

# Place and Forest Co-management in Nitassinan/Labrador

By

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## **Abstract**

The focus of this dissertation is on the relationships between the Innu people of Labrador and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, through the practices of production of their respective places: Nitassinan and Labrador. I argue that Nitassinan and Labrador are different places, which co-exist uneasily, sometimes in open opposition. These places are product of an assemblage of practices and relations of human and non-human persons and other agents. I centre my analysis in the process of forest co-management of Forest District 19a (Labrador/Nitassinan) between the Innu Nation and the provincial government in order to explore the intersections of these two places in the context of the current relationship between the Innu people and the provincial government, in a milieu that continues to be colonial. While co-management processes are often considered to be a way of empowerment for aboriginal people, I argue that the co-management process analysed here primarily reinforced and facilitated the types of practices of place that produced Labrador. However, amidst these practices, the Innu people and, in institutional terms, the Innu Nation, were able to carry on some practices of place that allowed for the continuation of the production of Nitassinan.

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## **Introduction**

### **This is Nitassinan**

In the fall of 2007, soon after I arrived in Labrador to do fieldwork, an Innu woman elder asked me what my research was about. I explained that I was interested in how the forest co-management, a process involving the provincial government and the Innu Nation, was working. As I spoke, she moved her head up and down, a gesture I thought showed her interest, even her approbation. As soon as I paused, however, she made a dismissive gesture with her hand, like chasing flies. Smiling, she said, “This is Nitassinan,”<sup>1</sup> adding, “and we can do whatever we want.” Later on, I heard similar ideas expressed each time I mentioned my research to Innu community members. In social gatherings, during interviews, in casual encounters at the supermarket or during camping trips, once and again my concern with the co-management process was dismissed by the simple but powerful affirmation that “this” is Nitassinan, and that the Innu (and, in most cases, only the Innu) are able to “do whatever [they] want.”

These claims somehow surprised me, as they seemed contradictory to the colonial context in which the Innu people find themselves. While Innu people continue to refer to

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<sup>1</sup> Note regarding Innu-aimun spelling. As Innu-aimun has no standardized spelling, variations occurred. I try to use the spelling more common for Sheshatshiu dialect when possible. I follow original spelling in quotes. The plural of Innu is Innut, however, to avoid further confusion with the word Inuit, I follow the conventional usage and use the word Innu for both singular and plural. I call the Innu community Sheshatshiu (not Sheshatshit) as that is the name that the Sheshatshiu Innu Band chooses to identify the community, but I follow authors and interviewees’ name usage in quotes and cites.

Nitassinan (usually translated as “our land”) as their territory, jurisdiction over this land is also claimed by the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and more generally, the Canadian Confederation. From my perspective, more than 500 years of colonial encounters with Europeans, and the provincial and federal governments’ claims of jurisdiction over the area seemed to limit the Innu capacity to exercise control over Nitassinan, or to do “whatever they want,” as my interlocutors kept affirming. In effect, Innu affirmations of “this” being Nitassinan and their rights over it were far from being fully recognized by the provincial government, the other party in the co-management process. While it can be argued that the co-management process recognized Innu rights in some ways (as its mere existence implies recognition of Innu claims over the territory), it never implied a full recognition of Nitassinan. For example, the forest being co-managed by the Innu Nation and the provincial government was always considered to be located in Labrador by the latter. This was reflected in the nomenclature most frequently used. With the only exception of a short-lived reference to Labrador/Nitassinan (in the 2003 forest plan), the forest was referred using the provincial bureaucratic nomenclature: Forest District 19a, Labrador.

Albeit short-lived, the reference to Nitassinan in the process clued me into the issue that I pursue in this dissertation: how different places might exist at the same time in the same location. This slightly changed the approach I had taken in my initial focus on the political aspects of the co-management process, specifically, the relations between the Innu Nation and the Provincial Government. Initially, I was interested in the strategies, if any, that the parties deployed in order to protect their respective abilities to make land

management decisions and whether or not the co-management process facilitated mechanisms for Innu and provincial representatives to communicate, cooperate, and resolve conflicts. But soon my observations led me to wonder whether the co-management could have two different ‘objects’: Nitassinan and Labrador. On this track, I started to ask: What is Nitassinan? What is Labrador? If these are different ‘objects,’ what does it mean to “co-manage” them? Does the co-management process allow for or facilitate the co-existence of these ‘places’ or does it impose one to the detriment of another, or neither? These are some of the questions at the base of this dissertation. Succinctly, then, this dissertation is about the production of Nitassinan and Labrador as places, with particular attention to how this production was effected within the context of a process of forest co-management. I argue that Nitassinan and Labrador are different places, which co-exist uneasily, sometimes in open opposition. These places are products of an assemblage of practices and relations of human and non-human persons and other agents. I call the practices that contribute to the production of place “practices of place.” By focusing on the co-management process of forest District 19a, I am able to explore the intersections of these two places in the context of the current relationship between the Innu people and the provincial government, in a milieu that continues to be colonial. While co-management processes are often considered to be a way of empowerment for aboriginal people, I argue that the co-management process analysed here primarily reinforced and facilitated the types of practices of place that produced Labrador. However, amidst these practices, the Innu people and, in institutional terms, the Innu Nation, were able to carry on some practices of place that allowed for the continuation of the production of Nitassinan.

## **Place and co-management**

Why look into the production of place in the context of a co-management process? Co-management processes and their institutions condense some of the characteristics of the current relationship between aboriginal people and different levels of the state; a relationship that, without ceasing to be colonial, is in a process of reconfiguration in Canada (Nadasdy 2003, Stevenson 2006, Natcher and Davis 2007). Although there is a lack of consensus in the strict definition of co-management, it can be loosely defined as situations where local actors and one or more state levels negotiate the sharing of management responsibilities over a territory or resource (Berkes 1994, Berkes et al 1991, Notzke 1995, Borrini-Feyerabend 2004, Armitage et al 2008). According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (Dussault and Erasmus 1996), co-management processes are a potential way to resolve longstanding conflicts between aboriginal peoples and state governments. However, some authors argue that co-management processes have structural limits that restrict the scope and type of aboriginal participation (Nadasdy 2003, 2005, Rose 1999, Asch 1989a, 1989b), and they could create new or recreate old conflicts (Castro and Nielsen 2001). Based on his research among the Kluane First Nation of Burwash Landing, Yukon, Nadasdy argues that instead of resolving conflicts, co-management may extend the power of the stronger party, the state,

*[A]lthough on the surface co-management may seem to be giving aboriginal people increased control over their lives and land, I argue that these processes might instead be acting as subtle extensions of empire, replacing local Aboriginal ways of*

*talking, thinking and acting with those specifically sanctioned by the state.*

(Nadasdy 2003: 9)

Thus, under a rhetoric of aboriginal empowerment and participation, co-management processes are what Rose (1999) calls hidden colonialism. For aboriginal people, participation in co-management processes and institutions implies playing according to the rules imposed by the state (Asch 1989b, Nadasdy 2003, 2005). As Asch (1989b) points out, aboriginal people “have had to accept working within a paradigm that is external to their ideology and have yet to find ways within it to obtain some of the rights and guarantees they see as properly theirs” (1989b: 211-212).

Therefore, aboriginal participation in co-management processes and institutions can be best understood not as a way to resolve conflict with the state, but as a strategy towards survival in a colonial context (Scott 2011, Feit and Beaulieu 2001). As Scott (2011: 7) points out:

*Political survival demands a dual, seemingly contradictory, strategy. On the one hand, First Nations are impelled to enlighten and persuade outsiders about the character and meaning, in Aboriginal cultural terms, of their relationship to homelands and waters. On the other hand, in order to create legal and constitutional space for the defence and autonomous development of their territories, they are forced to negotiate Aboriginal and cultural political landscapes in relation to Euro-Canadian concepts of property and jurisdiction.*

The co-management process analysed in this dissertation offers an example of these apparently contradictory strategies. On the one hand, the Innu people struggle to defend Nitassinan, displaying their particular relationship with their territory. On the other hand, by entering into negotiations with the government, the Innu Nation seems to accept provincial jurisdiction over Labrador, insofar as through their participation they seem to accept, among other things: the administrative limits imposed upon a part of the territory (Forest District 19a) where the co-management applies; the terms of their engagement with the territory (those of “management”); the relative roles of the participants (namely, the “co” in “co-management board” and the consultative rather than executive character of it); and last but not least, the language used through the co-management process, which is almost exclusively English.

While keeping the above in mind, it is also important to consider that co-management processes and institutions make visible the colonial state’s need to participate in a process in which, at least symbolically, it resigns some power and recognises the existence of aboriginal rights over a territory on which, up to recent times, it assumed exclusive jurisdiction. McKay and Acheson (1987: 31-32) see co-management involving the state and aboriginal peoples as the latest “political claim to the right to share management power and responsibility with the state” thus, a challenge to the power of the state. Co-management processes and institutions therefore, can be seen as an adaptation of the state to the demands of those who, like First Nations, challenge its claim to sovereignty. This mutual (albeit not necessarily fully willing) accommodation raises the question of how

the practices of place of the Innu and those of the colonial state are changing as they interfere with each other. But, before delving into this issue, some background is in order.

### **The Innu of Labrador and the co-management process**

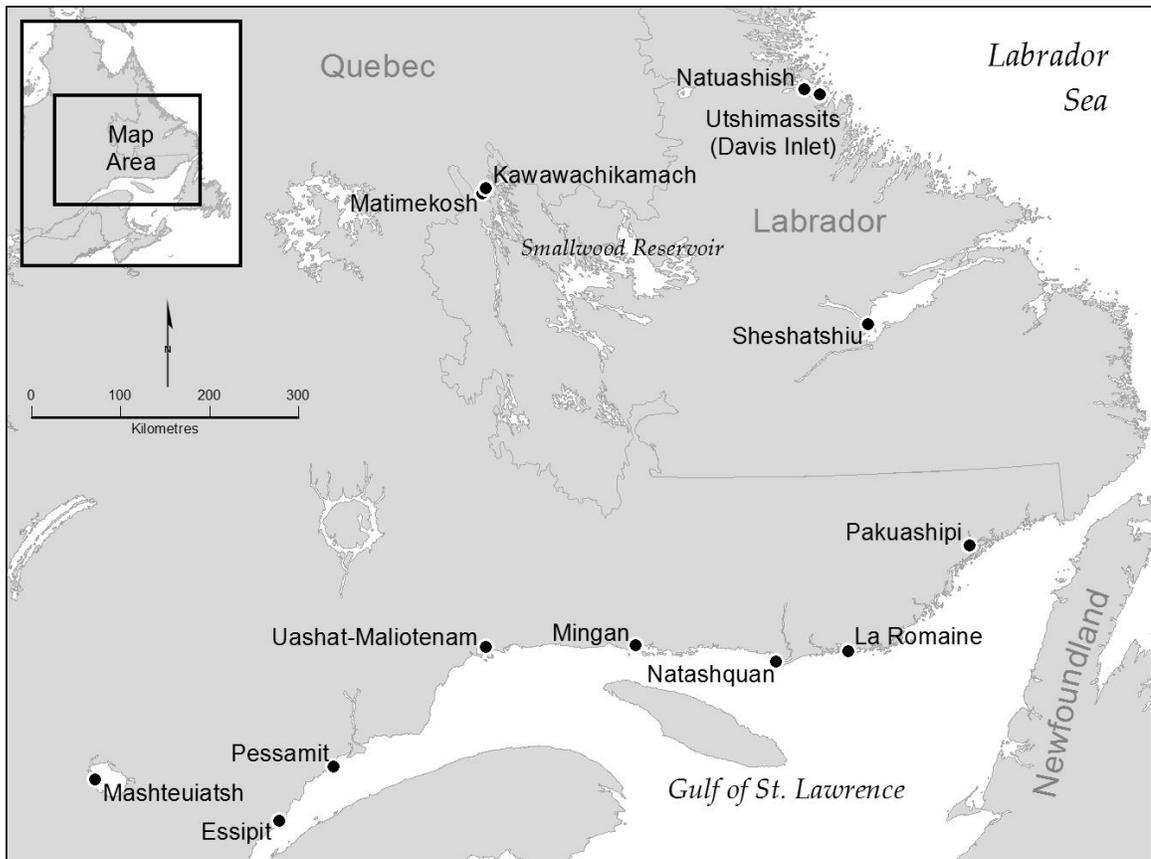
The Innu are Algonquian-speaking people who live in the eastern portion of what is known as the Labrador- Quebec Peninsula, a territory they call Nitassinan. Formerly known as Naskapi-Montagnais Indians, the Innu are around 16.000 persons living in eleven communities in Quebec<sup>2</sup> and two in Labrador: Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. The Innu developed a successful way of life based on the hunting of caribou and other animal and fish species, living in nomadic bands that moved through and had an intimate knowledge of Nitassinan. Since the 1600s, the colonial advancement forced upon the Innu multiple connections with Europeans: missionaries, fur traders, English and French settlers<sup>3</sup>, the imperial, national and provincial colonial apparatus. These connections produced demographic and technological changes, reconfigured the relationship with other aboriginal groups, and progressively interfered with Innu access to their territory. Despite these processes, the Labrador Innu continued their nomadic lifestyle until the late

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<sup>2</sup> The Quebec Innu communities are: Pessamit, Mingan, Essipit, Metimekosh, Kawawachikamach, Mashteuiatsh, Natashquan, Pakuashipi, Uasht-Meliontenan and La Romaine (Unamenshipit).

<sup>3</sup>In Labrador, identities and boundaries of ethnic groups are complex, and so are their labels. Historical Europeans who lived in Labrador were referred as Settlers, Planters, Trappers or Liveyers, these names also applied to the people of mixed Inuit and European descent, in addition to Halfbreeds, Half-Eskimo, Kablunangujait, and Labradorians. Some of their descendents are now recognized by the Federal Government as Inuit (members of Nunatsiavut), while others are looking for recognition as members of NunatuKavut (formally the Labrador Métis Nation) (Fagan 2010). In this dissertation, I try to use the categories by which people identify themselves, when that is possible. When using quotations, I respect the original terminology.

twentieth century, living in seasonal hunting camps (Loring 1998, Leacock 1954, Leacock 1969, Henriksen 1973, Samson 2003).



**Map 1: Innu communities**

The Innu territory was disputed and influenced by different colonial powers, particularly France and England. Their influence would ultimately result in the jurisdictional division of the Innu territory in two parts, one nominally under French control, and the other, Labrador, in dispute between France and England. As a consequence, different colonial policies and languages would be imposed. The reconfiguration of the respective imperial powers of France and England in the New World, and the process of configuration of the Canadian Dominion, would not resolve the dispute regarding Labrador's jurisdiction.

Thus, this issue would become an object of dispute between Quebec, part of the Dominion of Canada (created in 1867), and Newfoundland (a British colony officially recognized in 1824, and a British Dominion since 1907<sup>4</sup> until it became a Canadian province in 1949). Following years of ambiguity and growing conflict, in 1927 the Privy Council defined the boundary between Quebec (Canadian Dominion) and Labrador in favour of the Newfoundland Dominion, giving it jurisdiction over more of the interior of the Quebec/Labrador Peninsula.

In Quebec, where most of the Innu live, a policy of land appropriation ensued, while reservations were created under the Indian Act.<sup>5</sup> In Labrador, Newfoundland acted without any formal agreement but under the assumption that the province had sovereignty over the Innu land (Samson 2003).

Following its incorporation as a province into the Canadian Confederation in 1949, Newfoundland retained administrative and legislative control over the Aboriginal population, while in the rest of Canada Aboriginal people are under federal jurisdiction (Tanner 1998, Hanrahan 2003). The provincial government's approach towards the Innu people was a destructive policy of settlement, cultural assimilation, negation of their

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<sup>4</sup> On September 26, 1907, Edward VII, by Royal Proclamation declared the Colony of Newfoundland an independent Dominion within the British Empire (same status was given to New Zealand in this proclamation). These changes were done to clarify the equal status between Newfoundland, New Zealand, Canada and Australia (Dohey 2014).

<sup>5</sup> The Indian Act is the statute originally from 1876, significantly amended in 1951 and 1985, which consolidated previous colonial ordinances and it is still the main act through which Canada's federal government regulated its relationship with First peoples, including the definition of Indian Status and the management of reserve land and communal monies. The Naskapi Nation of Kawawachimakamach, Quebec, signed the Northeastern Quebec Agreement, a comprehensive land claims settlement in 1978. Consequently, some of the provisions of the Indian Act no longer apply to the Naskapi of Kawawachimakamach.

distinctive identity and encroachment on their territory for development projects. Extensive psychological and social problems were the consequences and increasingly better articulated arguments against these policies were the response (Samson 2003, Denov and Campbell 2002, Fouillard et al 1995). In the 1960s, Innu people were forced to settle in the communities of Sheshatshiu and Davis Inlet. At the same time, the province promoted and organized development projects that alienated Innu land, further limiting Innu access to Nitassinan. These have had enormous consequences for the Innu people, including poorer health standards and widespread social dysfunctions that emerged as self destructive behavior (e.g., substance abuse, suicide and family violence). The Innu people responded by creating representative institutions, protesting and taking legal action to claim and protect their rights. For example, during the 1980s, the Innu of Labrador protested the presence of NATO doing low level flight training over their territory, securing international solidarity in their struggle (Wadden 2001).

The Innu people of Labrador are currently represented by the Innu Nation. Created in 1976 to protect Innu rights, lands and ways of life in the context of the growing industrialization of Labrador as the Naskapi Montagnais Innu Association, it changed its name in 1990. Since 1991, the Innu Nation in Labrador has been involved in land claim negotiations and self-government agreements with the Canadian and Newfoundland and Labrador governments. Framework agreements were signed in 1996 and in 1998, and an Agreement-in-Principle had been finalized. However, negotiations regarding a final agreement are still ongoing, as this agreement has yet to be ratified. As part of the negotiation process, the two Innu communities of Labrador have been recognized as

Bands under the Indian Act since 2002, and their members as status Indians (INAC 2007). At the provincial level, the Innu Nation signed no treaties until the 2008 Tshash Petapen/New Dawn Agreement, ratified by the Innu people in 2011. These agreements included: a bilateral land claim agreement-in-principle; the Impact and Benefits Agreement (IBA) for the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project (currently under construction); and a compensation for the development of Upper Churchill River, a hydroelectric project finished in 1971, which dammed the Churchill River, reducing the Petshtshunau Falls (Churchill Falls) and creating Smallwood Reservoir (5,700 km<sup>2</sup>). The development of Upper Churchill River flooded Innu burial sites, camps, trails, hunting grounds, and affected caribou and other wildlife without warning, consultation or compensation. At the same time that these land claims and aboriginal rights negotiations were taking place, other more specific agreements were also reached allowing for Innu Nation participation on advisory boards, including those related to the forest co-management process which is the focus of this dissertation.<sup>6</sup>

Aboriginal participation in co-management processes in Canada is usually the result of finalized Land Claims Agreements or of real or perceived crisis situations (RCAP 1996).<sup>7</sup> The co-management process at the center of this dissertation was of the latter type, as it originated from the protests of the Innu people against further forest development in their

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<sup>6</sup> Participation on other advisory boards included the Voisey's Bay Environmental Management Board and, for a time, the Labrador Woodland Caribou Recovery Team.

<sup>7</sup> Stevenson (2004) adds a third category: multi-stakeholder environmental management agreements; however, in most cases, these arrangements can be situated in one of the two other categories.

territory without their participation. These protests were expressed in direct actions, including the blockage of forestry roads; in a Canadian context in which aboriginal people struggling to regain control over their forest lands were asserting their rights through similar direct actions (Tindall and Troster 2013); and where the Innu countered with the knowledge acquired in past successful protests, such as the above-mentioned protest against the NATO low flight training over Nitassinan.

I will provide further details later. For now, it will suffice to indicate that the forest co-management process studied here was based on a series of legal arrangements between the Innu Nation and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources: the 2001 Forest Agreement (which enabled, among other things, Innu participation in the development of a forest plan for District 19a) and the 2003 Interim Forest Agreement. The later agreement established the Forest Management Committee (FMC), a co-management body. The FMC was composed of two representatives from the Innu Nation and two representatives of the Provincial Government, with the General Manager of the Western Newfoundland Model Forest (now the Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador, a not-for-profit organization) serving as a non-voting committee chair. The FMC was funded by the provincial government.

### **Space and place, culture and nature**

As I pointed out, a key question I am grappling with is how practices of place of the Innu and those of the colonial state are changing as they interfere with each other. The term ‘practice of place’ seeks to articulate an emerging perspective on place that diverges from

more established ones. Anthropological approaches to place had been marked by the discipline's assumptions of a dichotomy between nature and culture, a dichotomy typical of modern western conceptualizations (Descola and Pálsson 1996, Descola 2006, Latour 1993). Operating under this assumption, place has traditionally been considered as part of the dominion of nature, and as *a priori* category, pre-existent to and independent of, although influencing, social categories (Mascareño and Büscher 2011, Bello 2011). The discipline's approaches to its traditional objects of study (non-western cultures and societies, located on "exotic" non-western landscapes) tended to be presented with emphasis on their internal coherence, more than their connections to or influences by other groups (making invisible, in a number of cases, the colonial presence that allowed or facilitated the presence of the anthropologist in the first place). This "fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces," as Gupta and Ferguson (1992b:7) argue, rendered space "a kind of neutral grid on which cultural difference, historical memory and societal organization are inscribed."

As a pre-existent category, place was considered "unproblematic" (Rodman 1992) and thus, "disappear[ed] from the analytical purview" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:7) of the discipline, where it was neglected in most of the anthropologic corpus of work (Geertz 1996, Coleman and Collins 2011, Thornton 2008). A renewed preoccupation with relations between people and place, however, developed in the last few decades, at least partially as a corollary of critical inquiries regarding the anthropological key term of "culture" (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b) and the discipline's fieldwork practices (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, 1997a, Appadurai 1988, Rodman 1992). Besides these disciplinary

preoccupations, concerns related to globalization processes renewed the interest in the relations between people and places. The perceived place homogenisation implicit in these globalization processes was expressed in terms of “non-places” in opposition to “anthropological places” (Augé 1995). Issues related to global mobility, such as “flows” and “displacement,” were at the center of the globalization concerns (Clifford 1997, Escobar 2012, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Ward 2003, Castells 2001, Appadurai 2003, Coleman and Collins 2011). On the other hand, ways of being “in place,” especially in relation to aboriginal people, become the focus of disciplinary inquiry (Low 1999, Basso 1996, Feld and Basso 1996, Thornton 2008, Altman and Low 2012).

In this context, most anthropological approaches interested in the relation between people and place distinguish between the concepts of place and space. These approaches are influenced by, and are in dialogue with, authors from other disciplines, particularly with humanist geographers and phenomenologist philosophers such as Eduard Relph, Yi-Fun Tuan and Henry Lefebvre, and post-structuralist thinkers such as De Certeau.<sup>8</sup> Place and space are defined in dualistic terms: place is meaningful space, and space, an abstract domain without meaning; space becomes meaningful –that is, becomes a place– because people attach meaning to it through experiences or perceptions (Basso 1996, Feld and Basso 1996, Thornton 2012, Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, Low 2000, Thom 2005). Places are thus socially constructed or produced (Gupta and Ferguson 1992, Rodman

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<sup>8</sup> The dialogue with geography is based in a common philosophical frame, particularly in the phenomenological ideas of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.

1992), becoming “not just a thing in the world but a way of understanding the world” (Creswell 2004: 11) and are “concrete and particular” (Walter 1988: 142-143). In this vein, Basso (1996) –whose work is influential to many studies of aboriginal people’s sense of place– looks at the way places are produced, a process he calls place-making. Looking at place names in relation to myth and stories, which he describes as “the ideational resources with which they [the Navajo] constitute their surroundings and invest them with value and significance” (1996:66), Basso argues that “place-making involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways.” And he adds,

*essentially, then, instances of place-making consist in an adventitious fleshing out of historical material that culminates in a posited state of affairs, a particular universe of objects and events -in short a place-world- wherein portions of the past are brought into being. (1996: 5-6)*

Other authors put emphasis on the practices that create place, instead of the ideational resources mentioned by Basso. Gupta and Ferguson (1997b), for example, argue that the process of place making is “less as a matter of ‘ideas’ than of embodied practices that shape identities and enable resistances” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 6). Similarly, Rodman (1992) argues that places are socially constructed through practices.

There are, however, important limitations to these approaches to place and space. The first one is the risk of reproducing the nature/culture dualism (common in the earlier anthropological approaches) now in terms of space/place. As Casey (1996) notes, if the

transformation from space to place is based on human meanings, experiences and perceptions, place is assumed to be something *posterior to space*, even *made from space*. ‘Space’ here is meant as a neutral, pre-given medium, even a “physical space” (Basso 1996), which acts as “a tabula rasa onto which the particularities of culture and history come to be inscribed, with place as the presumed result” (Casey 1996: 14). In this process Casey (1996) notes, space becomes compartmentalized in places and places become bounded space. This bounded space, thus, becomes associated with particular cultures and societies, replicating the anthropological fiction of discrete cultures occupying discrete spaces.

A related limitation of these conceptualizations is that the experiences or perceptions that make a space meaningful, that is, that transforms space into place, appear to be exclusively those of humans. Place is presented as social, a human construction, firmly on the culture side of the dichotomy culture/nature. However, places are not produced by human persons alone. Referring to the countryside, but in terms applicable to place, Murdoch (2003: 264) argues that “the idea that the countryside is simply a social construction, one that reflects dominant patterns of social relationship, cannot adequately account for the ‘natural’ entities.”

To transcend these limitations, a definition of place must include the agency of non-humans, or using Massey’s words, it must move beyond “the realm of human social relationships” (2006:34). As Jones and Cloke argue, “non-human agencies not only co-constitute the context of life, but they also frequently reconstitute the fabrics of day-to-day life and the places and spaces in which it is lived” (Jones and Cloke 2008: 79). Non-

humans-persons (animals, spirits, etc.) and what can be described as landscape elements (rivers, mountains, etc.) and geological (eruptions, earthquakes, etc.) and climate events (wind, rain, etc.) are participant agents in the production of place. Cloke and Jones (2002, 2004), for example, show the creative agency of trees (usually attributed to the realm of “nature”). This division has been challenged and revised by approaches that aim to transcend the binary nature/culture (Jones 2006). Authors such as Thrift (1999), Harrison and colleagues (2004) and Massey (2005a, 2005b) abandon ideas of place as bounded, social spaces, focusing instead on places as connected, temporal projects where, as Jones (2009:304) describes

*all manners of trajectories –people, non-humans, economies, technologies, ideas and more– come together to assemble enduring (but also changing/open to change) distinctive patterns which are still fully networked into the wider world.*

The division between place/space (associated to the culture/nature divide) has limited explanatory power, as it cannot explain the practices that are articulated with the existence of non-human<sup>9</sup> agencies. In the approach I am trying to articulate, place is not defined in relation to an abstract space – as Jones eloquently expresses “a case of social flows whirling through, and tangling with, the more fixed ground of nature” (2009:304) – but instead to the web of relations and practices that conforms it.

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<sup>9</sup> Hallowell (1960) developed the concept of other-than-human persons based on the Anishinabe (then called Ojibwa) sense of personhood, which, contrary to the western division between human and non-human, where ‘person’ is synonymous with human, conceived ‘person’ as a category that contains subcategories (human-person, animal person, thunder person, etc.)

As places are conformed by a web of relations and practices, they are not inherently local, in other words, “the connectivities and contingencies that shape a place are not all limited to the scale of that place” (Pierce et al. 2011: 60). However, to understand how humans and non-humans are inserted into these relations and a possible way to ‘localize’ these patterns, the concept of dwelling, or, as Ingold calls it, the perspective of dwelling, is useful, as it allows to take into account the fact that humans are not exclusive producers of place. Dwelling is “the thesis that the production of life involves the unfolding of a field of relationships that *crosscut* the boundaries of humans and non-humans” (Ingold 2005: 504). This perspective transcends the division between nature and society, focusing on the ways organism-persons (whether human or non-human persons, as there is no distinction made) dwell, thus the focus is in the body-in-environment (Ingold 2011:4). In this way, “all manner of entities thus bring together their agency to the formation of place, which is in turn rendered ‘local’ by the dwelt processes of living bodies” (Jones 2009: 304).

Building upon this, in this dissertation I argue that Nitassinan and Labrador are two distinctive patterned places, which are produced by the practices of heterogeneous assemblages of humans and non-humans. Hence, when I subsequently refer to practices of place or to the production of places I am not implying that those practices only involve humans, even if the limitations of language might make humans appear as the main agents. To the contrary, non- human persons participate in these practices of place.

The places at the centre of this dissertation, Labrador and Nitassinan, are entangled by more than 500 years of colonial encounters and nowadays produced within a colonial

context characterized by unequal degrees of access to power. Neither Nitassinan nor Labrador are enclosed, complete, and self-coherent places; they both involve heterogeneous practices, often in tension with each other, sometimes enabling each other, but nevertheless shaping distinctive patterns. These entanglements, as it will be shown in the context of the co-management process, result sometimes in the fact that the production of one place is made difficult, or near impossible, by the production of the other; while at other points the production of one place facilitates, in direct or indirect ways, the production of the other.

### **Nitassinan and Labrador as places: approaches in the literature**

With a few exceptions – notably Armitage (2011) and Whitridge (2004, 2012) – place has not been the focus of the literature about the Innu or other Labrador groups. Nevertheless, some of it sheds light, sometimes in indirect ways, on the practices of place of the different inhabitants of Labrador.

Earlier written accounts of what would become known as Labrador and of the people that inhabited it were produced by explorers, missionaries and settlers. Their visions, thus, were not only based on European –and in most cases, Eurocentric– conceptions of the world, which continued to be informed by medieval ideas, but they were also biased by the agendas and goals that brought them to the so-called new world (such as to convert the aboriginal people to Christianity or to participate in the fur trade). During European expansion, the newly discovered places were conceptualized as remote and primitive. Thus, in these narratives, Labrador is typically described as inhospitable wilderness and

its inhabitants as primitives or savages, who are both geographically and temporally distant. In effect, the Innu captured the attention of the missionaries, traders and adventurers who narrated their encounters with them. They referred to the Innu as Indians, Red Indians, savages, barbarous and Montaigne or Naskapi. In their narratives and memoirs, the Innu way of life –hunting and traveling extensively– is presented in opposition to the ideal industrious and agricultural, thus sedentary, ways of the Euro-Canadian colonizers. For example, Père Le Jeune<sup>10</sup>, superior of the Jesuits of the Nouvelle France, describes Innu people (who he called Montaigne) as “wanderers” who are “roving” in “their country” where they “find food (...) without cultivating the soil” (275). Since the Innu are “so occupied in seeking livelihood in these woods, that they have not time, so to speak to save themselves” (2004[1634]: 146-147) living, however, “a life of idleness” as opposed to one of “hard work, such as cultivating the soil” (149). Le Jeune suggested, as means of converting the Innu to Catholicism, to “send a number of capable men to clear and cultivate the land, who... would work for the Savages, on condition that they would settle down” (2004[1634]: 143). While the Innu nomadic way of life was presented as a consequence of their primitivism, the Innu presence in the territory was negated. Repeating well known colonial tropes, Euro-Canadian colonizers conceived the area as an empty and pristine wilderness where the explorers and settlers were the first to arrive to a place unknown and virtually untouched by human presence (Sluyter 2001, Denevan 1992). Louis Fornel, a merchant from Quebec who, guided by

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<sup>10</sup> Abé (2011) notices that Le Jeune’s disdain towards the Innu and their way of life decreased drastically after he spent the winter of 1633-1634 living with an Innu band.

Innu families, traveled from what is now Chateau Bay to Melville Lake, described how, upon his arrival, he planted two crosses and extended a flag (Fornel 1743), claiming the land under the gaze of the people already living there. Later, explorers enticed by the perceived wilderness of Labrador contributed to produce an exotic view, presenting Labrador as the scenario of difficult and sometimes tragic adventures, which were, however, dissociated from the routine trips of Labrador's inhabitants (particularly the Innu) in the same areas (Wallace 1905, Hubbard 1908, Wallace 1907, Pritchard 1911, Watkins 1930). As late as 1911, H. Hesketh Prichard, an explorer, titled a book about his adventures *Through Trackless Labrador* (1911), as if Innu and Inuit people did not leave tracks on the land.

Early anthropological literature continued to characterize the Innu as primitive and savage people. Speck, the first anthropologist to work among the Innu of Labrador, described them as "exceptionally crude and simple people" who showed "a lack of material progress since some period of cultural history coincident with the Mesolithic era" (1977 [1935]: 5). These studies, while not focusing on Nitassinan have, however, some preoccupation with Innu territoriality. Initially, anthropological studies of Innu and their territory were influenced by cultural area studies. Cultural area studies' emphasis on the links between culture and place explains why, for a long time, the Innu were described as two different groups: the Montagnais and the Naskapi, associating what was perceived to be different territories with different cultural groups (Speck 1915, 1923a, 1923b, 1924,

1928, Speck and Eiseley 1942, McGee 1961, Henriksen 1973).<sup>11</sup> This distinction was even reproduced by the Innu people of Labrador at the beginning of their political organization. The distinction between Montagnais and Naskapi was later abandoned, first by using the Montagnais-Naskapi form, and then by adopting the term the people call themselves: Innu, sometimes adding other identifications (i.e. Mushuau Innu, Maskauano Innu) as the correct designation for the group.<sup>12</sup> An early example of the influence of cultural area studies can be seen in Speck, who specifically refers to “the Algonquian culture Area” (although he recognized the difficulty of establishing its southern limits) (Speck 1924).<sup>13</sup> Speck’s more influential idea –the existence among Northern Algonquian people of family hunting territories (Speck 1915, 1923a, 1923b, 1924)- are, in a way, an extension of the correspondence between groups and a particular, discrete territory (in this case, applied to families). As presented by Speck, family hunting territories implied a well demarcated hunting ground where a family or an extended family habitually hunted and over which the group possessed exclusive rights to the resources. This, he argued, constituted proof that a form of private property existed, or was on the process of

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<sup>11</sup> Mailhot (1986a) traces the use of the terms ‘Naskapi’ and ‘Montagnais’ and concludes that their “dichotomy constitutes a refinement of the old concept of the *Savage*, applied to a specific region” (1986a: 410). In fact, they stand for two types of savage, ‘Naskapi’ being the ‘real savage’. Mailhot adds that “what counts in this system of representation is the cultural gap between the Europeans and those two types of savage. Montagnais is used solely to designate those primitive Indians who have closed the gap, at least, in part.”

<sup>12</sup> For example, Henriksen speaks about ‘Naskapi’ in 1973 and about ‘Mushuau Innu’ later (Henriksen 1973, 1993).

<sup>13</sup> Inside this culture area, further divisions were established between groups, including the division of Cree, Naskapi and Montaigne. Speck’s book *Naskapi: the Savage hunters of the Labrador Peninsula*, originally published in 1935, in spite of its title focused on what the author called the Montaignais-Naskapi (although it also included some bands today considered to be Cree, not Innu). The book starts with a map of the Quebec – Labrador Peninsula, showing not only the location of the Algonquian culture but also the location of each Cree and Naskapi and Montaigne particular groups and ‘bands.’

emerging, before Europeans arrived. These ideas would be at the centre of the family territory debate, a point I discuss further below.

The anthropological literature also noticed patterns of uses of the territory, particularly seasonal variations. Speck (1915) mentions seasonal differences in the distribution and the sizes of groups. While dispersed during the winter, many family groups converged at the same location during the summer. McGee (1961), who did his fieldwork in the Sheshatshiu area, also noticed annual patterns of dispersion and aggregation. He described how, after spending the holiday season together at the “base camp” (in current day Sheshatshiu), the Innu spent the rest of the winter months hunting caribou in smaller groups of a few families, returning briefly to Sheshatshiu only to disperse again by the springtime. By the end of the spring, black flies and mosquitoes brought people back to Sheshatshiu, where they gathered together until the berry-picking season, when small groups dispersed around the Lake Melville area. By October, families regrouped to hunt until mid-December, when everyone came back to Sheshatshiu for the holiday season (McGee, 1961). These patterns, also noticed by missionaries and traders, were confirmed by the archeological record (Fitzhugh 1972, Loring 1992) and by historical studies (such as Frenette’s (1986) analysis of the nineteenth century Hudson Bay Company’s records in reference to the Innu of Mingan). After the 1960s, when the Innu of Labrador were forced to live in settlements, this seasonal pattern was altered. The work of Henriksen (1973), based on fieldwork conducted in Utshimassits (Davis Inlet) during the 1960s, showed the Innu stayed for longer periods of time along the coast, where permanent –although inadequate– dwellings had been built by the government in an island of difficult access.

At the same time, a growing number of industrial projects were encroaching on Innu land and Innu access to hunting grounds was further limited. These changes, Henriksen argues, forced the Innu to live in two distinctive worlds, marked seasonally: the world of the barren ground of the interior and the world of the coast. During winter, the Innu lived in the interior, following and hunting caribou in the barren lands of the interior; during the summer, the Innu lived on the settlement on the coast, fishing cod for cash.

Concerns specifically related to Innu territoriality were expressed in the so-called hunting territory debate. This debate, while focusing on the forms and origins of land tenure organization among northern Algonquians, was involved with “a more general issue in human social evolution, especially in relation to the theories of Morgan, Marx and Engels” (Tanner 1986: 19). The principal issue under discussion was whether Algonquian family hunting territories were a pre-contact institution or an artifact of the fur trade (Preston 2011, Feit 1991, Tanner 1986). The terms of this debate were principally based on the positions of Speck<sup>14</sup> (1915) and Leacock (1954).<sup>15</sup> The former characterized the family hunting territories as a form of private property challenging the Marxist evolutionary assumptions about communal property at the so-called hunter-gathering stage (Tanner 1986: 20). Leacock, on the other hand, considered that “basic sources of livelihood are not privately owned” (Leacock 1969: 94), and, in consequence, the private

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<sup>14</sup> It has been suggested that Frank Speck’s ideas were influenced by his desire to protect aboriginal people from the encroachment of their land, thus presenting their relations with their territories in terms that were comprehensible to the colonial governments (Pulla 2008, Pulla 2011, Feit 1991).

<sup>15</sup> Amidst these positions, Hallowell (1949) centered his discussion on hunting territories on ecological factors. This author argues that among Northern Algonquian the decisive factor regarding the size of hunting territories is the availability of game.

ownership of resources in particular parts of the territory “has developed in response to the introduction of sale and exchange into Indian economy which accompanied the fur trade” (1954: 2), changing “production to use” for “production to exchange” (1954: 7). Leacock’s ideas were consistent with Marxist theories (Tanner 1986: 20) and were also influenced by Julian Steward’s emphasis on environmental adaptations (Pulla 2011). Later, a number of authors challenged Leacock’s early assumptions (Bishop 1986, Craik and Casgrain 1986, Tanner 1979, Tanner 1986, Feit 1991, Feit 2004) and revised some of Speck’s original ideas (Tanner 1987, Feit 1991, Feit 2004), proposing other explanations to Algonquian territoriality.<sup>16</sup>

Other models of access to the territory which do not include family hunting territories were also proposed. Mailhot (1986b, 1997), who worked among the Innu people of Sheshatshiu, affirms that there were no family hunting territories in the Central Labrador area. This author argues that, for the Labrador Innu, access to different parts of Nitassinan depends not on ownership over the resources of a particular hunting ground, but on social relationships. Mailhot calls this form of access to the territory “structural mobility,” where “the presence of an individual in a particular area can be explained in terms of social relationships” (1997:102). According to Mailhot, for the Innu, place and kinship

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<sup>16</sup> Among these, Bishop (1986) claims that some kind of territorial arrangement was present in pre-contact cultures of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes and Eastern subarctic areas; Feit (2004) suggests that the territories likely existed in pre-contact times, as a part of a set of land tenure arrangements adopted according to changing necessities, particularly in response to environmental changes; while Craik and Casgrain (1986) found that some of Leacock’s conjectures, such as the emphasis on the economic motives of change, contradict historical data (1986: 177). Tanner criticizes the division between production for use and for exchange, especially Leacock’s assumption of Natives’ conflict between the two systems and the dominance of the system of production for exchange over the other (Tanner 1979: 10-11). Later, Tanner suggested that “a hunting territory is a unit of management” (1987:70).

are entangled: people are not just traveling through territory, but through family lanes, as people live, travel and hunt with relatives.

Finally, some of the most recent literature in relation to the Innu people on both sides of the colonial administrative border (Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador) echoes a larger trend which, influenced by Basso's approach to the study of sense of place among the Navajo, analyses place-making practices of aboriginal people by looking at the ways place-names relate to aboriginal values, identity and aboriginal rights claims (Nieminen 1998, Thorton 2012, Müller-Wille 2011, Jacobs 2011, Poirier 2011). Thus, in Quebec there have been a number of ethnographies looking at the Quebec Innu understanding of their territory, with emphasis on the linkage between Innu place names and Innu identity (Lacasse 1996, Lacasse 2004, Massuard 2006, Doran 2008, St-Georges 2009). In Labrador, the Innu Nation has produced documents aimed to demonstrate Innu people's uses of Nitassinan as part of Land claims and other negotiations, as well as environmental impact documents in reference to various development projects in Nitassinan, including the development of Voisey's Bay, the Trans-Labrador Highway and the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project (Tanner and Armitage 1986, Henriksen 1997, Armitage 1990, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011, Armitage and Stopp 2003). While these documents are produced in terms that government agencies are able to understand (Samson 2003), they nevertheless are the base, or allow for the documentation and transmission of Innu understandings of Nitassinan, including place names. For example, as part of land claims process' requirements, between 1975 and 1999, the Innu Nation produced map biographies for land use and occupancy. Individuals' map biographies record the locations of travel

routes, campsites, harvesting areas, birth and death locations and toponyms among other information (Armitage 1990). In the late 1990s, Armitage, who conducted most of the original research, digitized these map biographies.<sup>17</sup>

Current representation of Nitassinan also includes the development of websites with multimedia approaches to the land, including the use of maps, pictures and videos. For example, *Pepamuteiati Nitassinat: As we walk across our Land* (Penashue and Armitage 2008) is a website about Innu place names in Labrador that is based on the research of Peter Armitage, José Mailhot and Marguerite Mackenzie. It includes recorded pronunciations of the place names and their locations using Google Maps, as well as pictures, videos and stories about some of these places. These projects add to the narratives produced by the Innu, which give insight into their ideas about Nitassinan and their dwelling there, including the link between their identity and Nitassinan (Fouillard 1995 et al, Bryne and Fouillard 2000, Antane 2011, Buchard et al 1977, Kaneuketat and Henriksen 2009, Doran 2008). The links between Innu identity and their land is also fundamental in the literature that focuses on Innu struggles resulting from the loss of autonomy and access to land (Wadden 1991, Samson 2003, Sider 2014). In addition, some academic enquires has been directed to Innu people experiences of settlement and relocation, particularly in reference to Davis Inlet and Natuashish (Dalsbø 2010, Hardin 2003, Burns 2006).

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<sup>17</sup> Incidentally, these land and occupancy studies, imposed upon the Innu as part of the land claim process, show and reproduce the colonial logic of land tenure, further discussed in Chapter 3,

My research follows, albeit with a twist, these earlier works on Innu territoriality. In effect, the debate on hunting territories can in part be seen as a debate on (to use my own terms) how and to what extent colonial and Innu/Algonquian practices of place influenced (or did not influence) each other and the actual result of their interaction. Mailhot, in turn, foregrounded the degree to which Innu people's relations with the territory (their practices of place) cannot be disentangled from the relations between Innu people themselves. In other words, practices of place are social relations that transcend the human/non-human divide, a point that resonates strongly with the dwelling framework from which I take inspiration. This also resonates with Scott (1988), who in his work with the Cree, examined the entanglement of land "ownership" and the network of relationships in which the Cree are immersed, arguing that this is not a property system but a system of human-animal-land relations which "entails specific criteria for inclusion within the network of human beings who practice it" (Scott 1988:40). Authority over a particular piece of land is thus not based on unidirectional property rights, but in the capacity to promote the right relations among all the beings involved in this network. Cree ideas of property, Scott argues, have to be understood in the set of relationships in which they emerge. I will argue that a similar point applies to the understanding of Nitassinan as a practice of place: we need to consider the participation of all the beings (human and non-human) that make up Nitassinan.

