family groups. Generally, however, the group does not completely

splinter, but retains a core of one or two families who had agreed to hunt together at the beginning of the season, and who have continued to do so until the end.

Therefore, a successful production unit generally includes several families who are successful in both living together and harvesting together. In contrast, the beneficiary unit, if broadly defined as a nuclear family, as it is in the James Bay model, is one single "household", defined as an adult harvester, with or without a consort and dependants. It is not relevant to talk of the beneficiary unit as being successful or not, as the fulfilment of its goal is accomplished by its very existence. This is to say that the goal of a beneficiary unit is to collect Programme benefits, and that is accomplished by fulfilling the criteria for being a beneficiary unit within the program: being a harvester (with or without consort and dependants) who engages in defined HSP activities for the minimum required period. Success as a production unit, or a member thereof, is not directly related to being a beneficiary unit. Units who produce subsistence goods and those who do not, equally collect HSP benefits. A beneficiary unit which camps on its own may have no choice but to produce at levels able to sustain itself, but one which is part of a larger production unit need not produce the same amount (or theoretically anything at all) and still be able to collect full benefits. Of course, there are social pressures, and cultural/ideological impetuses, such as prestige, at work as well; and HSP payments alone may not be enticement enough to keep members participating in what can be a strenuous lifestyle. Conversely, there may be social or cultural reasons why a larger group might desire a particular individual or household to winter with them without keeping up their share of the production. For example, the individuals may be elders or other family members who perhaps cannot take care of themselves as well, and yet qualify fully to be participants in the HSP programme.

Although the James Bay model BU is not representative of the socially most important unit of production in Mushuau Innu culture, it is an institution which bridges the gap between the indigenous structure and the imposed bureaucratic structures of the dominant society. If the beneficiary unit had been defined as the multi-family hunting group, then it would have been administratively impossible to track individuals between groups, forcing them to maintain their membership throughout the season, which would go against the natural tendencies of Mushuau Innu social dynamics. However, linking the payment of benefits to the *individual* "participant in production", i.e., the harvester as an autonomous actor, HSP would allow for the continuance of indigenous Mushuau Innu social dynamics – allowing harvesters, their spouses and children, to change groups as they see fit – while maintaining eligibility for full benefits. Of course, the option of leaving a group, but having your children remain with that group with full eligibility, may be impossible under this administrative system if children are registered solely as dependants of registered harvesters. This scenario could possibly arise if both hunter and spouse both needed to return to the settlement for any prolonged period, perhaps for reasons of participation in regional politics, or to attend a political demonstration (a not uncommon occurrence among the Innu), but wish to leave their children in the country with relatives.

The multi-family hunting group, therefore, is a unit of subsistence production (and cultural reproduction), which may include both HSP beneficiary units and non-HSP harvesting families. For the purpose of subsistence production, there is no practical difference between HSP and non-HSP harvesters. In practice, however, will there be a difference in the contribution or social role of HSP harvesters in the group? Let us be mindful of the fact that the success of the group has been defined as inclusive of the

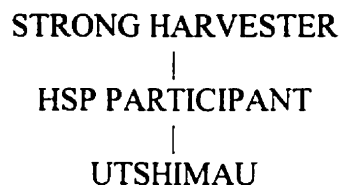
successful realisation of individual ambition within the group. Will there be social tension between those who are and those who are not HSP beneficiaries? Will this lead to the increased probability of group fission?