Armitage's words are illuminating with regard to Labrador, which he argues, is

*an imaginary place, a state of mind, as well as a fact of geography and nature. Our experience of this place over time has been by way of direct contact or through*

*discourses of various types. Basque whalers, New England privateers, Newfoundland fishermen, Innu, Inuit, geologists, surveyors, gentleman explorers, missionaries, doctors, botanists, ornithologists, anthropologists, journalists, tourists, trades, administrators, air force personnel, and many other have visited or lived in Labrador over the years. Many of them have had something to say about the place, which has been transmitted to future generations by way of text or oral tradition. (2011: 152)*

The narratives of explorers, missionaries, traders (Le Jeune 2004[1634], Fornel 1743, Hind 1863, Holme 1888, Wallace 1907, Low 1897, Wallace 1905, Hubbard 1908, Pritchard 1911, Cabot 1920, Watkins 1930) and, doctors, administrators, scientists, researchers and later settlers (Grenfell 1929, Grenfell 1933, V. Tanner 1944, Paddon 2003, Goudie 1973, Baillie 1947) contribute to the creation of Labrador as a place as an object of analysis (Grace 2004, Roy 2004) and a subject of the literary imagination of the north (Atwood 1996, Davidson and Ruge 1988). These narratives and the publishing industry that made them possible greatly contribute to the production of Labrador. As Connor (2010) shows in his analysis of Dr. Grenfell's memories and reminiscences:

*Authors, their books, readers and publishers created an intellectual and economic ecosystem that was greatly shaped by the unique locale (even mystique) and culture of Newfoundland and Labrador and the "North"; such works helped define a sense of "place" as much as the place provided material for their creation (2010:79)*

The vision of Labrador informed by most of these narratives –an inhospitable wilderness, virtually untouched by human presence– emphasized the role of explorers and adventurers, particularly male adventurers, as the “first” to arrive there, downplaying the fact that most of them counted on the knowledge of aboriginal guides and used aboriginal routes, and either met aboriginal people along their way, or found aboriginal structures that clearly marked the presence of aboriginal people in the territory. When aboriginal presence was acknowledged, it was often to emphasize its primitivism. The idea of pristine wilderness, however, is still informing the current discourse about Labrador, including some environmental approaches (NCC s/d) adventure narratives (Coady 2008, Finkelstein and Stone 2004) and even provincial tourism advertising (Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism 2010, Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism 2015).

Labrador as a wilderness, nevertheless, was not the only way Labrador was conceptualized. Labrador also has been conceptualized as a place waiting to be developed, one abundant in natural resources, a place for adventures and scientific inquiries, a place in need of evangelization or medical attention, and a place for military expansion (Cabot 1920, Grenfell 1929, Grenfell 1933, V. Tanner 1947). Most of these notions included some type of call for external intervention, ultimately presented in terms of progress: to foster civilization, scientific knowledge, or economic development.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> For the settlers and their descendants, Labrador also became home and a place linked to their identity, something well expressed in their autobiographies, such as Lydia Campbell’s *Sketches of Labrador Life by a Labrador Woman* (1981); her daughter Margaret Baikie’s *Labrador Memories* (1983); Elizabeth Goudie’s memory *Woman of Labrador*, originally published in 1973; her son Horace Goodie’s *Trails to Remember*,

The literature about Labrador as a place can be interpreted in the context of studies of colonized territories and the creation of new nation-states common to Canada and elsewhere.<sup>19</sup>In Canada, some of this literature, particularly from literary studies, has focused on exploring the construction of the north, informed in a number of cases on the memories of those that have lived in or have traveled through Labrador (Grace 2002, Grace 2004, Hulan 2002, Osborne 2001, Roy 2005, Blake 1996, Parson 2011, Rusted 2005). Other approaches look at the different ways in which ethnic identities were constructed in Labrador, including different ideas and linkages to the territory and its development. These include studies of what was initially called the settler population, part of which would later identify as Metis and Southern Inuit, or Inuit (Zimmerly 1977, Plaice 1987, Kennedy 1995, Burque 2003<sup>20</sup>) as well as the aboriginal population (Samson 2003, Whitridge 2004, 2012). Samson (2003) analyzes the colonial creation of Labrador as part of the process of dispossession of the Innu and their extinguishment as distinctive people. Whitridge (2004) explores places as specialized imaginaries, looking at Inuit archeological and ethnographic examples, and, in a later work (2012), Whitridge explores the imaginative engagement of place of the Inuit people when colonizing what is now know as Labrador. As already mentioned Armitage (2004) analyses the various discourses that contribute to creating multiple visions of Labrador through time,

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published in 1991; or the publications of *Them Days* magazine. These memoirs, as those of earlier explorers, continue to inform Labrador literature (Blake 1996, McGrath 1997, Fagan 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Among those, Read (2000) explores non-aboriginal Australians' ideas of place, as does Kuhlenbeck (2010) with a geographic and literature studies framework. Ganaphaty (2013) looks at the ways Alaska is an imagined place.

<sup>20</sup> For references specific to the Inuit population and Nunatsiavut, see Natcher et al (2012), Whitridge (2004).

particularly from the European point of view looking at the ideological, political and economic bases of these discourses.

## **Methodology**

This dissertation is primarily based on over two years of ethnographic fieldwork in Nitassinan/Labrador. Echoing an ethnographic Malinowskian trope, I could ask to imagine yourself arriving not alone, but as a family of four, not to a tropical island in the Pacific, but to Nitassinan/Labrador. Nitassinan/Labrador was initially as unfamiliar to me, an Argentina-born researcher,<sup>21</sup> as the Trobriand Islands must have been for Poland-born Malinowski. I was, however, far from the archetypical ethnographer, as described by Stocking Jr. (1992) after Malinowski: a white male living alone in an “exotic” (underdeveloped) location. To the contrary, as an immigrant to Canada (to where I moved from an underdeveloped country) my ethnic identity is ambiguous.<sup>22</sup> I am a woman and I was living in Nitassinan/Labrador with my family. These characteristics, among others, influenced my fieldwork situation.

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<sup>21</sup> The lack of familiarity with the Canadian North is not, however, particular to foreign born researchers, but also very common among southern Canadians. Rüdiger (2009: 38) proposes the term “nordism”, related to the Said’s orientalism, to describe the construction of the Canadian North. The author argues that “the Canadian North is also more than a geopolitical entity. It is a highly constructed reality that became the centre of the multifaceted discourses of the North. Regardless of geographical, historical, political, and socio-cultural differences, the Canadian North –just like the Orient– is commonly portrayed as Europe’s other. Constructed by and in relation to the Europeans who explored it, the North became to be known as the contrasting image and idea of the colonial elite.” (2009: 38)

<sup>22</sup> Definitions and perceptions of race and ethnicity are different in Canada than in Argentina. Even the Federal definition of visible minority is ambiguous, as it depends on group self-adscription based on perceptions of skin color that are culturally specific.

My fieldwork extended from October 2007 to December 2009. It was preceded by a short introductory visit in May of 2007, and followed by a one week visit in March of 2010. During this time, I lived with my family –my husband (a fellow anthropology graduate student also doing fieldwork for his doctoral research) and our two small children. We were located in the area commonly known as Central Labrador, first in the Town of North West River and later in the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, as we were not able to find a place to live in the Innu town of Sheshatshiu as we wanted.<sup>23</sup>

Being with my family presented some advantages as well as some challenges during my fieldwork. Among the first, it facilitated my acceptance into the community. In this sense, I agree with Cassell (1987) when she affirms that bringing family in a fieldwork situation creates a more balanced way of conducting research, as it implies a type of disclosure: there is less information that researchers can withdraw. Doing fieldwork with my family, particularly with my children, increased my level of exposure and vulnerability, allowing a more open dialogue with community members. This facilitated some social relationships and unlocked opportunities of research that could have been closed in other circumstances. However, the logistics related to being a family in the field were, particularly at the beginning, very complicated, especially in reference to housing and child care. At the same time, being with my kids limited the time and attention given to some field situations, and also made it difficult or impossible to attend some social events

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<sup>23</sup> At the time of our fieldwork, the habitational deficit in Sheshatshiu made finding accommodations for four people difficult. More importantly, we felt that living there would had been a burden to the community, as it would had worsened the living conditions of Innu families.

(such as events late at night). The boundaries between “home” and the “field” were sometimes vague, and I often found it difficult to conciliate my different roles.

My gender also influenced my fieldwork experience. Being a woman I found myself in the minority in a number of situations, particularly when observing or participating in intergovernmental meetings, such as the FMC meetings, as most of the Innu Nation and the provincial bureaucrats and officials are male. In some of these instances I was the only or one of the only two women present.<sup>24</sup> My interactions with Innu people in the communities and when camping in *nutshimit* (the bush or the country) were also marked by my gender. While the Innu society is egalitarian, there is also a permeable but strong division of gender labor. For example, although I was told of women who are good hunters, I only observed men hunting or going to hunt. On the only occasion I was in a hunting party, I not only was the only woman present, but I was with my husband. When camping in *nutshimit* with other families, I usually stayed around the campsite doing what other women were doing (taking care of children, cooking, tending the fire, etc.), while men were out hunting, fishing and trapping. My age, and the relative age of my children, was also a factor that influenced my social interaction. According to Innu standards, I was too old to have kids so young. Most women my age were already grandmothers, or had kids in their late teens or earlier twenties. If they had children around my kids’ ages under their care, they were their grandchildren, or the youngest of their kids, so usually an older sibling or other relative helped by babysitting. Most of the mothers who had children

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<sup>24</sup> This predominance of man among the members of co-management boards has been observed across Canada (Tytelman and Natcher 2008, Natcher 2013).

around my children's ages were younger than me. While gaps in life experience, age and parenting styles were illustrative and interesting from the anthropological point of view, they left me in an ambiguous position that made it sometimes difficult to establish a rapport with other women, particularly women around my age. On the other hand, I found it easier to connect to older women and children.

Having been born in Argentina, where I also did my undergraduate degree, and being an immigrant to Canada, I arrived at the field with a set of conceptions and knowledge that likely differed from Canadian researchers. My family and I were also perceived differently, in some cases with curiosity. My background influenced my perceptions and understanding of the fieldwork situation. For example, I found that my understanding of colonial processes in Canada was enriched by my exposure to similar processes in Latin-America. At the same time, my perceptions of the state/aboriginal people relationship in Canada have not been shaped by years of exposition to State mandated education and mass media portrayals of these issues. My criteria regarding poverty and inequality also greatly differed from Canadian standards (and also, from Innu standards).

Being an immigrant, I was not associated with the Canadian and provincial colonial apparatus, nor with the dominant Canadian society. To the contrary, my and my family's "exoticism" generated some curiosity, and the questions about our native country often enabled other discussions. It also allowed for an identification of common historical traits (as when someone remarked to my husband: "You too were invaded by the English") and in some cases, dialogues about the historical and current aboriginal people/state

relationships in Argentina and other countries of Latin-America in comparison to Canada and the United States of America.

My knowledge of Spanish proved to be a valuable tool, particularly with children, who were quite curious about the Spanish translation for common words. Those were also opportunities to discuss Innu-aimun meanings. My knowledge of Innu-aimun remains, however, basic. Although I took some lessons early in my fieldwork, and tried to speak Innu-aimun whenever possible, I was not able to become proficient in the language and required the help of translators (such as research assistants and community members) in some instances, for example, when interacting with some elders. This was frustrating for some of my Innu acquaintances, who pointed out examples of other non-Innu with better Innu-aimun abilities, including my husband. Although I regret not being able to speak Innu-aimun fluently and I know it affected my communication with elders and my understanding of some social interactions, the core of my research, the co-management process, was not extremely affected by my low Innu-aimun proficiency. FMC meetings were conducted exclusively in English, and minutes and forest plans were redacted in English. In addition, it did not obviously affect my interviews and dialogues with Innu Nation's officials, as they are competent English speakers (in some cases English was their mother tongue). I believe that being an English-as-a-second-language speaker had a greater impact on my fieldwork than my low proficiency in Innu-aimun.

During my fieldwork, I spent time both in the communities located in Central Labrador and in Nutshimit. As my research focused on the co-management process, I attended all of the official Forest Management Committee (FMC) meetings that took place during the

time I was in Labrador. I observed three of the four FMC meetings that took place in 2007: May 2007, November 2007 and December 2007 (the other meeting took place in March, before I started my research). During 2008, there were two official FMC meetings, but I was able to attend only one, in February. There were no official meetings held in 2009. In addition, I travelled twice from St. John's to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to be able to observe FMC meetings. The first of these trips, as I mentioned earlier, happened in May 2007 and was also an opportunity to present my research to the Innu Nation and to the Forest Management Committee. Upon my return to St. John's, I travelled to Labrador in March of 2010 when I attended a FMC meeting and met with FMC members. In addition to the FMC meetings, I attended different events where interaction with and among members of the FMC and other government agencies, scientists and other stakeholders took place. Those included the Climate Change and Renewable Resources in Labrador Conference (North West River, March 2008), a presentation by the members of the FMC to the Monitoring Committee organized by local environmental groups (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, October 2008), the 12<sup>th</sup> North America Caribou Workshop (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, November 2008), the Forest Mini-Forum (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, May 2009) and the XIII World Forest Conference (Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 2009).

Combined with the use of direct observation, interviews provided additional information. I interviewed members and former members of the FMC. I used a combination of open ended and semi-structured interviews. Interview questions focused on the process of establishing the FMC, the expectations of the participants, attitudes concerning the

functioning of the board, how decisions are made and consensus reached, as well as which aspects of the FMC were working well, which were not, what changes needed to be made, and the ideas regarding the future of the FMC once the land claim is settled. I also conducted some formal interviews with Innu community members, but in general I found it more useful to talk informally while camping, visiting, hosting visitors at my place, staying in the Innu Nation offices or doing other daily activities.

The observations of the FMC and other meetings were part of a wider ethnographic inquiry informed principally by participant observation around the Central Labrador communities and when travelling around and camping in Nutshimit. I attended numerous social events including all types of celebrations, such as birthday parties, Valentine's Day parties and Christmas parties, school functions and trips, church services, sport practices and games, and a funeral. I also had innumerable casual encounters in everyday situations in and around the communities, including encounters on the road between North West River and Happy Valley-Goose Bay, in local businesses, such as supermarkets, restaurants and pubs, and while accessing local services such as post offices, libraries, and health services. These encounters not only allowed for an understanding of everyday activities, but also occasionally resulted in unexpected and interesting conversations.

I spent a considerable amount of time in the Innu Nation's Environment Office in Sheshatshiu, observing and sometimes taking part in the office's activities. In Sheshatshiu I also observed (and in one case helped to organize) a number of meetings, workshops and community consultations, of various levels of formality, usually organized by outside researchers (biologists, anthropologists, geographers, foresters, etc.). Community

members, particularly elders, were invited (and usually paid) to attend these events. The topics covered during these events included among others: Climate Change, Labrador forest modeling, Labrador vegetation, caribou, and land nomenclature.

In addition to the time I spent with Innu people in the communities of central Labrador (Sheshatshiu, Northwest River and Happy Valley-Goose Bay) and later in St. John's, there were other opportunities to share time with Innu families in nutshimit. My family and I camped on different occasions with Innu people there. Camping took place in different locations and times of the year, traveling to camps by different means of transportation. We camped in nutshimit during winter, springtime and fall; sometimes we camped just for a few days, sometimes for weeks at a time. We arrived at or left camping sites by car, aeroplane and helicopter. Taking into account all the different occasions, we spent more than six weeks camping in nuthsimit in the company of Innu families. We also made same day visits to Innu camps located on the side of the road. During the time in the camps we participated in a range of subsistence and daily activities. My involvement in these activities was fundamental in shaping my understanding (and consequently my research) of the Innu relationship to Nitassinan.

I undertook a media analysis of print and radio coverage of the news related to the Forest Management Committee (FMC), forestry in Labrador, the Innu Nation lands claims, and land and resources development in the area under co-management (e.g. the projected creation of a National Park in the Mealy Mountains area and Lower Churchill Hydro electrical development). I was especially alert to information on Innu people/government relations and issues of governance. My exploration of archival media focused on the

provincial and local newspapers, where I was able to identify how issues of land tenure, land rights and co- management are presented. As the origin of the co-management process preceded my fieldwork, I complement my ethnographic information about this particular process with the use of archival and news sources. I also analysed historical documentation available at the Labrador Institute Library (Happy Valley- Goose Bay) as well as the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, Queen Elizabeth Library, Memorial University (St. John's). I also was granted access to some of the Innu Nation Environment Office's documents available at its office in Sheshatshiu, which I analyzed.

Early in our fieldwork, my husband and I were aided by Innu research assistants, first by a young man in his early twenties and later by a woman in her early to mid-twenties. Their collaboration was fundamental not only for translation, but perhaps most importantly, to bridge cultural differences and to open the doors of the community, particularly at the beginning of our fieldwork. While they were mostly occupied in helping my husband do a survey of caribou meat sharing, they also did translations during my earlier interactions with elders, and accompanied us in some of the camping trips.

Because of logistical limitations, I was not able to visit the Innu community of Natuashish. I did, however, meet people from Natuashish while camping in nutshimit, and during their visits to central Labrador's communities and to St. John's. My understanding of the Innu perceptions of Nitassinan and regarding the forest co-management process were very much influenced by my observations in nutshimit and Sheshatshiu.

While doing fieldwork for my doctoral research, I worked as an Instructor on the College of North Atlantic for a semester (Fall 2009), and as a Research Associate for the Labrador Institute (March 2009 to March 2010). In addition, I worked as a researcher assistant for a project on climate change (Spring and Summer 2009). As these different roles sometimes overlapped with my own research, I was careful to make it clear in which role I was acting when interacting with different people.

### **Dissertation organization**

Having established the focus of this dissertation in this Introduction, in the following chapters I explore the practices that make Nitassinan and Labrador, as well as the tension between them. In chapter I, I focus on the historical and current ways Nitassinan is conceptualized, represented and experienced by the Innu people while taking into consideration other non-human persons that also dwell in and contribute to the production of Nitassinan. In the following chapter I focus on the ways Labrador has been produced through the expansion of the European empires and, later, through the process of “nation” building of Newfoundland and Canada. As colonial places are produced through processes that render invisible aboriginal places (Porter 2007, Tsing 2005, Thorpe 2008, Rossiter 2008, Samson 2003), I look at the way Nitassinan nevertheless continues to be produced both in tension and entangled to Labrador.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the forest co-management process, concentrating on the ways in which this co-management process facilitated or hindered the production of Nitassinan and Labrador respectively. I analyse how the territory under co-management was

conceptualized and represented through this co-management process. I particularly look at the extent of the recognition of the existence of Nitassinan, and the practices that produce Nitassinan. I conclude this chapter by pointing out that the co-management process mostly replicates and validates practices of place that make Labrador rather than Nitassinan. This point is explored further in the following chapter.

Chapter 4 examines two co-management instances where Nitassinan and Labrador collided, so to speak. The first of these instances focuses on the different ontological conceptions of the parties in reference to issues of accountability and sharing, exemplified in a lost tent. The tent, bought by the FMC, was used to organize meetings on the land. After being stored at the Innu Nation office for a while, the tent went missing. The event allows me to discuss the political significance of issues of accountability in the aboriginal/state relationship, and the different ontological foundations that ideas of accountability may have for the Innu and the state. The second instance analyzed in this chapter involves a conflict regarding the management of a Hemlock looper infestation in the Labrador forest<sup>25</sup>. The conflict makes evident the different expectations the parties had in relation to their participation in the co-management process. While these two examples have different characteristics, both of them show how the forest management process works in a way that is coherent with the logic and authority of the state, reproducing and acting according to it.

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<sup>25</sup> An earlier version of this discussion has been published in Tytelman, C. (2014) *Natural Resources and Cultural Expectations: the Co-management of Forest District 19, Labrador/ Nitassinan*. In Valentine, J. R. and Macoulay, M.(Eds) *Papers of the Forty Second Algonquian Conference*. Albany, NY: Sunny Press.

Chapter 5 focuses on the ways in which Innu participation in the co-management process facilitated some aspects of the production of Nitassinan. The focus of this chapter is the reasons behind Innu Nation participation in the co-management from the point of view of the advantages that this participation offered for the production of Nitassinan.

In the Conclusion I return to the ways Nitassinan and Labrador are produced by the experience of the co-management process, looking at the direct and indirect ways in which this process allows for particular ways of conceptualization and representation of place. While this particular co-management process is now finished, the Innu Nation is still linked to the provincial and the federal government, as well as to other aboriginal governments, research institutions and companies, by a constellation of negotiations and agreements. There is also an expectation that once (if) the land claim is finalized, new shared management institutions will be created, such as the Resource Management Board mentioned in the Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle. Thus, the Innu Nation continues, and will continue, to deal with other, sometimes interlinked, productions of place in a context of colonialism, often in an institutional context similar to the one analysed in this dissertation. The findings in this dissertation can thus inform present and future negotiations and agreements.

## **Chapter 1: Nitassinan, the Innu land**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I explore what practices of place contribute to the production of Nitassinan. Nitassinan is often translated as “our land” or “our territory” and can refer to the entirety of the Innu ancestral land (most of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula) or to the territory associated with a particular Innu group (Mailhot 1997). Nitassinan is produced in tension and entangled with the productions of place of other groups. While this dissertation focuses on the ways Labrador and Nitassinan are interwoven and are often in tension, other practices of place also exist and influence Labrador and Nitassinan.

Archeological and historical data show that access and use of the territory was a source of conflicts, often violent, with the Inuit population. After contact with Europeans, Nitassinan was in tension with the different expressions of Labrador’s practices of place (which are further discussed in the next chapter) and also those of Quebec, while the production of Labrador was also influenced by imperial powers economic and political interests in North America and the types of practices of place those deployed, and later, by the practices of place of Quebec and Newfoundland as well as with the construction of a national Canadian identity and Canada’s position in the world.

### **Nitassinan as a complex web of social relationships**

The underlying assumption the Innu have regarding Nitassinan is that they have always inhabited it; this is their territory and always has been (Loring and Ashini 2000: 175). It is in relation to territory that Innu conceive both themselves and other peoples. According to

Innu atonegen,<sup>26</sup> all people received from the Supreme Being –called Tshishe-Manitu, the Great Spirit– a distinctive territory that belongs to them. Nitassinan is the territory the Innu received from Tshishe-Manitu, thus, it is their territory (Mailhot 1997). Nitassinan is for the Innu

*the root of their culture. It is here that the world-view and the philosophical concepts which are part of the [Innu] intellectual culture were formulated. [It is] by living in this land [that] people learned to define themselves and to define their relationship with the others. (Vincent and Mailhot 1983: 21, quoted in Armitage 1990)*

Nitassinan is produced by multiple constellations of social relationships, which include human and non-human persons. Innu people do not consider themselves the only beings that are related to Nitassinan; to the contrary, a fundamental part of Innu conceptualization of Nitassinan is that animal, animal masters and other non-human persons are also constitutive of the territory. Armitage (1992) suggests that this understanding of the relation to the animals and other entities “totalizes the empirical reality by adding additional levels of meaning and explanation to it” (Armitage 1992: 2). However, Nitassinan is not just composed by an “empirical reality” with an additional meaning, but by different spheres of reality that include the people’s social world, the

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<sup>26</sup> Innu oral tradition is comprised by two different narrative genres: atonegen (also called atanuakan) and tipatshimun (also called tobadjimun). The first genre is related to the western category of myth, and refers to the words transmitted to the ancestors when they were married to animals. The second category refers to the real-life experiences of the storyteller or someone that he knows or knew (Savard 1977).

social world of animals, the world of animal masters and other spirits. There is a complex web of social relationships that connect these different spheres.

Anthropological discussions of landscapes and timescapes are useful in grasping the mutually entangled spheres that constitute the Innu understanding of Nitassinan. In his analysis of the Yukpa people of Venezuela, Halbmayer (2004) argues that the concept of timescape can be applied to “non- modern” amalgamated concepts of time and space, that are contrasted to modern notions of time based on discontinuous continuity, where units of time with a beginning and an end are fastened together linearly. Timescapes, on the other hand, are based on a continuous discontinuity, where the reproduction of mythically created, inclusive discontinuity generates continuity. Multiple timescapes can co-exist in the same universe and different timescapes can intercept each other. These capabilities of timescapes explain how mythical figures, animal masters and spirits can be part of the past while at the same time can intermingle with human persons and non-human persons in the present, and refer to the future. Different timescapes manifest themselves in what Halbmayer describes as the perceptible and visible world: in dreams where mythical figures and non-human persons appear and interact with humans, in places where myths are embedded, in shaking tents ceremonies where mythical figures and humans are connected, and in the apparition of animals symbolizing or acting in representation of family members. Thus, Halbmayer argues, the landscape includes a spiritual dimension in which other worlds are also present.

Nitassinan, then, includes a number of timescapes that intercept each other. Nitassinan is inhabited and produced by people, animals, spirits and animal masters,<sup>27</sup> who are animal spirits that rule each ‘animal kingdom’<sup>28</sup>. As other Algonquian societies (Tanner 1979, Brightman 1993, Berkes *et al.* 2009, Armitage 1991), Innu people conceive animals, spirits and animal masters as social beings that constitute a collective with human persons. The terms of engagement between human and non-human persons include friendship, sexuality and competition as well as kinship. There are not clear limits between human and non-human persons, as transformations are possible (Henriksen 2009) and Innu and animals and even animal masters can have a common genealogy. As animals are social beings, with emotions and a purposeful life, Innu interactions with animals assume that they have feelings, agency, and will. For example, Speck affirms that for the Innu “the animals (*awa’c̄ats*) pursue an existence of corresponding to that of man as regards emotions and purpose of life” (Speck 1977 [1935]: 72). The Innu consider that animals inhabit their own social universes, which can be described as timescapes, and those universes are part of Nitassinan. Innu explain that animals perceive their own world in the same terms that humans perceive theirs, for example, beavers see their lodges as humans see their homes: with furniture, tools and decoration. There are possibilities for crossings between the human, animal masters and animals’ worlds, with humans visiting

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<sup>27</sup> The relative importance of each animal master varies according to the region of Nitassinan, but in general the caribou animal master, called Katipinimitautsh or Atiku-napeu “Caribou man,” is considered one of the most powerful along with Matshishkapeu, the Fart Man, that is sometimes called the big boss because of its ability to punish animal masters, animals and people by controlling their anal sphincters (Armitage 1992).

<sup>28</sup> The Innu animal taxonomic system classified animals as Europeans (particularly domestic animals) or Innu animals. Innu animals are further classified according to the following categories: four legged animals, waterfowl, birds, fish and insects. Superimposed to this classification, animals are separated into tipentamun or kingdoms (Clémens 1986, Armitage 1992).

or becoming animals or animal masters themselves, such as the caribou man, an Innu man who married a female caribou. Some Innu consider that they have animal masters or spiritual beings as ancestors. A young Innu in his early twenties with whom my husband and I were sharing a car ride from Sheshatshiu to Happy Valley-Goose Bay discussed the story of the caribou man. Just before arriving at his destination he told us that, “My uncle believes that he [the caribou man] is family; that is what my uncle says.” On another occasion, we were having lunch with an elder, who was telling us about his encounters with Kuekuatsheu (the wolverine, a trickster figure) when he was a young adult. At the end of the lunch, the elder explained that his aunt told him that the wolverine “is a relative.” Damián Castro (personal communication) also mentioned another instance in which an Innu elder told him that the caribou-man was his relative.

Innu relationships with animals are conceived in terms of reciprocity: animals give their flesh, bones, hides and fur, and people need to show respect for the animals and the animal masters. In this context, it is considered that animals, guided by their animal masters, offer themselves to hunters and it is an act of disrespect not to take them, and, as it is discussed below, respect is a key term in the relationships with animal masters and other beings. The will of the animals and the necessity of showing respect were made very clear to me during a hunting trip early in my fieldwork. I was travelling with a group of hunters and my family. The goal of this trip was to hunt for the elders, but, for most of the day, we couldn't find any caribou. It was almost dark when I saw a caribou looking at me. I pointed out the caribou to the Innu hunters, who proceeded to shoot the caribou, a female who dropped dead to the ground. I was convinced it continued to look at me while

falling. This being my first hunting experience, I was impressed by the death of the caribou, and I felt responsible for the end of the caribou's life. Later, I related my feelings to another *akaneshao*,<sup>29</sup> without realizing that a young Innu (who also had been in the hunting trip) overheard me. He promptly dismissed my concern saying: "What else could you do? She offered herself to you."<sup>30</sup>

The landscape of Nitassinan includes a dimension that can be described as spiritual, or coming back to Halbsmayer's terminology, a different timescape that coexists in the same landscape. Some of the Innu mythical and spiritual figures occupy specific places in what can be described as the human person's world. Mishtapeuat, giant beings that are not human or animals (Armitage 1992), mediate between people and animal masters in the shaking tent ceremony.<sup>31</sup> The presence of a Mishtapeu<sup>32</sup> inside the shaking tent was fundamental for Shamans, because this being was able to translate the language of the

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<sup>29</sup> Akaneshao is the word in Innu-aimun that means white person (Mailhot et al 2013). This word also refers to English-speaking persons. It was used in reference to me and my family but with limitations, as our ethnic category was ambiguous and our English much accentuated.

<sup>30</sup> In effect, when caribous become aware of the presence of a predator (or hunter), they stop and directly look at the predator. Ingold (2000), looking at the different ways this behavior is considered among biologist and Cree hunters, points out that biologists explain this behavior as an adaptation to predation by wolves. When a wolf chases a caribou, once the caribou stops, the wolf also stops. Since it is the caribou that has the initiative to restart running, it has a slight advantage over the wolf. However, Cree people explain caribou behavior in terms of its relationship with the hunter: the caribou offers itself to the hunter. This is also the case among the Innu.

<sup>31</sup> The *kushapatshikan* (shaking tent) ceremony was one of the most important annual rituals for the Innu (Armitage 1992). It was officiated by a *kakushapatak* (a shaman) that used the tent to access the secret, spiritual world. The shaking tent access was restricted to shamans. The shaking tent allowed for the communication with animal masters, including the caribou master and other non-human persons, as well as communication with relatives that were in distant parts of Nitassinan. The shaking tent was also used for amusement. The shaking tent was a small, conic-shaped tent, usually set up inside another tent. Depending on the spiritual power of the shaman the shaking tent used four, six or eight poles, and was covered with caribou hide (Armitage 1992). The last *kushpatshikan* (shaking tent ceremony) in Nitassinan happened in Ushkan-shipiss (near Upper Brook, Labrador) in November 1969 (Armitage 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Mishtapeuat: plural, Mishtapeu: singular.

animal masters. Mishtapeuat inhabit their own world, Tshushtashkamuk, which looks similar to the human world, but is populated by giant animals and other non-human beings. Humans cannot live there, but Tshushtashkamuk is linked by a bridge to the world inhabited by the Innu. Tshushtashkamuk is the place where important myths occurred (Vincent 1978, Armitage 1992). Another example of the presence of the spiritual world in a specific place in Nitassinan is Atiku-mishuap, the caribou house, which is home to the caribou animal master and the animals this master controls. Atiku-mishuap is located in the Ungava Peninsula. Some places are also considered to be animated and to have the capacity to punish people if they show disrespect. Consequently, people need to avoid disrespectful behaviours such as pointing at some mountains (i.e. Aissismeushtikuaniss and Ishkeu-akunishkueun Mountains); otherwise, the weather would become stormy and windy. Similarly, wind, water and the sun are considered to be manitous, forces or spirits which have to be treated properly (Speck 1977, Arsenault and Zawadzka 2014). This shows how, for the Innu as for other aboriginal people,<sup>33</sup> the landscape is not an inert object, but something alive which has agency.

The landscape and the practices of the non-human persons described here contribute to Nitassinan place production, their social links with the Innu, and the timescapes where they inhabit, are all constitutive of Nitassinan.

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<sup>33</sup> See Ball's (2002) analysis of place in Apache cultures.

## **Innu values**

It is in this landscape of Nitassinan where different timescapes exist and where the Innu people root their understanding of themselves and their social relationships, thus where their fundamental values are produced and reproduced. These values can be synthesized as generosity, respect and autonomy. They are all-encompassing for the Innu, and regulate their social relationship with human and non-human persons.

In this landscape where humans and non-human persons are linked by social relationships, the Innu see themselves as having a warden role. Innu people consider that they have rights over their territory; however, these are not associated with the western conception of property rights but with the exercise of what Mailhot (1986b) describes as mental control and responsibility over the land. Different terms have been suggested to express these ideas. Armitage (1990) argues that Innu ideology regarding the territory is expressed in the Innu-aimun term *kenauenitam* that this author presents as “an equivalent to the concept of stewardship” used “to convey the idea of taking care of something, or watching over it, preserving or conserving it” (1990:119). For his part, Lacasse (2004) suggests that the Innu-aimun term that describes the Innu relation to the land is *tipenitamun*, which can be understood as an approximation to stewardship and to taking care of something (in this case, the land) so everything works well (Lacasse 2004: 249). Both terms express an understanding of the relation to Nitassinan that is based on responsibility towards the land and the human and non-human persons that inhabit it.

Fundamental Innu values of generosity, respect and autonomy are embedded in Nitassinan. Some authors (Henriksen 2009, Castro 2015) suggest that these values are a consequence of the Innu hunting way of life and their relation with the animals and other non-human persons. Innu generosity is rooted in Innu understanding of their relation with the animals and animal masters. The relationship with these non-human persons is based on the conception that they are sharing themselves with the hunters. Generosity is learned from animals and the animal masters, and it is replicated in other Innu social relationships (Armitage 1992, Armitage 2000, Henriksen 2009, Castro 2015). This is expressed in a sharing ethic that has surprised western observers since early contact with the Innu. Paul Le Jeune (2004[1634]), superior of the Jesuits of Quebec who travelled with the Innu (then called Montaignes by the Europeans) during the winter of 1633-34, was shocked by the generous character of Innu people. Early anthropologists also noted this characteristic. For instance, Frank Speck pointed out that “among the virtues of Montagnais-Naskapi life is the spirit of generosity in sharing with others one half of the carcass of all large game falling to the hunter’s weapons” (Speck 1977[1935]: 89). His colleague William Duncan Strong, who in the winter of 1927-28 participated on the Rawson-McMillan Subarctic Expedition, describes how the groups of Innu people he was living with received another group of people. The newcomers were sick and hungry, in Strong’s words: “dead weight” as “they can’t hunt, they can’t trap, etc.” They were, however, welcomed into camp. Strong explains that “apparently Indian ethic demand their cordial reception by this band to whom they will be a serious handicap if no more deer are killed” (Strong 1994: 133).

As a result of the settlement process there were new pressures on the ethics of sharing, since the rules that made sense and had meaning in a nomadic context do not necessarily translate well into the settlement, creating new contradictions. Henriksen (1973) noticed more than fifty years ago, contradictions in sharing between what he calls the ‘Barren Ground world’ and the ‘coastal world’ (where the settlement town of Davis Inlet was situated). This author argues that in the Barren world, the sharing ideal is important to the preservation of communal values, and gives value and significance to hunting and to the other subsistence activities. In the coastal world, in contrast, there is not a clear consensus about the applicability of sharing rules, or about what is the appropriate conduct of a hunter (Henriksen 1973: 112). Henriksen (1973) also notices a dilemma between ‘sharing’ and ‘having’ that he considers a central feature of Innu social life. He exemplifies this by describing the development of strategies to avoid sharing, such as the hiding of a small amount of personal goods.<sup>34</sup>

Later accounts of Innu people’s life in the communities also reveal pressures over sharing. Mailhot (1997: 69), for instance, describes the Innu communities as “in a permanent state of tension between the values proposed by the dominant society (to hold a job, to improve one’s material position) and those which are properly Innu (sharing and equality)” a tension that, according to Mailhot is at Sheshathiu “all the more severe

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<sup>34</sup> While I observed some non-sharing strategies similar to those observed by Henriksen, including carrying around a skidoo in a trailer to avoid having to lend it, I agree with Castro (2015) that these do not necessarily show a dilemma between sharing and having, as Henriksen believes, but a strategy towards the recognition of a different set of values at the same time. Thus, the focus is not on the dilemma between sharing and having as part of the Innu social life, but on the tension between a set of values where having is important and a set of values where sharing is fundamental.

because the egalitarian ideology and the traditional system of sharing are still alive.”<sup>35</sup>

Tanner (2001), points out that the poverty that the Innu encounter as a consequence of the settlement puts impossible strain on their sharing ethic. Samson (2003) points out that though sharing practices continue to occur in the communities, these are not only unnecessary but also counter-productive for people who want to become better integrated in the Euro-Canadian way of life.

In any case, generosity still is a central feature of the Innu social life. There is pressure on people to be generous, and there are social sanctions for those who are not. Sharing continues to be expected, particularly in reference to food. Wage and welfare payments are not directly shared, a fact that is sometimes considered an illustration of the weakening of the sharing ethic among the Innu (Magocsi 1999: 38). Resources and goods obtained with money from wages and/or welfare, however, enter into the sharing network. Mailhot (1997) points out that

*For an Innu the fact of being gainfully employed (as opposed to living on meagre welfare payments) does not guarantee a significant improvement in his or her material circumstances (...) This is because the ancient Innu principle ensuring distribution of wealth allows the member of the family to benefit from an*

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<sup>35</sup> Regarding the issue of Innu egalitarian ideology, it is important to notice that this does not mean that there is an absence of stratification or inequalities among the Innu people. These do, in fact, exist. However, I agree with Mailhot when she affirms, in reference to Sheshatshiu, but in terms applicable to both Innu communities in Labrador, that “the social stratification in the community of Sheshatshit springs from a symbolic complex that obtains throughout the Innu area. It would be wrong, therefore, to confuse it with the system of social classes found in industrialized societies” as elite member “are recruited according to family and territorial, rather than economic, criteria” (Mailhot 1997: 68).

*individual's material advantages, whether or not the interested party agrees. (1997: 68-69)*

I observed that access to waged jobs, when they are in Innu-run institutions, is also consistent with generosity values. Similarly, Samson (2003) observes that some Innu transfer their sharing and community values by intentionally holding jobs temporarily; and giving jobs away to family members or friends, allowing them to obtain benefits from the wages and creating a way for more people in the same family to be eligible to claim unemployment benefits (2003: 153). Castro (2015), who centers his research on caribou sharing among the Innu, demonstrates how sharing mechanisms are not only still relevant among the Innu today, but they also define social relationships and belonging.

Closely related to generosity, respect is another important Innu value, which is “omnipresent in Innu culture” (Armitage 1992: 15). Innu wellbeing depends on showing respect to human and non-human persons. Particularly important is showing respect toward animal masters, because it is not possible to hunt the animals they control without their agreement. Animals and animal masters, as other non-human persons, have autonomy and can decide to offer or to withdraw themselves from hunters. An important part of showing respect for non-human persons is to replicate their generosity in the social relationships among human persons, so being generous is related to respect. Another way to express respect is by adhering to a prescribed behaviour in the treatment of animals and their remains. This behaviour includes following sharing rules for meat and other animal products; the proper disposal of animal remains (disposing uneaten parts on the fire, in trees or in scaffolds); handling the caribou marrow with intense care during the *makushan*

ritual feast,<sup>36</sup> the avoiding of wasting meat or over-hunting; the offering of respect to the animal masters by using decorated clothing and hunting equipment, and the using of deferential language when communicating or referring to animals and animal masters (Armitage 1992, Loring 1996). The observation of these rules derived in a consumption pattern that can be described as immediacy, which has surprised and disgusted western observers since early contact. For instance, Le Jeune (2004[1634]) notices the tendency of the Innu to consume all their food immediately, without considerations for future necessities, conduct he considered immoral. Similarly, Strong (1994) describes how, when food was available, people would eat continuously “at short intervals during the day,” adding that “truly it is feast or famine with this people” (130). The author describes the same intensive consumption pattern for alcohol, since brewing and drinking beer often accompanied periods of abundance of meat. Strong describes a drinking period that was about a month in length. This period of abundance was followed by a period of starvation.<sup>37</sup> Vaino Tanner (1947) also notices the cycle of abundance and scarcity that marked the Innu way of life. These early observers neglected to understand, however, that these behaviours were taking place in a relational world, in which, as Henriksen notices “the Innu are accountable to the animal spirits whenever their decisions and actions have

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<sup>36</sup> The *Makushan* feast is a form of distribution of bush food. It can take place in the country or in the communities. In preparation for *Makushan*, an elderly man crushes or supervises the crushing of Caribou long bones. The marrow is extracted with extreme care from those bones and then boiled, and the fat is subsequently separated. The fat is used to make cakes, called *atikupimi*, that are the most sacred element of the *Makushan* feast (Henriksen 1973, Armitage 2000).

<sup>37</sup> Some caution is necessary regarding the perception of starvation and poverty that western observers attributed to arctic and subarctic aboriginal populations. Black-Rogers (1986) points out that while “starving” is a repeated concept through post journals and reports by fur traders working among Athapaskan and Algonquian societies, it encompassed a variety of literal, metaphorical, technical, and ritual usages.

consequences for the animals” (2009: 18). The particular relationships established between Innu and animal masters and other spirits implied that it is necessary to show respect by consuming all the animals offered in order to have access to more. In this context, far from immoral, this behaviour is, from the Innu point of view, rational. These patterns of consumption are also related to conceptualizations of time and the scope of human influence, particularly in relation to the future. For the Innu, as for other aboriginal people, the future is unpredictable and beyond human control, so people can only make limited and flexible plans for the future.

This historical pattern of consumption is still present among the Innu. The consumption of the products circulating among webs of social relationships tends to be in most cases rapid, particularly while in *nutshimit*. Foodstuff that is not sent back to the communities is usually promptly consumed, with the exception of meat being conserved by producing jerky (which, however, is also promptly distributed once ready). The introduction of refrigerators and freezers, however, has produced some changes in the patterns of consumption and sharing of foodstuff in the communities, as it allows for the extension of storage time and temporal separation of the procurement, the sharing (or re-sharing) and the consumption of the foodstuff. Nevertheless, this pattern of consumption immediacy extended beyond food stuff, covering other products, including money, which for the Innu, as Samson argues, “is not a universal medium of exchange, investable capital, or a badge of status. Rather, it is something to be used and consumed, not hoarded or invested” (2003: 154).

My observations are consistent with this. An occasion on which all Innu adults received a payment of Impact Benefices Agreements' (IBAs) royalties, for example, resulted in a number of small electronics and furniture being sold out in Happy Valley- Goose Bay. This also resulted in organization of purchasing trips to Labrador City, which offers more commercial options. On another occasion, a lump sum received by a family, the consequence of a retroactive correction on the payment of the federal child care benefit, was immediately used to buy a new truck.

Autonomy is another important value for the Innu. In order to understand the significance of autonomy, it is necessary to have in mind, as I mentioned above, that animals, animal masters and other spiritual beings are considered persons in the Innu world, that is, they share the same attributes of human personhood. This notion of personhood for both human persons and non-human persons is not based on the intrinsic characteristics of beings, but on their "field of relationships" (Ingold 2000). These ideas are not exclusive to the Innu but a number of aboriginal peoples around the world, particularly hunter and gatherers (Glaskin 2012, Bird-David 1999, Hallowell 1960, Tanner 1979). Working in the Western Australian context, Glaskin (2012) presents the notion of personhood as the "ontology of embodied relatedness" where the constitution of the self is only possible in a web of relationships that transcends the human. Similarly, but in relation to the Nayaka of India, Bird-David (1999) affirms that the sense of Nayaka personhood can be summarized as "I relate, therefore I am" (in opposition to the modernist Cartesian conception "I think, therefore I am"). In this context of relational personhood, aboriginal ideas of autonomy, including Innu ideas of autonomy, are relational. Innu consider that persons make their

own choices while taking into account how these will affect other persons (human and otherwise), and how, by the actions of those affected, their choices are going to affect themselves back. Consequently, personal autonomy among the Innu is a relational autonomy, which is exercised carefully and with the expectation that other persons will also be careful when exercising their own autonomy.

Relational autonomy is consistent with Innu ambivalence with regard to leadership. While they have some form of leadership, autonomy is a fundamental value that can be threatened by the consolidation of leaderships. Thus, leadership is unstable and contingent on ability and it does not confer a special status; this is even the case in the context of the Innu governing institutions that emerged as interfaces with the colonial state where the instability of leadership roles frequently become institutional crisis.

Historically, Innu followed a *wotshimao* (first man), however, each family was independent and self-sufficient, and consequently, could decide to follow and/or stay with a particular *wotshimao* at any given time (Leacock 1958). The influence of the *wotshimao* was then constrained as his leadership could be challenged at any moment. The *wotshimao* should listen to his followers, and in critical moments, the decisions of the *wotshimao* could be in fact joint decisions discussed by the group. The figure of the *wotshimao* continues to this day, particularly in relation to hunting activities where the authority emanates from hunting ability and knowledge of particular places. In the context of institutions created to operate in the colonial interface, such as the band councils and the Innu Nation, patterns of authority are also unstable. This instability is expressed in frequent institutional crises, including frequent protests –sometimes violent–

against Innu authorities, tumultuous election processes, and the limited capacity of representation within these institutions, including, as discussed later in this dissertation, the Innu Nation's Environment Office, which represents the Innu people in the co-management process.

The Innu values described here are fundamental in Innu people's understanding of themselves, their practices, and their field of relationship with human and non-human persons. As such, these values are linked to and at the same time constitute Nitassinan.

### **Social relationships and territory**

As discussed in the Introduction, Algonquian people's relationship with their territory has been the object of discussion among anthropologists, in what was known as the "hunting territory debate." This debate was conceptualized in terms of the land tenure system, and centered on the pre-contact existence of family ownership over particular hunting grounds. This debate is a theoretical conceptualization that does not take into account aboriginal experiences, nor does it have equivalents or does it translate easily onto the aboriginal conception of their relationship to their territory. In this sense, the debate is presented in ethnocentric and moral terms (Tanner 1986).

It is doubtful that the terms of the debate, however, can be applied to the Innu of Labrador. The ways in which people regulate access to land varies across the Innu territory (Mailhot 1997). Hunting territories, the system prevailing among most hunting peoples of Northwest North America, is only found in the Innu Southwestern region: Saguenay-Lake St. John's area and the upper North shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence

(Mailhot 1997, Speck 1923b). This model, that appears to have developed in areas where the beaver was numerous, did not exist either in the northwestern area of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula or in the Lake Melville region (Mailhot 1997), likely because of the dependence of migratory animals as a food source.<sup>38</sup>

Instead, Mailhot's (1997) analysis suggests that territorial rights are collective, but with a band-level subdivision among the Innu of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, and that land access and occupancy is related to kinship. Thus, social relationships among human persons and non-human persons defined Innu access to their territory. Mailhot (1986b) describes this form of access to the territory as "structural mobility" where "the presence of an individual in a particular area can be explained in terms of social relationships" (1997:102) because people have to live, travel and hunt with relatives. For the Innu, place and kinship are entangled: people are not just traveling through territory, but through family lanes.

The Innu kinship system is, as Mailhot (1997) points out, stretchable and tends to maximise the networks of relatives with whom an individual can decide to travel, to live or to hunt. This happens in a number of ways. First, the Innu kinship system is bilateral, allowing individuals to depend on both the paternal and the maternal relatives from birth. At the same time, the system is exogamic, thus the network of relatives of any individual can be extended through marriage. The system also encourages early marriage, and the

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<sup>38</sup> This seems to support Hallowell's (1949) hypothesis linking hunting territories to the availability of game (more predictable in the case of non-migratory animals).

remarriage after the death of a spouse, further extending kin relationships, as the succession of marriages not only affects the spouses but also their children, who also increase their family connections. In the past, polygamy acted in the same way. At the same time, the system's category of classificatory parents is very inclusive, and the system is extensive in terms of collateral kinship. Finally, adoptions are very common among the Innu. The social identity of the kids being adopted does not necessarily change, though, and children remain connected to their biological parents and/or their biological parents' families. In some cases, children go through a series of adoptions, multiplying the family members that are part of their networks. By creating a large enough network of relatives, the Innu kinship system allows individuals to select those relatives with whom to have a closer connection. At the same time, it is elastic enough to offer individuals the possibility to activate and display different kinship networks at different times and as needs arise, even when some of those networks might not be the ones the individual in question uses regularly. In this way, neither the Innu notion of family, nor the accesses to the territory are closed (Deschênes and Dominique 1983).

The sedentarization produced changes the uses and forms of access to Nitassinan. In the case of Davis Inlet, the location of the settlement on an island even made traveling unsafe during the spring and fall. The obligation for the children to attend school made it difficult for families to leave the communities. Growing dependence on the cash economy acted in the same way. These pressures to remain in the communities, in combination with access to new technologies, such as the skidoo, changed the ways people travelled and the time they spent in Nitassinan. However, even with these limitations and changes,

pre-sedentarization patterns of mobility (and their associated kinship flexibility) are still present. Labrador Innu continue to use “core areas” (Armitage and Stopp 2003: 27) of the territory: the network of lakes at the beginning of *Nutapinuat-shipu* (Eagle River) and its tributaries; the area enclosed between the *Uinnakapau* (Winnikapau Lake), the Smallwood Reservoir (before the construction of the reservoir: *Mishikamau*), *Atshukunipi* (Seal Lake) and *Nipishish* (Nipishish Lake); and the area centered on *Ashuapamatikuan* (Shipiskan Lake) *Ashtunekamuk* (Snegamook Lake), *Shapeiau* (Shappio Lake) (Armitage and Stopp 2003, Mailhot 1997), as well as the Kamastastin Lake and the areas surrounding the communities of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. Pre-sedentarization patterns of mobility continue to be significant. Mailhot (1997) points out that “occupation patterns in the band territory are identical to those I have described for the pre-settlement period,” adding that “there is a considerable circulation of individuals within each zone, and movements from one zone to another are still determined by the structure of kinship networks” (Mailhot 1997: 154). Similarly, Samson (2003) describes how “strong family ties across the entire Labrador- Quebec Peninsula, intermarriage and adoption also mean that there is a constant flow of people using places that are in both [Sheshaushiu and Utshimassits historical occupation] maps or are cordoned off on the Quebec side of the border” (Samson 2003: 70), showing the continuous use of the space and the relevance of kinship ties.

During my own fieldwork, I found a number of ways in which these patterns of structural mobility are still present. First, people move between communities following kinship lines. Mobility between Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, and to and from Innu communities

in Quebec is still common, as well as mobility to and from non Innu communities in Labrador and beyond. These movements, with the partial exception of those related to the pursuit of higher education in urban centers, continue to follow kinship lines.

Second, Innu people continue to travel through and to dwell in *nutshimit* (the bush, see discussion below) sometimes for weeks or months at a time, sometimes just for the weekend. These trips follow a dynamic that resembles that described by Mailhot (1997) and Samson (2003). People camp in seasonally used campsites in the interior of Labrador, which have cabins, tent frames, and other structures in place and are associated with particular family groups. Access to these campsites is facilitated by an Outpost Program – called *Kakushpinanut*– run by the Sheshatshiu Band Council since the middle 80s. People also stay in tents, tent frames or cabins in places accessible by road or by using skidoos in winter and canoes in summer. In addition, the Sheshatshiu Band Council owns a cabin in Ozzie’s Brook, next to the Trans Labrador Highway and the Tshikapisk Foundation<sup>39</sup> has developed a lodge in Kamestastin Lake.

In any of these locations, the usual pattern is to camp in groups. Each group is typically composed of a number of close relatives centered on an older male – the *wotshimao*- who has extensive knowledge of the area. The social composition of the group is completed by a fluctuating and unstable number of people related by kinship to someone in the central group. Thus, while people camping together are not all necessarily related to each other,

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<sup>39</sup> The Tshikapisk Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, was created in 1997 by a group of Innu people with the goals to increase experiential learning programs for Innu youth and to provide employment opportunities in *nutshimit* for Innu people.

all of them have some kin relation with the central group. The association of a seasonal camp with particular families does not prevent members of that family to make an extensive use of their kinship network to access the territories associated with other groups. Non-related people camping together seem to be a sort of ‘anomaly’ that Innu try to ‘control’ by invoking subtle connections or creating new ones following family models. This was what happened during a camping trip that included my family, and our research assistant and his family, all of us without obvious kin connections to the central group. My family’s anomalous status was corrected by the establishing of a father-son like connection between my husband and the camp wotshimao. The wotshimao started to call my husband “my son” and to direct his activities in the same way as those of the teenage boys in camp. The situation of our research assistant’s family was corrected by invoking his girlfriend’s grandmother’s connection with a member of a family in the camp. One afternoon, while the men were out of camp hunting, and we women were looking after the kids and chatting next to the lake, I tried to joke about my kids’ and our research assistant’s daughter’s lack of family connection while all the other kids in the camp were related. I was promptly corrected by one of the women, who informed me that they had been talking about the same issue the day before and had been able to establish a kin relationship between the girl’s mother and another family in the camp. I must add that this family connexion was not invoked during the time I knew both families in Sheshashiu before this trip.

When hunting trips to seasonal camps are organized by the Band Councils or the Innu Nation, the wotshimao continues to have some level of control over the hunting group,

and his choices are based on compatibility and kinship lines. For example, during a winter hunting trip organized and funded by the Sheshatshiu Band Council, I observed that in addition to a number of young hunters, the hunting party included the wotshimao's wife and granddaughter.

Patterns of structural mobility are also present in the multiple living arrangements that individuals experience during their lifetime. While the distribution of people in dwellings both in the community and in nutshimit varies according to a number of circumstances (including composition of families, availability of dwellings, kinship and personal relationships), most Innu people frequently reorganize individual and familiar living arrangements.

I have experienced these variations when camping in nutshimit with Innu families. Once, during a winter camping trip, my family and I spent a night in a tent frame with a number of hunters participating in a communal hunt. By the second night, however, the wotshimao decided that we should move to his tent, which he had been occupying with his own family, while they moved to the tent frame. On another occasion, during springtime, we stayed in nutshimit for over three weeks. During this time, almost everybody changed dwellings at least once. This seasonal camp had three tent frames of different sizes, and a changing number of tents were erected according to necessity. First, we shared the medium tent frame with our research assistant, his daughter, and his girlfriend, who arrived some days later, while a couple and three hunters used the bigger tent frame. When more people arrived at the camp, our research assistant and his family moved to a small tent by themselves, while we moved to another tent, which previously

had been used for storage. A newly arrived family stayed in the biggest tent frame, previously occupied by the couple and the three hunters. The couple moved then to the smaller of the tent frames, which had been used as a private area to take baths, and two of the single young men moved to the medium tent frame, the one that we had been occupying. The third young man had, at this point, left the camp. When some days later another family and a woman with a number of grandchildren arrived, a new tent was erected for the family; the grandmother occupied the middle size tent frame, while the young men moved to a commercial tent. The commercial tent, the type used for summer camps, was an object of amusement: everybody agreed that it looked like a toy tent, not apt for serious camping, particularly considering that it was impossible to put a stove in there.

Later, when one of the family left the camp to seek medical attention for one of the children and mice were found in the middle tent frame, the grandmother (afraid of mice) moved to the tent in the company of a teenage grandson, his girlfriend, and a changing number of children. When the family returned, they used the middle tent frame. The children, meanwhile, were moving more or less freely between the big tent frame and whatever place the grandmother was occupying, although those whose parents were also at the camp tended to be with them.

This pattern of relational mobility is also present in Sheshatshiu. People move to different rooms in houses, and between houses, adapting to different personal and familiar circumstances. I observed a number of moves between houses, some of them related to the construction and subsequent availability of new houses, but most of them not. Among

the cases I observed, the following one is illustrative: an elderly couple was living with two of their grandsons, and one of their granddaughters and her children, in a two-floor house. At some point, however, the elderly couple moved to the woman's sister's house, because, she said, she was tired of taking care of her great grandchildren. A little later, the granddaughter moved to her mother's house, taking her children with her. This left the two grandsons in the house by themselves. Soon enough, one moved to his girlfriend's house, the other one moved to the house of another of his sisters, leaving the house empty. Later, the first one of the grandsons broke up with his girlfriend and moved back to the house. In a matter of months, a crowded house became empty, and then the movement into the house started again.

These examples show continuity with the dynamics developed before the process of sedentarization, when the minimal units of residence were flexible hunting groups whose constitution varied from year to year (Leacock 1981c, Mailhot 1986b: 147). As a result, most Innu people continue to spend time and share living spaces with a large number of relatives during their lifetime and this, in turn, informs the movement in and experience of Nitassinan which continues to be largely associated with family lines.

### **Nitassinan, *nutshimit* and the settlements**

A term often associated with Nitassinan, yet different, is *nutshimit*, another concept in Innu-aimun that expresses the Innu's relationship with the land. While values associated with Nitassinan are also associated with *nutshimit*, these terms express different dimensions of experience. Nitassinan is usually a political term associated with issues of

identity and rights to access the territory, while *nutshimit* is most frequently used to express personal connections and experiences in the territory.<sup>40</sup>

Nitassinan is the term of choice in contexts of struggles for and/or affirmation of Innu rights to the territory. Nitassinan is the term that the Innu governments used in land claims and other negotiations with Canada and its provincial states (both Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador); in guidelines for a discussion paper about research and development projects (Innu Nation 1995, Innu Nation 1999, Innu Nation 2000); as well as in reports and documentation in which the Innu Nation provided some input, such as environmental reviews of development projects (Armitage 1990, Armitage and Stopp 2003) and co-management plans and agreements, such as the Forest Ecosystem Strategy Plan for Forest Management District 19 Labrador/Nitassinan (Forsyth et al 2003), which is further discussed in Chapter 3.

Nitassinan was extensively used in context of one of the most visible conflicts the Innu had with the colonial state, their resistance to NATO training for low-level flights in Labrador (further analyzed in Chapter 2). Innu people articulated the conflict around the defense of Nitassinan. One of the most iconic pictures from the conflict shows a group of Innu women marching with a banner that reads, “We Will Always Struggle for Ntesinan.” Marie Wadden’s 1994 book chronicling the conflict is similarly called *Nitassinan. The Innu Struggle to Reclaim their Homeland*. Likewise, Nitassinan is sometimes the concept

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<sup>40</sup> Throughout this dissertation, when I use Nitassinan, the term with stronger political connotation in reference to the Innu territory, I am also including in this term the most personal meaning of the term *nutshimit* that some Innu people use to make sense of their relationship with the land.

employed when Innu identity is on display through practices associated with traditional usage of the territory. For example, Antane's (2011) book about the walk of his nephew Giant (Michael) Andrew is called *Giant's Dream, A healing journey through Nitassinan*.

For a more personal connection to the land, however, most Innu use the term *nutshimit*. Nutshimit, as mentioned before, is usually translated as the bush or the country in opposition to the settlement, but Wadden points out that it "means a lot more to the Innu people" (2001: 9). Nutshimit is the place identified with the Innu culture, where practices associated with the "traditional" way of life can be deployed: hunting and fishing, sleeping in tents, gathering boughs, cooking in open fires and in wood stoves, telling myths and stories, as well as a place of healing by means of "traditional" medicine and practices (Penashue and Penashue 1998, Degnen 2001, Samson 2003, Sable 2006). These activities allow for the development and practice of Innu core values of generosity, respect and autonomy and are embedded in the ontological order and the social relationships that support the Innu's understanding of themselves. These explain why an Innu friend told me that nutshimit is "where Innu can be Innu."

Life in nutshimit is contrasted to life in the communities of Shetshashiu and Natuashish (as Davis Inlet before), where the Innu people of Labrador were compelled to live. The literature offers numerous examples of the differences between life in nutshimit and in communities. Henriksen (1973) describes the differences between life on the coast and life in the interior (the Barrens, following this author's terminology) of the then-called Naskapi forced to settle in Davis Inlet. At the time of Henriksen's research, the Innu of Davis Inlet still lived a nomadic life for half of the year in the interior of Labrador and

“find the world of the interior more gratifying and meaningful than the coastal world” (Henriksen 1973: 101). Life in the Barrens was characterized by the development of prestige-laden forms of leadership associated with caribou hunting, and the communal sharing of caribou meat. As Henriksen expresses:

*In the Barren Grounds, most, if not all, activities take place in contexts that are vested with tremendous value and meaning for the Naskapi. They reflect their links with the natural, mythological, and social realms of the Naskapi culture. Thus, through the activities involved in hunting and sharing meat, the hunter is simultaneously interacting with the physical environment, the animal spirits and his fellow Naskapi. (Henriksen 1973: 108)*

In contrast, life in Davis Inlet was characterized by a dependence on the white middlemen (missionary, stock keeper, and teacher) to interact with the white world. In addition, in the coastal world, there was no opportunity to gain prestige through the exploitation of coastal resources and a shift in gender roles (in the interior, the men hunt; on the coast, the women received government subventions). Most importantly, in the coastal world there was an increment of social problems expressed through alcohol abuse. The contrast between life in the interior and life on the coast was so sharp that Henriksen states that, in fact, “the Naskapi live in two different worlds” (1973: ix). This conception of the Innu living in two different worlds is frequently repeated in the literature (i.e. Wadden 1994, Samson 2003) as well as in a BBC documentary film deliberately called “The two worlds of the Innu” (Wilson 1994). Similarly, while describing the life of his ancestor Matshiu Ben after being forced to settle in Sheshatshiu, Antane (2011) affirms that he “found

himself torn between the two worlds of *nutshimit* and the community” (23). More than forty years later, Samson (2003) echoes Henriksen’s earlier description, noticing that life in *nutshimit* “provides meaning, purpose and spiritual connections” (259) for the Innu, arguing that in *nutshimit*,

*[the Innu] live in small family groupings as confident, skilful, and respected hunters. While they are often pulled back to the villages by the need to obtain money and to send their children to school, nutshimit affords the Innu a much greater degree of well-being and autonomy. In contrast, when they return to the village –a transition often fraught with many personal difficulties—they are struck by the ubiquity of Euro-Canadian institutions that regulate almost all aspects of their lives. (Samson, 2003:14)*

In my own fieldwork, I was able to observe this strong difference in perceptions, as well as behaviours, of life in Sheshatshiu and in *nutshimit*. In *nutshimit*, people have a sense of purpose that is difficult to find in the settlement. Everyone is busy, hunting and trapping, looking after the kids, cooking, taking care of the necessities of the camp. There are also moments of relaxation, reading and drinking tea, enjoying the sunsets. People seem to enjoy each other’s company, chatting, playing, and making jokes. Children enjoy their time there, running and playing around the camp, listening to the adults telling stories, learning to live on the land. Time in *nutshimit* is a time of sharing of knowledge that it is not mediated by western-style institutions, such as the school. In *nutshimit* there are fewer conflicts and the absence of alcohol and drug-related problems (including domestic violence) is evident. People are content in *nutshimit*, and are very vocal about it,

commenting on what a good time they are having, how healthy and happy they feel there. In contrast, a lot of people seem apathetic and, in some cases, plainly unhappy when in Sheshatshiu. There are multiple complaints about life there. There are complaints about the children becoming disrespectful, lacking the knowledge to follow Innu rules, and learning the ways of the akaneshao. People complain of not feeling well, to the point that an elder told me, “Here (in Sheshatshiu) we are always sick” (a type of comment that Samson (2003) also registered during his fieldwork among the Innu). There is the abuse of alcohol and drugs and some people become violent.

The degree to which feelings and behaviors change between nutshimit and the communities is sometimes fierce. I met K. while in nutshimit, where he was camping with his partner. I was so impressed by his presence and knowledge, that I was intimidated, almost afraid of him. I had never met someone so in control of himself and his surroundings. I needed to collect all my courage just to speak to him. He seemed a proud, happy man, at ease in nushimit. It was a big contrast to see him back in the settlement or around Happy Valley- Goose Bay. One day, we found K. in a burger restaurant, drunk, crying because he missed nutshimit and didn't like his life in Sheshatshiu. He had been kicked out of a bar already, and would be kicked out of another two before the end of the night. Another day, we arrived at his house only to witness a conflict with his partner, both of them drunk. For a number of months, every time I met him, he was lethargic and, more often than not, drunk; nothing close to the proud, happy man I had met in nutshimit. While not everyone reacts in this extreme way, everyone feels the transition in one way or another. Most people reminisce about their time in

nutshimit and perceive great differences between their lives in nutshimit and their lives in the communities. As a middle aged Innu woman pointed out to me,

*In nutshimit there are no problems, everyone is relaxed, everyone has something to do. Here (in Sheshatshiu), everyone is drinking or thinking about drinking, going to the bingo, watching TV; everyone is doing nothing.*

Differences between life in the communities and in nutshimit are perceived to be so strong that they are replicated in the relationship between the communities and Nitassinan, leaving the communities conceptually outside Nitassinan, even when Sheshatshiu and Natuashish are located in parts of the territory that were frequented by the Innu in the past (Maihot 1986:153). The communities are perceived as tools of the colonial process. An elder told me, in reference to Sheshatshiu: “We did not choose to live here; they put the church here, the school here.”

Inasmuch as there are strong differences between the settlement and nutshimit (and by extension, Nitassinan) there are also continuities. During the time I spent in nutshimit camping with Innu families, I observed how food from nutshimit was transported back to Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, while junk food was sent from the community for consumption in nutshimit. Communication with the communities and beyond also was very important, as could be appreciated by the presence of radios, satellite phones and TVs. Patterns of use of space in the communities sometimes mimic those of use of space in nutshimit, as it is discussed later, and there is a continuity of social relationships between nutshimit and the communities. Innu values –generosity, autonomy and respect-

while more easily displayed in nutshimit, continue, however, to be present in the settlement, although their expressions sometimes change.

### **Nitassinan, gendered place**

At the beginning of this chapter I pointed out the personal characteristics of the production of Nitassinan. However, the processes of the production of Nitassinan are somehow patterned, including by gender practices. While the Innu have been described as an egalitarian society in terms of gender (Leacock 1981a, Leacock 1981b, Leacock 1981c), the uses of the territory tend to follow some distinctive gender lines,<sup>41</sup> associated if not directly with inequality with gender divisions of work. Ethnographic accounts demonstrate that in terms of gender relationships among the Innu people, both men and women have equal levels of autonomy (Leacock 1981c), and autonomy is, as discussed, an important value for the Innu people. There is, however, a gendered division of labour. This gender division of labor was registered in early accounts of the Innu. William Duncan Strong, who spent the winter of 1927-1928 with a band of the then called Montagnais-Naskapi in northeastern Labrador, describes their activities as having a “conceptual division of labor,” but affirms that such division was “subject to many personal variations” (Duncan Strong, 1994: 70). In fact, the author argues that “throughout the entire economic structure one felt such sex division of duties as existed were fundamentally matters of convenience and not of pride or implied prestige” (1994:

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<sup>41</sup> Specific gender assignments of place inside tents have been described in the past, but I did not observe these types of practice.

70). As is the case in other northern societies, gathering activities are limited and hunting is a predominantly male activity among the Innu (Leacock 1981c). However, women do hunt. For example, Speck (1977 [1935]) points out that “Women are neither physically nor spiritually disqualified from the pursuit of game,” adding that in any band it was possible to find widows whose hunting records “are the talk of the country” (1977[1935]: 73).

In addition to the women who do hunt, female activities are fundamental to sustaining hunting activities. While men hunt, women take care of children and the camp, fish, cook, and make clothes, slippers, mittens, and other objects, including sacred objects used for hunting, such as cloaks and game bags that have spiritual power (Lovisek 2002). Women were responsible for maintaining tent structures and floors and taking care of part of the snowshoe making process. For instance, Lucien Turner, who lived in Juujjuaq (Fort Chimo) area between 1882 and 1884, explains that women took care of the flooring of tents, sometimes with “great taste” (Turner 1979: 135).

My own fieldwork suggests that women are very active in the subsistence economy. Although I did not see women hunting, I spoke with women who related their hunting experiences. I also was invited to and took part in hunting trips without my gender being an issue (although it must be noted that on these occasions I was one of the only women on the trips and accompanied my husband). While camping in *nutshimit* with a number of Innu families at different times, however, I observed a distinct gender division of work, with men hunting and women rarely leaving the camp sites. Women were responsible for child care, took care of much of the food preparation, changed tent floors, carried water,

moved fire wood, made moccasins, cured caribou leather, made preparations to send food to the communities of Sheshatshiu and/or Natuashish, plucked birds, and washed clothes. While in the community, I observed women taking care of children and elderly people, cooking, cleaning houses, washing clothes, and taking care of tents placed in backyards. Women are the principal force behind the craft sector, creating products that are sold locally and around the world. This gender division of labour, nevertheless, does not appear to influence the gender hierarchy, which is in line with what Leacock (1981b, 1981c) has suggested, and does not affect structural mobility as described by Mailhot (1986b, 1997); neither does affect it access to the cash economy nor to leadership positions (including both institutional leadership roles, such as Band and Innu Nation Chief or council members, and non-institutional forms of leadership, such as during protests).

Based on my observations and experiences, it is possible to see gendered practices of access to and travel through Nitassinan. While both men and woman spend time in nutshimit, it is clear that men have more opportunities to do so. Also, when men travel, they can do it with friends and cousins in set age groups, or with their families, while women tend to travel with their husband or as part of multi-generation families. Short hunting trips usually involved only or mostly men, relatives but also friends, traveling together. During the time I lived with my family in Nitassinan/Labrador, my husband took a number of hunting trips, as part of male only parties, while I, as did other women, stayed in the community taking care of my children. Communal hunting trips, organized and supported by Innu organizations such as the Sheshatshiu Band Council, usually

consist of groups of young male hunters directed by a more senior wotshimao. In these cases, if women are there, they are family members of the wotshimao. It is these women's responsibility to look after the hunters, particularly cooking and taking care of the camp. I took part in a communal hunting trip, where a number of young men from Sheshatshiu hunted caribou for the community. There were no families on this trip, with the exception of the wotshimao's wife and granddaughter and my own family, although we were there for a shorter period of time. While I was invited to go hunting (along with my husband and children), the other women stayed at the camp. Similarly, when entire families travel to nutshimit to camp there, men leave the camp more often, for longer periods of time and go farther away from camp than women normally do. While camping in Kapanien Nipi during spring, my husband, as other men, left the camp almost every day to go hunting and trapping, while I basically spent the three weeks we were there on the campsite with other women and the children, none of us abandoning the camp for long.

There are, however, exceptions to the characteristics described here of the gendered access to the territory, notably the walks and canoeing trips organized by Elizabeth "Tshaukuesh" Penashue<sup>42</sup>, where several women participated without necessarily being accompanied by husbands, parents or grandparents. The same is true for the trips of young walkers, such as the ones organized to after Giant's walk.<sup>43</sup> In all these cases,

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<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Penashue, also known as Tshaukuesh is an Innu elder and activist. She was very active in the Innu opposition to NATO's low-level flying over Nitassinan in the 1980s. Since 1996, she organizes treks and canoeing trips to promote Innu culture and relationship with the land.

<sup>43</sup> In 2009, Giant, a young Innu, walked from Sheshatshiu to Natuashish to promote awareness of Diabetes. In the following years, after his solo trip, Giant led the Young Innu Cultural Health Walkers in walks across all Labrador and Quebec Innu communities.

people follow the same or similar itineraries independent of their gender. In a way, these examples show that there are not only gender differences but also age differences in the forms and types of access to Nitassinan, as young people and older women seem to have more freedom to travel around Nitassinan than young mothers or middle-aged women taking care of young children.

### **Cartographies of Nitassinan**

Innu people use a combination of social practices to represent and express, and thus to produce and reproduce, their territory. These practices not only include the production, use and interpretation of maps, but also the use of their toponymic system, dreams, narratives by different mediums (including stories, songs and drumming), textile drawings and rock art.

Historically, Innu represented their knowledge of Nitassinan in maps of travel routes usually outlined in birch bark or in sandy superficies, based on personal memories (Speck 1977 [1935]: 148-149, Samson 2003:78, Loring 1987). Innu maps were very valuable to western explorers (whose travels are further discussed in the following chapter) because of their accuracy (Buchaman 2005).

Today, most Innu are familiar with western-style cartography, as well as with the colonial toponymic system. There is extensive use of government maps and related technology, such as GPS (Global Positioning System) information illustrated on on-line maps. The interpretation of this information, however, is based on Innu ideas in relation to Nitassinan and animal agency. For example, the provincial government scientists monitor

the Red Vine Caribou herd by using GPS-tracking collars, which allow them to know where the animals porting the collars are, and if they are alive. This information is published online (although with a delay to avoid giving precise information to potential hunters). The Innu people follow this provincial website with interest, and are well aware of the movements of the caribou represented there. One morning, while we were working at the Innu Nation, an experienced Innu hunter come looking for my husband, who was researching about Innu relations with caribou, to comment about some of the information obtained through a GPS tracking collar. “They found a Red Vine collar close to Lake Kamistastin” he said, showing a map printed from the government’s website. Lake Kamistastin, located around 400km North of Sheshatshiu, is far from the Red Vine caribou herd’s supposed territory. “See,” the hunter added, “caribou *wants* to go there.” As Castro et al (2016) argue in relation to these comments, Innu and government have diverse interpretations of the data provided by the collars, which in turn reflects what caribou and atik (the Innu word to describe it) are understood to be:

*The government uses these to obtain the information the scientists need to learn about caribou behavior, such as their whereabouts, while the Innu use this information to understand what atiku wants (...) In other words, while the government administers the collars to satisfy their will to learn, the Innu use it to learn the will of atik. This difference in the usage of information about atik and caribou is the tip of the iceberg of deeper differences. This is not a difference in practices, this is a difference between atik, a being that wants, and caribou, a being that cannot want. (2016: 106)*

Innu Nation uses Western-style maps for issues related to Land Claims and other negotiations with the provincial and or federal governments and employs a GIS specialist. Map biographies were produced for land use and occupancy research between 1975 and 1999. Individual map biographies are based on the memories of the informant, recording the locations of travel routes, campsites, harvesting areas, birth and death locations among other information (Armitage 1990). The sum of the individual biographies supposedly allows for an inference of the communal use and occupancy of the territory. The objective of these biographic maps is to provide bases for the ownership claims of aboriginal lands in the context of land claims. In the late 1990s, Peter Armitage, who conducted most of the original research, also digitized the map biographies. Current representations of Nitassinan involve the development of websites with multimedia approaches to the land, including the use of maps, pictures and videos. For example, *Pepamuteiati Nitassinat: As we walk across our Land* ([www.innuplacenames.ca](http://www.innuplacenames.ca)) is a website about Innu place names in Labrador that are based on the research of Peter Armitage, José Mailhot and Marguerite Mackenzie. It includes recorded pronunciations of the place names and their locations using Google Maps, as well as pictures, videos and stories about some of the places.

In the past, representation of the territory was also produced by divination maps through scapulimancy. In scapulimancy, the scapula bone of a large animal, usually caribou, was inserted in the fire. The marks produced by the fire, burnt areas, cracks and fractures were interpreted. The Innu used scapulimancy to help locate caribou, and according to Speck (1977 [1935]) who witnessed and instigated divinatory sessions among the Innu,

“scapulimancy is often cartographic” (Speck 1977 [1935]: 149). The movements of animals were inferred based on the patterns made by the flames on the bone, and different components of the landscape, including lakes, rivers, forest and hills, as well as people and animals –alone or in groups- were read on the marks left by the fire. Along with those, “abstract ideas” such as “life, death, success, failure, plenty, famine, sickness, chicanery, time periods, warnings, encouragements and general good or bad luck” (Speck 1977 [1935]: 142) could also be represented and read in the shoulder blade.

Another important practice of place is related to dreams. For the Innu, as for other aboriginal people (Hirt 2012, Boer 2012), dreams are a means of knowledge and representation that link different spheres of their reality. The importance of dreams among the Innu had been noticed by the first Europeans that spent time with them. Le Jeune, for example, commented negatively on this in the chapter named “On the Belief, Superstitions, and Errors of the Montagnais Savage” of his Relations. Le Jeune stated, “They have, besides, great faith in their dreams, imagining that what they have seen in their sleep must happen, and that they must execute whatever they have thus imagined” (2004[1634]: 181).

For the Innu dreaming is a way to represent and conceptualize Nitassinan and the social relationships among its inhabitants. It is considered that dreams are a form of communication with animal masters (Armitage 1992: 27). Speck (1977 [1935]) describes dreams of places where caribou could be found and of places for fishing. More recently, Samson argues that “the Innu used dreams as methods of representing and understanding their lands” (Samson 2003: 78). This aspect is further illustrated in *Dreamed the Animals:*

*Kaniuekutat: The Life of an Innu Hunter* (2009), a book based on the life experience of Kaniuekutat, compiled by Henriksen, where the importance of dreaming is clear, hence the title.

During my fieldwork, I encountered numerous instances where people related their dreams, or histories related to dreams. For example, an Innu friend, M., described to me the importance of dreams by narrating an experience that included him and one of his brothers. They were camping in nutshimit, next to a lake. One morning, before leaving the tent, his brother told him that he had dreamed of a caribou crossing the lake. M. said he hoped the dream would come true, and described his and his brother's anticipatory excitement before opening the tent to look outside. When they found the courage to look out, they saw a number of caribou looking at them. M. finished his narrative saying that, since then, he has confidence in his brother's dreams, and that he goes to the places his brother dreams about. Similarly, the importance of dreams in the life of the Innu can be seen in the example of Giant, who walked from Sheshatshiu to Natuashish in the winter of 2009. He decided to start walking through Nitassinan because his late grandfather told him to do so during a dream.

Drumming is also used to help understand and represent the territory. It is related to dreams, as only hunters that have dreamt about drumming three times are able to become drummers. Drumming, practiced in communal dances and in private in nutshimit, "provides the Innu hunter with information on the possible location of game and future success at hunting" (Armitage 1992: 26). When hunters are drumming, they fall in a trance that allows them to see sparks on the drum's skin. Spark sizes and their location on

the drum head indicate the number and location of caribou, symbolically recreating and representing Nitassinan.

Another way of representing the territory can be found in traditional clothing, which linked hunters, non-human persons and the mythical landscape. Speck (1977[1935]) noticed in the 1930s that the Innu believed it was an act of respect towards animals to wear decorated clothing while hunting, as animals preferred to be killed by hunters wearing it. Traditional hunting coats, heavily decorated, were thus made for the hunters by the women, embroidering and painting on caribou skin. The decorations consisted of complex geometrical designs “encoding an elaborate myth and dream landscape” (Loring 1996). According to Dorothy Burnham (1992), the triangular gusset on the back of the coat was the base of its power, symbolizing the mountain where the caribou-man and his caribou herd live, thus the place from where hunters hoped that caribou would come to offer themselves (Werness 2000). An Innu elder narrated how traditional clothing linked hunters and animals. He related how his ancestors used caribou hide in ceremonial ways, in order to show respect to the caribou-man. Every morning he would go alone outside the tent, covered by a caribou skin, calling the caribous. Historical pictures show similar ceremonies.

The use of traditional clothing, now usually made of canvas instead of caribou, is strongly associated with a reaffirmation of Innu ethnic identity, which is connected to the territory. While some elders, particularly women, usually dress following Innu traditional patterns, the use of Innu clothing is related to the reaffirmation of Innu identity. For example, Elizabeth Penashue uses traditional clothing, including traditional shoes, during her

walking trips. Similarly, when in 2009 Giant left Sheshatshiu to walk to Natuashish, he was wearing traditional clothes. To celebrate his return, most of the community met at Melville Lake in front of Sheshatshiu to welcome Giant back. Numerous people, from babies to elders, were wearing traditional clothing, most of which looked new, made for this occasion. In later years, when young walkers joined Giant on his travels, they also dressed in traditional clothing.

Innu-aimun, the Innu language, still is the first language for most Innu people of Labrador and is key to the way Nitassinan is produced in place-names, stories, both atanukan and tipstshimun, and songs. Toponics, work in this way as “rich evocative symbols” (Basso 1988) which connect people, non-human persons, place and time. As Thornton (2012: 16) notes, named places “reach *across* time, making elements of the past accessible to those who have not experienced them directly.”

Toponyms in Innu-aimun express a specific relation between the Innu and places in the territory. The Innu toponymic<sup>44</sup> system has developed through time based on a variety of elements, sometimes in combination with each other, including references to people, animals and notable events. Innu place names, as other toponymic systems, are not immutable, as place names change when new references become more appropriate than older ones.<sup>45</sup> A good example of this is Etuat-shipiss (“Edward River, small”), a river that was named after Edward Rich, who spent the winters hunting at the mouth of this brook,

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<sup>44</sup> The Innu-aimun spelling and English translations of toponimycs in this section are based on the website Pepamutiati Nitassinat ([www.innuplaces.ca](http://www.innuplaces.ca)), developed by Peter Armitage, José Mailhot and Marguerite MacKenzie with the support from the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation Band Council.

<sup>45</sup> See Koch and Hercus (2009) in reference to place names changes in Central Australia.

but whose old name was Ukaumau-shipiss, in relation to Ukaumau-nipi (“Mother Lake”) from which it flows. Some places conserve old names, even when those are no longer directly descriptive of the characteristics of the place. Such is the case of Kauipushkakamat, “Burnt Area Lake,” where there are no longer traces of what was presumably a forest fire. The toponymic system also reveals the presence of other ethnic groups. There are place names borrowed from the Inuktitut, the Inuit language, or that refer to the presence of Inuit people. Place names also reflect historical changes and the incorporation of new social actors and new inter-ethnic social relationships. The “discovery” and settlement of the territory by Euro-Canadians not only superimposed a colonial place name system over Nitassinan (a point that is further discussed in the next chapter) but also impacted on the Innu place name system that incorporated the presence of settlers and trappers. An example of this is Uniam-Mitshu-shipu, a river named after William (“Uniam”) Mitchell, a settler who had a house there.

The topographic system is sometimes organized by relations between places. This is especially clear in the names for the hydrographic system, in which some bodies of water are named in relation to other bodies of water, particularly rivers and creeks in relation to the lakes of which they are tributaries<sup>46</sup> and lakes in relation to other lakes. For example, Atshiku-nipi means “Seal Lake” and the nearby Atshiku-nipiss means “Little Seal Lake.”

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<sup>46</sup> There are a few exceptions in which this is inverted, for example Kaishkepinuesht-natuashu Lake, named in reference to the brook Kaishnapinuesht-shippis, which flows into it (incidentally, these names translate as “Tired of Sitting Lake” and “Tiring Small River,” referring to the characteristics of the brook where people get tired from sitting in their canoes while paddling).

Some place names describe what was or is perceived to be particular characteristics of a place. These characteristics include both the perceived features –such as shape or size– and the functions that places had or have as well as references to particular activities done there by human or non-human persons. Examples of toponymics referring to characteristics of a place go from the mere description, such as Upatshuan, meaning “Rapids in Narrows” and Ushpuakan-ashini katak, “Where there is Soapstone,” to the almost poetic interpretation of the landscape, such as Ashini kakusset, “Where a Rock is fishing.” Examples of place names referring to functions can be divided into activities done by unidentified people or activities done by a particular, identified person (even when, in some cases, it is not clear who the person was). The first groups included Tshshkuepeu-nipi, “Crazy Drunken Lake,” a name that is assumed to reflect that in the past, people likely got drunk there; or Ashuapun (“Waiting Place Lake”), referring to a place where people used to wait for caribou. In other cases, place names refer to particular actions made by specific people, such as Ukueiaiu unuatikuan natuashu, which means “Ukueiaiu’s Lake for Chasing Caribou in a Canoe.” In a related category, some toponymics are entangled with personal and family histories, referring to places where people were born or buried, such as Ushpuakaniss (“Little Pipe Lake”), called after Thomas Noah’s baby son. Ushpuakanish (“Little Pipe”), buried along the shore of that lake. Other places are named after non-human creatures that were inhabitants there, or where encounters with them had taken place. Examples included Manitupek (“Evil Creature Lake”) and Mishtamishku-shipu (“Giant Beaver River”).

As some of the examples above show, place names are important to indicate in which places it is possible to do certain activities. Tanner and Armitage (1986) comment on this aspect, pointing out that “the Innu discuss with each other in detail their experiences hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering in the land,” adding that “toponyms aid in this, as the terms often encode descriptive information about the regions” (Tanner and Armitage 1986: 40). Additional examples of place names explicitly referring to gathering, fishing and hunting grounds included Kukamessat-kataht, meaning “Where there Are Lake Trout” and Usahkapineu-mishkuni, “Place for Ptarmigan Winter Lake.” However, even when place names are not specifically referring to hunting grounds or fishing places, they are still useful in guiding people towards places where food can potentially be found, as they help people locate themselves in a place and in relation to other places. In effect, another important function of place names is to describe travel routes (Tanner and Armitage 1986, Armitage and Stopp 2003), important for a nomadic people whose “trails, some more tangible than others, criss-cross all of Nitassinan” (Loring and Ashini 2000:168).<sup>47</sup> Some place names provide valuable information about trail and navigation conditions, such as Kaiakuapishkat shippiss (“Dangerous Rocky River, small”) that informs travelers that the river is full of boulders.

Toponyms are interlinked with Innu ontology. The importance of their relationship with animals, for instance, is not only expressed in the multiple place names named after animals, animals’ parts, places where animals or the animal masters live or where

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<sup>47</sup> For other examples of the importance of place names for travel among aboriginal people, see Aporta’s (2009) discussion about Inuit trails and Andrews et al (1998) regarding Dogrib travel.

encounters with them happened, but also in place names that express cultural practices related to those animals. For example, caribou disposal rules and, by extension, the importance for the Innu to show respect in their relationship with animals and animal masters, become entrenched in the perception of places by using names such as Eshkanat katshipakutiniht (“Where hanging Antlers Block the Way”) to refer to a place where the prescribed conduct of respect toward the caribou took place.

As some of the preceding examples show, toponyms are important when singing and telling stories about past and present experiences in Nitassinan, both atonogens (mythological stories) and tipatshimuns (personal experiences, including encounters with non-human persons). As Malinowski (2002) noted long ago, in another context, myths and landscape are entangled: myths influence the landscape, as physical landscape features give tangibility and permanence to what Malinowski denominates the mythological world, while the stories re-enacted on it gives the landscape a meaning.

As among other peoples to whom oral tradition is important, in Innu stories and songs specific dates are not usually relevant, but the locations where the narrated events took place are very important, thus “excursions into the past are meticulously marked onto the landscape” not the calendar as Rosaldo (1980: 48) explains in relation to the Ilongot. Place names, and their presentation through singing and story-telling in which they are entrenched, root people’s memories and help them remember and share personal and social events.

Innu narratives also link people and places in another way: since for the Innu the territory is a place entangled with social relationships, particularly in terms of the structural mobility discussed earlier, people create kinscapes (Bender 2003:36) of Nitassinan, mental “maps” in which kin lanes, particular locations and traces of past uses come together, connecting people with each other and the land.<sup>48</sup> As Henriksen explains, “By situating persons, social relations and events in the landscape, the Innu cultivate and map their land” (2009: 3). Story telling is a powerful way to share knowledge and to conceptualize the Innu understanding of Nitassinan. People, particularly in nutshimit, but also in the settlement, enjoy relating stories. Rock art was also used to mark or point out significant places, usually described as sacred places. Arsenault and Zawadzka (2014) point out that many “rock art sites have been sacred places and elements of a larger sacred landscape for generations of Algonquian-speaking groups” (118).