In the James Bay Cree case, it is empirically shown that the leaders of hunting groups are generally ISP hunters (Scott & Feit, 1992). Non-ISP hunters may be a part of the group, either for the season (but not qualifying for ISP for one of a number of reasons), or for short periods of a few days to a few weeks. It must be remembered, however, that the James Bay area is one consisting of "registered trap-lines" based on earlier (multi-)family hunting territories, and the Cree obtained recognition of the authority and autonomy of hunting groups to manage these units via the JBNQA. The "owners" of these traplines are generally the heads of the hunting groups; they are the most intensive hunters in the James Bay area, and are generally ISP beneficiaries. Those wishing to benefit from the programme who are not "owners" of hunting territories, must demonstrate to the local ISP committee that they have made arrangements to use a hunting territory, which means permission to harvest within the trapline territory of a hunter who is most likely a registered ISP beneficiary (Scott & Feit, 1992: 61). Non-ISP hunters may attach themselves, by invitation, to existing groups led by an ISP harvester, or may strike out on their own (by permission of the registered owner) within the territory. It is very unlikely however, for practical reasons, that non-Programme harvesters will lead a multi-family harvesting group including HSP harvesters. This seems to imply that HSP participants will be the harvesting elite, as attested by their almost exclusive representation as *utshimauits*, and will, as a group, dominate harvesting decision making and leadership. Their position as such, however, is not because of their status as HSP harvesters; rather it is their status and history as senior hunters that has

made them statistically much more likely to be HSP harvesters, and as well statistically much more likely to be group leaders. Therefore the line of determination runs from being a strong and respected harvester to both HSP participation and group leadership:



It does *not* run sequentially from strong harvester to HSP participant to *utshimau*:



Therefore, although there seems to be a correlation between HSP participation and social status in country life (Nutshimit), it is not as a result of the social effects of HSP membership, but by virtue of the fact that those who would conventionally be the leaders anyhow, are over-represented in the HSP population.

An Utshimassits Beneficiary Unit Model

In order to best approximate the patterns of hunting social organisation in the country, and the dynamics of group formation and membership negotiation prior to departure from the community, the following model is proposed for Utshimassits HSP Beneficiary Units.

The harvesting programme should be set up in terms of a "team/player" system. Individual community members may apply to register themselves for HSP eligibility, thus placing themselves in the pool of individuals ("players") available for the formation of hunting groups. As well, individuals can apply to register a hunting party ("team"), and be named as its leader. This registered party would initially be without members other than the leader, who throughout participation in the programme also retains "player" status. Other members ("players") may or may not be named later, before leaving for the country, or afterwards once the party has already left to pursue harvesting. Group members may be recruited through negotiations among those eligible hunters registered in the programme. Selected participants may be accompanied by their spouses, who may be leaders or players themselves, and registered dependants.

The selection and approval of participants and group leaders would be carried out at the community level by the HSP board, to be composed of members elected by the community, most likely on the merit of their reputation within the community as strong or committed hunters. Because the overall annual budget for the HSP programme will likely have a cap, this board is necessary to adjudicate the allocation of the limited resources of the programme.

The Beneficiary Unit of the program would be the individual ("player"). The Beneficiary Milieu would be the Hunting Group ("team"), consisting of a leader and at

minimum zero players. This is to say that although the recipient of HSP benefits through the programme would be the individual participant, the participant is ineligible for benefits if not participating as the member or leader of a registered hunting group ("team"). There are several organisational possibilities that emerge from this structure. In its most basic form, a hunting group would consist of a team leader, and various individual "players", harvesting cooperatively. An individual leader may also constitute a "team" of his own, therefore allowing him to engage in solitary harvesting activities without jeopardising his qualification. Furthermore, a team leader may participate for a time as a "player" in another leader's "team" (hunting-group).

This structure serves three parallel purposes. First, it limits the total number of participants within the programme, therefore capping the expenditure of programme financial resources (depletion of fauna resources through hunting is not at this time a concern). Secondly, it allows the programme to encourage the pattern and process of group formation, membership negotiation, and *utshimau* selection that was in place among the Mushuau Innu prior to sedentarisation. Thirdly, by making the individual the Beneficiary Unit, and not the family, individual household members are free to participate or not in the programme, without jeopardising the eligibility of other participants. As well, making the individual the beneficiary takes the pressure off women to join the programme along with their spouses, or allows individual family members to come and go in order to meet other growing commitments in the community. Under the James Bay ISP system as well, individual camp members or even individual family (beneficiary unit) members may depart for a time, or permanently, without jeopardising the benefits of other participants. I feel, however, that designating the individual participant as the recipient of programme benefits would serve to