### **A place of relationships**

Nitassinan is a relational landscape. It is formed by entangled webs of social relationships produced through practices that link human and non-human persons, from different timescapes, all of whom inhabit Nitassinan. The territory is not only produced, but defined and represented based on these relationships. Social practices construct the territory at the same time that they enact the values that are important to the Innu:

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<sup>48</sup> Gow (1995) argues that among the Piru, the landscape is embedded in kin relationships, and people are “implicated” in the landscape not only by their personal experiences, but also by the narratives of the elders.

generosity, respect and autonomy. These values, social practices and social relationships explain what being Innu means, in other words, what constitutes Innu identity. This identity cannot be separated from Nitassinan and the social relationships that constitute Nitassinan. In her analysis of the Nayaka of India, Bird-David affirms that “maintaining relationships with fellow Nayaka but also with other local beings is critical to maintaining Nayaka identity” (Bird-David 1999: S73). I believe this also applies to the Innu: maintaining relationships with fellow Innu but also with local beings (non- human persons: animals, animal masters and other spiritual beings) is critical to maintaining Innu identity. This identity is related to the production of Nitassinan, where the webs of social relationships are deployed and where the values that support them are rooted.

The production of Nitassinan as a place, and the consequent affirmation of Innu identity, is an ongoing process, based on social relationships that cross the human/non-human boundary. The Innu, along with other beings, produce and reproduce Nitassinan through daily activities such as, among others, camping, walking or hunting in *nutshimit*, using Innu-aimun place names, and showing respect to animals. But as Nitassinan is a relational place, Innu people also produce and reproduce Nitassinan in their dialogue and negotiations with other peoples, with other productions of place, among those the colonial production of Labrador as a particular place. The production of Labrador and its interactions with Nitassinan are the focus of the next chapter.

## Chapter 2: Labrador

### Introduction

This chapter historicises the production of Labrador, and contextualizes the ways in which it is (and has been) conceptualized. Now the continental part of the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador,<sup>49</sup> with a population of about 26,000 people in an area of 294,330 km<sup>2</sup>, Labrador is a product of colonial expansion. For the aboriginal inhabitants there, it was not Labrador, but their homes, their land, their territories, places created by spiritual, social and economic relationships and practices. The colonial processes encroached onto these aboriginal places, superimposing their own production of place. While Labrador was, until recently, the only place that the state recognized, other aboriginal places continue to exist as aboriginal people continue to deploy practices that produce their own places, even as these become increasingly entangled with those that produce Labrador.

The encroachment of the colonial place onto the aboriginal places was based on conceptualizations of the territory (and of aboriginal people) imagined, created and recreated from far away and from the settlers and travelers that brought with them their own set of conceptions about place. The European and Euro-North American “imaginative geographies” (Said 1978) of Labrador have been multiple and sometimes contradictory, and included pre-existing ideas of nature, religion and social organization,

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<sup>49</sup> The incorporation of Labrador as the official name of the province is a recent occurrence, which happened in 2001. Before that, the official name of the province was Newfoundland.

which not only referred to the geographical place but also to its inhabitants and their place in human history. These conceptualizations, in conjunction with the deployment of state construction tools, produce “Labrador” as a particular entity. This entity is conceptualized as part of the Imperial economic and political interests in the New World, as part of Newfoundland and finally, as part of Canada, imposing particular notions of place, society and nature.

This chapter focuses on the creation of Labrador where Nitassinan also exists. Because the production of Labrador is part of the colonial process that covered more than five hundred years, rather than attempt to produce a comprehensive history of European interference, I focus on the historical development of the conceptualizations of Labrador, its representations (including its cartographic representations), and the instauration of a western land tenure regimen. The practices that constitute Labrador have curtailed some of those that constitute Nitassinan in several ways, for example, through limiting Innu access to the territory and changing the landscape in pursuit of development projects. However, although the colonial powers and its agents either largely ignored Nitassinan and its associated practices or considered them some kind of primitive deviation that needed to be corrected, Nitassinan still interferes in the production of Labrador. I aim to illuminate particular moments where the interferences between Labrador and Nitassinan become, from my point of view, especially clear.



Map 2: Map of Labrador, as seen by the State (From Elections Canada).

## Producing Labrador

Multiple practices and ideas-some complementary, some contradictory- are embedded in the production of Labrador as a place. Labrador has been conceptualized, among other things, as a wilderness, a place for adventures and scientific inquiries, a place in need of evangelization, and a place for military expansion and industrial development. Most of these notions included some type of call for external intervention, ultimately presented in terms of progress: to bring civilization, scientific knowledge, or economic development to Labrador. For settlers, Labrador also became home and a place associated with their identity.<sup>50</sup>

Labrador has not been the exception to well known colonial tropes. The land was conceived as an empty and pristine wilderness where the explorers and settlers were the first to arrive to a place unknown and virtually untouched by human presence (Sluyter 2001, Denevan 1992). The European peripheries are constructed as remote and primitive, not only in terms of distance but also in terms of time. Aboriginal inhabitants were viewed as being almost part of the natural landscape and therefore unproductive and inferior to the Europeans and their cultural expressions, including their religion, political and economic organizations, technology and uses of place (Hinton 2002, Moore et al, 2003: 12), as discussed further later in this chapter. Thus, the first known European

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<sup>50</sup> These will also result in the claim of new aboriginal identities, such as the case of NunatuKavut, the Southern Labrador Inuit (formally Métis). Without entering into a discussion about the merits of their claim, an issue that goes far beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is important to notice that these claims are articulated in the similar constructions of place as those of Nunatsiavut and the Innu Nation (see Hanrahan 2000, Kennedy 1997, Kennedy 2015).

impressions of the territory now known as Labrador portray a space of desolation. While it is likely that the Norse visited the area around 986 A.D., and called it Markland (Woodland), there is not much certainty regarding their time there. When the Europeans re-discovered the Americas 500 years later, they didn't find in Labrador an appealing place (Zimmerly 1975). An inscription on a Spanish map of the Americas from 1529<sup>51</sup> states that "Labrador was discovered by the English; there is nothing on it of any value" (quoted in Gosling 2006 [1910]: 11). This opinion was echoed by some other European travelers. In 1534, Jacques Cartier infamously called Labrador "the Land that God gave to Cain."<sup>52</sup>

In his analysis of the discourses about Labrador, Armitage (2004) argues that ideas of wilderness have changed over time. Following Roderick Nash's historical analysis of the origins of the idea of wilderness, Armitage notes that until the rise of Romanticism in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, the dominant view considered wild places as repulsive, solitary and chaotic.<sup>53</sup> Yet, even as a wilderness, Labrador was also

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<sup>51</sup> The map was made by Diego Ribeiro, also known as Diego Ribero, a Portuguese cartographer who worked most of his life for the Spaniard Crown.

<sup>52</sup> This type of conceptualization, however, was persistent through time. In 1833, John James Audubon, travelling the Labrador coast to complete his ornithological studies, stated that in Labrador he observed "the dreary wilderness of grim rocks and desolate moss-edged valleys" (quoted in Knott 2009: 206) and "the most extensive and dreariest wilderness I have ever beheld," adding that "seldom in my life have I left a country with as little regret as I do this" (quoted in Leacock and Rotschild 1994: xxii). Similarly, in 1853 George S. Shattuck, one of Audubon's assistants, stated that "we have travelled over the country very thoroughly and can bid adieu to Labrador without regret" (quoted in Leacock and Rotschild 1994: xxii). And in 1888, in a meeting of the Royal Geography Society, Holme described the Labrador Coast as an "abomination of desolation" (Holme 1888: 189).

<sup>53</sup> And even then, the revulsion toward what was perceived as wilderness continued to be common among European and Euro-Americans travelling around the world. For example, while sailing to Mailu, Malinowski, who would become a fundamental figure in Anthropology, described the landscape he found outside Port Moresby as "marvelous abysses of verdure" which are "inaccessible, hostile, alien to man" in

conceptualized as a land of resources to be exploited, attracting fishermen and whalers, traders, settlers, speculators and others interested in those resources. The once vast marine resources of the Labrador coast caught the attention of European merchants and fishers. Breton and French Basques started fishing on the Strait of Belle Island in the 16th Century. Seasonal Basque whaling operations took place in the Strait of Belle Island during the mid to late 16th Century, based in Red Bay. Later, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Basques and English –and later Newfoundland<sup>54</sup>– fishing vessels visited the coast annually during the summer and then established colonies to live there year around.<sup>55</sup> French fur traders established in central Labrador in 1743 and in 1836 the Hudson’s Bay Company Labrador arrived, which would change the demography and the ethnic and racial categories in the area. The perceived potential for forestry exploitation also originated speculative activity in Labrador and competitive ownership claims from Quebec and Newfoundland. Potential for mining activities was confirmed in 1892 with the discovery of iron ore deposits in Labrador and Québec by the Canadian Geological Survey, and although development projects would not start until the 1950s and 1960s, its potential informed ideas of Labrador and development policies.

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contrast to the European places “where you’d like to lie down and embrace the landscape physically” (Quoted in Young 2004: 328).

<sup>54</sup> For example, a survey of the Labrador Coast was done in 1867, urged by the Chamber of Commerce of Newfoundland. W. Chimmo explains that “the object of our voyage to this little known part of the world, so seldom visited, was to search for new fishing-grounds, and to find harbors of refuge for the Newfoundland fishermen” (Chimmo, 1868: 258)

<sup>55</sup> Courtemanche, who received a grant of lands from the French Crown, was convinced of the abundance of resources, including “salmon, codfish, porpoises, seals, walrus and whales (...) the infinitive of caribous and other animals” as well as “mines of copper and iron,” all of which “will furnish France with dish and oils, whalebone, skins of seals and caribous, furs, ivory and eider-down, and all in such abundance that a large trade can be established with foreign countries....” (quoted in Gosling, 1910: 136-137).

In all these cases, Labrador was viewed as a source of raw material to be used elsewhere, and development was (and is) understood as the deployment of extractive industries. For instance, Sir Wilfred Grenfell, founder of the Grenfell Mission<sup>56</sup>, was optimistic about the possibilities for development of Labrador both on the coast – whose “raw products” Grenfell considered “more needed than ever” (Grenfell 1920: 288) and important “not merely to the British Empire but to the entire world” (1920: 99) – and in the interior. Samson characterizes Grenfell’s vision of the Labrador interior as a potential “vast exterior factory” (2003: 93) where paper, mining, hydroelectric power and other industries could be possible as, in Grenfell’s words, “the hinterland of Labrador possesses huge preserves of timber, unlimited water-power from her tremendous falls, and, in addition, the potentiality of minerals indicated by the nature of her rock formation” (Grenfell 1933: 100-101). Grenfell was not alone in his optimism for Labrador’s development. As Armitage (2004) notes, in his “Ode to Labrador” written in 1927, Harry Paddon, Grenfell Mission’s physician “transformed this optimism into something theological” (160). In effect, in Paddon’s lyric, Labrador’s natural resources are presented as a gift from God, whose development expresses God’s will.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Vaino Tanner, a Finish geographer who led two expeditions to Labrador in 1937 and 1939, shared this optimistic vision, affirming that Labrador “is potentially relatively rich in natural

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<sup>56</sup> The Grenfell Mission, later the International Grenfell Association, provided medical services in Labrador and Newfoundland’s Northern Peninsula.

<sup>57</sup> The first and second verses of the “Ode to Labrador” are: “Dear land of mountains, wood and snow,/ Labrador, our Labrador/ God’s noble gift to us below/ Labrador, our Labrador/Thy proud resources waiting still/Their splendid task will soon fulfill/ Obedient to thy makes will,/ Labrador, our Labrador.//The stately forest soon shall ring,/ Labrador, our Labrador. Responsive to the woodman’s swing,/Labrador, our Labrador./And mighty fury unrestrained,/Shall serve the purpose God ordained/ Labrador, our Labrador.”

resources: soil, timber, iron ore and hydraulic energy, and these will enable the introduction of modern civilization even into the darkest wilderness” (1947:826).

Tourism was also considered a key to development.

Labrador was also conceptualized as a place of religious and moral emptiness whose spiritual, medical and social miseries needed to be attended. The missionary efforts were, however, fitted within the mercantile necessities or desires of the colonial powers, and based on Eurocentric religious orientations and particular branches of Western Christianity (Fisher 2012: 52). In the North, the establishment of the Moravians Mission was functional to the British colonial policy and to the British interest to avoid conflicts between the Inuit and the fisherman in the South of Labrador,<sup>58</sup> contributing to the creation of a raced territory. Among the Innu, Missionary work was initiated in 1615 from New France by Roman Catholic orders (Recollects and Jesuits), described by Speck as “self-denying emissaries of ecclesiastical orders commissioned by royalty and by private religious enterprise” (Speck 1977 [1935]: 15), who made efforts to convert “the Indians” to Catholicism. Pere Le Jeune, a superior of the Jesuit mission in what then was New France, spent a winter travelling with the Innu in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1633-34. While part of an evangelical mission, Le Jeune was, as Samson points out, “the first to attempt to instill the value of permanent authority among the Innu” (2003:28).

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<sup>58</sup> As Whiteley (1964) states: “The United Brethren saw their venture as an attempt to convert to Christianity the heathen Eskimo tribes; the British government saw in the venture a means of converting into loyal British subjects the savage natives of the Labrador coast, in order that they might be an asset rather than a hindrance to trade and the fishery there” (1964:29).

Sir William Grenfell, doctor and adventurer, described Labrador as “a kind of mental and moral sanatorium” (Grenfell 1920: 20) as well as a wilderness. Grenfell first visited Labrador in 1892, and the Grenfell Mission (later the International Grenfell Association) established a hospital in Battle Harbour soon after. While attending to the very real medical necessities of the settlers (by then called liverymen), Grenfell also brought his moral vision based in evangelical Christian ideas (Rompkey 1991) and his mission was constructed over strong class-based belief that assumed the local settler population inferiority vis-à-vis the British middle class standard. It “displayed colonial attitudes of English cultural superiority based on class distinction and of a desire to ‘civilize’ a ‘backwards’ corner of the British Empire” (Coombs-Thorne 2010: 213).

Labrador attracted the imagination of American, Canadian and British adventurers, who produced books, articles and maps, contributing to its production. Their interests coincided with the closing of the American frontier (Nash 2014 [1967]), leaving Labrador to be perceived as one of the last remaining wild places waiting to be explored on the North American continent (Armitage 2004). Even though exploration interest in most cases also included interest in encountering the aboriginal populations, Labrador was consistently characterized by its emptiness. Adding to myths of an empty, wild territory to be explored, American explorers brought with them the American frontier mythology, reinforcing ideas of American exceptionalism and the notion of the frontier as a space of moral conflict, echoing Puritan views of nature (Johnstone 2006). These explorers contributed to the production of an exotic view of Labrador, presented as the stage of

difficult and sometimes tragic adventures, which were, however, dissociated from the routine trips of Labrador's inhabitants (particularly the Innu) in the same areas.

William Cabot, an engineer from Boston, Massachusetts, travelled regularly on the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula between 1898 and 1924. He defined himself as “a minor wanderer” (Loring 1987: 169) and based his expeditions on discussion with the local aboriginal population (Tanner 1997). Cabot believed that in Labrador, “the invitation of the country to the wilderness traveler, the traveler with a taste for unworn places, is unusual. Nowhere are such clear, unfisher rivers, mapped and unmapped,” adding that “over their great territory the people still wander at will, knowing no alien restraint, no law but their own” (1920: 5 quoted in Armitage 2004: 159). In what constitutes the most famous expedition in Labrador, in 1903, American Leonidas Hubbard and Dillon Wallace, with George Elson from Missanabie as guide, made an ill-fated attempt to arrive at Lake Michikamau from North West River by the Naskapi River. The expedition was troubled by mistakes and miscalculations. After confusing Susan Brook for the Naskapi River, with food supplies running out, L. Hubbard died in October when the men were trying to return to North West River. Upon his return, in 1905 Wallace published *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, a book that became a bestseller. In it Wallace “uses the language of faith to express a sense of cultured purpose rooted in ideals of masculinity, militarism, and social order” (Johnstone 2006: 292). Labrador is conceptualized as “wilderness,” and conceived, like other mythical frontier places, as “the last bastion of rugged individualism” (Cronon 1996: 77) where a young journalist such as Leonidas Hubbard could have adventures and claim fame. In his narrative, Wallace uses “the

language of spirituality to project a sense of otherness onto Labrador. The imperial nature of this exceptionalist discourse is reflected in their tendency to declare their own cultural superiority” (Johnstone 2006: 302).

In 1905, Mina Hubbard, a Canadian and Leonidas Hubbard’s wife, traveled to Labrador to complete her husband’s expedition, in an open competition with a new expedition organized by Wallace, who Mina Hubbard believed had affronted her husband’s memory in *The lure of Labrador Wild*. Mina Hubbard’s expedition followed her husband’s original plan, and arrived at George River’s post in Ungava Bay (current day Kangiqsualujjuaq) nearly six weeks earlier than Wallace’s, who had opted for a more difficult route. Wallace returned to Labrador in a commemorative trip in 1913. All these expeditions were heavily documented in diaries, accounts in the popular press (which called the 1905 expeditions “The Great Labrador Race”), travel magazines and books: Wallace’s (the already mentioned) *The lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905), *The Long Labrador Trail* (1907) and M. Hubbard’s *A Woman’s Way through Unknown Labrador* (2004 [1908]). The expeditions were commented on at the time (Cabot 1909, 1912), continue to be objects of analysis (Grace 2004) and inform the Canadian literary imagination of the north (Atwood 1996, Davidson and Rugge 1988, Rusted 2005). Expeditions in Northern Labrador repeated the impression of desolation and wilderness. Hesketh Pritchard, a British explorer who travelled the area west of Nain in 1910, which he infamously named “Kingdom of Beelsebub” (1911). In his book, *Through Trackless Labrador* (1911), Pritchard described Labrador as a “menacing wilderness”, and commented on his surprise that “such a tract should exist under the British flag, within a

comparatively short distance from our shores, and moreover situated actually next door to our oldest colony of Newfoundland” (1911, 1-2). The narratives of this explorations and adventures in Labrador repeated and reinforced colonial tropes of heroic masculinity (Yecani 2011). Not only are the ‘heroes’ of this adventures males, but also all the language of exploration is gendered and the territory itself is conceptualized in feminine terms (Hinton 2002). The notable exception is Mina Hubbard expedition, which, however, needed to follow some of the conventions of the time in terms of gender narrative (Grace 2004, Grace 2005, Roy 2004).

Later expeditions to Labrador reproduced ideas of mystery and emptiness (and, in most cases, of heroic masculinity). In 1930, describing his expedition, A.G. Watkins stated that “although so close to Canada, Labrador has remained very much a *terra incognita*. Even the charts of the coast are out of date and inaccurate, and much of the interior is almost completely unknown” (1930: 97). However, through his description, Watkins made clear that “trappers” and “Indians” have a deep knowledge of this “unknown,” the territory in which they extensively traveled. Watkins’ own expedition depended heavily on the help of a “trapper” guide. These ideas of the emptiness and wilderness of Labrador have persisted through time, and even now continue to inform the academic, environmental and pro-development discourses associated with it. In 1964, F. Kenneth Hare from McGill University’s Department of Geography described the Labrador Ungava Peninsula as an “empty, virgin territory” and as “a man-deserted world” where “in such a country the geographer becomes once again an explorer” (Hare 1964: 459). Recent books recreate this romantic tradition of adventures in a perceived wilderness. For instance, in *Paddling*

*the Boreal Forest* Finkelstein and Stone (2004) retrace the route covered by Albert Low in 1893-1894. Similarly, *The Lost Canoe: A Labrador Adventure* (2008) by Lawrence W. Coady looks for Prichard's canoe and retraces his expedition. These books reinforce perceptions of Labrador as a wild place where adventures can continue to happen. At the same time, ideas of Labrador as wilderness, with its associated connotations of "emptiness," continue to appear in environmentalist discourses. The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), for example, is currently developing the "Labrador Conservation Blueprint." The vision of Labrador offered by the Nature Conservancy of Canada states that "with a low population density and many wild areas remaining, Labrador has the opportunity to conserve 'the best of the best' not just the 'best of what is left'" (Nature Conservancy of Canada s/d). Similarly, ideas about Labrador as wilderness are also present in tourism promotions of Labrador. The tourist web page developed by the provincial government presents Labrador as "one of the last untamed, unspoiled places left on earth" (Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism 2015). Similarly, TV advertisements describe Labrador as "the world's last true wilderness areas" (Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism 2010).

These conceptualizations of Labrador were operating (and continue to operate) where Nitassinan (and other aboriginal productions of place) already existed. For example, the conceptualization of Labrador as a wilderness, as mentioned before, a well know colonial trope, negates Innu's (and other aboriginal peoples) experiences, knowledge and practices on the territory. In this way, the forms and regulations to access to Nitassinan, the interventions on and modifications of the landscape, the multiple ways in which the

territory is “unwild” and produced by the Innu become invisible.<sup>59</sup> Behind this invisibility, there was (is) a colonial project of access the territory. As Guensey (2008) argues,

*First Nations landscapes were never read or interpreted within their own particular cultural context, but were read and interpreted through the colonial lens of a wilderness. Erasing First Nations landscapes and replacing them with a preconceived understanding of “wilderness” allowing the landscape to be physically, socially, conceptually cleared for the colonial settlement of the land.*

(Guensey 2008: 121-122)

## **Spiritual Labrador**

As in the case of Nitassinan, different spheres of experience were interlinked in the production of Labrador. As in the case of Nitassinan, a sphere that can be described as spiritual is important in the production of Labrador as a place. The first Europeans who arrived to what would become Labrador brought with them their own set of beliefs, some of which can be described as “pre-modern.” In effect, the first explorers and settlers (then called planters) had an ideological heritage informed by medieval notions and based in an

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<sup>59</sup> Innu Land and occupancy and environmental studies (Tanner and Armitage 1986, Armitage 2007, 2011, Armitage and Stopp 2003) show the extend “unwieldiness” of Nitassinan. Not in reference to the Innu but to the Inuit, Lemus-Lauzon and colleagues (2012) analyze the impact on the landscape of wood use among the inhabitants of Nain (Nunatsiavut) since the XVIII century, showing how anthropogenic factors (i.e. wood harvesting) contributed to changes in the forest landscape.

entanglement of the supernatural in everyday life (included as a component of their monotheistic religion). This entanglement, according to Le Goff (1991) can be divided into three dominions, the *mirabilis* (of pre-Christian origins), the *magicus* (the malefic supernatural, usually, but not only, associated with the religious figure of the devil) and the *miraculosus* (the Christian supernatural, which included, but was not limited to, the *miraculum*, miracle), all of them characterized for being produced by supernatural beings or forces. The medieval world was then composed by objects and actions, beyond which there were a multiplicity of forces and beings. A number of authors (Todorov 1984, Flint 1992, Delaney 2011) have demonstrated how this supernatural perception was a fundamental part of the worldview of Christopher Columbus,<sup>60</sup> whose first arrival to what now is known as the Caribbean area preceded John Cabot's trip to what would become known as North America by only five years. It is not long after that Jean Cartier, during his expedition of 1534, declares Labrador "the land God gave to Cain." Medieval perspectives informed European's conceptualization of the people they encountered. These perspectives were influenced by the classic Greek and Roman mythological tradition, a fundamental component of much of the European thought (Cosgrove 1993, Ramey 2008). Religious references would continue to be made among Labrador's explorers and settlers. God and other biblical references were a constant among the missionaries working among Innu and Inuit people, but also in the narratives of the

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<sup>60</sup> According to Todorov, there were three spheres articulating Columbus' world: the natural, the divine and the human, and he behaved differently depending on which sphere he was addressing. The divine sphere not only included Christian dogma, but also extraordinary beings, including Cyclopes, mermaids, amazons, men with tails, men with dogs' heads. Columbus' belief in these extraordinary beings, as revealed by his own writing, was strong enough to, as Todorov argues, "permit him to find them" (Todorov 1984: 15).

settlers and the narratives of explorers, showing what could be denominated the agency of supernatural beings and forces, frequently expressed in terms of God's Will.

While this does not mean that these "pre-modern" notions had dominated the production of Labrador, it shows that they have been present and have influenced (and in some ways continue to influence) it, along with other modern notions, such as the division of nature and culture, which supported the implementation of an extractive economy based on the existence of "natural resources" and, as discussed later in this dissertation, is an important component in the conceptualization and implementation of the forest co-management process. In some cases, these different notions are advanced by the same person. For example, the emphasis on the economic development of Labrador, based fundamentally on an extractive economy expressed by Dr. Paddon, a doctor with the Grenfell Mission,<sup>61</sup> would take on almost theological characteristics, as expressed in his Ode to Labrador (Armitage 2009).

### ***The Red Indians***

Within these various ways of producing Labrador as a place, the Innu were consistently conceptualized as primitive and backward. Cartier's negative view encompassed not only the land but also the aboriginal inhabitants, who he describes as "wilde and unruly" (quoted in Samson 2003: 89). Lucien Turner, who travelled to Northern Labrador in the

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<sup>61</sup> The Grenfell Mission provided medical services in Labrador and the Northern Peninsula (Newfoundland).

1880s, presented the Innu he encountered as adverse to planning and adept at gluttony (Turner 1979). Holme, in 1888, offers the following description:

*Labrador is a kind of Pompeii of the New World. It is there, perhaps, alone that the unaltered Red Indian is now to be found. The country of this fortunate section of an unfortunate race has so little to offer the progressive European that the forest and their inhabitants have been left to their primeval owners. (1888: 201)*

The author, however, proceeds to admit that the “unaltered Red Indian” has been influenced by the presence of the Hudson’s Bay Company and Christianity, however, since there was not, to his knowledge, instances of “Indians intermixed with whites or Eskimos” Holme considered that “this interesting race is therefore, I believe, found in Labrador in a state far more primitive than in any other part of the continent of North America” (Ibid). Alpheus Spring Packard Jr., an American professor of Zoology and Geography who traveled through the Labrador coast in the 1860s, believes that the Innu could be “the only truly wild, untamed red-men of North America” (quoted by Samson 2003: 135). Similarly, Dillon Wallace describes Hubbard’s interest in studying “the habits of the Indians who are the more primitive in the North American continent” (Wallace 1977[1905]: 25).

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, reciprocity, respect and autonomy are fundamental values for the Innu. Behaviours related to these values were negatively perceived by the Europeans. For example, in Innu generosity and respect toward animals and animal masters, Europeans, from Le Jeune to recent times, saw wasteful and primitive behavior. Henry Youle Hind described what he called “savage life” as follows:

*They kill a caribou, store away a little, make a gluttonous and wasteful feast of the greater part, sing, boast and sleep, until hunger wakens them, and the cold reality of their desolation is before them again. (Hind 1863:239)*

Likewise, Europeans conceptualized Innu autonomy, and its consequent resistance to adapt to the fur trade economy and other European requirements, as laziness and as proof of their primitivism. Erlanson, a Hudson's Bay Company employee who was guided by the Innu through the Labrador interior, assures that "these are the most indolent, spiritless Indians I ever saw, they are equally insensible to persuasion or threats" (quoted by Samson 2003:133). Similarly, when in 1861 Henry Youle Hind was unable to recruit Innu guides to take him inland from Sept-Îles, he explained that their reluctance was due to their "sickness and habitual indolence" (Hind 1863:4). The Innu people's abilities as hunters and fishers and their capacity to travel and live in a difficult environment were sometimes praised, however these characteristics were also seen as contributing to their (perceived) primitive state, inhibiting their "progress".

Even anthropologists portrayed the Innu in terms of their perceived primitivism, particularly, as Mailhot (1986a) notes, the group identified as the Naskapi. For Speck, "A glance at the culture history of these seminomadic bands shows strikingly their lack of material progress since some period of culture history coincident with the Mesolithic age" (1977[1935]: 5). While Speck had similar prejudices to those of his contemporaries, his interest in what he called the Naskapi religion led him to the complexity of Innu understanding of their territory and their relationship with animals. For his part, V. Tanner, who called the Innu "the children of wilderness" (1944: 648), compared the

changes among the “Labrador Eskimoes” and the “Montagnais society” and found that “the progress of the former and the backwardness of the latter is clearly apparent,” adding that the life of a Montagnais

*is dictated by the hunt, he dreams of nothing but the game and their spirits, here are his greatest achievements. Hunting elicits a special talent and personal skill; the sole ambition of the Indian is to be as perfect a hunter as possible and this becomes routine in his life. Because of his geographical position and his mental stage he seldom comes into contact with the rest of the world and no representative of modern civilization has helped him to break out of the charmed circle of prejudice and tradition in which he lives. (V. Tanner 1944: 646)*

Ideas about the primitivism of the Innu have been, as Samson (2003: 141) points out, pervasive. As recently as 1992, the Innu were presented as “Stone Age Arctic Nomads” by a CBC broadcast (quoted in Samson 2003:141). Government policies toward the Innu have been based on similar conceptualizations of primitivism, which were used to justify policies of assimilation.

### **Labrador Land Tenure and Occupancy**

Nitassinan emerges from practices that have as a basis social relations across the human/non-human divide. Thus, the relationship of the Innu with the place is tinged by notions of responsibility. In contrast, the practices from which Labrador emerges are grounded on claims of sovereignty by colonial powers, based in colonial legal artifacts, and later on the claims of sovereignty of the settler state (in this particular case,

Newfoundland and after its incorporation to the Canadian confederation, Canada). As Howitt (2006:55) points out in relation to colonial land tenure in Australia “What can be seen here is the construction of a politics of denial which privileges a legal landscape of absence and dispossession” which resulted in the erasure “of the scales at which Indigenous people’s relationships with each other and with their country are constructed.”

In the case of Labrador, imperial, and later, national and provincial claims would be principally based on the doctrine of Discovery and on the doctrine of Terra Nullius, both of which can be considered a type of legal self referential claims based on self-authorizing power. The Doctrine of Discovery is an international doctrine based on ethnocentric ideas of European superiority. It asserts that Europeans acquired legal property rights over aboriginal land, as well as governmental, political and commercial rights over its inhabitants without requiring knowledge or agreement from them, just by arriving and “discovering” the “new” land by performing rituals like planting flags, displaying religious symbols, painting signs or hanging or burying plates and coins (Miller 2010). In their competition with Portugal and Spain (countries that countered with papal bulls that supported their rights over the New World), England and France added to the Doctrine of Discovery the principle of occupation to justify their rights, particularly in North America. In her analysis of the implementation of the Discovery Doctrine in Canada, Reid (2010) points out that

*the Doctrine of Discovery is not simply an artifact of colonial history. It is the legal force that defines the limits of all land claims to this and more fundamentally, the necessity of land claims at all. (2010: 337)*

The importance of this doctrine to the establishment of the European in the new world is thus clear, as are its repercussions in the current relationship between aboriginal people and the governments in Canada:

*According to international law as it was established by European colonial states, sovereignty in the New World was possessed by whatever European state claimed discovery and settlement. Later claims to the same territory could be made by other states through the negotiation of treaties or through successful military bids. It has never been necessary for any state to settle an entire territory in order to maintain its title; rather, it need only prevent all other states from challenging claims to sovereignty. The land rights of Indigenous people have never been recognized by the European-based system of international law as having priority over the rights of colonizing states; and although international law has undergone dramatic shifts in terms of recognizing human rights, there has never been an attempt to revisit the injustices inherent in the notion of sovereignty based on the Doctrine of Discovery. Consequently, Indigenous peoples have been forced to deal with judicial systems that are wedded to an archaic and racist principle of papal law. (2010:351)*

A related legal concept to the Doctrine of Discovery is that of “*terra nullius*” which extended discovery claims to land not occupied by a nation or person, or that was not being used in a way recognized by the European legal system. This principle negated any right of possession on the part of aboriginal people living in territories claimed by European imperial powers, as right of ownership was based on occupation of the land, and occupation was defined in terms of be cultivation (Buchan 2007). Based on the

Roman idea of *res nullus*, *Terra nullius* was epitomized by Locke's theories regarding the value of land and labour, particularly as expressed on his *Second Treatise on Government*. In it, Locke systematised the theological legal concepts (including those related to sovereignty and natural law) as well as the practices that have been used to justified imperial occupancy in the New World (Samson 2008, Corcoran 2007). Locke emphasised improvements on the land by means of labour as what gives Europeans rights to property in the new world. While aboriginal people were considered to have natural rights, these did not include rights to property. Asch (2002) has shown that Canada has ultimately based its claims of sovereignty on this doctrine,<sup>62</sup> and the same can be said of Newfoundland before and after Confederation. A clear example of how Canada had incorporated Locke's ideas into its national mythology (Razack 2002) can be found in Michael Ignatieff's –Canadian scholar and politician– delivery of the 2000 Massey Lectures, in which he states

*through centuries of collaboration between newcomers and aboriginal nations, Native peoples have always accepted, with varying degrees of willingness, the fact that being first possessors of the land is not the only source of legitimacy for its use. Those who came later have acquired legitimacy by their labours; by putting the soil under cultivation, by uncovering its natural resources, by building great cities and*

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<sup>62</sup> It must be noted, however, that within Canadian Law, the doctrine of *terra nullius* has no application. On June 26, 2014, in a unanimous decision in the context of "*Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia*" the Supreme Court of Canada expressed that "The doctrine of *terra nullius* (that no one owned the land prior to European assertion of sovereignty) never applied in Canada, as confirmed by the *Royal Proclamation* (1763)."

*linking them together with railways, highways, and now fibre-optic networks and the Internet.* (quoted in Razack 2002: 2)

Not only does his argument make invisible the colonial history, but it is also based on an understanding that the aboriginals' use of land is not sufficient, or correct, and thus justifies the rights of the colonial powers, based on their self declared correct use of the land. This type of argument appears in reference to Labrador as late as 1964. In effect, in *The Forest of Labrador* (1964), a publication of the federal Department of Forestry (now the Canadian Forest Service), the Innu's use of the land is referred to as "predatory". While referring to the potential of the Labrador forest, the same one that it is the focus of the co-management process, the author, W.C. Wilton, states that

*It can be seen that Labrador is fast moving out of the subsistence economy based upon the predatory occupations of hunting and fishing that were the only means of livelihood for the population over so many centuries. However, the forest resources, which are the most obvious and one of the earliest known sources of natural wealth, have not been developed to any appreciable extent.* (Wilton 1964: 7)

In general, in Labrador as in the rest of Canada,<sup>63</sup> the provincial and national jurisdictions over the territory are based on western ideas in relation to land property. This situation, particularly in reference to the federal state, is described by the jurist Anishinaabe John Borrows (1997):

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<sup>63</sup> For example, Coles (2004) shows how the dispossession of aboriginal land in British Columbia is justified using a moral discourse that separate civilization of savagery and their respective uses of the land.

*These federalist structures organize, separate, allocate water and rocks in a manner that promotes unequal distributions of political influence. Federalism constructs a 'legal geography of space' that marginalizes Indigenous peoples in significant environmental decision making (420)*

Adding,

*The process of Indigenous exclusion within North American democracies has been greatly assisted by the operation of law. Despite its potential to do otherwise, the law has both inadvertently ignored and purposely undermined Indigenous institutions and ideas, and thus weakened ancient connections to the environment. The culture of the common law has imposed a conceptual grid over both space and time which divides, parcels, registers, and bounds peoples and places in a way that is often inconsistent with Indigenous participation and environmental integrity. (1997: 429-430)*

In Labrador, the French and the English crowns (and later Quebec and Newfoundland) granted concessions for various European groups, allowing, as Samson states, “to trade, possess and convert” (2003:41). In 1670, King Charles II of England granted a charter to the Hudson’s Bay Company all the land around Hudson’s Bay, although it is not clear how much of current day Labrador was included in that charter<sup>64</sup>. In 1702, Augustin Le

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<sup>64</sup>McGraith (1927) affirms that the frontiers of the Hudson’s Bay Company territories “were not definitely ascertained, they did not extend anywhere... farther into the interior than the height of land” (646) which would not include most of Labrador territory. Contrary, Gosling affirms that the H.B.C. was “the first legal possessor of any part of Labrador (1910: 129). By the time the Hudson’s Bay Company arrived in

Gardeur de Courtemanche was granted a concession by Louis XIV, King of France, from the Kegaska (Kégashka) to the Kessessakiu River (Hamilton River) overlapping the Hudson's Bay Company on what are now officially Quebec and Labrador. The concession gave Courtemanche the exclusive right to trade with the "Indians" and permission to hunt seals and fish cod and whales. Courtmanche stayed on the coast, without venturing into the interior. A post was first established in Old Fort Bay in 1702, and later moved to the Baye de Phélypeau (Brador Bay) where Fort Pontchartrain was built (the fort was occupied until 1760). In 1714, once the Kegaska-Kessassakiu concession expired, Courtmanche was granted a concession for life for "la baye de Phelypeau" with the exclusive rights to hunt seals and trade with the "Indians" and permission to fish. When Courtemanche died in 1717, the concession was passed to his family and divided into smaller concessions (Corley 1969, Plaice 1990). The Treaty of Utrecht, which marked the end of the War of the Spanish Succession (Queen Anne's War 1702- 1713), consolidated British interests in North America. France retained Cape Breton Island and the Île de Saint Jean (now Prince Edward Island), and some fishing rights off the Newfoundland coast, but agreed to give up its claims over Newfoundland, Acadia and the areas around Hudson Bay. As these areas, however, were not clearly defined, France continued to issue land concessions in Labrador. While initially the concessions granted large areas of land in perpetuity, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century concessions became smaller, and, for limited periods of time, generally did not exceed nine years

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Labrador, the era of the monopoly trade had concluded, thus the HBC was not restricted to its original grant. Although it had the right to trade, it was not an official monopoly.

(Stopp 2008). Concessions covered much of the coastal area between Mingan and North West River, however, few merchants established beyond the Strait of Belle Isle (including Louis Fornel's concession, which established a trading post in what is now North West River in 1743).

There were, however, British interests in Labrador. In 1752, a group of the London Moravian Brethren, took possession of land in Labrador by the act of carving King George III's name in a tree (Samson 2003). They built a mission house, named *Hoffnungsthal* (Hopedale), but this expedition ended tragically for the Moravians when their leader and six of his companions were killed by the Inuit. In 1763, following the end of the Seven Year War (also known as the French and Indian War, 1754/56-1763) and the subsequent Treaty of Paris, in which New France (except Louisiana) become a British possession,<sup>65</sup> the Royal Proclamation of 1763 stipulated Crown sovereignty over all new acquired territories,<sup>66</sup> specifying the Crown as the only authority to make treaties with the "Indian Nations." The proclamation defined the limits of Quebec and puts "the Coast of Labrador and the adjacent Islands (including among others, Anticosti and the Magdalen Islands) under the naval governance of Newfoundland" (Reid 2013). The proclamation's definition of the Labrador Coast would resonate in the Labrador Boundary dispute, where the jurisdiction of Newfoundland over Labrador and the depth of the coastal territory was

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<sup>65</sup> Louisiana became a Spanish possession, in compensation for the loss of Florida. France lost Quebec, the Île de Saint Jean (now P.E.I) and Cape Breton (granted to France in the Treaty of Utrecht), but retained fishing rights off the Newfoundland Coast and was granted the islands of Saint Pierre et Miquelon.

<sup>66</sup> The Royal Proclamation of 1763 is one of the founding constitutional documents of Canada. It is part of the Constitution Act of 1982, and it is referred to in Section 25(a) as a protection of Aboriginal Rights from potential negative effects of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

under discussion (Reid 2013). The administration of Labrador was entrusted to the Governor of Newfoundland and, as Samson points out, “sovereignty by tree carving was replaced by the edict” (2003: 41). In effect, Sir Hugh Palliser, the Newfoundland Governor, issued a number of edicts assuming ownership over Labrador resources and affirming the “Indians” were under the protection of the English Crown (Samson 2003). Palliser made a further allotment to the Moravian Mission in 1764, alienating more land in the north of Labrador and deepening the pressure for the Inuit population to settle. This was done in an attempt to keep the Inuit away from the fishery in the South, where the relationships between the Inuit and the fishermen have been marked by conflicts and disruptive Inuit raids (Plaice 1990). Stopp (2008) notes that Palliser’s approach to economic enterprise was more restrictive than the one in place during the French Regime and intended to encourage British vessels to fish and to hunt seals along the Labrador coast, avoiding competition with those living closer to the area (particularly Newfoundland and New England fishermen, but also the Canadiens who were year-around residents of the North Shore). In 1774, the Quebec Act extended the boundaries of Quebec and annexed the Labrador coast that had been placed under Newfoundland jurisdiction by the Proclamation of 1763 (White 1914), however, the governors of Newfoundland were required to supervise Labrador’s fisheries and to protect the Moravian Missions (Hillier 1997).

Around this time, the Moravians, who had been granted the right to occupy and possess 100,000 acres of land at “Exquimaux Bay” by the British Crown in 1769, re-established missions in Labrador. The Nain Mission was established in 1771, followed by two other

stations: Okak in 1776 and a new Hopedale in 1782. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century the mission expanded, establishing Hebron (1830), Ramah (1871), Makkovik (1896) and Killinek (1905) (Hillier 2001). The settler presence was also expanding. Between 1770 and 1786 Cartwright, an English entrepreneur, established in Chateau Bay and then Sandwich Bay, operating a series of sealing, salmon and cod-fishing posts (rooms) (Stopp 2008) and soon other British would follow him. By 1777, Slade and Company Fishery was established in Battle Harbour. Also in 1777, British settlers established themselves in the area of what it is now North West River, the first of English, Scottish and French Settlers that started to populate the coast of Melville Lake, making a living as trappers or traders (Zimmerly 1991: 44, 45).

The administration of Labrador was retransferred to Newfoundland in 1809 by the Labrador Act (White 1914), while the Labrador Act of 1825 re-annexed parts of the coast to what was then called Lower Canada (White 1914, McGrath 1927). These acts of transfer focused principally on coastal areas, without defining inland boundaries, as it was on the coastal areas where European activities were mostly taking place (though, non-aboriginal people had begun to live in the interior). The colonial government presence was, however, tenuous. Traders and missionaries served as substitutes for the government “regulating the people who depend on their posts and representing local interests to colonial and imperial officials” (Cadigan 2009: 99). Attempts of a more

formal colonial presence were short-lived, such as the civil court for Labrador, which operated between 1825 and 1834.<sup>67</sup>

By the 1830s, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) established a trading post in the Labrador interior. The HBC created new small pockets of settled populations and factors<sup>68</sup> working for the company were stationed on their post for a number of years and ventured into the interior. In 1836, the HBC established posts in Rigolet and in North West River. While the Innu participated in the fur trade, the principal providers of the HBC in central Labrador were the settlers, because the Innu population was not only small, but also valued its autonomy and had withdrawn from the area. This was unusual for the HBC, who typically relied on aboriginal people to supply their posts with furs, not on European Settlers (Plaice 1987). Initially, the company used its own labour force to supply their post until a supply by the settlers became possible. The settler's economy was based on exploitation of fish and fur and was dependent on small scale barter trade with trade merchants and fisher traders. The settler's way of life implicated the gradual alienation of Innu territory. Settlers trapped continuously in the same territory. Innu trapping practices, on the other hand, were based on a rotation of the trapping territories, which avoided depleting the animals. As the number of settlers increased and their resources became depleted, they extended their trapping paths further into the interior, eventually asserting trapping rights over all the major river valleys in the region (Samson

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<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, as Cadigan (2009: 99) points out, the Government in St. John's continued collecting customs duties and other revenues from Labrador, "collecting more from the territory than it spent there in Services."

<sup>68</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company's trading posts were called factories and their agents, the highest paid HBC employees in each area, were called factors.