strengthen the individual's ability to flexibly incorporate emerging aspects of local and regional political and economic life. With benefit cheques made out to individuals, spouses would be free to depart for a time, collecting their own benefits for time spent, while not diminishing the payment made to the remaining spouse. Furthermore, individuation of payments would strengthen recognition of women's roles in harvesting activities by paying them directly as full participants, rather than having their benefits subsumed within the payment made in the name of a single household head. In effect, all participants, regardless of gender, would be classified as harvesters, rather than as hunter-wife pairs. This conceptual shift allows the programme to be incorporative of contemporary realities and the growing prominence of women's political roles in the community, while also creating space for traditional family organisation to persist. Hunters and their spouses can remain the dyads they have historically been, while individuals remain free to exercise their autonomy to pursue other activities elsewhere.

During the nomadic era, the composition of hunting parties was negotiated during the summer and autumn in the community. Individual, usually senior, hunters would declare their intentions in terms of date of departure and general destination, and others would "talk" about joining them from the outset, or meeting up with them later. Henriksen (1973) provides a detailed transactional analysis of this process. What is important to highlight here, however, is that there existed a social "market" for hunting skill and prestige. This is to say that there was a strong social consensus as to who were the strong hunters – *utshimauits* – who would most naturally lead multi-family hunting groups. This consensus manifested itself by default, as the *utshimauits* were those who perennially and passively were able to attract followers in the country. These followers were other autonomous hunters who determined that it was in their best interest to hunt

as a member of the *utshimau's* party, rather than strike out as leader of their own group, even though the latter eventuality would afford them the higher degree of autonomy and prestige. This decision to join rather than lead was based on – but not limited to – such criteria as: whether or not one expected to be able to attract others to join them (a necessity unless one wanted to spend weeks or months in isolation in the barrens, which is not only lonely and inefficient in terms of productivity, but also potentially hazardous); which other individuals were joining what groups; and where a hunter's wife might wish to go, depending on with whom she wanted to spend the winter. A structure therefore existed where individual hunters had the options of leading, joining, or remaining in the community, and the ultimate choice was based on the carefully weighed consequences of each eventuality. Thus, although most adult men would have liked to lead multi-family hunting parties, in reality very few actually did, and the turn-over from year to year of *utshimauits* was very low.

The proposed structure for the Mushuau Innu HSP Programme is an attempt to reproduce these relationships and processes within a contemporary context based primarily on a prolonged extra-community hunt, but incorporating the reality that many participants would choose to participate more sporadically, joining and leaving existing camps throughout the year. The HSP board would annually approve the year's participants and *utshimauits*, based on standardised criteria. These *utshimauits* would head up multi-family hunting parties over the course of the HSP season. The HSP board would not, however, allot and administer individual places in the programme; once an individual harvester is registered in the programme, that individual must approach registered *utshimauits* and talk about joining their party.

The programme creates a system where individual hunters are dependent on the registered *utshimauits* for their HSP livelihood, because the individual may only collect HSP benefits within the milieu of the registered hunting party. The onus is therefore on the *utshimau* to be a dedicated hunting leader, and responsibility for incorporating those non-leaders desiring to participate in the programme may translate to political prestige in the modern context. The onus is as well on the HSP board to select dedicated *utshimauits*. Through this arrangement, the institution of *utshimau* is transformed within the contemporary world. Utshimauits are still implicated in the livelihood of individual harvesters, but livelihood now equates with ability to benefit from the programme, where historically, livelihood equated with survival.

Eligibility to be selected as an HSP *utshimau* should be based on individual participation in the programme. A number of years of participation as an individual hunter should be required prior to being eligible to apply for *utshimau* status. For the initial years of the programme, interviews and community consensus should decide on whom is accorded *utshimau* status.

No special official privilege, *per se*, would be accorded to *utshimauits* by their status within the programme. This status would primarily mean that the hunting party was "registered" with the board in their name. The primary motivations, therefore, for becoming an HSP *utshimau* are prestige and autonomy. These parallel the motivations for leading a multi-family hunting party during the pre-sedentarisation era.