2003: 92). This further displaced the Innu and alienated their territory. Settlers were also establishing themselves along the coast. By the end of the nineteenth century, when British dominance of the fisheries had been replaced by Newfoundland and New England interests, a small population of settlers (“liveyeres”) was living along Labrador’s south coast hamlets, often married to Inuit woman.

The issue of the ownership of Labrador was the object of dispute between the dominion of Canada, created in 1867, and Newfoundland. In 1869, the Hudson’s Bay Company sold its territories to the Canadian Government (with the exception of some land in towns and along roads), which in 1895 created the administrative District of Ungava to administer part of these territories. The District of Ungava covered what is now northern Quebec, the Labrador interior and the islands in James Bay, the Hudson Strait, Ungava Bay and the eastern side of Hudson Bay, parts of which were also claimed by Newfoundland. The 1898 Quebec Boundary Extension Act transferred the southernmost area of the district to Quebec, including along the center of the then called Hamilton River (now the Churchill River) (McGrath 1927). However, assuming its ownership over the territory, Newfoundland began to issue grants of land for mineral and, especially, timber development. In 1902, competing claims over an area south of the Hamilton River ended in a Quebec Court where civil action was taken at the same time that the two governments and the British authorities started negotiations to submit the boundary dispute to the Privy Council, although this was delayed for a number of reasons, including the first World War (McGrath 1927). Meanwhile, in 1912, in a new Quebec Boundary Extension Act, the remaining continental lands of the Ungava district were added to

Quebec.<sup>69</sup> Finally, in 1927 the Privy Council in England defined the border by the height of land. This decision, favourable to Newfoundland was, incidentally, never recognized by the province of Quebec. Through this process, as Rompkey (2003) notes, discussions focused on the interests of Quebec and those of Newfoundland, while “the interests of Labrador and the people who lived there were forgotten by all” (2003: 83).<sup>70</sup>

Following the Privy Council Decision, Newfoundland, itself a peripheral colony<sup>71</sup> first, and a peripheral Canadian province since 1949, found itself in a dominant position with respect to Labrador. The relationship between Newfoundland and Labrador can be defined as colonial, based on the conviction of Newfoundland of its ownership of Labrador<sup>72</sup> (MacDonald 2014). This production of Labrador as colony of Newfoundland continues to inform the relationship between the island and the continental part of the

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<sup>69</sup> The islands of Ungava were formally transferred to the Northwest Territories in 1920, and at that time the District of Ungava (that was in fact not functioning in any capacity since 1912) stopped existing.

<sup>70</sup> These multiple ownership claims and tenure arrangements are reflected in Labrador censuses: Labrador was included in the Census of Canada, 1871 (as Quebec, Labrador District) and in the Census of Canada, 1911 (as Northwest Territories, Labrador Sub-District), and in the Newfoundland Census of 1921, 1935 and 1945. After Newfoundland became a Canadian province, Labrador was incorporated into the Canadian censuses.

<sup>71</sup> There were English and French settlements and competing claims over Newfoundland. In the British Newfoundland Colony, Proprietary Governors were appointed from 1610 to 1728. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 gave all Newfoundland to the British Crown. It became a Crown Colony in 1825, and was granted self-governing status in 1854. In 1907, it became the Dominion of Newfoundland, a Dominion of the British Empire.

<sup>72</sup> This idea of ownership is expressed in Newfoundland’s numerous attempts to sell Labrador to Canada, before and after the boundary dispute was resolved. In 1909, the asking price was 9 million dollars. Newfoundland tried again to sell Labrador in 1922 and in 1923. In 1924, then Prime Minister Walter S. Monroe proposed to sell Labrador to Quebec for \$15 million. In 1931, Newfoundland offered to sell Labrador again, this time for one hundred and ten million dollars, but the offer was rejected by Ottawa.

province, the perceptions of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, as well as the relationship between Newfoundland and Quebec.<sup>73</sup>

After the installation in Newfoundland of the Commission of Government in 1934, Labrador attracted greater attention for development (Rompkey 2003). By the time Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation in 1949, Labrador was considered to be open to development for the benefit of Newfoundland. As Joe Smallwood, the first provincial premier, put it, Labrador was “the one lucky break that nature gave to Newfoundland, a compensation for their climate, isolation and sparse natural resources” (Gwyn 1972: 240). In a 1955 memorandum of Walter Rockwood, then director of the provincial Division of Labrador and Northern Affairs, this pro-development context is clear. In said memorandum, the inhabitants of Labrador are perceived as “a problem” whose days “of primitive hunting economy are numbered,” adding that they “must be prepared to put over into the industrial society now ready to burst upon them.” (Rockwood 1955: 9).

Starting in the late forties, policies of settlement were imposed on the Innu as part of a long-term project of Innu assimilation into the dominant society, and as a way to open Innu land to developmental schemes. These intents, understood as Innu “economic rehabilitation” (Rockwood 1955), were at its core a way to separate the Innu from their

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<sup>73</sup> The idea of Newfoundland ownership over Labrador and the dispute with Quebec continue to inform the popular culture. An example of this is found in the song “The Islander” by Bruce Moss (1982): “In Montreal the Frenchmen say that they own Labrador. / Including Indian Harbor where my father fished before. / And if they want to fight for her then I’ll surely make a stand. / And they’ll regret the day they tried to take our Newfoundland.”

territory and forced upon them and their territory industrialist plans consistent with ideas of progress of civilization of the colonizing society. Before Newfoundland joined the confederation, seasonal camps had been established around trading posts in Davis Inlet and North West River. The growing encroachment of Innu territory by Labrador settlers limited the Innu people's access to their former hunting and trapping grounds. This, in combination with a lower number of caribou as a result of its cyclical decline and the collapse of the fur trade as the European market deteriorated, left the Innu in an increasingly-dependent financial relationship with the Newfoundland government and the church for welfare relief. The provincial government and church pressured the Innu to live year-round in these seasonal camps.

In 1948, without consultation with the Innu and without their consent, the Innu people were relocated by the Newfoundland government from Davis Inlet (Utshimassits) to Nutak, located in Okak Island, 400 km North from Davis Inlet, where they were supposed to work in the cod fishery. Since living in Nutak made access to caribou grounds impossible, the Innu decided in 1949 to return to the Davis Inlet area, a trip that took them five months. In 1967, the Innu were settled permanently in Davis Inlet, on Iluikoyak Island. The goal of the government was to direct the Innu towards a fishing economy. This settlement, once again, happened without Innu consultation or consent (Denov and Campbell 2012). After a long struggle with poor living conditions in a location that limited their movements (an isle only accessible in winter or summer), the community chose to relocate to Natuashish in 2002.

Another group of Innu were pressured to settle in Sheshatshiu. Innu were used to setting summer camps in North West River, but the growing settler population forced the Innu to move across the river, to the current location of Sheshatshiu, where they finally settled in the 60s following the establishment of a Roman Catholic Mission there (Wadden 1991). The settlement of the Innu, itself a consequence of their dispossession and growing dependence on the government and the church, further advanced the dispossession process. McGhee, who lived in North West River during the 40s and 50s, describes the dispossession of the Innu of the Lake Melville Area thus:

*Since the Northwest River Band of Algonquians are not treaty Indians, de jure, they owned not land.... From their own point of view they once owned the whole area over which they moved, hunted, fished, picked berries, and trapped. In the course of time much of this land, including the better fishing and trapping places in the immediate of Northwest River, was pre-empted, or in most cases, simply taken over by whites, some of whom have not been a bit bashful about describing how they succeeded in getting Indians off 'their' land. (McGhee 1951, quoted in Wadden 1991: 62)*

The encroachment of aboriginal territory was further deepened by industrial development in Labrador. The conformation of Labrador as a space of development has been linked to the expansion of capitalism. In this scheme, Newfoundland and Labrador's role continues to be centered on the exploitation and exportation of natural resources. In this context, Labrador is constantly recreated as a frontier space that must be open to progress, but whose inhabitants rarely see its benefits. As Tsing affirms:

*Frontiers are not just edges; they are particular kinds of edges where the expansive nature of extraction comes into its own. Built from historical models of European conquest, frontiers create wildness so that some- and not others- may reap its rewards (2005: 27).*

In effect, the benefits of Labrador's development seldom reach Labrador inhabitants, who are left to deal with the changes in the landscape and the consequences of development's cycles of boom and bust.

Part of the territory was appropriated and militarized with the construction of the American and Canadian base in Goose Bay, the town of Happy Valley during the Second World War and the installation of radars for the Distant Earlier Warning Line. After the war, development activities in Labrador started to focus on mining. Mining development took place in Western Labrador with the establishment of the iron ore mine and the establishment of the town of Labrador City in the 1950s, and later Wabush in the 1960s. Late in the 1990's, mining operations were expanded with the discovery of nickel deposits in Voisey's Bay. The biggest development in Labrador, however, occurred with the hydroelectric project at Churchill Falls (officially started in 1967), which diverted water from the falls and created a reservoir of 5,700 km<sup>2</sup> named after Premier Joey Smallwood. This development also created a new company town (Churchill Falls) and a web of transmission lines.

These developments reconstructed the space of Labrador, changing the geographic, ecological and social landscape. The benefits of mining developments in western

Labrador “were almost nil” (Zimmerly 1975: 244) for Labrador, while the hydroelectric development of Churchill River created temporary jobs for Newfoundland and Labrador’s workers, but directly benefited companies in Ontario, Quebec and the United Kingdom which provided equipment and materials (Crabb 1973). Revenue from this project mainly benefitted the province of Quebec (Burke 2003, Procter 2012).<sup>74</sup> The creation of the Smallwood Reservoir resulted in the flooding of part of the Innu traditional territory and the loss of important places. Some other development projects that have either never materialized or took a long time to materialize, however, had social consequences, such as the resettlement of the Inuit population, housing shortages and changing demographics that created tension in the communities. Procter (2012), for example, describes the different phases of the potential uranium exploration near the Labrador communities of Makkovik and Postville and how its always “imminent” development has provoked demographic changes in the communities. Likewise, Burke (2003) described in 2003 how the announcement of the hydroelectric power development project in the Lower Churchill River perpetually appeared to be “just a few weeks away.”

The development of the Lower Churchill is currently ongoing, with a series of social, political and environmental consequences. It was approved by the provincial Parliament in the fall of 2012 (although the provincial government was previously acting under the

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<sup>74</sup> According to the former premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, Danny Williams, Hydro-Québec profits from this development are 1.7 billion per year, while the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador receives \$63 million per year.

understanding that the project would go ahead<sup>75</sup>). The future energy policies of the entire province appear to depend on the development of this project that, at the same time, is reshaping the relationships with other provinces in Atlantic Canada.<sup>76</sup> The hydroelectric project has also become important in the relationships between the province and the aboriginal groups of Labrador. It catalyzed the Tshast Petapen/New Dawn Agreement between the Innu Nation and the provincial government (see below), as the growing recognition of aboriginal rights in Canada would not allow for the lack of consultation and agreement with the Innu that was possible during the development of the hydroelectric project in the Upper Churchill. At the same time, the opposition to the project is one of the factors that agglutinate the demands of NunatuKavut Community Council, formerly the Métis Nation, a Labrador group which is demanding aboriginal recognition.

The development of Lower Churchill River also expresses western conceptions of land and nature as resources. Recent declarations of Labrador MHA Keith Russell are particularly transparent in this sense. While opposing protest against the development, MHA Russell stated:

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<sup>75</sup> For example, Nalcor, the provincial Crown Energy Corporation, spent \$30,000 million during the summer of 2012 in preliminary work before the project was formally approved.

<sup>76</sup> Because the development of Muskrat Falls depends on the capacity to export energy to US markets, and considering the historic disputes regarding energy between Newfoundland and Quebec, the project called for an underwater link between Labrador and the island of Newfoundland and another between Cape Ray, Newfoundland and Ligan on Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Nalcor, Newfoundland Energy Crown Corporation and Emera (Nova Scotia's private power utility) have reached an agreement where in exchange for \$600 million in contributions to the cost of links and electric transportation infrastructure (currently estimated to be in the order of \$1200 million); Emera would receive 170 megawatts of energy (around 10% of Nova Scotia's energy necessities) for 35 years. This agreement was announced in simultaneous press conferences by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Nova Scotia in July 2012.

*....people have to understand too that there is a need for this development. We do need this power... I don't buy into the mumbo jumbo about the trail leading to the Muskrat Falls site as being sacred. You can romanticize and sensationalize that particular piece of land all you want, but it is a resource. (Quoted in CBC News 2012)*

Later, MHA Russell had to apologize for the “poor selection of words” with regard to the “mumbo jumbo” remarks, which were questioned by both government and opposition parties. However, the apology did not include any change in relation to the consideration of that “particular piece of land” as a resource, terms that, it must be added, were not questioned by the critics of the “mumbo jumbo” remarks.

The most recent change in Labrador land tenure is the recognition of Aboriginal land rights. Historically, most of the Labrador territory was considered (provincial) Crown Land, but in the last number of years the provincial government has been forced to recognize the territorial rights of aboriginal groups. Because of the terms of the union of Newfoundland to the Canadian Confederation, the Indian Act didn't apply in the new province of Newfoundland and aboriginal people were a provincial responsibility (not at federal one as in the rest of Canada). Consequently, the policy of reserve lands was not initially applied in the province. However, after decades-long negotiations, the province recognised aboriginal claims over the territory. In 2005, the Labrador Inuit and the provincial and federal governments signed the Labrador Inuit Lands Claims Agreement. This created *Nunatsiavut* (Our Beautiful Land in Inuktitut), a 72, 520 square kilometers' region over which the Inuit of Labrador are granted special rights (including ownership of

the surface rights of 15,799 square kilometers). The agreement also created the first national park in Labrador, the Torngat Mountains National Park (9, 700 square kilometers), which is under federal jurisdiction (Procter 2012).

The Innu filed its first land claim to the Federal Government in November 1977, claiming land in central Labrador. The claim was accepted but not given priority. There followed a period in which the Innu political leadership considered that there was no need for either a land claim or a official recognition by Canada, and did not push the claim (A. Tanner, personal communication). When the Innu political leadership changed its approach, a second land claim was filed in October of 1990, leading to the signing, in 1996, of a Framework Agreement. In parallel negotiations, Sheshatshiu was recognized as a reserve in 2003 and Natuashish (where the Innu of Davis Inlet relocated), in 2006. The Federal Government covered the cost of the construction for and the move to Natuashish. In September 2008, the Innu Nation and the provincial government signed the Tshash Petapen /New Dawn Agreement. It was subsequently approved in a referendum held in 2011 by the Innu people of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish. The Tshash Petapen/ New Dawn Agreements, as they actually are three agreements, included compensation for the loss of land as a result of the development of the Upper Churchill River, a long time grievance of the Innu people; compensation for the development of the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project (in fact, these agreements opened the door to the development of the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Project); and the Innu Land Claims and Self-Government Agreement- in-Principle between the Innu Nation, the provincial and the federal governments. If finalized, this agreement will confer legal title to 12,950 square

kilometers of land in central Labrador to the Innu, as well as hunting and fishing rights in 36,260 square kilometers. Negotiations to finalize this agreement that would change the characteristics of land tenure in Labrador are ongoing. There is also a proposal to establish a national park reserve in the Mealy Mountains area. Once the land agreement is finalized, a new national park under federal jurisdiction would be established there, covering 10,700 square kilometers.

Through these negotiations, the provincial government acts based on its certainty that the territory is provincial crown land. In order to create the reserves of Sheshatshiu and Natuashish, as well as the Torngat Mountains National Park, the provincial government transferred crown land to the federal government. A similar arrangement is expected to take place for the eventual creation of the Mealy Mountains National Park.

### **Mapping and naming Labrador**

Western cartographic representations have been a key practice in the production of Labrador. Maps were produced under a number of different circumstances and for diverse objectives. Explorers, fishers and merchants, missionaries and scientists made contributions to these cartographic representations that, becoming hegemonic, contributed to the invisibility of Nitassinan and the practices that constitute it, although, in a number of cases, these representations were only possible because of the knowledge, maps and help provided by aboriginal guides. The advancement of the cartographic project in Labrador was produced as part of a set of technologies –census, scientific reports, and Royal Commission’s reports– that helped to produce a colonial space. The production of

maps was never a neutral form of space representation; to the contrary, maps are creative and constitutive of the reality that they are suppose to reveal (Harley 1989, 2009, Craib 2000, Breadley 1995, Harris 2004), and, as Harris points out, “conceptualiz[e] unfamiliar space in Eurocentric terms, situating it within a culture of vision, measurement, and management” (Harris 2004). However, maps are but one kind of practice among others that contribute to the creations of place, and the relations between these various practices are complex and contradictory. Maps alone, although powerful, cannot create places. Craib points out that “a map is often an expression of desire rather than a summation of reality,” adding that maps that contribute to the creation of state places “offered an aesthetic of possession that portrayed an orderly fantasy in lieu of a complex reality” (2000: 29). Maps of Labrador portray and arrange a space where another place “Nitassinan” continues to be produced by the network of practices of the human and non-human persons that dwelt there, and other actors with agency. Thus, while the maps of Labrador are a fundamental part of the colonial enterprise, they are not enough to erase the existence of Nitassinan.

As initially the European interest was principally focused on fishing and whaling along the coast, these were the first areas to be systematically surveyed and charted <sup>77</sup>(Stopp

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<sup>77</sup> Basque Spanish whalers had charts of the area currently called Red Bay, where they operated seasonally. By the seventeenth century, French interests prompted the explorations of Louis Jolliet, who under order of the Comte de Frontenac, surveyed the coast between Mingan and Zoar, located north of Hamilton Inlet The systematic English charting of the southern cost of Labrador started in 1763, after the end of the Seven Years’ War, when the British government commissioned surveys of the island of Newfoundland and the Strait of Belle Isle to Captain Cartwright. Around the same time the Moravians, who had been granted land for their mission, started to collect information on the northern coast. Between 1765 and 1812, they explored the coast north of present day Hopedale into Ungava Bay. Naval officer Roger Curtis also

2008). The interior of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula started to be explored and charted, with aid from indigenous guides, by French traders before 1763, and continued into the 1840s by employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, who travelled inland from the coastal post of Mingan, Eastmain and Fort Chimo, now Kuujjuaq (Samson 2003). In 1834, Erland Erlandson, was the first non-native to travel inland between the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Chimo and North West River. Erlandson wanted to go to the company post on the North Shore of the St. Lawrence River, but his five Innu guides took him to North West River using Innu travel routes.<sup>78</sup> He partially used the same route in his return back to Fort Chimo (Hillier 1998). Erlandson produced sketch maps and a report that vanished into the Hudson's Bay Company's archives. However, it was based on that report that the Hudson's Bay Company decided to establish an inland post in Labrador. Consequently, during the late 1830s John McLean (factor at the Hudson's Bay Company, Fort Chimo Post from 1837 to 1842) traveled accompanied by Innu guides<sup>79</sup> to the interior of Labrador and between Fort Chimo and North West River numerous times. William Kennedy, company clerk, also was guided by Innu from North West River to Fort Chimo.

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produced an outline of the North Coast that included Inuit names (Stopp 2008). Later, fishermen fishing along the Labrador Coast created their own set of nomenclature. While there is not much historical register of this process, Story (2012:11) refers to an example compiled by Dr. Shannon Ryan's Oral History Project, which included an account of how two brothers, Timothy and Richard Hayden, from Harbour Grace (Newfoundland) named a series of islands nine miles off the shore of Labrador circa 1880.

<sup>78</sup> Samson (2003) points out that Innu personal autonomy was an issue for "explorers," depending on their guidance.

<sup>79</sup> When in 1839, McLean and Erlandson attempted to travel from Fort Chimo to North West River without Innu guides, they became lost and had to retreat.

In 1861, Professor Henry Youle Hind, with his artist brother William Hind, and a party that included Canadian Crown Lands Department surveyors, French-Canadian travellers and two aboriginal guides (one Abenakis and one Innu) explored and mapped part of the interior of Labrador, travelling the Moisie River and the Nipossis River following a chart made by Innu people (Hind 1863, Hoggins and Hoyle 1997). Zacharie Lacasse, a Roman-Catholic missionary, travelled with Innu families to the interior on at least four occasions between 1876 and 1880. While HBC employees' maps and sketches were in the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, Father Lacasse's records of his trips disappeared into the offices of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In 1887, Randle Holme, an English lawyer and explorer who had previously traveled in the interior of Brazil, made a number of corrections to Hind's maps while attempting to arrive at the Grand Falls (Holme 1888).

In spite of these cartographies, western maps depicting Labrador continued to mark the interior as "terra incognita" until 1897, when the Geological Survey of Canada published the results of Albert P. Low's research. Albert P. Low, working for the Geological Survey of Canada, traveled through the interior of Labrador in 1894 and 1895. Guided by aboriginal people –including John Bastias, who in 1899 met William Cabot and interested him in the Innu people of the Labrador interior (Loring 1987) – his expedition followed Innu canoe and portage routes. He produced an accurate map of his travel route, in which he also presented in dotted lines the inferred course of major rivers (Buchanan 2005).

This was the information available to Hubbard and Wallace during their unfortunate expedition. This expedition did not add much to the European mapping of the area. Mina Hubbard's expedition in 1905, on the other hand, produced a map of Naskaupi and

George Rivers that was amply recognized (Roy 2004). For her expedition, Mina Hubbard used as guides maps showing lakes and portage routes produced by the Innu people she encountered in Rigolet and in North West River (Buchanan 2005). William Cabot's contributions to the western cartography of Labrador were minor ones, but he reproduced maps drawn for him by his aboriginal companions. One of these maps, the original being a drawing by an Innu hunter on the sand on a riverbank, was presented as evidence in the Labrador boundary dispute (Loring 1987). Dillon Wallace's serial version of his 1905/1906 expedition included a map produced for him by William Ashini, which, however, was not included in his book *The long Labrador Trail* (Buchanan 2005). Later, G. Watkins' expedition mapped the "Unknown River Region" of the Kenamu and the Travespine Rivers. Another significant contribution to the Western mapping of Labrador was made by Väinö Tanner, a Finish Geographer who was head of the Finland-Labrador expedition of 1937 and the V. Tanner Labrador expedition of 1939. He published his findings in *Outlines of the Geography, Life and Customs of Newfoundland-Labrador* (1944).

Explorers, fishers, merchants, and politicians not only produced maps and narratives, but also imposed toponyms over the existing Innu and Inuit place names (some of which they also recognized). These new names contributed to the creation of Labrador, all the while obscuring the aboriginal presence. The example of the imposition of new names is not exclusive to Labrador, but a common practice in North America and beyond, as "the uneven socio-economic conditions, linguistic barriers and cultural prejudices, or even

plain geopolitics have affected the continued existence of indigenous toponymics”

(Müller-Wille, 1984: 3).

The origin of the name Labrador, the founding act of its creation, is usually attributed to the Portuguese João Fernandes. Initially, the name was applied to a most extended area from Greenland to Newfoundland, which was then thought to be continuous continental land (Hamilton 1996: 6). While the first official “discovery expedition” in the area was Jacques Cartier’s in 1534, other European fishermen had travelled and had already named some of the geographical features. Cartier already knew the name of some of the features of the Newfoundland and Labrador coast, and encountered numerous European vessels (Hamilton 1996). Initially, Breton cod-fisher enterprises in the Strait of Belle Island left their mark on the toponymy of the Southern Labrador coast, such as Blac Sablon (Barkham 1984). Spanish Basques also established on the southern Labrador Coast used their own set of place-names (Barkham 1977). When Breton and Spanish fishers lost preponderance, most of their names fell on disuse, and new names were imposed in the area. In his descriptions, Cartier often used European names, although he sometimes used local names (Cook 2015).

Later European fishers, explorers and merchants continued to impose their names, contributing to the production of a differential territory. For the southeastern coast of Labrador, Cartwright’s Journal (written between 1770 and 1786) listed more than 300 place-names, most of which were his own creation, including the town of Cartwright (Hamilton 1997: 185). Many of them were later copied onto maps, becoming official

names. Along Labrador North's coast, unlike other Europeans, the Moravians recorded many Inuit Names.

The interior was renamed by explorers, who ignored the existent aboriginal and settler topography. The river called the Mishtashipu by the Innu and Grand River by the settlers, was renamed Hamilton River by Captain William Martin, in 1821, after the then Commodore-Governor of Newfoundland Sir Charles Hamilton, and later, in 1965, its name would be changed to Churchill River by Premier Joey Smallwood, honoring former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. In 1891, A. Cary and D. Cole, in the context of an expedition of the Bowdoin College (Maine, USA), followed the then called Hamilton River up to the Grand Falls and named it the Bowdoin Canyon.

During their expeditions, L. Hubbard, Wallace and Mina Hubbard imposed new names on the landscape, in a way that, in the case of Wallace, has been described as "compulsory" (Parsons 2011). Parsons (2011) notes that, while Hubbard and Wallace were aware of the presence of Innu people in the area after seeing numerous signs of previous uses of the land, they never doubted their authority to name as the "first" white men to penetrate "the vast solitudes of desolate Labrador" (Wallace 1977[1905]: 3). Parsons points out that "Wallace tells us how he ceremoniously named a place (even evoking poetry) and then in a dramatic fashion erased the traces of others who had been there before" (2011: 58).

During her expedition, Mina Hubbard showed a similar attitude, imposing more than fifty names onto the landscape, most of which are still being used (Greene 2005, Roy 2005). Her naming practices were based on the remembrance of her late husband, the use of the first names of female friends and family members, the recognition of friends and

supporters, as well as the names of her companions while on the expedition. Her naming practices were also based on the perceived appearance of geographic features, as Roy notices, “filtered thought her own cultural knowledge” (2005:144). For example, she named a mountain Santa Claus Mountain because it resemblance him resting. Roy also points out that Mina Hubbard’s place names “contribute to her personalization and domestication of the landscape as they evoke her husband and other relatives and friends” (Roy 2004: 24). Although notable in terms of a female-based narrative of exploration, it follows historical traditions of ignoring aboriginal toponymy to present its own presence as the “first” (Roy 2004) assuming, as it was usual among explorers, that the places do not already have aboriginal names (Grace 2004). In *A Woman’s Way through Unknown Labrador*, her book about the expedition, Mina Hubbard frequently expresses her place-name decisions, for example: “we had passed down the stretch of river below Long Lake and out in the larger one which I afterwards named Resolution” (Hubbard 2004 [1908]: 125).<sup>80</sup> However, not all explorers acted with the same disregard for aboriginal names. William Cabot, who travelled extensively throughout the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula, had not the same compulsion to re-name landscape features. To the contrary, he was interested in Algonquian languages, and had studied New England aboriginal place

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<sup>80</sup> Wallace and Mina Hubbard named some of the same features. In August 14, 1903, Wallace named a range of mountains Kipling Mountains, because, he writes in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, “as I gaze upon them, some lines from Kipling’s “Explorer” that I have often heard Hubbard repeat were brought to my mind” (Wallace 1905) (“Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the range”). In her expedition in 1905, Mina Hubbard named the same range Lion Heart Mountains, a name that also made reference to her husband (LH: Lion Heart, Leon Hubbard). Neither of these names is in common usage for this range, officially known as the Red Wine Mountains. However, the tallest of the mountain in the range is called the Kipling Mountain, partially because of the effort of Wallace’s grandson. Neither of these names considered the fact that these mountains, before being called the Red Wine Mountains, the Lion Heart and Kipling’s Mountains, already had an Innu Name: Penipuapishk.

names. His name was nevertheless given to a Lake in northern Labrador by Mina Hubbard (and also to a sub-species of Caribou in Northern Labrador) (Loring 1987). In 1925, Varick Frissell, a Yale student and volunteer with the Grenfell Mission, and James Hellier, also a Yale student, renamed the Unknown Falls the Yale Falls (Hodgins and Hoyle 1997, Paddon 2003).

The development and military projects in Labrador also imposed new names. For example, the name of Goose Bay for the military base in Central Labrador was suggested by Eric Fry of the Dominion Geodetic Survey, who helped to select its location in 1941. The development of mine projects in the 1960s, in Western Labrador, created new towns: Labrador City, initially “Carol’s Lake”, and Wabush, originally a company-owned town (apparently named using the Innu-aimun word “waban,” meaning “rabbit grounds” (Hamilton 1997: 274). Particularly dramatic was the development of the Churchill River, which created a massive reservoir, named after Joseph Smallwood. The opening of new roads in Labrador has also imposed a number of settler’s names (Armitage 2007, Samson 2003).

After Newfoundland joined the Canadian Confederation, decisions about geographical names were made at the federal level; however, in 1961, the authority to name was transferred to the provinces. The Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board (NLGNB) was appointed by the Minister of the Department of Environment and Conservation. The NLGNB vision is to preserve oral and written functional names. The board appeals to the Minister for the approval of official names, and it has the final authority regarding spelling and pronunciation. While it has a Labrador representative, its

meetings take place in St. John's. The Innu Nation has been consulted regarding names around the last section of the Trans Labrador Highway, which opened in 2009, and on areas under Innu Land Claim. The provincial government's Department of Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs also was consulted regarding land claims areas. It must be noted that the area under land claim is only a portion of Nitassinan. During 2014, the Innu Nation submitted 582 place names. While the Board encourages aboriginal names (NLGNB 2013) and the Innu Nation is consulted, Innu people's authority to name their territory has been limited, as naming has become an institutional process happening in the provincial capital city of St. John's, where the Innu are considered one among other "stakeholders," where the Innu don't have representation and where the final authority is a provincial minister.

However, as in the case of the western cartographic production of Labrador, the emplacement of a new set of names, although fundamental to the appropriation of the territory, is not enough to obliterate the existence of Nitassinan, as the encroachment of Labrador over Nitassinan is neither complete nor monolithic. A series of Innu place-names continue to mark the landscape; and the growing recognition of aboriginal rights and the presence of land claims implies a new recognition of aboriginal topography. In fact, during the last number of years, most of the name's considerations offered to the Geographical Names Commission of Newfoundland and Labrador were made by the Innu Nation (Newfoundland and Labrador Geographical Names Board 2013, 2012).

At the same time, Innu place names continue to be used by the Innu people, and to be considered the right names for Nitassinan, as Mary Adele Andrew points out:

*There are thousands of Innu names for the lakes, rivers, mountains, peninsulas and other geographic features of our land. These names have been here and are still used by us, the Innu, after thousands of years. Today, the maps drawn by the Europeans carry the names of these geographical features in English, for example: Churchill Falls for Mista-paustuk, Churchill River for Mista-Shipu and Mealy Mountains for Akamiuapishk. These are only a few, and the names I give you in Innu are the proper ones. (Mary Adele Andrew quoted in Roy 2005: 148)*

### **Labrador and Nitassinan: territories in tension**

Practices of place that make Labrador are grounded in notions of sovereignty as property of humans over non-humans. Practices of place that make Nitassinan are grounded on notions of guardianship and responsibility (which, while not centered on humans, impregnate the whole human/non-human collective). Since the arrival of Europeans and their practices of production of Labrador, Nitassinan and Labrador have been territories in tension, coexisting in complex, sometimes messy ways, with different levels of mutual acknowledgement. Both Nitassinan and Labrador are produced and reproduced in everyday practices that take place in a context of colonialism and unequal access to power, in a dynamic that could be conceptualized in terms of hegemonic/ alter-hegemonic production of place. Nitassinan is produced and reproduced, among the actions of other agents, by Innu practices related to the use of territory –including camping, travelling, fishing and hunting– in the deployment of behaviours associated with Innu values – generosity, autonomy, respect– in other symbolic practices –using Innu-aimun toponymics, maintaining relations with animals, animal masters and other non-human

persons, dreaming, singing, drumming— as well as in the interactions with the federal and provincial governments and larger international networks such as those involving the defense of Indigenous rights. Labrador is also produced and reproduced in everyday practices of their non-aboriginal inhabitants, including, as in the case of the Innu, practices related to the uses of the territory, behavior related to values (often associated with western economic values, but, in some cases, also related to values built upon an intimate relationship with the territory) and the symbolic representation of place.

Labrador is also produced politically by local, provincial and national governments as well as by regional and global resource exploitation networks. At the same time, neither Nitassinan nor Labrador is a monolithic construction. To the contrary, both are produced in different ways and on different scales by different actors. Innu hunters' practices of place of Nitassinan, with an intimate knowledge of the landscape, for example, are different from the Innu Nation's practices of place of Nitassinan, which are based on a language of rights. Similarly, Labradorian settlers' practices of place of Labrador are different from the Provincial Government's. Simultaneously, other tensions are operating over the construction of the territories. Labrador, for example, is produced at the same time as a part of Newfoundland and in opposition to Newfoundland (MacDonald 2015). Other aboriginal practices of place are operating over, or even disputing, the same territory, including not only Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut, but also the claims by groups of Innu from Quebec.

While everyday practices generate an almost continual friction on these alternative practices of place, there are moments in which the tensions between the practices of place

that produce Nitassinan and the practices of place that produce Labrador appear to erupt with particular force. Three of these moments include: the Labrador boundary decision; the exploitation of the hydro-electric resources of Churchill Falls and the creation of Smallwood reservoir; and the low-fly conflict.

As mentioned earlier, the Labrador Boundary dispute was resolved by the Privy Council in England in 1927. The vision of the Privy Council was based on a view of Labrador as empty and mysterious land open for development, in line with the early conceptualizations of Labrador. According to the Privy Council Report:

*the region in dispute consists mainly of dense forest and bleak and inhospitable table-lands, of which the greater part is uninhabited (except by a few Indian families) and was until recently unexplored, being visited only by a few trappers in search of fur. The country has accordingly been regarded as having little or no value, and it is only in recent years, when the growing demand for paper has attracted attention to the vast quantity of timber suitable for pulping that a serious controversy as to its ownership has arisen. (Mc Lean 1998:1 quoted in Samson 2003: 95)*

However, for these “few Indian families” the region in dispute was part of their territory. It is important here to remember that, as discussed in the previous chapter, Innu people had a high degree of mobility. As Mailhot says, “the history of a mobile people such as the Innu is completely different from that of village communities,” adding that

*When they were nomadic hunters the Innu travelled with ease throughout the whole eastern half of the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula. Each group maintained close relations with their neighbors; there were marriages between members of different groups, and individuals readily changed groups and went to live in new territories.*  
(Mailhot 2001:31)

While there were some preferences and family tendencies to travel with one group or another and to particular places in the territory, there was, and still is, mobility among groups. During my fieldwork, more than once Innu people commented on how the mobility of their ancestors misled earlier colonial classification attempts:

*People would go, you see, they would go to Quebec. There someone took a picture there “these are the ‘Montagnais” they said...they wrote on the picture. Then, people travelled, came here. Another picture. They said, ‘Naskapi.’ But you look at the people: some of them are the same! (laughing). People walked, stayed with family there, then, the same person is in another picture, staying with family here.*

Personal autonomy is an important Innu value, and people can exert it, even today, by deciding to spend time in different places with different people. As discussed earlier, structural mobility implies that the Innu not only move through their territory but by their social relationships. Nitassinan was thus conceptualized as a contiguous territory where Innu had the autonomy to travel and access according to their kinship system. It was not until the arrival of the colonialist, the institutionalizations of Innu bands, and the subsequent sedentarization that the conception of Nitassinan did not become, at least for some Innu people, more restrictive.

The institutionalization of the colonial border can be seen as an imposition of Labrador over Nitassinan, inflicting specific boundaries and limits. The dispute between Quebec/Canada and Newfoundland over the ownership of the territory was fundamentally a colonial quarrel, which resulted in the bureaucratic division of Nitassinan without any consideration for the unity of the Innu as people. As Scott points out, this resulted in “the fracturing of home territories by state jurisdictional boundaries in one of the most blatant effects of colonial policies” (Scott 2001: 8). This division left the Innu people and their territory split into two separate administrative units, which in turn resulted in different colonial relationships, religious organization, administrative apparatuses, colonial language, and relationships with the respective provincial and federal governments.

These multiple divisions had become embedded in the communities, harming the integrity of the Innu people and creating new forms of identity. While the Innu of Labrador and the Innu of Quebec continue to be related (with extended family relations, visits and movement on both sides of the provincial border, and a common language, Innu-aimun), there is also political and administrative division between them. There are consequences in everyday life, including limitations associated with the use of the territory and the recognition of aboriginal rights (including hunting rights) for those who are on the “wrong” side of the border. There are also some political tensions between the different Innu governments on both sides of the border, and contradictions and ambiguities in their relationship. For example, in 2008 Quebec Innu organized a protest hunt on their own traditional territory, which happens to be on the Labrador side of the border, following the announcement of the New Dawn Agreement between the Labrador Innu and the province

of Newfoundland and Labrador. Protesters sustained that this agreement attacks the cultural rights of the Innu as a people, including their right to hunt in Labrador. They also noted that the agreement “draws a line between the Quebec Innu and the Innu from Labrador (...) and it draws a map of where the Innu in Labrador will always be considered first in Labrador, leaving the Quebec Innu out of the loop” (quoted in CBC News 2010). The Labrador Innu Nation did not publicly support the protest hunt or the protesters’ claims.

In addition to the partition of Nitassinan, the imposition of the Quebec/Labrador boundary implied an imposition of a western conceptualization of territorial limits. The issue with the borders and its representations is that they were conceived following a Eurocentric construction that conceptualizes them as “terrestrial, linear, bound and defined through western legal frameworks” (Lloyd et al 2010: 701). As other aboriginal people, the Innu conceptualized borders not as terrestrial but as relational, as borders are the limit of social networks. Since social relationships are dynamic, so are borders. Social relationships partly depend on kinship; consequently, they are built over many generations. In addition, social relationships extend to non-human persons (such as animals) and through the spiritual world, so borders are not terrestrial but also occupy a cosmologic space.

Finally, the Privy Council decision gave Labrador to Newfoundland, without much consideration to aboriginal presence,<sup>81</sup> reaffirming the dispossession of aboriginal territory that was an integral part of the imperial process and would become an integral part of the internal colonial process.

While the Privy Council's decision on the Labrador boundary reaffirmed the colonial relationship between Labrador and Newfoundland, it did not extinguish the tension with Quebec, which never formally recognized the boundary. This tension will reappear around issues related to the industrialization of Labrador. After the incorporation of Newfoundland into the Canadian Federation, the now provincial authorities of Newfoundland enthusiastically promoted industrial development, whose possibility had importantly contributed to previous conceptualizations of Labrador. As discussed earlier, industrial development in Labrador changed the landscape. One of the most important and disruptive developments was the construction of the hydroelectric plant at Churchill Falls, in the upper portion of the Churchill River. This development was an exercise of colonial power, based on Newfoundland's conviction of its ownership over Labrador in the context of dispute with Quebec. On July 17, 1967, in front of Churchill Falls and in front of 450 guests that arrived from Montreal and St. John's, Premier J. Smallwood affirmed: "This is our river, this is our waterfall, this is our land. We are developing it mainly, chiefly, principally for the benefit of Newfoundland, then Quebec, then the

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<sup>81</sup> The issue of the Innu dispossession was pointed out in the context of the Labrador Boundary Inquiry in the early 1900s, but, as Wadden notes, neither Quebec nor Newfoundland took these issues seriously (2001: 60).

world” (Quoted in Gwyn 2015: k). Contrary to Smallwood’s belief, however, this project only marginally benefited Newfoundland (to the contrary, it greatly benefited Quebec, as Hydro-Quebec has the right to purchase most of the 4,500 megawatts produced by Churchill Falls for a fraction of its market price until 2041) and at the same time it produced social and ecological losses, which added to the political hostility between Newfoundland and Quebec and between Newfoundland and Labrador (Higgins 2007).

The project diverted waterways and flooded more than 1300 square kilometers in Central Labrador, including Innu burial grounds, campsites, harvesting territory and travel routes, destroying Innu hunting and fishing gear, canoes, tents and other possessions. The water at Patshetshunau (“Great Steam rising”) or Mistapaustuk (“Grand Falls”), known as the Churchill Falls by non-Innu, was dramatically reduced, leaving behind only a shadow of the magnificent falls. Innu people were not consulted or informed about the project. This is Elizabeth Penashue’s description of the losses that ensued:

*My late father, Stakeaskushimun (Simon Gregoire), was always very emotional when he talked about his belongings, including his canoes and traps, were flooded over when the Mista-shipu (Churchill River) was dammed. He was not the only one to lose all his belongings. Many others also lost all the basic things they used to survive in nutshimit (the country). My father lost everything, even his hunting land. He mentioned this many times, over and over again. He was so troubled about what had happened. Mistapaustuk (Grand Falls) no longer exhaled the mist, which was a landmark that helped us find our way from afar. (Elizabeth Penashue, quoted in Roy 2005)*

The development of this project was based on an understanding of the territory as Labrador and appeared, at least initially, to imply a complete subsumption of Nitassinan. Its characteristics, the magnitude of the landscape's transformation, its international connections (both in terms of financial support and access to the American energy market), its mangles with regional politics and its complete disdain for the local inhabitants, shows a reaffirmation of Labrador being conceptualized in colonial terms as a place of development for external markets. However, a widening in the temporal scale shows the messiness of the process of territorial production. While the development of the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project ignored Innu rights, more than fifty years of Innu fighting for compensation for the loss of their territory eventually paid off. The Tshash Petapen/New Dawn Agreement signed in 2008 and ratified in 2011, included compensation for the development of Churchill Falls. The province agreed to pay to the Innu Nation \$2,000,000 annually plus a 2.5% annual indexation between the ratification of the agreement and 2041 (when the agreement with Hydro Quebec would be concluded) and an annual amount equal to 3% of the dividends by this hydroelectric project after that. As part of the agreement, the Innu Nation was to provide

*a comprehensive release for any and all past, present and future claims by the Innu of Labrador concerning the interference with the enjoyment of aboriginal rights due to the upper Churchill River hydro-electric development. (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador et al 2008: 4)*

The compensation for the upper Churchill hydro- electric development recognized Innu claims over the territory that for them is Nitassinan. However, not long after this

recognition, in the context of the development of a new hydro-electric project at Muskrat Falls on the lower Churchill River and a new dispute with Quebec, in 2013 Premier Kathy Dunderdale echoed Smallwood's words, pointing out that "They (Quebec) absolutely do not believe we own Labrador" showing a clear example of the ongoing colonial conceptualization of Labrador that the provincial authorities have.

It was also possible to clearly visualize the friction between the practices of place of Nitassinan and Labrador during the low-level flights conflict of the 1980s. As Labour (1993:1) points out, at the core of these conflicts are "the fundamentally different attitudes and values that aboriginal and Euro-Canadians attach to land." Labrador territory has been militarized for a number of years, starting in 1941, during the Second World War, when the American and the Canadian governments initiated the construction of the military base at Goose Bay, seizing Innu territory. In 1979, Canada (the only country responsible for the base) started to lease the Goose Bay air base to some of Canada's European NATO partners for low-level training flights. The provision of airspace in the Quebec/Labrador Peninsula was, in fact, a large part of Canada's contribution to NATO. This was also considered important because of its economic contributions to the regional economy by the federal and the provincial governments, as well as by a number of local supporters.

At the same time, in Europe the low-level flight training not only faced logistical airspace constraints but also generated vocal public protest. Its relocation to the Quebec-Labrador Peninsula was based on the Canadian and European perception of this area as empty and wide-open, ideal for low-level flight training (Barker 2001). Colonel P. Engstad, a former

Commanding Officer of CFB Goose Bay, appears in the film *Hunters and Bombers* (Brody and Markham 1990) affirming that “the beauty of low-flying in Labrador is that there is not one permanent resident in our low flying area.” Likewise, a West German officer commented to a reporter: “You’ve a lot more empty space over there –except for a few caribou– than we do” (Lackenbauer 2014: 123). The local supporters of the low-level flight training agreed with this conception of the emptiness of Labrador. For example, in a 1990 press release in opposition to the Innu demonstrations, the then Mayor of Happy Valley Goose Bay, Harry Baikie, stated

*There are no people in the 100,000 square kilometer area used for pilot training.*

*No more than 2000 people go into the area to hunt, and there are never that many people in the area at one time (quoted in Labour 1993: 54).*

As in the construction of the base, built without consultation or consent from the Innu, there was no consultation with the Innu about the expansion of the base training activities, as the Government considered the area to be Crown Lands without any permanent settlements.

While Labrador has been used for air training exercises since the creation of the air base at Goose Bay, the low-level flight training changed the scale and characteristics of these exercises. The federal government designed two extensive corridors in eastern Quebec and Labrador, covering around 100,000 square kilometers to be used for training, and allowed training as low as thirty meters above ground level and speeds of more than 450 miles per hour, with noise levels superior to 125 decibels (Lackenbauer 2014, Rowell

1990, Barker 2001). Low level-flight operations increased annually from 1980 (in 1979 there were 274 low-level fly sorties; by 1996 the number of sorties had increased to 6,558) (Samson 2003, Rowell 1990). Additionally, bombing ranges were developed at Minipi Lake and targets were developed at Seal Lake. In 1984, in the context of a revamped Cold War, NATO considered building a Tactile Fighter Weapons Training Centre in Konya, Turkey, but Canada lobbied to situate it in the Goose Bay Air Base instead, which would have dramatically increased the number of training exercises (up to 40,000 annual sorties).<sup>82</sup> In 1986, Canada signed a Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMOU) with the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Federal Republic of Germany, allowing these countries to station personnel and aircraft at Goose Bay for ten years for low-level flight training. The following year the Netherlands adhered to the Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (and later, the United States withdrew from it). The Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding allowed Canada's allies to increase low-level training flights to up to 18,000 per year (although there were never more than 8,400 sorties).<sup>83</sup>

Innu people opposed the growing militarization of their territory, which they considered invasive and threatening to their way of life and their existence as a people. Since 1979 the Innu used informal and institutional channels and strategies to bring attention to their

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<sup>82</sup> In 1991, in consideration of geo-political changes, NATO dropped this proposal (Barker 2001).

<sup>83</sup> In 1990, partially in response to Innu and Inuit concerns about the wellbeing of people and animal during training exercises, the Department of National Defense implemented some mitigating mechanisms, including a satellite monitoring program for caribou tracking, a GIS mapping system for flight patterns, land uses and animal distribution and a set of criteria for avoiding critical species. In addition, two telephone lines were implemented, so their users could notify authorities of their whereabouts inside the flying training areas (Barker 2001).

opposition to the low-level flight exercise in their territory, including letter-writing, media and lobby campaigns. In 1983, an Innu delegation travelled to the Federal Republic of Germany, and in 1986 a delegation led by Ben Michel travelled to Britain, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany to communicate their troubles to NATO and government officials of those countries. While NATO and government officials did not receive the Innu delegation, the Innu got some support from peace, environmental groups and opposition political parties. By 1987, however, the Innu took direct action to stop the low-level flight exercises in their territory. In September 13, a small group of Innu from Sheshatshiu and La Romaine set up a camp in the bombing range at Minipi Lake and warned the base, forcing the suspension of bombing activities for the ten days they were at the range. The occupation of the range ignited the Innu from Sheshatshiu into action and on September 15, 1988, around 75 Innu from Sheshatshiu, including band council and Innu Nation leaders as well as children and elders, entered the Goose Bay Air Base and occupied one airstrip. This occupation finished with the detention of Ben Michel and Daniel Ashini, and the transportation of the rest of the Innu to a meeting hall outside of the base (Wadden 2001). A week later, around 100 Innu travelled to the Goose Bay airstrip to protest the potential expansion of NATO activities. Later that day, around 200 people camped inside the base, outside the fenced runway. These would be the first of a series of similar direct actions where Innu from Sheshatshiu, Davis Inlet and Quebec would occupy the runway, disrupting and even stopping NATO operations and training exercises. They also interrupted airport activities, particularly

during 1988 and 1989. Other consequences of these activities would be the arrests and charges against Innu protestors<sup>84</sup> (Wadden 2001).

Innu opposition to low-level flights was based on the Innu's understanding of their territory as Nitassinan, contrary to Canada's assertion of their ownership of Labrador.

Because of the importance of Nitassinan for the Innu as a distinctive people, the threat of losing Nitassinan was conceptualized as a direct threat to them and to their way of life. As

Barker notes, Innu attachment to the land differs from the military viewpoint that

Labrador is essentially an unoccupied land where there are only a small number of Innu seasonal hunters, thus the land, when not in immediate use by Aboriginal harvesters, can

be used for other purposes (2001: 248-249). As discussed earlier, Innu people have not ceded or extinguished their right to any part of their territory and that was made clear

through the conflict:

*Nitassinan is our land. We never gave it to them. How can they come in and take it and treat us if we were not human beings, as we were invisible? There is only one Nitassinan and one Innu people... We are fighting for our land and our identity as a distinct hunting people.* (Penashue and Gregoire 1989, quoted in Lackenbauer 2014:

119)

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<sup>84</sup> This produced a significant legal decision. Provincial Court Judge James Igloliorte dismissed public mischief charges against the protesters, using for the first time in Canada the concept of "Colour of Right" (a Commonwealth judicial concept that means that there is an honest belief that an act is justifiable). Judge Igloliorte sustained the Innu belief that they have a claim over their land, as "Through their knowledge of ancestry and kinship, they [the Innu] have shown that none of their people ever gave away (land) rights to Canada and this is an honest belief each person holds" (quoted in Labour 1993: 20). This ruling rejected the Crown claim that it had acquired the land "magically by its own declaration of title" (quoted in Whitney Lackenbauer 2014: 138). This decision was appealed by the Crown.

This was also the position expressed in Innu Nation letters to Canada and their allies during the conflict. A letter from 19 April of 1989 expresses:

*We remind you that Canada has no legal claims to these seized lands, and as countries flying out of Goose Bay you are accomplices to this illegal activity (...).*

*We have never given Canada, the US nor any other European government permission to use our land. The airspace in which you fly is Innu airspace, and the land over which you fly is Innu land. You are trespassing on our land and we are telling you to leave. We are defending our life and land and we will not stop.*

(quoted in Lackenbauer 2014: 139)

Slogans and songs during the protest expressed Innu relation to Nitassinan. As noticed in the preceding chapter, one of the most iconic pictures of the conflict shows a group of Innu women, including Elizabeth Penashue, holding a poster that says, “We will always struggle for Ntesinan”; in another a woman has a placard that reads, “Get out of our land.”

The Innu were worried about the social and environmental impacts of the low-level flights over people and animals and how they threatened their way of life. The Innu argued that

*Innu hunters are unable to leave their camps as they once did for 2 or 3 weeks at a time to hunt and trap. They can no longer leave the elders, women and children behind at the main camps because of possible accidents and other problems which may arise when the planes fly over. Problems, for example, such as: children*

*fleeing into the forest in fear of the flights, people in canoes panicking from the sudden noise and low altitudes of the jets.* (Innu protest letter, quoted in Lackenbauer 2014: 124)

Whereas the Innu's direct actions generated solidarity, resistance and interethnic conflicts both at the regional and the international level, the Innu succeeded at building public national and multinational support by appealing to moral values. While the real reach of the Innu protest regarding the militarization of their territory is still unclear and open to debate<sup>85</sup> (Lackenbauer 2014), there is no question that the campaign against NATO's low-level flights helped the Innu find a new sentiment of direction and personal and social empowerment. By taking direct action and opposing the colonial authorities, the Innu publicly and vocally reasserted their rights over their territory and, at the same time, their identity as distinctive people (Lovisek 2002, Lackenbauer 2014, Wadden 2001). As Shuurman (2001) notes, these forms of direct action

*[have] revived several concepts of Innu-ness from the past that have helped to create a growing sense of the potential of an organized community to bring about social and political change[...] political action has produced new symbols, which have served to constitute a more positive public presentation of community consciousness (389).*

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<sup>85</sup> The Innu were unable to completely stop low-level flying in Nitassinan. At the same time, the end of the Cold War, as Lackenbauer (2014) points out, did not result in an immediate big decline of low-level flight training; however, there was a notable decline in Innu protests.

The actions against NATO training in Nitassinan continue to inform Innu protest and acts of resistance. In August 2015, during a blockade at the entrance of Nalcor's site in Muskrat Falls (a project approved by the majority of Innu, but one that generates contradictions among the Innu population), a sign read: "We kick out NATO, we can kick out Nalcor."

After the low-level flight conflict, Innu have been able to organize other direct actions in order to assert their presence in their territory, to force the government and/or private companies to negotiate or to reaffirm their rights. During the 1990s, displays and route blockades limited the commercial exploitation of the forest in central Labrador, and forced the establishment of a co-management board with Innu presence. Similarly, on August 20, 1997 Innu and Inuit protestors blocked the construction of the road and airstrip for the proposed mining development at Voisey's Bay. This blockade—in association with the Newfoundland Court of Appeals granting an injunction to the association then representing the Labrador Inuit, the Labrador Inuit Association, halting construction—convinced the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company to enter into negotiations with the Innu and the Inuit. Katie Rich, then president of the Innu Nation, reaffirmed the Innu rights over Nitassinan, stating that, "Any development in our land must be done on our terms, with our consent" (quoted in Lovisek 2002:107). In addition, direct actions resisting provincial hunting regulations, which also had taken place before the low-level flight protests, gained in organization and public visibility, although not necessarily in public support. In 2009, during my fieldwork, a hunt took place east of Churchill Falls, in an area that the provincial government closed to hunting because of the presence of

caribou from the endangered Red Wine herd among the George River herd. This hunt, which was supported by the Innu Nation, was reported in the local and national news (Moore 2009). The provincial government's response included the seizure of trucks, arms and caribou carcasses as well as the prosecution of Innu hunters, based on the assumption that, as the then Newfoundland and Labrador Minister of Natural Resources (and between 2000 and 2014, provincial Premier) Kathy Dunderdale affirms, "Conservation trumps everything, trumps all other rights" (quoted in Moore 2009). A total ban on caribou hunting in Labrador imposed by the provincial government in 2013 was also broken by the Labrador Innu with the support of the Innu Nation because, as the Innu Nation deputy grand Chief Tshakapesh explains, "The [provincial] government can't tell us not to practice our culture, not to practice our spirituality, not to listen to our elders" (quoted in Michelin 2015). Currently, Innu people are being persecuted for their presumed actions during this hunt.<sup>86</sup>

Other forms of reaffirmation of Innu identity and to make visible Nitassinan and Innu presence on it also continue to take place, such as the Innu spending time in seasonal camps in nushimit, including the emplacement of Innu tents in hardly visible places

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<sup>86</sup> The legal status of these hunting bans, and the relative weigh of conservancy vs. aboriginal rights - expressed in this example on the words of the Minister Dunderdale and those of Chief Tshakapesh- are, incidentally, at the centre of the tension between aboriginal peoples and the state in Canada. The Sparrow Case decision (1990) affirms that aboriginal rights that were in existence in 1982 (the year of the promulgation of Constitutional Act) are protected under the Constitution and cannot be infringed by the government without justification. The point under discussion here is if the provincial government desire to protect the caribou herd is justification enough to infringe upon existing aboriginal rights.

(further discussed in Chapter 4) and actions such as Tshakuesh (Elizabeth) Penashue's walks and canoe trips<sup>87</sup> and Giant's<sup>88</sup> (Michel Andrew's) walks.

### **Conclusion: Nitassinan and Labrador, different places.**

This chapter began by analysing the practices of place that produced Labrador as a colonial place. Different, concomitant conceptions merged in the creation of a particular geographical entity, now known as Labrador. Particular ideas of progress, nature and society are on display in these conceptions. From hopeless land to a land of promises, a distinct feature in the perception of Labrador is its construction as wilderness, negating the reality of millennia of aboriginal presence and influence upon the landscape. This wilderness appears open for exploration or exploitation from outside and would be the base of extractive development projects and military occupation.

However, Labrador is produced in tension with other practices of place, including Nitassinan. Labrador and Nitassinan are not simply different names for the same space, but different places that are constituted by different practices. The practices are never quite established and secured, and always interfere with each other. In short, Labrador and Nitassinan are ongoing processes. In the following chapter, I look at how these processes manifest in the context of the co-management arrangements, and how this co-

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<sup>87</sup> Tshakuesh (Elizabeth) Penashue, Innu elder and activist, has been organizing spring snowshoe walks from Sheshatshiu into the Mealy Mountains for over 15 years. During the summer, she also leads canoe trips on the Churchill River.

<sup>88</sup> Michel Andrew, better known as Giant, walked from Sheshatshiu to Natuashish in 2009. In the following years, he led the Young Innu Cultural Health Walkers in walks across all Innu the communities.

management arrangement, in turn, imprints specific directions to these ongoing processes of mutual interference and entanglement.

## **Chapter 3: Nitassinan and Labrador in the forest Co-management process**

### **Introduction**

In the preceding chapters, I discussed the practices of place that produce Nitassinan and Labrador. In this chapter, I ask to what degrees these sets of practices find a hospitable place in the process of forest co-management between the Innu Nation and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Over the past number of years, the formation of co-management, joint-stewardship, or co-operative management regimes have changed the way aboriginal people and governments approach their conflicts around the management of “natural resources,” restructuring indigenous-state relations (Natcher and Davis 2007). Authority previously exclusive of the state is now increasingly being shared, at least at the formal level, with the local population most dependent on the continued availability of the resource(s). The incorporation of Aboriginal resource users in management regimes is part of a paradigm shift that tends to build upon local knowledge systems and practices, which theoretically could improve the effectiveness and equitability of the management institution and at the same time recognize the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous peoples (Pinkerton 1989, Howitt 2003) considered to guide the stewardship of the world’s natural resources into the future (Jentoft et al 2003). Aboriginal participation in co-management processes thus, has been presented as a potential way to resolve longstanding conflicts between indigenous peoples and state governments (RCAP 1995). However, some authors have

argued that co-management processes have structural limits that restrict the scope and type of aboriginal participation (Nadasdy 2003, 2005, Rose 1999, Asch 1989b) and that they could create new or recreate old conflicts (Castro and Nielsen 2001).

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the co-management process of the District 19a in Labrador/ Nitassinan. By ‘co-management process’ I refer to the procedures directed to the management of Forest District 19a introduced by the 2001 Forest Process Agreement (FPA) and the 2003 Interim Forest Agreement (IFA) signed by the Innu Nation and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>89</sup> These agreements created specific co-management procedures and institutions, including the joint development of forest plans for the district and the establishment of a co-management board. The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Innu Nation developed together a 20 year forest strategic plan, the 2003 Forest Ecosystem Based Forest Plan for Forest District 19a Labrador/Nitassinan (henceforth, the “2003 forest plan”).<sup>90</sup> The 2003 forest plan, on which all successive plans for the district would be based, was developed by a planning team composed of two Innu Nation and two Provincial Government officials over a two year period. The other important component of the co-management process was the

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<sup>89</sup> Additionally, a new Interim Forest Agreement (IFA) was signed between the province and the Innu Nation in 2012, maintaining the basic co-management organization

<sup>90</sup> At that point in time, provincial forest policy demanded for each forest district a twenty-year strategic plan and 5-year operational plans. Since then, changes in the provincial legislation established a new planning framework for the Newfoundland Forest Service and thus twenty year strategic plans (such as the 2003 forest plan) are no longer required. The twenty-year plan’s strategic content is now divided between the Provincial Sustainable Management Strategy (covering what the 2013-2017 forest Plan describes as “issues that are Provincial in scope” (2012:1), such as carbon cycling and issues related to global warming) and the five year operating plans. This means that the 2012 operational plan in fact replaced the 2003 twenty-year forest strategy plan.

Forest Management Committee (FMC), a co-management board. Between 2003 and 2012, this committee, a co-management board integrated by provincial and Innu Nation officials, was responsible for the management of Forest District 19a. The FMC was a legal arrangement between the Innu Nation and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources. The FMC was composed of two representatives from the Innu Nation and two representatives from the Provincial Government, with the General Manager of the Western Newfoundland Model Forest serving as a non-voting committee chair, a role known as facilitator. The Forest Process Agreement also contemplated the establishment of the Innu forest guardians program, which was funded by the FMC during the time it was active. The FMC had an advisory role, counselling the Innu Nation Grand Chief (formerly known as Innu Nation President) and the Minister of Natural Resources regarding forest management in the District 19a and was fully funded by the provincial government.

This chapter looks specifically at the practices that collaborate on the production of places in the context of the process and institutions that comprised this forest co-management process. I analyse how the territory was conceptualized and represented through this process and what practices of place it facilitated and what practices of place it hindered. I also look at to what extent, if at all, this co-management recognized the existence of Nitassinan and in which ways, if any, this co-management process implies shared responsibilities over the territory, thus living-up to its promise and those of the co-management in general.

## **Co-management of what?**

This co-management process focused on forest land. While this might appear obvious, what is not so obvious is what exactly a forest land is. In fact, far from being self-evident, the idea of forest requires attention: what is exactly a forest and how and by whom was the forest land of Labrador conceptualized as such?

Definitions of what a forest is are multiple and ambiguous (Lund 2002, Bennett 2001) and the problems created by this ambiguity are discussed in the forestry literature, which exhorts for a clearer definition (Kleinn 2001, Lund 2002, Lund 2006, Sasaki and Putz 2009, Putz and Redford 2010). In the British imperial context, forest was originally a juridical term that referred to land placed off limits by a royal decree, without any direct reference to trees or woodland. Currently, there are more than 720 written definitions of forest in usage in different parts of the world, ranging from legal and administrative considerations to types of land or types of use, with various legal implications (Lund 2006). Administrative definitions of the forest offer variations even within Canada. Canadian definitions of forest include: “plant association consisting predominately of trees” (Nova Scotia); “woodlands as defined by The Woodlands Improvement Act, covering a ground area of 10ha or more” (Ontario-Halton Region); “any uncultivated land in Saskatchewan on which trees or shrubs are growing or standing or any barren, dry marsh or bog, and includes any highway over any such lands” (Saskatchewan); “public land intermittently covered with forest growth” (Alberta) (quoted in Lund 2006). These administrative definitions include trees and woodlands, barren lands and even the highways that cover such lands. In the case of Newfoundland and Labrador, the

administrative definition of forest land is “land upon which are growing or standing trees or shrubs and includes dry marsh, bogland and land commonly known as ‘barrens’ (Department of Natural Resources 2010b). This provincial definition refers to particular ways of producing the forest, focusing only on specific aspects and elements (i.e. trees and shrubs). Yet, while it is safe to assume that this is the meaning of “forest” in the context of the co-management process, there is no definition of the forest in any of the documents related to the forest co-management process of forest district 19a, including the forest agreements and strategic and operating plans. Forest is assumed to be a clear and uncontested term.

However, the forest in Labrador as a distinctive land category was a creation of the colonial process, resulting from the intersection of the western conceptions of wilderness, development and land ownership. In order to create the Labrador Forest, “explorers” settlers and other visitors to the area first needed to be able to perceive a forest as a particular type of land, different from other types of land. While definitions of what constitutes a forest are, as just indicated, multiple and ambiguous, there was a perception of the Labrador Forest as a distinctive type of wilderness, and, as such, it was conceptualized in opposition to civilization. As in other parts of North America (Nash 2014 [1967]), forest was conceptualized in utilitarian terms, as a resource, or in romantic terms, as a place for adventure (this last aspect is particularly clear in the cases of explorers such as Wallace and L. Hubbard). The construction of forest as a resource was based on particular ideas of nature, and on a relationship between humans and nature that supposed the dominion of humans over nature. In addition, this construction took place in

a colonial context that assumed colonial ownership over the territory. In her analysis of the production of space in Victoria, Australia, Porter (2007) states that the colonial state produced its territory by actively applying “imperial technologies” to it, including exploration campaigns, surveys and mapping, the imposition of new names, the classification of the land, and the establishment of legislation towards its development. These practices separate the territory from its aboriginal inhabitants. These processes can be also seen in the production of the Labrador forest.

The creation of the forest as a resource in Labrador was directly linked to the creation of the forest as a resource in Newfoundland (and to a lesser degree, in Quebec). Forestry activities of Newfoundland and Labrador have been historically focused on the island of Newfoundland, where the political power of the province is located. Consequently, forest has been conceptualized as a resource and forestry legislation has been influenced by the realities, perceptions and necessities of the forestry sector in Newfoundland, as well as Newfoundland’s need for economic diversification. Changes in provincial management plans show the changing criteria of forest values. Provincial forest management plans that used to be centered on the carrying capacity of the forest to sustain production changed to ecosystem management after the introduction in 1990 of a new Forestry Act. This shift toward sustainable or ecological forest management echoes the focus on sustainability that has become commonplace in western discourse and practices, as a part of the intent to redefine the relationship between humans and nature (Johnson 1995). While the current forestry paradigm changes the focus to sustainability, it nevertheless continues to

conceptualize the forest as a particular –although interconnected– ecological entity, which still has inherent value as a resource, now defined in broader terms.

In opposition to the colonial construction of the forest, the Innu people do not endorse a clear division in terms of value between forest land and others in their territory. To the contrary, as discussed on Chapter 1, trees, rivers, ponds, and their inhabitants are partly constitutive of Nitassinan and of the social relationships that define Nitassinan. For the Innu as for other people, “the forest landscape is social” (Tsing 2005: xi). It includes social relationships between humans and non-human beings, and connections with the past and with the future. The value of the forest does not refer simply to market value, but to the wellbeing of a whole set of persons, human and non-human that live there and to the opportunities to display Innu values, particularly caring and showing respect. During my fieldwork, I cannot recall a single conversation about the forest that didn’t include references to Nitassinan or the non-human persons dwelling there. Discussions about forest and forestry practices turned more often than not into discussions about caribou, which occupy a central role in Innu culture. For example, when discussing the importance of the network of protected areas introduced by the 2003 forest plan with an Innu official, the importance of these areas for caribou was the first aspect mentioned, and the protection of the forest was linked to the wellbeing of the caribou. The provincial definition of forest, in contrast, focuses only on particular aspects and elements (i.e. trees and shrubs), leaving out other elements and social relationships that also can be considered to be participating in the production of place.

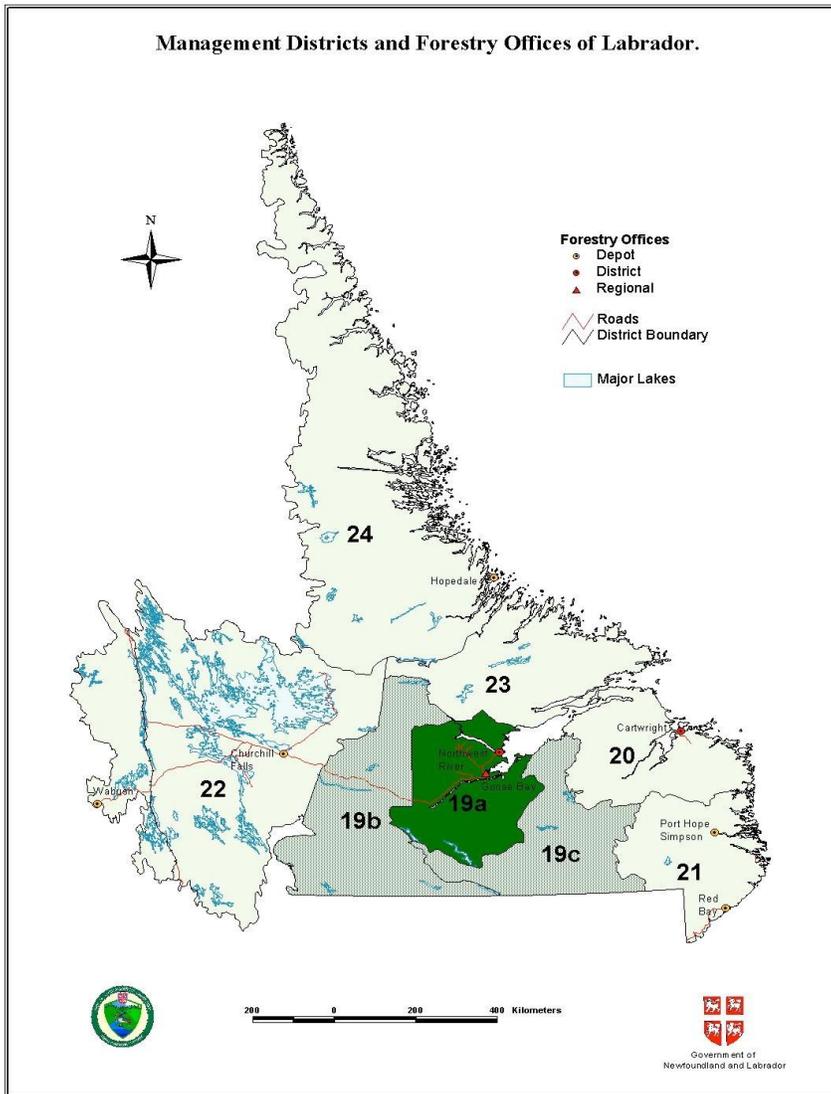
The co-management process, by focusing on the forest as a particular entity the value of which is defined by the market, does not consider that for the Innu the forest cannot be singled out and separated from the social relationships that are constitutive of Nitassinan and, thus, the base of Innu values. The forest for which the co-management was imagined by the province is a western forest, a colonial forest.

### **Co-management where?**

The co-management process was limited to a particular section of a forest district as defined by the provincial government: Forest District 19a, encompassing 2,270,000 hectares<sup>91</sup> (Map 2).

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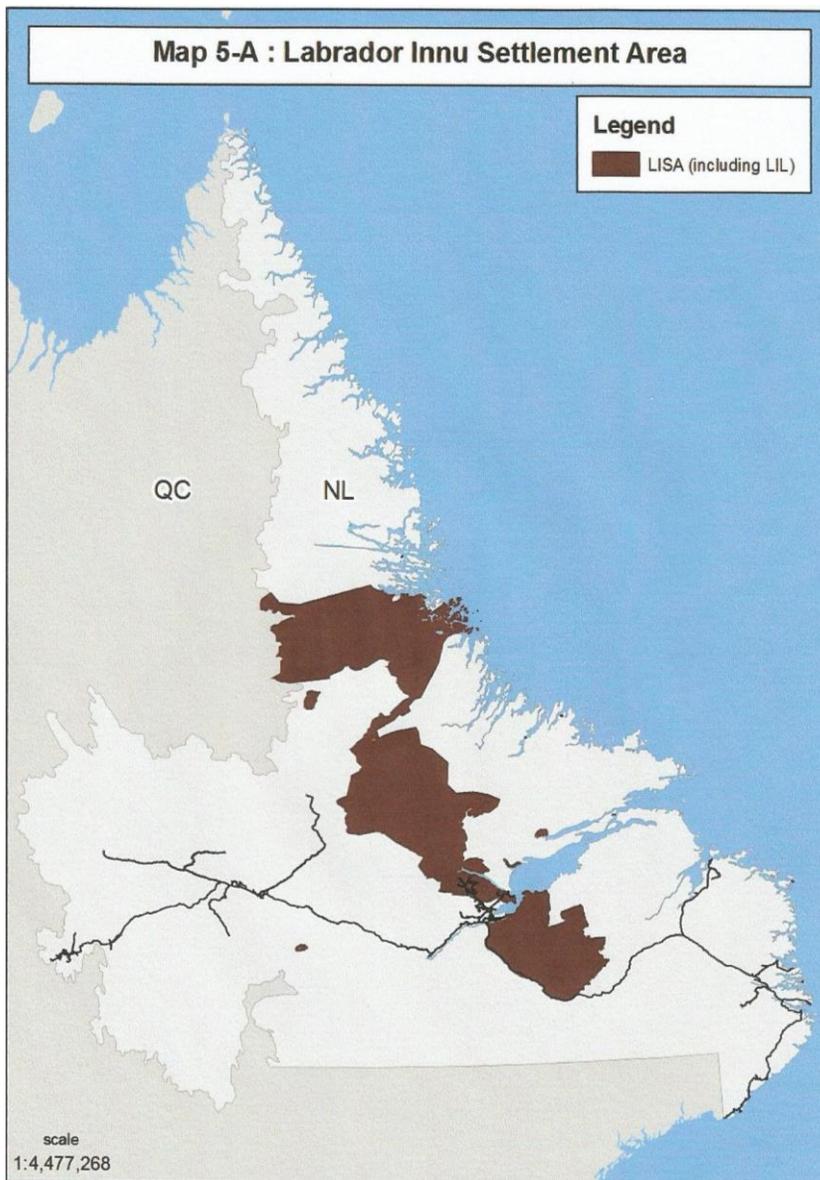
<sup>91</sup> The focus on district 19A is based, according to the 2013-2017 operating plan (Department of Natural Resources Innu Nation 2012), on the limited access to district 19B and 19C, and the lack of inventory data outside district 19A.



**Map 3: Forest District 19a from 2003 forest plan (Forsyth et al 2003)**

This limited scope of the co-management process was agreed by the Innu Nation early in the process (in the Forest Process Agreement in 2001) even when the Innu land claim, which was under negotiations at the same time, claimed a much bigger extension of the territory. The Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle, which resulted from those negotiations but has yet to be ratified, is much more limited in scope than the Innu Nation’s original pretensions. However, it covered a bigger, but different area than the

forest co-management process analysed here (Map 3). The Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle establishes different types of areas, which different levels of Innu control and capacity to exercise their rights. The Labrador Innu Settlement Area, over which a co-management board similar to the FMC would have authority, encompasses 3,643,600 hectares. However, during the FMC meetings that I observed, the provincially defined administrative scope of the co-management process was never under discussion.



**Map 4: Labrador Innu Settlement Area, as represented in the Lands Claim Agreement-in-Principle**

Innu participation in the co-management process introduced, at least initially, changes in the way in which the forest district was conceptualized in terms of its ‘location’: in the 2003 forest plan, Forest District 19a was no longer just located in Labrador, but also located in Nitassinan. This is evident in its title: “Forest Ecosystem Strategy Plan for Forest Management District 19a, Labrador/Nitassinan.” While this title signals

recognition of the existence of different conceptualizations of the territory, the extent of this recognition was rather limited.

The recognition of Nitassinan as a place was not only limited in scope, but also disappeared in successive versions of the forest plans. In the 2003 forest plan title, Labrador precedes Nitassinan. This prominence of Labrador over Nitassinan is consistent with the current colonial situation, but it is contradictory to both the historic process (as Nitassinan can be considered pre-existent to Labrador, although these entities also coexist) and to their physical dimensions (if considered by their land mass, Labrador is included in Nitassinan, not the other way around). Furthermore, in the Forest Plan's content there is not a single mention of "Labrador/ Nitassinan" and only one to Nitassinan in reference to Innu culture (page 40). Labrador, however, is extensively used in relation to the territory within the Forest Plan.<sup>92</sup>

The recognition of Nitassinan in the forest plan is also short-lived. Even in the 2003-2008 operating plan, which complemented the 2003 forest plan, the geographic location of forest District 19a is "Goose Bay" (Forsyth et al. 2003), as in the 2008-2012 operating plan (Schlossek et al. 2007) (although both operating plans contain the Executive Summary in Innu-aimun). By the time the 2013-2017 (Department of Natural Resources and Innu Nation 2012) operating plan –based on the 2003 Forest Plan– is introduced,

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<sup>92</sup> For example, there are in the 2003 Forest Plan (Forsyth et al) multiple references to the "people of Labrador" (i.e. on pages v, 38 and 40); the "Labrador people" (i.e. on page 42); to "Labradoreans" (pages 39 and 42); to the "Boreal Forest of Labrador" (page 53); to the different parts of Labrador, including "Central" (74); and just to "Labrador" as the particular geographic location (as in pages iii, v), including multiple mentions to it in the summary section translated to Innu-aimun.

there is no mention of Nitassinan in the title (nor does it contain the Executive summary in Innu-aimun), and, instead, the forest district 19 is located in Central Labrador.<sup>93</sup> All these plans continue to be endorsed by the provincial government and the Innu Nation.

During the FMC meetings that I attended, the place under co-management was referred to following the provincial bureaucratic nomenclature as District 19 by both Innu and provincial representatives, the facilitator and by the other people present at the meetings (usually provincial government officials), although sometimes the Innu representatives mentioned Nitassinan. However, when the Innu Nation made reports, newsletters, or presentations for community communication or use, the space was always referred to as Nitassinan. In the Innu Nation's presentations for outside audiences, in the cases in which Labrador was included, Nitassinan was always presented first. For example, a public presentation by an Innu Nation official in 2008 was titled "Sustaining Nitassinan: Facing Climate Change – An Innu perspective" (Courtois 2008).

In the context of co-management, all documents predominately used colonial place names (which are linked to the creation of Labrador as a place) to refer to the territory under co-management. There is in the successive forest plans an almost complete absence of Innu toponyms, with the exception of those under common usage. For example, the forest plan refers to Lake Melville not Atatshuinipeku, and to Grand Lake not Kakatshu-utshishtun. In other words, at the toponymic level, the place under co-management is neither

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<sup>93</sup> As in the case of the 2003 plan, the only mention of Nitassinan (on page 37) is a reference to Innu culture, while references to Labrador are found throughout the plan.

Nitassinan nor Labrador/Nitassinan; it is simply the colonial place of Labrador. Innu place names, a fundamental part of Innu practices of place, which link the Innu people to their territory, to the non-human-persons that dwell on it, and to their history, are not included.

Cartographic representations of the territory under co-management also follow the constitutive logic of Labrador. In the forest plans and in other documents, there is an extensive use of western cartographic representation. For example, the 2003 forest plan includes twelve maps. Among these there is a map of Labrador forest districts and forestry offices, showing the sub-divisions of district 19; the locations of forestry offices and roads and major lakes; a map of “Labrador eco-regions,” showing different types of forest classified according to their composition (high boreal forest, low subarctic forest, mid boreal forest); other ecologically classified regions (tundra, barrens, etc.); as well as the boundaries of Labrador forest districts, the locations of major lakes and provincial forestry offices, roads and the railway. In both cases, Labrador is presented out of context, floating on a white page, without representation of the adjacent province of Quebec and the territory of Nunavut, the Labrador Sea, the Strait of Belle Island or the isle of Newfoundland. The Innu communities of Natuashish and Sheshatshiu are not represented either (as neither of those have a provincial forestry office). Other maps exemplified the different scales utilized to define the protected areas inside the district 19a, as well as the location of such areas. As discussed earlier, maps are not just a technical resource but a particular representation that contributed to the imperial expansion and to the configuration of national conscience (Anderson 1991). In this particular case, Samson

points out how these government maps replaced the Innu presence and experience (Samson 2003: 78). This representation of the co-management process is that of a colonized place.

The distinctions of Nitassinan and Labrador, the different practices that produced those territories, are implicated in the perception of the legitimacy of the co-management process. With the exception of people working at the Innu Nation Environmental Office, the Innu community members I consulted did not consider the co-management process legitimate because the provincial government is not perceived to have the authority to make decisions regarding Nitassinan. This is what one elder has to say regarding this, comparing the government authority over Nitassinan to her own authority over Newfoundland:

*This is Nitassinan. I don't want the government telling me what I should do on my land, in Nitassinan. You keep talking about co-management... but do the government want me to co-manage in Newfoundland? Can I go around saying that I want to co-manage with them in Corner Brook, in St. John's? This is Nitassinan, our land. This is Nitassinan and we can do what we want. The government has nothing to do with it.*

## **The Language of Co-management**

English was the language of the co-management process. All of the co-management documents, including agreements, forest plans,<sup>94</sup> FMC agendas and budgets were written in English. All of the FMC meetings were integrally conducted in English (although some public consultations with Innu community members early in the 2003 forest plan planning process were conducted in Innu-aimun).

The use of the colonial language was naturalized and never, to my knowledge, contested during the co-management process. When I asked the FMC representatives about the possibility of provincial officials learning Innu-aimun, everyone, Innu and non Innu, laughed at the idea. An Innu Nation representative added, “That is never going to happen.” However, during an interview; one of the provincial representatives recognized as a limitation the fact that nobody in the provincial government was able to speak Innu-aimun, and although not open to personally invest in learning the Innu language, this person suggested that it would be nice to have an Innu employee among the provincial staff.

Issues regarding the use of the colonial language in co-management processes have been discussed in the literature (Nadasdy 2003, Howitt 2001, Rose 1999) showing that, as languages are related to particular understandings about the world, in order to participate

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<sup>94</sup> The executive summaries of the 2003 and 2008 forest plan were translated into Innu-aimun. Such translation occupied only six of the almost 100 pages of the 2003 forest plan and six of the more than 150 pages of the 2008 forest plan. The Innu-aimun translation disappeared by the time the 2013 forest plan came into effect.

in negotiations and co-management institutions with the state, aboriginal people have to learn not just the colonial language but new ways to communicate and to think. Thus, language imposed limits to Innu participation in the co-management process, limits that the Innu Nation accepted in a context of unequal power relationships with the provincial government. The use of English restricts Innu participation by naturalizing colonial relationships, reducing the pool of possible Innu representatives to those able and willing to communicate in English, and assuming that there is congruence in word meaning without considering core cultural differences of understanding (Hawley et al. 2004). The imposition and naturalization of colonial language, an integral part of the colonization process, expresses the symbolic power of the dominant group, which is able to legitimate its own domination by making it invisible (Bourdieu 1991). While Innu representatives are forced to know English in order to participate in negotiations and in co-management meetings, other stakeholders need not reciprocate by learning Innu-aimun.

Besides the use of English, the technical language utilized in the co-management process further entrenched this situation. The use of forestry lingo made FMC meetings difficult to follow, or plainly boring, for anyone without specific forestry knowledge (including me, an English-as-a-Second-Language speaker without a background in forestry). While some of the Innu representatives did have a solid background in forestry, others seemed as lost at the meetings as I initially was. These Innu representatives were uncomfortable or bored, and following a pattern I observed on other occasions, did nothing to dissimulate this: they kept moving in their chairs and even around the room. They also looked for excuses to abandon the meeting, spending time in corridors around the board

room.<sup>95</sup> On one occasion, for example, an Innu member arrived late to the FMC meeting, left early, and did not attend the lunch break at a nearby restaurant with the other committee members. During the time this Innu Nation member was present at the meeting, he/she did not express any opinion when asked. At some point, this person appeared to be asleep. This type of behaviour was not exclusive to the FMC meetings, but appeared to be a common occurrence in other meetings. I observed similar behaviour among Innu participants during the XII North America Caribou Workshop<sup>96</sup> and in some sessions at the Climate Change Conference.<sup>97</sup>

Forestry technical lingo utilized in the co-management process is also associated with a paradigm of resource development, which supports the exploitation of the forest as an economic resource and links its value to the market. For example, “management” is a term that crystallizes a particular vision of nature and humankind’s relationship with nature; it is presented in the Forest Plan just as a technical, neutral term. The possibility of the other view, where humans can be “embedded in rather than outside and above ecological relations” (Howitt 2001:157) is in fact negated by the management approach because its premises are incongruous with it.

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<sup>95</sup> All of the FMC meetings I observed took place in boardrooms (some public consultations early in the co-management process took place in a tent, but this practice was not repeated during the time I observed this process, as it is discussed in the following chapter) and had a duration of at least a full business day, but when there were presentations by special guests scheduled, meetings were two business days in duration. These long meetings in boardrooms did not facilitate Innu participation by imposing a context not familiar for some Innu. This context requires a specific set of behaviors, as noted in the literature (Nadasdy 2005, Howitt 2001).

<sup>96</sup> The XII North America Caribou Workshop took place from November 3-6, 2008 in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador.

<sup>97</sup> The Labrador Climate Change conference took place from March 11-13, 2008 in North West River, Labrador.

On top of the almost exclusive use of English and the extensive dependence on technical lingo, the co-management process privileged the provincial government's style of communication over the Innu one, which seems to be a problematic characteristic of co-management processes (Nadasdy 1999, Greskiw and Innes 2008). Most of Innu communication is based on speaking and listening with extensive sharing of stories as the mean of expression. Ideas are often expressed in indirect or metaphorical terms. While there is an intensive use of social media and technology, particularly among the young population, oral rules of communication continue to apply. The government, on the other hand, favours forms of communication that emphasise literacy and the production of documents that address ideas in direct, non metaphorical ways. The co-management process tended to reproduce this government preference, imposing literacy requirements on the communication, with the production of plans, agendas, document and agreements. The Innu Nation's various failures to accommodate to such requirements were perceived by the government as lack of accountability (an issue further discussed in the following chapter).

### **Planning landscapes**

An important part of the co-management process consisted of planning for the uses of the forest (even though much of the planned forest exploitation failed to materialize). In this section, I look at what types of places planning contributes to produce. Planning is a tactic that contributes to the constitution of particular places, marked by the imprint of the colonial state (Porter 2007), and is a factor in the creation of wilderness or natural places that then are considered open for development by colonial authorities (Anderson 1991,

Howitt and Suchet-Parson 2006, Suchet 2002, Thorpe 2008, Rossiter 2008). A number of authors (Porter, 2007, 2010, Escobar 1992, Howitt 2001, Sandercock 1998, 2003, Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003) demonstrate how western planning practices are constructed as rational and neutral, hiding the role of the ideologies that sustain them. These practices, in turn, “constitute some ways of thinking, some ways of being-in-place, as irrational” (Howitt 2001: 156) and are thus oppressive for the groups whose rationality does not adjust to this modern epistemological model (Porter 2007: 467), and who are not considered “legitimate knowers” (Sandercock 2003). Indeed, the “the rational-comprehensive paradigm” (Howitt 2001: 157) central in the planning epistemology marginalizes aboriginal perceptions of their land because these perspectives are incongruent with the basic premises that support planning. In effect, in the place produced by the co-management planning, Innu practices are considered, if not directly irrational, “cultural” and are mostly excluded from the forest plans. Innu people are not considered to be legitimate knowers of their territory, and, to the contrary, are required “to build capacity” as discussed later in this chapter.

Planning not only conceptualizes and reinforces particular ideas of place, but also of time. Planning assumes and imposes a linear conceptualization of time (Howitt 2001: 155) which presupposes that the future can be thought of in advance, and that time can be bound and separated into blocks (five years, twenty years), while aboriginal conceptions of time are often organized around concepts of circularity and patterned cycles (McNab 1999, TenHouten 1999). Even more, an aversion to make too specific plans for the future appears to be a common trait in aboriginal societies, related to an ontology that does not

give human beings a prominent role. During my fieldwork, I found that it was difficult to establish concrete plans for events, or even simple tasks for the near future. I was insistently told that, “You don’t know what is going to happen,” so plans tended to be general, open and flexible, and nothing was too clear until a particular action or task was about to take place, or actually taking place. It seems that, after making general plans, Innu people make decisions regarding the concrete form a plan might take according to the contextual circumstances, including such things as weather conditions, but also the network of social relationships within which Innu people find themselves and the decisions and desires of other people and non-human persons about particular events. Thus, the type of rigid planning developed by the state, based on assumptions about time and human persons’ capacity to control all the variables, is considered by the Innu to be pretentious and a little naïve.

A characteristic that appears to be exclusive to this planning process for forest district 19a between the Innu Nation and the provincial government is the use of the concept of “landscape.” The 2003 and successive forest plans for district 19a organized the space under this concept, linking human activities (or the lack thereof) to place, reinforcing western ideas of the division of nature and culture. Under the forest plan, the territory is organized in terms of three different landscapes: ecological, cultural and economic, assigning a chapter of the forest plan to each of them. There is no superimposition among these chapters, from the Forest Plan organization’s point of view these categories are exclusive: what is ecological is not cultural or economic, what is cultural is not economic or ecological, what is economic is not ecological or cultural. This type of categorization

requires clarification regarding the pertinence or not of particular practices in any of the above categories, as in the case, further discussed below, of the hunting and gathering activities of Labrador inhabitants, both aboriginal and non aboriginal, that are excluded from the Economic Landscape Chapter and instead considered part of the Cultural Landscape chapter. The forest plan's system of categorization has thus implications for a number of issues, including ideas of culture and knowledge, conceptualization of animals and other non-human persons, and gendered perceptions of economic activities, as discussed below.