The final consideration for programme design is whether or not there should be statutory minima for time spent in the programme, and distance hunted from the community. These considerations are more than anything else directly related to an anticipated cap on programme spending, and feasibility of participation considering the

overall state of the community and its social and economic health. If we approximate James Bay participation benefit rates (JB ISP Board, 2000), then a 25% HSP participation rate in Utshimassits would amount to approximately 5 multi-family hunting groups – the beneficiary milieus, comprising in total about 20 households (out of a total of 81 (MIBC, 1996)) equalling in total approximately 140 individuals, and costing the programme in the vicinity of \$750,000 per year.³¹ As the total community population of adults between the ages of 18 and 65 is approximately 165, a 25% participation rate would leave about 120 adults in the community to occupy the approximately 60 job positions afforded by Innu Nation, the Mushuau Innu Band Council, the Mushuau Innu Renewal Committee, and the various social service departments and community boards requiring Innu leadership or staff-members. An employment rate less than 100% of those adults not participating in the HSP programme would allow individuals to pursue domestic livelihoods, engage in child care, or initiate enterprise ventures.

And thus, on the one hand, \$750,000 per year seems a reasonable amount to expect for a program coming out of a land claim settlement for 1,700 people³² (Utshimassits and Sheshatshiu together as Innu Nation), and on the other hand, a 25% participation rate in the programme is likely the maximum that the community can sustain without jeopardising other facets of its economy and the social and political workings of the community. Therefore statutory minima on time spent in programme-sanctioned activities, or on distances travelled from the community, would only be

³¹ Assuming a benefit scheme which would see adult participants earning in the area of \$15,000 per year, with dependant benefits in the order of \$1500 per child.

³² The annual budget for James Bay ISP (Cree Hunters and Trappers ISP Board, 1997) sees over \$13,000,000 in benefits paid out to participants. The total registered population of the region (1997) is approximately 12,200. Therefore, \$750,000 for an Utshimassits programme would leave room for a Sheshatshiu programme, while keeping the total within the realm of feasibility with regard to an overall settlement agreement.

crucial if it were felt that these were needed to prevent all but those serious in leading an intensive hunting lifestyle from entering the programme. It is my opinion that minima should in fact be set on time spent in the bush engaged in HSP activities, but that this need not be as high as the 120/90³³ level set for the James Bay programme. And considering the high availability of caribou in close proximity to the community, coupled with extremely low levels of commercial and industrial development around the community (i.e., the "bush" begins right outside the village), I do not see the immediate necessity to consider minimum statutory distances. Within the context of land claim negotiations, however, HSP should be negotiated without a cap, as a treaty right for all Innu to opt into. I agree, however, that provision may need to be made if the Harvesting Board feels the potential for abuse of the programme, or the potential prevalence of "country squatters" (*cf.* Scott & Feit, 1992:158).

³³ 120 days minimum in programme, with at minimum 90 of these days spent in the country, at a statutory minimum distance from the community (JBNQA, 1975: Sec. 30.2).

Conclusion

There are aspects of working in the field of development anthropology in an Aboriginal rights milieu that are very rewarding, and some that are frustrating. The rewards come from working with a community on a project that, if implemented, would satisfy many needs and desires, and help to situate the community and its people at the place it wished to be within the contemporary world, but on their own unique terms. The frustrations come from the fact that the slowly revolving wheels and highly politicised course of the comprehensive claims process mean that no matter what you design, one's project might end up on the scrap heap as irrelevant by the time negotiations come to fruition. I have been working on this project for three years, and in all that time the Innu Nation has been "on the brink" of settling their comprehensive claim. Now, in the year 2001, they seem as far away as they did in 1998. The suggestions set out in this design are still relevant, as the community social and economic situation has remained virtually unchanged, and even the community relocation to Natuashish is about a year behind, meaning that individuals are still involved in construction employment. On the other hand, resources are changing, physical, political, and economic: caribou numbers are on the decline, although still very high, having reached the peak of their 75 year cycle in the mid-1990's; the political atmosphere has changed, with Brian Tobin stepping down as Premier in order to re-enter federal politics; and the Voisey's Bay mine development is still on the back burner due to flat negotiations with the province.