Neither version of the forest plan, however, specifies the reasons behind the use of landscape. An analysis of the literature suggests that this use is related to an optimistic vision of ecosystem-based management based on contemporary theories of landscape that “represent it as a holistic entity within which natural and human processes merge, and where economical, social, and ecological objectives can be balanced in the pursuit of sustainable development” (Selman 2006: 1). From this perspective, dealing with problems at the landscape- level, particularly in reference to ecosystems, presents two major environmental advantages: it increases awareness and knowledge of critical ecological processes among policymakers and stakeholders, and at the same time, forces consistency between different agencies and jurisdictions at the state level (Layser 2008: 25).

However, “landscape” is used inconsistently in the forest plans, as it refers to at least three different categories. The first use of “landscape” refers to the different categories identified by the forest plan as important for ecosystem-based planning, and each is consequently assigned a chapter (ecology, culture, and economy). When used at this

level, “Landscape” is always capitalized. The second use of “landscape” in the Forest Plan refers to the broader levels used to determine the ecological protected areas network (the others being watershed level and stand level). The landscape level has the goal to select core reserve areas that could be considered at the same time unique and representative “in order to ensure broad connectivity linkages in the landscape” (Forsyth et al 2003: 26). The third use of landscape in the Forest Plan appears to be associated with the descriptive definition of landscape, sometimes related to scenery as in “landscape aesthetics,” which is defined as the “visual quality and appreciation of the land” (Forsyth et al 2003: 44).<sup>98</sup> Other times descriptions of landscape are related to a given setting or location’s components, such as the proportion of water on the landscape (on page iii), the reference to ‘forest landscape’ (page 35) and “harvest units on the landscape” (page 66). The constellation of uses of “landscape” in the forest plan is related to the structural limitations of the concept, as “few concepts in ecology convey such a wide range of meanings as the term landscape” (Lepczyk et al 2008: 272). Different definitions of landscape may take into consideration different cultural and scientific approaches, and may range in scale from centimeters to kilometers (see Farina 2006, Lepczyk et al 2008). “Cultural” and “natural landscape” are also problematic and can be conceptualized to represent different things according to disciplines and disciplinary traditions (Jones 2003).

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<sup>98</sup> Such use is referred to in the 2003 forest plan on pages v, 4, 40, 44, 45 and 62.

Similar problems affect the concept of ecology, which is also used in the Forest Plan in reference to different scales that are neither explicitly described nor consistently used. Like landscape, ecology appears to have paradigmatic limitations (O'Neill 2001) and presents problems when defining issues of limits and scales (Harvey 2000). The forest plans are based on a concept of ecosystem which, while not clearly defined, appears linked to "nature." In turn, "nature" is identified with the absence or modest impact of human presence (particularly in terms of industrial activities). For example, "natural ecosystems" are defined as those "functioning prior to, or in the absence of human industrial activities" (Forsyth et al 2003:18), and the forest district 19a is characterized as "a relatively undisturbed tract of boreal forest" (Forsyth et al 2003: 18) which "ecologically ... has experienced relatively little impact from human industrial activities" (Forsyth et al 2003: 24). The forest district is, thus, perceived as a pristine landscape where no human intervention, at least not at the industrial level, is visible, repeating earlier perceptions of the territory that contribute to the creation of Labrador and the invisibility of Nitassinan and its inhabitants.

Paradoxically, this construction of the Labrador forest as a natural space "naturalizes" the presence of aboriginal people (and even early settlers) on the landscape. Their actions within the forest landscape are considered part of the natural landscape, in fact making invisible aboriginal roles as agents in landscape changes in Labrador, repeating a tendency that has been observed in western perceptions of the place (Griffiths 1996, Porter 2007). However, at the same time, Innu presence, as well as that of other ethnic

groups, would be recognized in all the versions of the forest plan as part of the cultural landscape.

The forest plan's understanding of culture fluctuates between a merely environmental determinist view<sup>99</sup> and a pseudo eco-systemic view. The first assumes that culture is based on the ecosystem/nature/environment, while the latter excludes culture from the ecosystem, but assumes that the culture works in a systemic way. For example, the forest plan states that, "The district's unique climate, vegetation, wildlife and other economic characteristics have shaped the people who call this land home" (Forsyth et al 2003: v and also 37) and "like ecosystems, cultural processes are also dynamic and continuously changing, but have meaningful patterns which emerge over time" (Forsyth et al 2003: 37). The Cultural Landscape chapter also looks at the historical conformation of the social relations in the forest district (it dedicates two paragraphs to archaeology and six to "European history"), and provides a reference to what it calls Innu culture and natural economy:

*The Innu believe that the foundation of Innu culture and the natural economy are the ecosystem of Nitassinan, 'our land.' The Innu believe that 'everything depends on everything' an insight that inter-related forest ecosystems support wildlife, fish, plants, fresh water and air. From an Innu perspective, protecting the natural*

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<sup>99</sup> However, environmental determinism, as well as other forms of determinism that reduce culture to a single material cause, has been mostly discredited (Moran 1990).

*composition, structure, and function of forest ecosystems is the highest priority.*

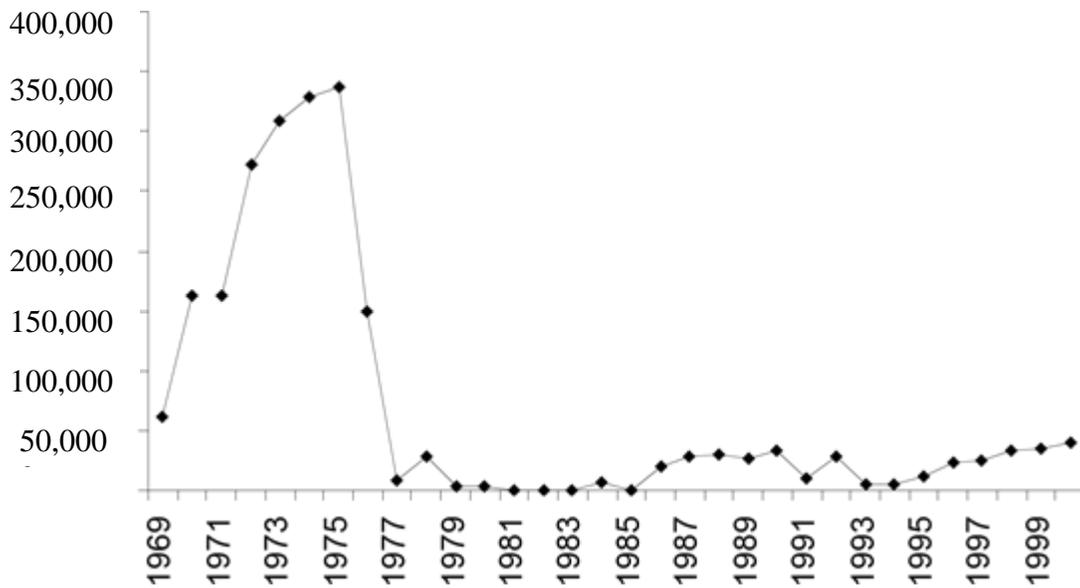
(Forsyth et al 2003: 40)

While Innu “beliefs” and perspectives regarding their culture are –loosely– explained in the forest plans, there is no discussion regarding the presumptions, beliefs, and perspectives that sustain the forestry paradigm. Ultimately, the forest plan uses what it has framed as an Innu perspective to justify the use of the western forestry paradigm. The Innu worldview is consistently presented in a superficial way that it is compatible with the current dominant paradigm in forestry. The paragraph quoted above, for example, sets the Innu ‘beliefs’ (not knowledge) in an ecological reductionist view of their own culture, which is, according to what is presented in the forest plan, based on the ecosystem. Western categories of wildlife, fish, plants, fresh water and air are presented as components of the Innu’s holistic beliefs, and on top of that, it also argues that the Innu believe in the existence of a “forest ecosystem” whose protection is the Innu’s highest priority.

There are also distinctions in the 2003 forest plan and the subsequent forest plans between traditional and market economy. Economic activities of the Innu and other aboriginal and non-aboriginal inhabitants of Labrador, which the forest plan refers as “the base of a vibrant traditional economy” (Forsyth et al 2003: 38), are considered to be part of the cultural sphere, not of the economy, and in consequence, are regarded as not being part of the economic landscape. According to the 2003 forest plan,

*domestic harvesting, included hunting, trapping, berry gathering, and similar activities are a large and important part of the Labrador economy, as well as vital and highly valued part of both aboriginal and non- Aboriginal ways of life in the District. However, for the purposes of analysis and description under the plan most of these activities are considered to be part of the Cultural Landscape.* (Forsyth et al 2003: v)

On the other hand, the 2003 forest plan sustains that “the Economic Landscape represented here is intended to describe forest-based activities which have a direct market value either as a product or as a service;” specifically, “such activities include timber harvesting, sawmilling, value-added wood production, outfitting, and guided or self-directed adventure-or eco-tourism, etc.” (Forsyth et al 2003: v). However, the forest plan itself recognized that these activities currently have marginal market value. In the year 2000, for example, commercial harvesting activity occurred within approximately 40,000m<sup>3</sup>, an increase from the 1993 level of 5,000m<sup>3</sup>, but below the levels of harvesting during the time of the Labrador Linerboard large-scale operations during the 1970s (over 300,000m<sup>3</sup> at year) (Forsyth et al 2003: vi) and also remarkably below the AAC suggested by the Forest Plan (Forsyth et al 2003: vii). The following table shows the evolution of the volume harvested before the Interim Forest Agreement and the implementation of the co-management process, illustrating its limited market value.



**Table 1: Volume of commercially harvested timber (m³) in District 19a from 1969 to 2000 (From Forsyth et al 2003)**

Nevertheless, in the 2003 and subsequent forest plans, these marginal economic activities are considered to be “more economic” than the Innu activities that the plan itself recognizes as “a large and important part of the Labrador economy” which operate over the same territory but on a different scale.

By excluding the domestic economy from the Economic Landscape Chapter, the Forest Plan does not consider the economic value of the domestic economy, regardless of the fact that the domestic economy can be partially quantified in terms of its market value. While standard economic analysis fails to address the value of the domestic sector (Sassen 2000), some efforts have been undertaken to provide a monetary analysis of the domestic sector, usually in order to quantify the value of subsistence production to either inform public policy, or to negotiate and determine compensation values (Natcher 2009). For example, the value of the domestic production around the Canadian North has been estimated to be equivalent to 30 to 60% of the area’s total income (Elias 1995). In

Nunavut, the dollar value of annual wild food production is estimated to be in the order of \$30 to \$60 million annually, depending on which activities are considered (Natcher 2009). The “art and craft” sector alone, for example, is considered to contribute \$30 million annually, providing some type of income to 27% of the Inuit population of Nunavut (TC 2008: x). The monetary or market value of Labrador’s domestic economy is difficult to quantify because of lack of data, but for the Labrador Inuit population, a recent analysis indicates that 76% of adults consume, use and share wildfood (Poppel 2006). Similarly, it has been estimated that 91% of Postville households participated in some way in subsistence production between 2006 and 2007 (Natcher et al. 2012: 231). Similarly, for the Innu of Labrador, research that took place in 2007 that focused only on caribou meat points out that at least one member from 30% of Shetshashiu families has spent some time in nutshimit during the researched period, and at least 40% of households participated in some way in hunting, consumption and/or sharing of caribou meat (Castro 2015). The value of the subsistence economy is not limited to the replacement value of wildfood, as there are social, economic and nutritional benefits as a result of Innu participation in subsistence economic activities (Samson and Pretty 2005, Castro 2015).

At the same time, this exclusion ignores the intricacy between the domestic economy and the market economy among aboriginal people of the Canadian North. These economic sectors are combined to form what is often described as a mixed economy (Elias 2005, Poppel 2006, Abele 2009, Aslaksen et al. 2008) conforming a landscape over which people utilize different strategies of accessing resources and services “along a continuum

with participation at varying points of the scale” (Aslaksen et al. 2008: 87). This allows for access to multiple sources of income and products, providing protection from the oscillations of the market, from the boom and bust cycles of resource extraction (Abele 2009) and the oscillations on availability of animals to hunt.

This division between economic and cultural activities also has gender-specific implications, by negating the economic character of the so-called domestic sector based on female work. As a number of authors show, the work of women in the domestic economy is invisible (Sassen 2000, Koukkanen 2006, 2011a, 2011b, Escobar 2012). Koukkanen argues that dominant colonial ideologies have reproduced patriarchal views of female labour when dealing with aboriginal communities, excluding or making women and their activities invisible (2011a). Escobar (2012), similarly, points out that the western narrative about aboriginal communities has failed to recognize the creative and productive role of women. As discussed earlier, ethnographic accounts, including my own, demonstrate that, in terms of gender relationships among the Innu people, both men and women have equal levels of autonomy. However, there exists a gendered division of labour, with women very active in the domestic sector of so called traditional activities. The Forest Plan division of cultural and economic activities twice denies the economic value of women’s work. By framing all domestic economic activities as “cultural,” the Forest Plan denies the economic character of the domestic economy. At the same time, it perpetuates the invisibility of women’s work in the domestic sector. The role of female work among the Innu people and female-particular practices of place, then, are not just “cultural” but also invisible.

## **Animals, wildlife, ancestors**

An elder once told me the history of the Caribou Man, an Innu man who married a caribou mare and became the caribou master. Caribou Man is one of the most powerful animal masters, a leader and protector of a number of animals, who gives the Innu permission to hunt, and can withhold the animals if the Innu fail to show respect. When he finished telling the history, he added: “My aunt told me that caribou-Man is our ancestor.”

While I attended FMC meetings or when I read the documents related to the co-management process, I keep thinking about this elder, and others like him who told me similar histories of family bonds with animals and animal masters. I wonder where in the co-management process these social relationships, which are part of wider constellations of relationships, are reflected. Where is this constitutive part of the conceptualization of Nitassinan, the interactions of human and non-human persons, contained in the co-management process? The answer, I believe, is nowhere. Besides expressing generalities about Innu values, the co-management process does not consider this aspect of Nitassinan. This is one of the ways of being in the land that planning constructed as irrational. The rational construction of place of the co-management process is based not on an entanglement of social relationships but in a careful separation of nature and culture, particularly visible in the strong division in the forest plan of the different landscapes (ecological, cultural and economic) discussed above. This can be seen in the ways in which animals are conceptualized. When animals are represented in the co-management process, they appear as resources, as wildlife, or as a threat (such as in the

hemlock looper example analysed in the next chapter), not as part of webs of social relationships. In the forest plans there are a number of references to ‘wildlife’ and animals, and some of their goals are directed to the protection of ‘wildlife’ and animals, particularly species at risk. Specifically, the first two of the 18 goals of the Forest Plan refer to “identification of species at risk” and “wildlife & habitat management” (Forsyth et al 2003: 4). The importance that the forest plan gives to these issues is explained as a consequence of both the ecosystem based forest management that guided the Forest Plan and the so-called “Innu perspective” that is supposed to be informing it. When animals are named in the forest plans, they are referred to simply as “animals” or as “wildlife”, “species at risk” or “endangered species”, and, usually in a different category, “fish”. The 2003 forest plan Ecological Landscape Chapter lists the animals following western-zoological categories (mammals, birds, etc). Wildlife is presented in the plan as part of the ecological characteristics of the forest district (Forsyth et al 2003: v, 37). Wildlife, including fish, is also conceptualized as a forest resource. For example, the Forest Plan states that among its goals is the “protection of fish, wildlife and other resource values” (Forsyth et al 2003: 70). As in other examples of management, aboriginal categories are not considered (Asch 1989b) and “the notion of wild is rarely addressed” (Suchet 2002: 146), however, as Usher (1995) states:

*Wildlife...is not an objective description but a cultural statement of the relationship of people and animals (and habitat) in an agricultural, settler heritage. It appears to have no direct equivalent in aboriginal languages. (1995: 203)*

Neither the forest plans, nor the discussions in the FMC include any reference to Innu characterizations of animals. The Innu organize non-domestic animals in different categories, which include “four legged animals, waterfowl, birds, fish and insects, with "an additional classification of animal species into kingdoms (*tipentamun*) (...) superimposed upon the category of Innu animals" (Armitage 1992:68). Animals are ruled by a spiritual animal master. While Clement, who analyzes Innu zoology, sees some resemblances (1995: 6) between Innu zoological knowledge and western science zoology, the forest plans overlook the existence of the Innu system and only consider and validate the knowledge coming from the western sciences.

### **Belief, Knowledge and Capacity building**

In the co-management process, there was an extensive use of western-style scientific knowledge. Scientists, some of them provincial employees, were invited to the FMC meetings to discuss topics related to their areas of expertise. In none of the meetings I observed was there an exposition of Innu knowledge, and no elder was invited to expound on their knowledge.

That does not mean, however, that there was no interest in Innu concepts. To the contrary, there was a lot of interest, but also a lack of understanding about non-western ideas. For example, a project funded by the FMC was supposed to systematically present western and Innu ideologies next to each other, organized in a book where a western concept would be followed by the Innu equivalent. As proposed, this project was unrealizable, as not only did it imply an over simplification and de-contextualization of Innu knowledge, but also supposed a level of compatibility between the systems of knowledge that allowed

for easy translation and for the adaptability of the Innu concepts to the structure of western science. This project was never completed.

The forest plan also gives pre-eminence to scientific knowledge. For example, the ecosystem landscape chapter focuses on ecological land classification systems for District 19a. All this classification, and associated maps, tables, aerial and satellite pictures, produce a particular knowledge about the Labrador forest. Such knowledge is presented as “objective, value-free, and neutral to political, social, or cultural influences and thus is of greater value in the ‘knowledge stakes’ than any other kind of knowledge” (Porter 2007: 472). In fact, this kind of knowledge is the only “real” knowledge that the Forest Plan considers and, it is the type of knowledge that legitimate knowers have. Yet this knowledge is actually at the service of a particular project that “seeks to simplify nature and render it legible for state intervention” (Porter 2007: 471). The Innu people’s knowledge of their territory, on the other hand, is not presented as knowledge but as “beliefs” or “perspectives.” Contrary to what is perceived as real knowledge, there is no systematic presentation of these beliefs, but vague references, principally in the Cultural Landscape Chapter.

Because the Innu were not considered legitimate knowers of their territory, they were required to engage in ‘capacity building.’ A portion of each FMC annual budget was transferred to the Innu Nation for this, and it was used to support the Forest Guardian

program.<sup>100</sup> The concept of “capacity building” (sometimes called “community capacity building”) is recurrent in reference to aboriginal governance. Originally linked with notions of development in underdeveloped countries, its use has expanded to situations of internal colonialism in developed countries. Capacity building is supposed to enhance public and individual capacities for development and governance. There is extensive literature that is critical of this concept (Howitt 2001, Howitt and Suchet-Pearson 2006, Graig 2007, Mowbray 2005). Graig (2007) maintains that capacity building is constructed over a ‘capacity deficit model’; this model defines groups by what they are lacking, failing to recognize groups’ capacities and knowledge, and obscuring the structural reasons of poverty and inequality. In the context of aboriginal capacity building in relation to the forest sector in Canada, Stevenson and Perreault (2008) also question the ‘capacity deficit model’ that presumes that aboriginal groups need capacity building, ignoring that they have been managing their territories for millennia. In this context, Stevenson and Perreault argue that it is not appropriate to refer to capacity without questioning for whom and for what capacity is required. In addition, I believe it is important to question why the Innu need to build capacity.

During an interview, a provincial official stated that “a lot of money from the FMC is directed to capacity building for the Innu Nation.” When I asked for what the Innu needed to build capacity, the official replied, “To manage the forest.” But the Innu have been

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<sup>100</sup> The Innu Nation has had ongoing guardian programs since 1992, when a seasonal fisheries guardian program was established with the support of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Since 2000, the Innu Nation secured funding to support a number of environmental guardian programs in different areas, including fisheries, wildlife management, mining and forestry. For the duration of the co-management process, Innu forest guardians were supported by the FMC.

“managing” Nitassinan, including “the forest,” for millennia. Why do they need to build capacity now? The answer to this question was provided by an Innu Nation official, who stated that the reason for capacity building was “to participate in the co-management.”

Thus, the Innu Nation needs to capacitate its members to be able to function in a Western-style institution. In other words, in order for the co-management process to resemble a balanced institution where the two parties, the Provincial Government and the Innu Nation, are in an equivalent situation, it is necessary to “build capacity” for the Innu members to function in what is, basically, an alien process defined by Western parameters. Building capacity is, therefore, the response of the state to their own necessity to have aboriginal interlocutors.

What about the state’s capacity building? It is valid to ask if the provincial government has taken any initiative to build up its own capacity to deal with the interethnic characteristic of the co-management process associated with Forest District 19a.

Although the provincial government has made some attempts to capacitate its officials to work in a diverse cultural environment, these attempts have been very limited. For instance, one of the provincial representatives in the FMC assisted with a one-day seminar about “aboriginal sensitivity.” During their interviews, some provincial officials expressed their frustration with this situation, talking about their own initiatives to learn more about the Innu culture, including reading about the Innu and talking with more experienced colleagues. Beyond the personal initiatives of its employees, the meagre institutional initiatives of the provincial government to build its capacity to act in an

intercultural context reaffirms that the capacity deficit model is applied to aboriginal people while

*forest companies, provincial governments and other non-Aboriginal interests view their capacity needs and strengths, as well as those of aboriginal people, within the constellation of existing economic, technical, social and political relationships, institutions and systems. (Stevenson and Perreault 2008: 7).*

## **Conclusions**

The forest co-management process was initiated amidst pre-existing practices of place that created Nitassinan and Labrador. But these places were unevenly reflected, recreated and recognized in the co-management process. Labrador's practices of place were fully acknowledged and reproduced, while Nitassinan practices of place were marginalized. Subjacent to all the co-management processes was a western division between nature and culture that allowed for and recognized some, and not other, practices of place. Marked by the imprint of the colonial creation of Labrador, the co-management process was based on the conceptualization of the forest as a type of wilderness containing resources (whether pulp, carbon credits or any other component of the forest) with market value, which could be develop.

Innu ways of knowing and conceptualizing Nitassinan were marginalized through this process. Since its conception with an exclusive focus on district 19a, the co-management process recognized practices of place linked to Labrador. District 19a, the geographic emplacement of the co-management process is an administrative space pre-defined by the

provincial state. It is, like Labrador, defined by fixed administrative borders, not by relationships like Nitassinan. The division of the territory in forest districts responded to the colonial necessities of the provincial government to organize the space and open it to resource exploitation. While Innu participation in the process briefly introduced changes in the conceptualization of the district, ascribing it not only to Labrador but also to Nitassinan in the first versions of the forest plans, the pertinence of the organization was never questioned during the co-management process. The restricted focus on forest management reproduced a western understanding that separated what is conceptualized as a resource from the territory. Contrarily, for the Innu, the forest is not perceived as being disconnected from Nitassinan and the values associated with Nitassinan are not linked to the market, but to the Innu values of reciprocity, respect and autonomy, discussed in Chapter 1.

Planning, an important part of the co-management process, contributed to the reproduction of Labrador as a place and of the practices that sustained this production. District 19a forest plans made the western distinction between nature and culture obvious by dividing the territory in mutually exclusive landscapes: ecological, cultural and economic. This affected the division of the traditional and market economy, gender roles, the conceptualizations of social relationships, including the conceptualization of animals and other non-human persons, and contributed to the construction of Innu practices of place as irrelevant, and the Innu as less than legitimate knowers of the territory under co-management, a territory where the Innu people have lived for hundreds of years.

All the conceptualizations of the territory within the forest plan, with the only exception of a mention about Innu knowledge (“everything has to do with everything”), were based on western ways of thinking. All the representations followed Western-style cartography, and were limited to bureaucratic conceptualizations of Forest Districts. The use of models derived from the western sciences. Thus, Innu were required to build capacity to participate in the process of forest co-management that was based on a colonial conceptualization of the territory. The exclusive use of English during the co-management process further marginalized practices of place that contributed to the conformation of Nitassinan.

The following chapter analyses two examples of the working of the co-management process. These examples do not only further demonstrate how the Labrador practices of place had pre-eminence over Nitassinan practices of place throughout the co-management process, but also how, considering that the process of co-management itself was conceived differently by the Innu Nation and the Provincial Government, the conceptions of the Provincial Government had pre-eminence over those of the Innu Nation.

## Chapter 4. Tents and hemlock loopers

### Introduction

As shown in previous chapters, Nitassinan and Labrador are different places. In the process of co-management discussed in this dissertation, the different practices and conceptualizations that underline these places are not fully acknowledged, nor are acknowledged the differential capacity of the parties to make their respective places relevant to the other. To the contrary, the colonial construction of Labrador (and the ontological assumptions on which this construction is based) continues to have pre-eminence over Nitassinan.

But not only are the places different; the process of co-management itself is conceived differently by the Innu Nation and the Provincial Government. In this chapter, I analyse two examples that show how the different practices of place are intertwined in these disjunctive expectations. The first example revolves around western ideas of property and accountability and how these apply to the forest co-management process in a colonial context. This example illustrates the perceived lack of accountability that one of the parties –the provincial government –claims about the other– the Innu Nation. I analyse how these perceptions of lack of accountability are embedded in an Innu tent, an object that often represents the Innu relation to the land and even Innu identity.

The second example is about conflicting visions regarding the treatment of a hemlock looper (*Lambdina fuscicornis*) infestation in the Labrador forest and shows how the Innu Nation's and the Provincial Government's practices of place imply different ideas

regarding respect to non-human persons, relationships with animals and human control of the land.

## **The tent**

The story I present here provides me with a launch pad to discuss two different but related aspects of the notion of accountability as assumed by non-aboriginal people in reference to aboriginal peoples and institutions. One aspect reveals that expectations of accountability directed towards aboriginal peoples and institutions are based on ethnocentric ideas about what accountability is. The other aspect reveals how these expectations take for granted and perpetuate current colonial relationships.

The first time I heard about the tent in this story was during one of the first FMC meetings I attended. In the context of a discussion about fund allocations, one of the provincial officials started to ask the only Innu representative present at the meeting about this tent. Eventually, slightly irritated, the Innu official answered, “I don’t know... I have been through peoples’ basements looking for that tent.” This conversation about a tent got my attention, even more when I looked around the room. The meeting was taking place in the board-room of an Innu Nation’s office in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In one end of the room, over a small table, there was a small, scale model of an Innu tent. This model was the cause of some curiosity during a break later in the day, giving the Innu Nation representative the opportunity to proudly explain the different components of the tent. In the same room, a painting made by an Innu artist over caribou skin depicted an Innu tent

sitting next to a lake. It seemed to me that tents were represented everywhere that day: in the conversation, in the painting on the wall, in the small tent model.

The tent under discussion, I learned later, was a big communal canvas tent made specially to have community consultations “in the land.” The FMC had paid for it. It has been used at least once, and then it was stored in the Innu Nation’s building in Sheshatshiu. After a while, the tent disappeared from there, but not from the conversations or the memories of FMC members.

Tents are important to the Innu people, as dwellings but also as means to represent Innu bonds with life in *nutshimit* and as an index of Innu identity. Tents were erected as Innu dwellings until the Innu were forced to live in permanent settings and houses were built. Still today, Innu people continue to utilize tents when traveling through or camping in *nutshimit*, sometimes for weeks or months at the time. Tents are set on ‘remote’ sites, accessed by plane or skidoo and also around roads (i.e. the Trans-Labrador highway and the road 520 that connects Sheshatshiu and North West River with Goose Bay). In those cases, tents are often placed there for the entire season, usually around the same location every year, while people inhabit them intermittently or for months at a time. In some cases, after a while, a tent is replaced by a tent frame or a cabin, around which other tents could be erected if necessary. People also stand tents in their backyards in Sheshatshiu. These tents are sometimes used to cook following traditional methods or recipes that cannot be easily replicated in a modern kitchen. Tents are (or were) also important during

rituals and for healing ceremonies, such as the *kushpatshikan*<sup>101</sup> (shaking tent) and the *matutishan*<sup>102</sup> (steam tent). The importance of the ceremonial and curative tent is recognized in the current negotiation process. The Labrador Innu Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle gives Innu access rights to *kushapatshikan* and *matutishan* structures in the Labrador Innu settlement area outside the Innu Land. Tents are also important in a number of community activities, such as community consultation sessions, public information sessions, and for public health awareness sessions. For instance, an information session encouraging cervical cancer screening was hosted by Elizabeth Penashue in her tent. Tents are also erected for important community events. After Giant finished his walk from Sheshatshiu to Natuashish in 2009, he returned to Sheshatshiu in a small plane that landed on Melville Lake, where most of the community was waiting for him. Big communal tents were placed over the frozen Melville Lake, just in front of the town in anticipation of his arrival. Tents are also symbolically used at funerals.

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<sup>101</sup> The *kushapatshikan* (shaking tent) ceremony was one of the most important annual rituals for the Innu (Armitage 1992). It was officiated by a *kakushapatak* (a shaman) that used the tent to gain access to the secret, spiritual world. The shaking tent access was restricted to shamans. The shaking tent allowed for the direct communication with animal masters, including the caribou master and other non-human persons, such as *Mishtapeu* and cannibal spirits. The shaking tent also allowed for communication with relatives that were in distant parts of Nitassinan. In addition, the shaking tent ceremony was an amusement. The shaking tent was a small, conic-shaped tent, usually set up inside another tent. Depending on the spiritual power of the shaman the shaking tent used four, six or eight poles, and was covered with caribou hide (Armitage 1992). The last *kushpatshikan* (shaking tent ceremony) in Nitassinan happened in Ushkan-shipiss (near Upper Brook, Labrador) in November 1969 (Armitage 2008).

<sup>102</sup> *Matutishanshuap* (steam tent) was and still is used for curative purposes. In contrast with the *kushapatshikan* tent, which only could be used by the shaman, access to a *Matutishanshuap* was less restricted. When used by a shaman, however, its purpose was to communicate with the spiritual world. Innu people use steam tents when they are tired or sick. In the past, its use was restricted to male hunters, but now everyone has access to it (Armitage 1992). Turner (1979), who visited the area in the 1880's, describes steam tents in detail, noting that signs of these tents were common on the Labrador-Quebec Peninsula. *Matutishanshuap* are also an important part of Innu healing programs. A *matutishanshuap* is currently erected beside the Charles J. Andrew Young Treatment Centre in Sheshathiu.

Tents symbolize Innu identity. Innu tents are on display at the Labrador Interpretation Centre in North West River as traditional Innu dwellings. Similarly, in a mural on the wall at the Friendship Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the Innu, the Inuit, and the Metis/Settlers population of Labrador are represented by a canvas tent, an igloo, and a cabin respectively. Innu people are very conscious of this link between tents and representations of being Innu. Innu tents, particularly the tents that are placed in visible spots nearby routes frequented by non-Innu people, represent a particular Innu use of the territory, affirming Innu rights over it, and making the affirmation of rights visible (Tytelman and Castro 2010). In a sense, these displays of Innu tents help to make Nitassinan visible: tents show the Innu presence in the territory and the existence of the territory.

The recurring mentioning of the lost tent was intriguing. I heard about this tent numerous times during my fieldwork. The tent was mentioned at FMC meetings, during interviews, and in informal chats with FMC members. It was clear to me that the tent was not just a tent but there was something else about it. After reviewing my notes and interviews, I realized that the issue of the tent was never brought up by the Innu. Someone from the provincial government or the FMC facilitator always mentioned the tent first. The reaction of the Innu people varied between a defensive position to one of indifference and weariness. It seemed evident that the discussion about the tent had taken place before I started attending FMC meetings and that it was a recurrent issue.

The dominant topic that centred on the tent was the perceived lack of accountability of the Innu Nation by the Euro-Canadian members of the FMC. In fact, the loss of the tent

was a metonymic example of this. In one of my interviews, a non-Innu representative of the FMC directly stated: “Accountability is an issue... look at the tent.” References to the tent worked as a shortcut to express the provincial government’s lack of confidence in the Innu Nation. For example, during an FMC meeting, when an Innu representative stated that a document would be ready for the next meeting, a Non-Innu provincial representative commented, sarcastically, “Yes, yes, like the tent.” Embedded in this perceived lack of accountability, the tent was also used to exemplify provincial representatives’ disappointment with the Innu Nation. For example, a non-Innu member of the FMC expressed that efforts to be “culturally sensitive” were received by the Innu with indifference, as the loss of the tent demonstrated that:

*We tried to be culturally sensitive, tried to understand them. They asked for the tent to have meetings outside. We spent the money on the tent. Now nobody knows where the tent is. There is no money; there is no tent. What are we suppose to do the next time they ask for something?*

It is interesting that it is a tent that represents the supposed lack of accountability of the Innu Nation.

The FMC non-Innu representatives’ request for accountability for the lost tent, and metonymically, accountability in general, respond to particular conceptions of accountability. From a western point of view (which is the one sustained by the non-Innu members of the FMC), accountability is a comprehensive and multifaceted concept. Generally, it is presented as a function of the relation between public and government, associated with expectations of account-giving that is displayed at different levels.

Accountability in this sense is related to Foucault's notion of governmentality (Foucault 1991). Accountability encompasses different ways of "domesticating power" (Schedler 1999). At the political level, accountability has two basic connotations: answerability and enforceability. Answerability relates to the duty of public officials to explicitly report and explain their activities and decisions, while enforceability relates to the imposition of sanctions to those that have abdicated their responsibilities (Schedler 1999). Political accountability includes restrictive notions of accountability that focus on financial aspects because even restricted ideas of accountability are related to wider issues of political accountability. These notions of restrictive accountability are presented as a mode to pursue economic efficiency and good practices (Strathern 2000: 2), concepts that are defined according to western terms and western notions of property, which take for granted that parts of the landscape can be conceptualized as resources and actually be owned (Baker 2010). Accountability, thus, becomes embedded in and limited to financial accounting practices, which ethnocentrically links notions of answerability and enforcement with the use of money and resources.<sup>103</sup>

In Canada, as in other settler nations, practices of accountability have been part of the colonial apparatus throughout history (Neu 2000, Neu and Graham 2004, 2006, Buhr 2011). There is extensive literature that focuses on these issues, mostly, but not only, in relation to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA, where somewhat comparable

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<sup>103</sup> This, however, does not mean that Innu people do not want accountability from Innu politicians and leaders. Issues of accountability, particularly around the use of communal funds, are commonly expressed by protest movements that often become violent toward property. Band Council and Innu Nation offices are periodically assaulted. Disturbances related to protest are usually reflected in the local and the provincial media.

processes of colonization from European powers followed by the conformation of national states took place. In the Australian context, Gibbon (1988) argues that accounting practices are a continuation of the dispossession process of aboriginal people, through the displacement of social practices and the imposition of economic imperatives. Moreover, the author points out that the meaning of western-style accountability terms is in opposition to the understanding that hunter and gatherer societies have of those terms. Likewise, Chew and Greer (1997) point out that the imposition of western forms of accountability on the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people creates conflicts among aboriginal organizations that need to be, at the same time, accountable to the government and towards their higher authority, the “Dreaming Law.” These authors argue that the imposition of accountability systems that do not take into consideration aboriginal culture contributes to the alienation, disempowerment, and marginalization of Australian aboriginal people. Similarly, Greer and Patel (2000) demonstrate that there is a contrast between the values embedded in Western systems of account and accountability and the core values of Australian aboriginal cultures. These authors show that important components of aboriginal culture, such as sharing, relatedness, and kinship obligations conflict with the western capitalist focus on principles of objectivity, productivity, efficiency, reason, and logic. Sullivan (2009) demonstrates how the idea of accountability is a cultural external phenomenon imposed on aboriginal Australians, representing the world in terms that the community cannot recognize. Likewise, in relation to the Salomon Islands, Hauriasi and Davey (2009) analyze how imported accounting practices and their underlying values interact with local traditions. The authors find that the assumptions and practices of the western accounting systems (including the separateness of economic and

social activities, the maximization of profits and wealth as maximum objectives of economic activity, the ideas of competition and effectiveness as part of the economic activities, and time based account controls) are in conflict with the traditional Salomon Islands values. Working in a different context, Holmes and colleagues (Holmes et al 2005) show how, during the 18th Century, Franciscan missions along the San Antonio River in La Nueva España (present day Texas) used accounting procedures as a tool to inculcate Western values in the aboriginal population.

The colonial context in which requests for accountability take place, affect the notions of answerability and enforcement, in other words, who must answer to whom about what and who has enforcement capacity. Specifically, in this context, aboriginal governments are expected to be accountable towards non-aboriginal governments, which also happen to have enforcement capacity. In this context, the exigencies of accountability are not just neutral, technical issues, but the current expression of power inequalities. These power inequalities undermine the attempts to develop and implement truly self-governing processes among First Nations. In fact,

*...the nature of the accountability relationship that developed between Canada's First Nations' bands and the Canadian federal government from the devolution of program delivery is hierarchical and dominating. This contradicts the notions of First Nations' self-determination and self-government that both parties claim to be promoting. (Baker 2010)*

The hierarchical and dominant character of accountability between the federal government and First Nation governments replicates past and current colonial

domination. The exigency of accountability is accompanied by an understanding of such accountability according to results determined by the federal government's own performance indicators (Shepherd 2007). Felt and Natcher (2008) argue that the context of aboriginal people's financial dependence on federal or provincial governments "all too often redirects accountability away from Aboriginal governments and their citizens to Aboriginal governments and the agencies they are financially beholden to" (2008: 34). Thus, western-style notions of accountability impose hierarchal requirements of accountability on aboriginal organizations, where they become accountable to the federal and/or provincial governments in terms that are defined unilaterally and in an ethnocentric way by these governments. At the same time, the federal government's restrictive definition of accountability limits the visualization of its own responsibilities, even "with [the] Federal Government's control over decision-making and funding levels, First Nations communities have been relegated to the poorest in Canada" (Assembly of First Nations 2011: 2).

Among the Innu, Henriksen clearly expresses how the requests for accountability are rooted in colonial, uneven practices:

*Here is in a flash what happens every day: people or institutions from the dominant society standing outside looking in at the Innu society, pursuing their own objectives, and evaluating and judging the Innu applying their own standards. In effect, the Innu are held accountable to these outsiders, but not vice-versa. The relationship is clearly asymmetrical. The Innu feel the gaze of the dominant society every day. This gaze carries very different meanings than those derived from an*

*Innu worldview, as it is typically the Innu who, unilaterally and asymmetrically, are made accountable to the Whites. Since White people do not consider themselves accountable to the Innu, their gaze becomes a demonstration of power and control.*  
(Henriksen 2009: 240)

This implies a displacement of other possible types of accountability, including the Nation-State being accountable to aboriginal people; the accountability of aboriginal governments to aboriginal people; and other types of accountability that have more cultural value for aboriginal people, who live in places that include responsibilities and accountability, not only between human groups but also to non-human-persons and to the land (Innes 1997).

In the case of the Forest Management Committee, accountability is demanded and understood in terms of criteria set by the provincial government. When non-Innu members of the FMC referred to the Innu Nation's lack of accountability, they added to a recurrent issue in the relations between the Innu Nation, the federal and the provincial government (Alcantara 2007, Blackhouse and McRae 2002). They are also reproduced a perception of deficient accountability among First Nations that is embedded in Euro-Canadian society. Policy briefs from the Institute of Governance, for example, more than once link the perceived First Nations' weak aboriginal governance to ineffective institutions of accountability (Graham 2000, Schacter 2000). Euro-Canadian politicians, the public and press tend to repeat these conceptions when dealing with crisis situations related to aboriginal people. These perceptions have helped to create and pass

legislation,<sup>104</sup> although less than 5% of First Nations have accountability problems (Assembly of First Nations 2011).

While the tent is used metonymically to exemplify the Innu's lack of accountability, or, to be more precise, the lack of accountability as expected by the government, it is important to remember that the Innu people respond to another accountability system, which is based on Innu relationships and obligations among themselves and also in reference to other than human persons. Paramount to this is the Innu expectation to be generous, thus, to share. Sharing tents, stoves and other camping goods is common and expected among the Innu. When my family and I camped for over three weeks in *Kapanien Nipi* (Gabriel Lake) in the spring of 2008, we used a loaned tent and stove. When we returned to town, both things were left at the camp and used there until the end of that camping season, though neither the family that owned the tent and the stove, nor we were camping in this location. When later we got our own tent, we lent it to other families. Innu sharing of tents and other camping goods expresses a fundamental characteristic of the Innu culture: the importance of sharing. As discussed in chapter 1, sharing is a fundamental part of Innu social relationships which, as pointed out before, extends beyond the humans. Immediacy is a recurrent characteristic of the Innu pattern of consumption of most goods and foods that are shared. This has caused surprise and consternation for western observers who since early contact, observed how periods of abundance were inevitably

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<sup>104</sup> At the parliamentary level, a number of Bills have been proposed in relation to this issue. In 2011, Bill C-575 of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act was introduced by a private member, Conservative MP Kelly Brock. Later, the government introduced Bill C-27 of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act built upon Bill C-575. Both bills state that their purpose is to enhance the accountability and transparency of First Nations by requiring that band chiefs' and councils' salaries become public.

followed by periods of scarcity as a result of inconsistent access to resources (LeJeune 2004 [1633], Strong 1994). Thus, sharing, and sharing fast, is expected among the Innu.

Some behaviours related to Innu patterns of consumption can be perceived, from the western point of view, as a mishandling of resources. Henriksen (1973), for example, observed a relaxed attitude towards material possessions among the Innu, noticing no attempt to care for equipment to prolong its use-life (1973: 35), as well as children mishandling goods without parents chastising them (1973: 26-27). The author relates this to the sharing ethic of the Innu, which makes it impractical to expend much time or effort in the handling of items, as “a Naskapi must always be prepared to lend or give away things that he himself is not using at the moment” and in consequence “it is of little use for the owner to take extra care of his equipment since the frequent borrowers may damage it, or even lose it completely” (Henriksen 1973: 35). However, he also notes that the Innu reuse objects according to necessity, finding alternative uses for goods when required. For example, to compensate for lost or damaged objects: blankets can lose corners to replace lost mittens, and rubber boots can become reparation parts for a rifle (Henriksen 1973: 35). This is consistent with the Innu perception of the value of items that, as Samson (2003) points out, is determined by function. Then, there is no a inherent value in an object that can be separated from the function that such an object has in a particular set of circumstances. Property has no inherent value; value is based on function. These patterns of consumption have their own type of accountability that is coherent with Innu values, and that generates its own set of obligations. Innu, for example, are accountable towards animal masters (Henriksen 2009), and thus have an

obligation to share. If this expectation and moral obligation to share is not met, people risk not only being considered stingy and selfish, a social offence, but also endangering their relationship with animal masters, which could result in being castigated by them, for example, by not being able to hunt. The expectation of generosity and the forms of accountability derived from it, thus, are inscribed in Innu social relationships.

As was mentioned earlier, the Innu inhabit a universe where social relationships extend beyond humans and where different timescapes intercept each other. The imposition of an ethnocentric form of accountability does not leave space for the type of accountability emanating from Nitassinan. This would be an accountability that considers the centrality of sharing and how this impacts patterns of consumption and the use of things such as a tent.

In this sense, maybe it is possible to consider this perceived lack of accountability as a form of resistance. Stevenson (2004) suggests that in a co-management context, aboriginal resistance is often a response to the imposition of the state conceptions and practices on them. This resistance can be displayed in direct or indirect ways. Direct ways include aboriginal people's refusal to accommodate the terms proposed by the state (Natcher and Davis 2003, Stevenson 2004). Indirect ways of resistance are subtle, such as not attending meetings or non-engagement during meetings. It can be suggested that this could be the case here, as the Innu are resistant to adapting to western conventions. In reference to forms of resistance among Guatemalan Mayan, particularly (but not only) in terms of the use of the Mayan language, Erich Fox Tree argues that those considered to be true activists are those who continue to practice everyday activities considered to be

Mayan (such as speaking the language, weaving clothes and making tools and foods), as Mayans “[have] always done” (Tree 2010:100). In this sense, the author states, “their potent resistance is nothing more than their everyday forms of existence” (Idem). Tree is, of course, referring here to Scott’s “everyday forms of resistance” (J. Scott 1985). Innu officials’ resistance to adapt western style forms of accountability – in this particular example, the accountability regarding an element linked to Innu identity (a tent)– by continuing to practice the type of accountability that responds to their own values, could be understood as a form of resistance by means of existence.