I stand by the concept of caribou hunting and Harvesters' Support as a valid development route for the Mushuau Innu of Utshimassits. It may prove that particularities of the design presented here will prove relevant only to the current

political and economic context, but the overall prospect of allowing intensive caribou hunters to engage full time in this lifeway and make a living doing so will endure. The Mushuau Innu have always defined their identity, to outsiders and among themselves, through their relation to the caribou and caribou hunting. The majority of individuals with whom I spoke expressed a strong interest in spending at least a portion of the year in the country engaged in caribou hunting and its related activities, yet found that this was not possible for any of a number of reasons, sometimes no more than that it was too difficult to organise their lives to accommodate it. A structured programme would make the jump to country living a more available prospect if only by creating a forum for the transactive negotiations involved in organising multi-family groups, and setting out on the land. Thirty years of stagnation in the community have erased this habit among generation of Mushuau Innu, although it still shows up when watching people make smaller plans, like deciding to go for wood, or heading out day-hunting, or even in something as simple as getting together at someone's house for an evening.

What I have attempted to show in this study is that there has always been an organisation to Mushuau Innu society that has transcended the level of the individual household. And despite thirty years of living in individual, fixed housing, this higher level of organisation re-emerges when a significant portion of the community heads out into the country together, as they do for the annual Gathering. Individuals and families do things in conjunction with others, in patterns that do not occur in the village community, and engage in transactive negotiations that, while not absent, are submerged beneath the fixed structure of life, work, and even social disability within the village. For these reasons, I believe that a Harvesters' Support Programme design as I have presented it, structured to replicate multi-family hunting and living under the

stewardship of an *utshimau*, would be a successful strategy for long-term development for at least a portion of the Utshimassits population.

Through the course of this study, I have attempted to demonstrate how aspects of social organisation and perceived tradition, and their transactive negotiation, have been fundamental to Mushuau Innu history and identity. The life surrounding country-based caribou hunting features prominently in narratives of Innu life and tradition, persisting in the sedentary era in the contemporary stories that individuals tell about their lives and their aspirations. This prominence situates these narratives as fundamental to the design and implementation of any development tool based on traditional pursuits. The predominance of the multi-family hunting group in traditional country-based caribou hunting identifies it as the proper milieu for structuring a contemporary hunting programme, while issues of autonomy and flexibility suggest that this institution should be openly defined to accord individuals the freedom and mobility to participate as they see fit.

Since Newfoundland and Labrador's entrance into confederation in 1949, the evolution of the Mushuau Innu mixed economy has seen a steady rise in dependence on transfer payments and federal subsidy programmes. A corresponding rise in employment opportunities has been much less marked, as few job opportunities, relative to population, have historically existed in this region. Over the past decade, the rise in scope and size of regional and local government administration, as well as the emergence of various offices created to address land claims and industrial development negotiations, have meant a shift in the derivation of the cash economy, with proportionately less coming from social benefit programmes and more from emergent employment opportunities. Furthermore, at present there is ample wage employment

through the construction of the new community settlement at Natuashish. The future will see a limited number of further salaried and wage employment positions, as well as the potential for private or joint enterprise ventures, but also the disappearance of most of the jobs, both administrative and wage oriented, associated with the construction of Natuashish. It is within this economic context that the discussion of a Harvesters' Support Programme is situated, and the proposed design has been formulated to allow individuals the freedom and mobility to take advantage of the newly emergent mixed economy. Those who prefer a more traditional lifestyle can participate full-time in the programme; those who prefer full-time employment are free to pursue that option, and those who prefer a mixture of country living and other pursuits can find a level of participation in each realm to suit their needs.

As stated above, implementation of this programme is dependent on the successful settlement of the Innu Nation land claim, and therefore its inception date cannot be predicted. If, as may reasonably be hoped, a settled agreement is finalised at about the same time as Natuashish is ready for occupation, several contingencies will come into line. The land claim agreement would create both limited additional employment and a Harvesters' Support Programme at approximately the same time as the completion of the relocation project would make redundant the majority of those who have been engaged in its construction over the past few years. Within this context, HSP would be a vital aspect of the Mushuau Innu's future, both in terms of economic well-being, and in terms of community health and the promotion of continued tradition.

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