### **The hemlock Looper Infestation**

The second example I want to explore is the management of a hemlock looper infestation detected in 2006/07 in the area that was under co-management. The hemlock looper is considered a severe defoliator in Canada. Infestation can occur from the Atlantic coast west to Alberta (a subspecies can also be found in British Columbia). In eastern Canada, the main hosts of these insects are balsam firs. When infected, trees turn a reddish colour as needles damaged by feeding larvae dry out, turn red, and drop in the fall (Natural Resources Canada 2010).

Damage caused by hemlock looper infestation was first detected by the Innu. The Innu Nation Environment Office communicated this finding to the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Natural Resources, and added the hemlock looper issue to the agenda of the following FMC meeting, where it was discussed. This was followed by a

series of exploratory trips to infection sites to observe the damaged area. Some of these trips were conducted in helicopter and included Innu Elders. Also, scientific research (partly funded by the FMC) was initiated to determine the type of infestation present, as well as its characteristics and life cycle.

By 2008, according to the Department of Natural Resources, the affected area forecasted in central Labrador was 26,157 ha. While all the parties understood that this was a problem, there was no consensus regarding the management of the infestation. Following its usual procedures, including public consultation with stakeholders (Innu and others), the provincial Department of Natural Resources planned to control the hemlock looper outbreak by spraying the area with the biological insecticide *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (*B.t.k.*). The Innu Nation, for its part, wanted to see the evolution of the infestation before proceeding to spray. The position of the Innu Nation was reached after a process of community consultation that included trips to the sites, information sessions, public meetings and meetings with elders, who were particularly vocal in their opposition to the government proposed solution.

The spray issue was discussed in FMC meetings until March 2008, but no consensus was reached. Nevertheless, the provincial government proceeded with spraying, without properly informing the FMC, which was, in fact, bypassed. In lieu of communication with the members of the FMC, in the spring of 2008, the Labrador Regional Planner sent a letter to the Innu Nation Grand Chief giving notice of the imminent spraying. The Innu Nation Deputy Grand Chief answered the letter explaining the Innu Nation opposition to this action. Nevertheless, treatment took place during the summer, when 6,324 ha in

District 19 were sprayed (bad weather during the summer limited the scope of the spray program, the proposed treatment area had started at 7,448 ha).

The management of the hemlock looper illustrates different expectations regarding the role of the Forest Management Committee (FMC). For the Innu Nation's Environmental Office, the FMC was a space to discuss and to resolve this type of issue affecting the area under co-management. The infestation was brought to the attention of the FMC by the Innu Nation and discussed at the FMC level. During FMC meetings in 2007 and 2008, the issue of the hemlock looper infestation was always present. Funding for research was allocated from the FMC funds on regular bases until 2010. For the Innu Nation, it was a surprise when the imminent start of the spraying program was communicated by letter to the Innu Nation Grand Chief and not further discussed at the FMC level. In an interview, an Innu Nation official expresses their surprise at these developments: "It was a shock", the official said, adding,

*You know we were discussing this at the [FMC] meetings. We asked the elders, but then when the elders said no, they [the province] do not want to discuss anymore, they sent the letter ....they completely ignore us... so what is the FMC for if not to discuss what is happening on the forest?*

From the province's perspective, however, this was an issue under its exclusive jurisdiction, not subject to co-management. One of the provincial representatives on the FMC said during an interview that "this issue was never a FMC issue." This was the official provincial position, clearly described in a news release (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008). In it, the then Minister of Natural Resources and

Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifood Agency, Kathy Dunderdale, is quoted referring to the seriousness of the infestation in the forest district 19 where “hemlock looper is forecast to infest over 25,000 hectares of forest, in this district, impacting almost two million cubic metres of wood” and informing that “we are focusing our spray program this year on approximately 7,500 hectares of forest that is forecast to receive the heaviest levels of infestation” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008). The news release then describes the consultation process, including information sessions in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Southern Labrador, consultations with the Innu Nation Forest Office, and a helicopter tour offered to Innu elders “to witness the damage of the forest areas” (Ibid). This was, however, seen as insufficient to the elders who participated in the process, as their opposition to the spray program was not taken into consideration. As an elder clearly said, “They allow us to speak, but they don’t listen to us.” At the same time, it was publically considered insufficient by the Innu Nation. Valerie Courtois, then the Innu Nation forester, is quoted in the local newspaper, *The Labradorian*, affirming that

*We (Innu Nation) have always said that we need to have a full consultation process, and make sure everyone understands what spraying means, such as the differences between biological versus chemical agents to control the insects. (Quoted in The Labradorian 2007)*

The Innu Nation Environmental Office also supported the elders’ position of caution in terms that were compatible with the western style science, showing a comparable example of hemlock looper outbreak in Quebec that had developed, reached its peak, and

subsided in the course of just four years without the use of spray. In fact, the sudden outbreak and subsiding of infections are well documented in the literature, and declines of hemlock looper density have been related to the presence of egg parasitoids (Carleton et al 2009, Natural Resource Canada 2010).

However, in the news release, the Minister is quoted affirming:

*I am pleased with the continuous dialogue between my officials and the Innu Nation on the issue of the causes and effects of the hemlock looper outbreak, as well as the management and science solutions available to us to respond to the outbreak.*

The Innu Nation not only considered the consultation process inadequate, but also expected to be able to participate in the decision making process as a party of the FMC. However, for the provincial government, the Innu Nation is one among other stakeholders invited to information sessions, for consultation and dialogue with the government. Besides maintaining a “continuous dialogue”, the Province did not believe itself to have any further obligation toward the Innu Nation or the Innu elders, and proceeded to spray according to their usual management practices, described in detail in the same news release, as it is shown below. The provincial government acted according to its own conceptualization of Labrador as provincial crown land. At the same time, the minister differentiated the “dialogue” with the Innu Nation from the “management and science solutions” as if the Innu were not capable of contributing to either of these. The fact that the area was under co-management was not even mentioned; the Province proceeded as it would in any other forest district, without distinction. This is not, as found in the Forest Plan title, the co-management of Forest District 19a Labrador/Nitassinan; it is, simply,

provincial management of the crown-owned Labrador forest, a forest that is clearly conceptualized in term of resources.

The different places imply different understandings of responsibilities. In the aforementioned news release, the Minister acknowledges the disagreement regarding the spray program, as well as the reason for the Provincial decision to proceed:

*The Innu Nation has expressed concern about proceeding with the spray program, however, failure to spray this year will cause irreparable harm and wipe out the five- to 10-year wood supply and this is simply not an option. This program is critical to our forest management efforts and it is proceeding in all areas of the province where the forests are at risk (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2008).*

For the Province, the forest is, above all, a resource. In Newfoundland and Labrador, forestry is under the control of the Department of Natural Resources, which also has jurisdiction over the energy, mineral, and agro-food industries. According to official data, the province's forestry industry's estimated value for 2009 was around \$250 million (Department of Natural Resources 2010 a), though it was mostly concentrated in Newfoundland. In this context, damage to resources should be avoided or limited, and it is here where the government's responsibilities reside.

The Innu opposition to immediate spraying was also based on their understanding of their responsibilities to Nitassinan. As discussed in chapter 1, Nitassinan is a social place that includes non-human-persons toward whom the Innu are linked by relations of reciprocity.

As part of that, Innu people need to show respect to animals and non-human persons. The Innu believe that they are responsible for actions that can have consequences for animals and animal masters, the spiritual beings that control the animal. Because of this, Innu limit their interference with other beings' activities. In this context, caution is required before taking actions that can affect animals and other non-human beings. In this situation, it was not clear for the Innu people that spraying would not affect the forest balance, creating further problems for its inhabitants. As an Innu elder explains,

*We don't know how this could affect the other animals, to the trees; we don't know how this could affect the caribou, the bears, the birds. What is it the rush to do this?*

In Nitassinan, there is no western-style ontological division between culture and nature that allows for forest resources to become commodities. It is the colonial process that created the Labrador forest as a resource. Both parties conceptualized their respective positions –the decision to spray or its opposition – in terms of responsibilities. However, these responsibilities are very different. Innu people feel that they are responsible for the land and their multiple relationships, and caution should be the norm. Their responsibility is to the land, the animals, and their wider social relationships, including past and future generations. The base of Innu relationships is respect in a wide sense (Armitage 1991) that includes what the Western way of thought calls environment. On the other hand, in the paradigm that sees the forest as a resource, the economic consequences of the infestation are the first priority. For the Minister, there is a certainty that failure to spray will result in the loss of a valuable wood supply. In this sense, the province will follow its protocols to ensure minimal loss of resources. In fact, the response to the infestation in

Labrador was the same that is routinely used in Newfoundland, where for the last 25 years B.t.k. has been used to control hemlock looper infestations (Department of Natural Resources 2010b). The decision to spray, and the concurrent action, is a reaffirmation of the sovereignty of the province over Labrador, and, at the same time, a reaffirmation of the encroachment of Labrador on Nitassinan.

Finally, this example shows different conceptualizations of knowledge. As it was discussed in the preceding chapter, there is in the FMC a limitation to the recognition of Innu ways of knowing. This was also clear during the hemlock looper infestation. Forest protection, quoting Minister Dunderdale once more, required a “concentrated approach” based, as noted before, in “management and scientific solutions” which sustained the Provincial decision to spray. By using this approach, the Province denied the Innu’s capacity for management and established its own scientific knowledge as the only legitimate knowledge to inform a response to the hemlock looper outbreak. Elders’ knowledge, as well as the Innu Nation Environmental Office’s support for elders’ desire to proceed with caution based on a comparable example of hemlock looper outbreak in Quebec, were disregarded.

The Innu people believe that the hemlock looper outbreak, a rare occurrence in Labrador, was linked to climate change. This is consistent with the findings of western scientists who connect climate changes with changes in insect disturbance systems (Fleming 2000, Fischlin *et al.* 2007). Climate change is a recurrent and visible topic in Labrador. Scientists from different disciplines travel to Labrador to research the issue. A conference about climate change (‘Climate Change and Renewable Resources in Labrador: looking

toward 2050') was organized in 2008, in North West River, Labrador, and many local people attended. The Innu Nation's Environment Office has been monitoring the effects of climate change on the Labrador Forest since 2007. As with other environmental issues, such as mercury in fish, climate change is perceived by the Innu as a result of conduct and decisions made elsewhere but whose consequences are suffered by them. Consequently, there is resistance to accepting solutions perceived to come from the same source as the problems. Moreover, there is some level of reservation about the quality of the western scientific knowledge on which the government bases its decisions. There is the perception that scientists' and other experts' knowledge is based, in the best case scenarios, on short periods of observation on the land the Innu have lived on and have known for generations. As P. Penashue notes:

*We've participated in many environmental assessments, and we've often been puzzled by the certainty of some of the experts that governments and companies bring up from the south to tell us about our land and the animals that we have studied for thousands of years. It was frustrating to listen to some consultant who may have spent a summer in our territory, or more likely had read a few reports about it, think he understood our land better than our tshishnnuat (elders) who had spent their entire lives here (Penashue 2001, quoted in Sable et al. 2007).*

One of the elders, Simon Michel, expressed this clearly:

*For us, it is always a good policy to leave alone what we do not understand. Not only us humans depend on the forests, but all life depends on them. We let things be, and let the forests grow naturally. This is our approach. All your science will not*

*save you if you continue to take away what is there and what keeps us here. I know that everything depends on everything... this is the best science I can give you.*

(quoted in Innes and Moores 2003)

## **Conclusions**

The two examples presented in this chapter show how the different practices of place are intertwined in the co-management process. In the first example, the tent represents the issue of accountability on different scales. First, there is a request for accountability for the tent itself, a tent that allowed the government representatives to participate in community meetings that they perceived as “culturally sensitive.” Paradoxically, while the claim of “cultural sensitivity” was used to lament the loss of the tent, there was no cultural sensitivity in requiring a use for the tent adjusted to the ethnocentric ideas of property and accountability. The request of accountability for the tent does not take into consideration the Innu’s sharing ethic, patterns of consumption or ideas of value.

Secondly, there is the general request for the accountability of the Innu Nation, in a national context where there exists a perception of the lack of accountability of First Nations. The demand for accountability, represented by the tent, is based on conceptions regarding an aboriginal/state relationship that takes for granted the colonial situation, and in particular western ideas about property. Accountability in these terms is an ethnocentric concept. This presumes the universality of accountability, without taking into consideration the intercultural relationships that the co-management regime is supposed to be empowering. The request for accountability reproduces mechanisms of

state control that take for granted an unbalanced power situation in a context of colonialism. At the same time, these conceptions of accountability assume that the western concept of property is the same as the Innu's.

The management of the hemlock looper infestation shows how the Provincial government conceptualizes the forest in terms of resources, while the Innu Nation conceptualizes it in terms of relationships. The consequent conceptualizations of responsibility also differ. For the Provincial Government, responsibility is based on the protection of the wood supply, while for the Innu Nation, it is based on respect towards animals and other non-human-persons that dwell in Nitassinan.

The management and the resolution of the hemlock looper infestation in Labrador also crystallized the different understandings and expectations that the two parties had in relation to the FMC. While the Innu Nation expected it to be an institution in which to make decisions about the forest, the province ignored the FMC as a decision-making space. The Province's unilateral decision to spray shows that the territory continues to be conceptualized as Labrador, a colonial place conformed by crown's land over which the provincial government continues to have exclusive decision making power.

## Chapter 5: The Innu Nation in the Co-management process

### Introduction

“Have you read *Hunters and Bureaucrats*?”

That was the first question I was asked after presenting my research project to the Innu Nation Environmental Office employees and associates in Sheshatshiu. *Hunters and Bureaucrats*, the book by Paul Nadasdy, critically examines co-management in the Yukon. I had, indeed, read Paul Nadasdy’s book, as obviously had my interlocutor. A discussion about the limitations of co-management, including the co-management of Forest District 19a, the process that would be the focus of my research and the literature of co-management followed. My interlocutor was very critical of the co-management process, a position that was, however, not necessarily shared by other Innu Nation officials and employees. Most of them were, nevertheless, aware of the existence of critical literature and of the limitations of co-management situations.

The discussion in the previous chapters demonstrates that the forest co-management process between the Innu Nation and the provincial government continues to be dominated by western ontology and organizations. This is a fact commonly recognized in the literature on co-management (Berkes 2009, Stevenson 2006, Nadasdy 2003, 2005, Ross et al 2011), literature that, as I just mentioned, some Innu Nation employees and officials were well aware of. Thus, the Innu Nation, as other aboriginal governments, chose to participate in these types of agreements with the government, even when at least some of its members knew about its limitations. Taking this into consideration, in this

chapter I aim to answer why the Innu not only decided to participate in this project, but actually pushed for its development. I particularly focus on the ways in which the co-management process might have allowed for Nitassinan's practices of place.

### **Innu rights and Nitassinan**

With all its limitations, the co-management process implied recognition of Innu rights over their territory, as well as recognition of the existence of such territory. In the preceding chapters I discussed the structural restrictions of the forest co-management process based on Euro-Canadian ontological and ideological assumptions and behaviours forced upon the Innu. Notwithstanding these restrictions—of which the Innu Nation, itself, was well aware, as the discussion about Nadasdy's book demonstrated— the co-management process involved a validation of Innu claims. By agreeing to take part in this process, vis-a-vis the Innu Nation, the provincial government was recognizing the existence of such claims over the territory.

The co-management process was instigated by the Innu people's desire to have more control over Nitassinan, and over those components of their territory conceptualized as natural resources by Euro-Canadians, in this particular case, over the forest. The forest co-management process was unleashed by the Innu people's desire to stop forest exploitation in Nitassinan, and to stop decisions being made regarding Nitassinan without their participation. A series of protests culminated in what was described to me only by Innu people as the "white bucket incident," in which Innu activists built a barricade closing access to logging roads -limiting logging activities- while demanding Innu

participation in decisions made about the forest. While I am not really sure about the role of the white bucket (apparently a white bucket was used for seating at the blockade), Innu protestors were able to assert their rights to be consulted: as an Innu official commented, “They couldn’t ignore us anymore”

This incident was not an isolated act, but followed blockades and other forms of protest that happened earlier in the 90s which capped harvesting at 1992 levels (around 50000 m<sup>3</sup>/year), and limited the development of new logging roads and the issuing of new operating permits (Innes and Moores 2003). Considering the Innu capacity to organize protests and the provincial interest in the forest and other development projects in Labrador, it was in the best interest of the provincial government to avoid escalating the conflict, which at that point included threats of violence. At the same time, in a national context of growing recognition of aboriginal rights and entitlement, excluding First Nations in decisions regarding their territories and resources (such as forest) become unacceptable (Wyatt 2008). This is particularly clear in the case of the Innu Nation that was (and still is) in land claim negotiations with the federal government. Incidentally, provincial representatives never referred to protests, blockades or other particular incidents nor to development projects associated with the origin of the co-management process, but instead emphasized the provincial obligation to consult with the Innu because of the ongoing land claim. When the Interim Forest Agreement was signed, the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador specifically affirmed in its news release that “the province is under the obligation to consult with the Innu Nation on issues affecting land or resources subject to land claims” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2001).

In both the Innu Nation and the provincial government narratives, however, the co-management process is based on the recognition of Innu rights to have a say in decisions affecting their territory and on the obligation of the provincial government to consult them.

Through the co-management process, the Innu Nation was not only able to reaffirm the province's obligation to consult with it, but also had benefitted from the forest co-management dynamic that presented it as an equal party to the province. During the planning phase of the co-management process, as during the FMC phase, the Innu Nation was in a position of equality, at least in reference to its number of representatives, to the government. While, as discussed in the previous chapters, this did not necessarily result in recognition of Innu ontology, values or conceptualizations of place, it nevertheless implicated recognition of the Innu claims, claims that the Innu Nation articulated in terms of rights. It also implicated a partial recognition of the existence of Nitassinan. This process also had a performative character, representing the provincial government and the Innu Nation –parties with asymmetric access to power-- as equal. The mise-en-scene of this equality, although more staged than real, set the discussion and became a precedent that would be difficult for the provincial government to ignore in the future.

### **Towards Innu autonomy**

The co-management process was part of a wider Innu Nation strategy towards recognition of their aboriginal rights, including the rights related to their territory. The final goal of this strategy was, and still is, to assure Innu autonomy through self-government and

control of Nitassinan. This strategy takes multiple forms, including a web of negotiations with different levels of government on such matters as land claim negotiations but also other negotiations toward greater autonomy in specific areas (i.e. in the areas of education and child welfare), negotiations with development companies toward compensation for the exploitation of “natural resources” in Nitassinan (for example, IBAs, Impacts and Benefit Agreements), commercial agreements and negotiations with potential business partners, and encounters and collaborations with government agencies, universities and other aboriginal governments. When negotiations have been unavailable or insufficient, the Innu have taken direct action measures, from protest hunts and road blockades to national and international demonstrations. Through these measures, the Innu people have demonstrated their capacity to organize themselves and to create far-reaching alliances, questioning the colonial authority of the state over Nitassinan.

Thus, Innu participation in the forest co-management process was consistent with the goal toward self-government and control of their own territory, and was part of the Innu strategy that included a web of negotiations and protests. From its conception, this co-management process was perceived by the Innu as a step towards greater autonomy, therefore toward greater control over Nitassinan, and greater opportunities to continue their practices of place. When the Interim Forest Agreement (IFA), the base agreement of the co-management process was signed by Innu Nation and provincial authorities, Peter Penashue, then president of the Innu Nation, stated:

*This agreement will help to develop Innu capacity not only within the forest industry, but in the management of land and resources. This is an important part of*

*realizing our aspirations for self-government.* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2001)

From the beginning, then, the co-management process was a way for the Innu to gain some of the tools required for self-government, thus, to regain control over Nitassinan. This was linked with a preoccupation for the future of the Innu people and the continuity of their access to and responsibilities toward Nitassinan.

Innu officials believed that this co-management process offered advantages specifically related to Innu values and perceptions about their territory. As both parties (the Innu Nation and the provincial government) believed there were opportunities for the development of the Labrador forest, the Innu considered that having these co-management agreements and institutions in place would allow for a greater Innu influence on this potential development, making such development more coherent with their ideas and values. For example, during the aforementioned IFA signing ceremony, Peter Penashue referred to Innu ideas of accountability towards Nitassinan and their stewardship role (as discussed in detail in the preceding chapter), stating, “We believe that we have responsibility for good stewardship of the land” (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2001), adding, in reference to the development of the forest,

*Innu have never participated in the benefits a sustainable forest industry can provide. This agreement will ensure that Innu goals and values will help define the way that the forest industry develops in Labrador. We believe that there is an opportunity to develop a truly sustainable forest industry, one that is compatible*

*with Innu values and our traditional way of life. We must also ensure that the benefits of what we do today are shared by future generations (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 2001).*

The Innu Nation's understanding of Innu people's goals and values in relation to this agreement were expressed by Richard Nuna, then in charge of the Innu Nation's Environment Office:

*The Innu have a vision of an ecosystem based forest economy which will protect the land for future generations and ensure that Innu can meet their subsistence needs while providing for a contemporary Innu economy. Innu will be involved in forestry, ecotourism, and other activities that respect and protect the land. This vision is based on respect for the needs of the forest, the needs and rights of the Innu and with their willingness to share their land with the people of Labrador (quoted in National Aboriginal Forestry Association 2002: 1).*

While the co-management process did not directly result in a process of self-government, as Innu Nation officials expected, it nevertheless facilitated the deployment and production of some of the Innu practices of place, and of specific bureaucratic mechanisms toward the goal of self-government, as discussed below.

### **Mutual knowledge**

The co-management process facilitated relationships between the Innu Nation and provincial officials, which opened new lines of communication and awareness. The co-management process contributed to create, or to extend, professional relationships

between the Innu Nation and provincial officials and employees. While these relationships were not without conflict, they allowed for further understanding and confidence among the parties and facilitated their communication. The co-management process required multiple meetings and conversations between the parties, first to negotiate agreements, later to develop a forest plan and afterwards as part of the running of the FMC, which required regular board meetings. Through this process, officials became used to talking to each other and a greater understanding among them developed. As a consequence, Innu and provincial officials found a common ground on which to discuss issues related to the forest, even when there were disagreements between them. When during an FMC meeting the discussion became tense and was not progressing, one Innu official mentioned this common ground, helping to extend and to redirect the discussion: “Oh, come on!” he said. “We are the same; we are all fans of the forest... hurray for the forest.”

This mutual knowledge also positively influenced some of the perceptions that provincial officials had of the Innu people, finding points of connection between Innu and western conceptualizations of the forest (although, as discussed in chapter 3, provincial officials tended to accommodate Innu ideas within the Western concepts they felt more comfortable with, for example, interpreting Innu ideas of interrelationships in terms of ecosystems). Building on this common understanding, provincial officials became improbable allies, deflecting ethnic prejudice against the Innu, something quite extensive toward the population of Sheshatshiu and neighbouring towns in Central Labrador. I observed a number of instances in which FMC non-Innu representatives took stances

against racist comments directed toward the Innu. One of these was during a child's birthday party to which my daughter was invited. It happened just after Innu hunters were caught hunting in an area designated off limits by the provincial government (before the hunting ban that prohibited all caribou hunting in Labrador) and thus were persecuted for illegal hunting. Among the few adults present at the party was one of the FMC provincial representatives, with whom I started a conversation that quickly centered on the negative, often openly racist comments toward the Innu found on the CBC News website that reported the hunting. The provincial official offered the following comments:

*It is complicated, the people here [in Goose Bay], they don't understand, they see... you know... "drunk Indians", "dirty Indians abusing the system", they say "why they hunt and I can't" but they do not understand, I have had all these discussions here, about their rights, people do not understand what it is for them (the Innu), their life, I know them now.*

By improving the understanding and mutual confidence between Innu Nation and provincial officials, the co-management process also allowed for new channels of communication to be opened. On one occasion, I asked an Innu official for information regarding the area sprayed during the summer of 2008, at the peak of the hemlock looper infestation. He knew the area that the government had planned to spray, but was not sure how much of it was effectively done, as the summer had been marked by bad weather. While the issue of the spray remained contentious, he immediately picked up the phone and called a provincial official, who gave him the data I was looking for. The phone conversation then deviated to a brief discussion about climate and weather change and the

need to further monitor it. Once he hung up the phone, the Innu official said to me: “This never happened before the co-management, we never used to talk, now I know [name of provincial official]’s number by heart.”

The literature of the co-management process points toward the importance of social connections in these institutional contexts. Natcher et al (2005) argue that co-management processes and institutions do not manage resources but relationships. Fienup- Riordan (1999), who worked with Yup’ik communities in Alaska, argues that without building personal connections, the possibilities of collaborative work between communities and governments have a limited scope. In the case of the co-management process discussed here, the consequences of these connections can be far reaching, as can a greater understanding of the bureaucratic ways of the respective governments developed for both parties, particularly in terms of understanding each government’s limitations. For the Innu Nation, this understanding could advance its capacity to deal with the provincial government, a requirement for the protection of their territory in the current context of colonialism. At the same time, this contributed to a better knowledge and understanding of the Innu position among provincial officials, who thus could become better interpreters of Innu necessities and even potential allies inside the provincial government.

### **Resource transfer**

Innu Nation participation in the co-management process facilitated in specific ways the continuity of Innu practices of place of Nitassinan by mobilizing material and symbolic resources. The Innu Nation made a strategic use of these resources. The funds to support

the Innu Nation's participation in the co-management process, that otherwise would not have been available to the Innu Nation, were articulated with other resources and used in ways that made sense to the Innu. The Innu Nation's use of these funds was determined by its necessities and goals, which although related to the forest co-management process, transcended it. These funds allowed the Innu Nation to partially cover the work of the Environmental Office, including the payment of salaries. This office was fundamental for the working of the FMC, but it also had other functions important for the Innu Nation. The existence of this office allowed the Innu Nation to capacitate people on their own terms and also to employ western educated professionals. To have gained this authority was particularly important considering the multiple ongoing negotiations with the federal and the provincial governments, especially those related to land claims.

The FMC allocation of funding used to sustain Innu participation and capacity building allowed the Innu Nation to take control and to set its own agenda in ways that made sense to the Innu people. For instance, these funds partially sustained the Innu Forest Guardians program, and also were mobilized in specific projects important to the Innu, such as the Climate Change Monitoring program. This program was carried out in 2008, by the Innu environmental guardians (originally called forest guardians, whose salaries, at the beginning of this project, were funded by the FMC) in collaboration with western scientists from Memorial University.<sup>105</sup> It built upon training offered since 2001 by the

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<sup>105</sup> This was partially funded by a grant by Environment Canada's Northern Ecosystems Initiatives (NEI) which focused on the development of Innu indicators of climate change, and by a grant from the International Polar Year's Educational Outreach Program Grant.

Innu Nation in association with the Gorsebrook Research Institute, St. Mary's University (Nova Scotia) and Memorial University of Newfoundland.<sup>106</sup> The program set permanent plots (called IPSPs or Innu Permanent Sample Plots) to monitor weather conditions in the forest of Nitassinan. Forest guardians, Innu officials and western scientists worked on the plot sites, “enjoying being outside, instead of sitting at the office,” as one of the guardians told me after a day trip to establish a plot. The setting of these plots was reflected in the local media, including the CBC radio and its website (CBC News 2007) offering, as an Innu official notes “a rare opportunity where there is positive news about the Innu.” Officials at the Innu Nation saw this Innu lead project of monitoring their territory as a method of generating their own data, in a way that complemented other forms of Innu knowledge.<sup>107</sup> The environmental office decided the placement and the characteristics of the plots, and proceeded to implement, maintain and administer the data obtained from the plots.

As this example shows, the infrastructure sustained or partially sustained by the forest co-management –the Innu environmental office, the Forest Guardian program– allowed the Innu Nation to develop or to participate in programs that responded to its own agenda. By

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<sup>106</sup> This training was funded by grants from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

<sup>107</sup> An account of these experiences from the point of view of the western scientists, who participated in the establishment of the modules, can be found in Trant et al (2012). The experiences narrated by the authors differ substantially from the understanding the Innu people have regarding their participation in the educational modules and in the establishment of the climate change monitoring. While the Innu see these instances as strategies through which to generate their own data, and their own knowledge, in this paper the authors see the role of the Innu as assistants to the western scientists, for example, expressing that the establishment of the IPSPs and the continuation of Innu involvement “will go far in bettering **our** understanding of how the boreal forest of Labrador is responding to climate change” (2012: 229, my emphasis). In this context, some of the challenges related by the authors regarding their work with the Innu are similar to those related by the provincial officials in relation to Innu Nation participation in the FMC, for example, lack of attendance and attention to accuracy.

doing this, the Innu Nation Environmental office was also marking Nitassinan in a way that could be recognized by the western sciences,<sup>108</sup> and could be covered positively by the local media, displaying Innu presence and legitimising Innu roles in research associated with their territory. Similar to the setting up of tents discussed in the preceding chapter, the Innu's setting up of plots implied a performative affirmation of the Innu people's control over their territory, and at the same time, their collaboration in the production of Nitassinan.

Participating in the co-management process also allowed the Innu people access to nutshimit by providing them access to the cash economy. Participation in the forest co-management process expanded the Innu Nation's capacity to employ Innu people. This was important to the Innu Nation, as it contributed to the formation of human resources able to interact and negotiate with representatives of the state, as discussed previously, and to their participation in an eventual self-government structure. But in addition to building capacity, this contributed to the local economy by allowing the Innu people access to stable employment opportunities, both directly through the funding available as part of the co-management process (i.e. salaries for forest guardians) or indirectly as a consequence of having some level of environmental bureaucratic structure in place (in the form, for example, of research grants). Access to the cash economy is important to maintaining access to nutshimit, especially considering the intricacies between the

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<sup>108</sup> It also can be appropriated by the Western sciences. The papers produced by the western scientists who participated in the development of the IPSPs never failed to acknowledge the Innu Nation or to thank the Innu Nation or the Forest Guardians for their "collaboration", however, they did not recognize the Innu as full research partners (i.e. as co-authors) (Trant et al 2012).

domestic economy and the market economy among aboriginal people of the Canadian North. These economic sectors are combined to form what is often described as a mixed economy (Elias 2005, 2006, Abele 2009, Aslaksen et al. 2008) conforming a landscape over which people utilize different strategies of accessing resources and services “along a continuum with participation at varying points of the scale” (Aslaksen et al. 2008: 87).

This allows the Innu access to multiple sources of income and products, providing protection from the oscillations of the market, from the boom and bust cycles of resource extraction (Abele 2009) and from the oscillations associated with the availability of animals to hunt. Nadasdy (2003) notes that as a direct result of land claims and other negotiation processes, such as the co-management process analysed here, the money in circulation in aboriginal communities has grown, adding to the local mixed economies.

Access to employment was important in Natuashish and Sheshatshiu, small communities with limited opportunities of employment (particularly during the first years after the establishment of the FMC, when the construction of the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric project that currently employs a number of Innu workers had yet to be started). While this has its own set of problems (as, for example, it facilitates access to alcohol and drugs and contributes to the development of inequality among community members), the influx of money is usually welcome among aboriginal peoples because, as Nadasdy notes, “Nearly everyone in the community benefits” (2003: 259). Among the Innu, Maihot (1997:68-69) points out that extended families benefits when one of their members access to the cash economy. This is consistent with my observations in Sheshatshiu: money from salaries was used to buy goods that were redistributed through kinship channels, thus reinforcing

family relationships. In addition, money from salaries was often used to sustain camping trips and hunting expeditions, contributing to practices that are considered culturally relevant and fomenting practices of place. As Innu employees' benefits included a month leave for cultural practices (in other words, to spend time in nushimit), money was employed to facilitate Innu Nation employees' time in nutshimit. This money was also used to support hunting trips, either as a means to access skidoos, gas or other required equipment (such as ammunition) for the employees and their family members, even when the employees were not able or chose not to participate in said trips. Thus, Innu Nation employees' participation in the cash economy facilitated by the allocation of funds from the co-management process allowed for the re-enactment of Innu values, including generosity, and Innu participation in a network of reciprocity that included both humans and non-human persons.

Additionally, as the Innu Nation had the capacity to influence decisions made regarding the operational funds of the FMC, some of these funds were used to acquire equipment and finance activities important to the Innu, such as organizing meetings in the country (although the tent produced to that effect eventually went missing, as described in the previous chapter). Other FMC funds, such as those designated to research, were also used to sustain issues important to the Innu. For example, FMC funds were used in conjunction with other provincial government's funds for research about the hemlock looper's life cycle. Research related to the hemlock looper was understood to be important to the health of not just the forest but of the non-human persons that inhabit Nitassinan, particularly as the Innu Nation evaluated that a further understanding of it could help

avoid another occurrence of spraying over affected areas. In fact, issues related to caribou were paramount to the Innu Nation's approach to the forest co-management process, as it is further discussed in the following section.

### **Forest and caribou**

Innu participation in the co-management process impacted some of the ways in which the forest administration was planned and executed. The relationships with animals and animal masters are at the centre of Innu ontology, thus the Innu Nation put special emphasis on issues that they considered important to the wellbeing of them, particularly in relation to the caribou. The Innu relationships with caribou and the caribou-man are fundamental to sustaining their way of life, their understanding of themselves, their values and religious ideology (Loring 2006, Armitage 1992, Castro 2015). Innu Nation approaches to forest management through the co-management process was marked by a preoccupation with the decline of caribou herds.

This preoccupation can be appreciated in the Innu's approach to forest planning. As discussed earlier, while the District 19a Forest Plan does not differ substantially from other provincial plans (Wyatt et al 2011), the participative nature of its development<sup>109</sup>,

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<sup>109</sup> The planning process of the 2003 Forest Plan included numerous instances of community consultation based on two components: Innu Community Consultation and General Public Sessions (Forsyth et al 2003:7). For the first component presentations, workshops and community meetings and fieldtrips were organized, with focus on Innu concerns but open to the public. General Public Sessions with other stakeholders included Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River residents and environmental groups, a number of which participated in the process by organizing themselves under an umbrella group: The Third Signatory. Public consultation sessions were announced on the local radio, local newspaper and through an e-mail list service, and were announced and held in both English and Innu-aimun. In total, more than 30 public sessions took place, including three field trips to harvesting sites (Innu Nation 2003). The

including Innu active involvement at the planning level, resulted in a series of changes, such as the recognition of competing claims over the territory under its jurisdiction. Other changes at the planning level included the creation of culturally and ecologically protected areas, and the consequent reduction of the Annual Allowed Cut (AAC).<sup>110</sup> In effect, as a result of Innu Nation participation in the planning of the 2003 Forest Plan, ecologically and culturally protected areas, including core reserves and connecting corridors covered 3 million ha, around 40% of the 7.1 million ha of District 19. Together, the ecologically and culturally protected areas represented over 60% of the 2.1 million ha of the District 19a planning unit (Innes and Moores, 2003). For the Innu officials, the protected areas were a key component of the 2003 Forest Plan. On one hand, the existence of culturally protected areas was perceived as a clear recognition of Innu rights over the land, and a reaffirmation of Nitassinan's practices of place. As an Innu Nation official commented:

[The cultural protected areas] are there because is our right. And it is our responsibility too. The protected areas are there because of our culture, because who we are. That is our history. We were here; those are our steps on here, our steps are everywhere, as they say. When the elders say 'this is my land' or 'this is the land of my ancestors', this is recognized, we don't need to explain anyone else why this is important to them, to us. This is our culture, this is Nitassinan.

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plan was also peer-reviewed by a number of professionals from different disciplines and a workshop with specialists was organized in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 2002.

<sup>110</sup> In forestry, the allowable annual cut (AAC) is the amount of wood allowed to be cut in a particular area within a one year period, while maintaining the forest sustainable.

Not surprisingly, the distinction between culturally and ecologically protected areas does not appear to be important to the Innu people. As an Innu elder points out, “They could call the protected areas whatever way they want. For us, it is Nitassinan.”

At the same time, the protected areas were part of a network whose goal was to ensure the viability of caribou herds, an important issue for the Innu people. As Innu Nation officials noted in a public presentation (Nuna and Innes, n/d), “We did this because we understood that this herd was suffering significant declines, in large part because of habitual loss.”

Another Innu official explained to me the importance of the network in its attempts to protect the caribou and forest:

*[The network] is important; there is not the same that a patchy land, with a developed area next to a protected area. We need to create some corridors for the caribou to move on and also some continuity, some coherent landscape if we are serious about protecting the forest.*

Personnel from the Innu Nation Environment Office routinely praise the plan in their newsletters as well as in public and academic presentations. My sense regarding the forest plan was that both parties, but particularly the Innu Nation, were proud of it. When I mentioned this to a member of the Innu Nation Environment Office, this person not only confirmed to be proud, but also related it, once again, to the protection of the forest and the caribou:

*Of course I am proud of this plan. We sat down and we did it together. Have you seen the draft for the plan before we were part of this? It was a cut and clear plan!*

*It was old style. We did something new here (...) we protected the forest (...) we took caribou into account. We did a truly ecosystem-based plan. Of course, I am proud of this plan.*

This shows how Innu participation in the forest co-management process had produced changes in areas important to the Innu, protecting the forest for the wellbeing of non-human persons to which the Innu are linked by social relationships.

## **Conclusions**

Why did the Innu Nation force the development of the forest co-management process and its institutions? Throughout this chapter, I argued that while the forest co-management process mostly perpetuated Labrador practices of place, it also facilitated some important practices of place that allowed for the continuing production of Nitassinan. As discussed in the preceding chapters, for the Innu Nation the co-management process implied playing according to the rules of the provincial government. It was the provincial government that dictated the scope and terms of Innu participation. In this way, the co-management process allowed for and facilitated the continuation of practices of place that facilitated the continued production of Labrador (and the state power associated with it). However, even on constrained terms, the process of co-management also allowed the Innu a series of strategies that strengthened and visualized the practices of place that produce Nitassinan, and the Innu's rights over it. In fact, in the context of the co-management process, some of the same practices that aim to perpetuate the practices that

produced Labrador were, at least partially used by the Innu to continue practices that produce Nitassinan.

The literature shows that even when co-management processes are limited and do not carry out all their promises, participation in them allow aboriginal peoples to regain some control over land and resources that would be otherwise unavailable to them (Nadasdy 2003, Howitt 2001). For example, Nadasdy (2003) argues in the book that was discussed during my first meeting with Innu Nation officials that participatory processes, such as co-management, “do indeed provide them with real tools for protecting their lands and do give them at least some control over their own lives” (Nadasdy 2003: 2). Even modest gains are important as “from the perspective of indigenous people and local communities, for whom basic subsistence activities are either a predominant way of life or a significant part of their economic activities, the maintenance and preservation of their traditional biodiversity, related knowledge traditions and applications is essential to safeguard food security and the provision of other basic economic and cultural needs” (Langton et al. 2005: 44).

The co-management process legitimated Innu claims over Nitassinan, and, at the same time, it gave access to specific resources and tools that the Innu Nation considered important in order to reach self-government, and thus more autonomy and control over Nitassinan. It also provided resources to display practices of place that are important to the Innu and for the production of Nitassinan, such as showing responsibility and respect towards non-human persons, by, for example, protecting the caribou’s habitat. In synthesis, even when the co-management tended to reproduce and facilitate Labrador’s

practices of place, the Innu Nation was able to navigate the forest co-management process to reproduce Nitassinan.

## **Conclusions**

When I started my fieldwork, I found that most Innu people I talked to disdained the forest co-management process. People repeatedly told me, “This is Nitassinan”, the Innu territory, and thus they could do “whatever [they] want.” People also resisted talking about the forest as a separate land category, and insisted on linking it to their territory as a whole and to the social relationships that Nitassinan supports. These affirmations, which initially surprised me but that I became used to hearing, contrasted with the provincial government’s conceptualization of the co-management process as being directed towards a specific part of forest land, the Forest District 19a, localized in Labrador. This contradiction, as the short-lived intent to resolve it by situating the co-management process in Labrador/Nitassinan, steered my interest towards the places involved in the co-management process.

The principal focus of this dissertation was, then, on the practices that contribute to the production of Nitassinan and Labrador as places, and how these practices were produced, displayed and legitimized (or not) in the forest co-management process between the Innu Nation and the provincial government. I started by asking what practices of place contribute to the production of Nitassinan and Labrador, and if and how these practices changed as they interfered with each other. Once I established Nitassinan and Labrador’s practices of place, I focused on the co-management process, looking at how it allowed or facilitated the co-existence of different practices of place, or if it imposed one to the detriment of the other.

These questions were informed by a conceptualization of place that goes beyond the assumed dichotomy between nature and culture that has marked anthropology since its origins. To transcend these dichotomised views, in this dissertation place has been considered an assemblage of enduring (but changing) patterns produced by the interlinked practices of people and non-human persons. This place is not projected over or sustained by a space acting as a background, over which human persons' practices of place are displayed. Human and non-human-persons (animals, spirits, etc.) what can be described as landscape elements (rivers, mountains, etc.) and climate events (wind, rain, etc.) are agents in the production of place. At the same time, ideas and contextualization regarding places can contribute to their production. Based on this, throughout this dissertation I argued that two different, although interlinked, places – Nitassinan and Labrador– co-exist in the same space, entangled by more than 500 years of colonial encounters and still being produced within a colonial context. I contend that both of these places are produced by practices of place that include multiple agents operating in particular historical and even ontological contexts.

### **Nitassinan and Labrador**

At the center of this dissertation is the idea that Nitassinan and Labrador are different places, which, for more than five hundred years, have been produced in entanglement and sometimes in tension with each other. Even when these places have not always been mutually visible, when the practices of place that participate in the production of Labrador have disregarded, or made difficult, the practices of place that participate in the production of Nitassinan, or when the slow advance of the colonial process seemed to be

incapable of reaching some areas of the territory, these diverse practices have been generating friction, putting up limits and shaping and reshaping each other.

I dedicated the first two chapters of this dissertation to illustrating the ways these places have been produced. In chapter one, the focus was on Nitassinan, the Innu territory. I showed how Nitassinan is at the center of Innu identity, and fundamental Innu values are embedded within it. Innu people have a strong identification with Nitassinan, as it is in relation with their territory that Innu conceptualize themselves and other peoples.

According to one of the Innu fundamental atonegen, Nitassinan is the territory they as people received from Tshishe-Manitu, the Great Spirit, while other groups received other territories.

In this chapter, I also demonstrated how Nitassinan is a relational landscape, produced by superimposed webs of social relations, which include humans and a constellation of non-human persons, such as animals, animal masters, manitu (spirits or powers) and landscape features, which connect different spheres of reality. In relation to this, I showed how Innu people's conceptualization of their rights to control Nitassinan are not associated with a western conception of property rights, but to *kenauenitan* or *tipenitamun*, Innu-aimun terms that can be loosely translated, according to Armitage (1990) and Lacasse (2004), as stewardship, or taking care. Therefore, Innu claims over their territory are associated with responsibility toward the land and toward those who dwell there, which are inscribed on the Innu network of social relationships.

The relational character of Nitassinan is also made clear in reference to the forms of access to the territory which was defined by social relationships among human persons (and by extension, their relationship with non-human persons). Mailhot (1986b) has described this form of access to the territory as “structural mobility”, in which people live, travel and hunt with relatives. For the Innu, place and kinship were, and still are, entangled: people are not just traveling through territory, but through family lanes. While the sedentarization process produced changes that limited access to the territory, pre-sedentarization patterns of structural mobility are still present, as my fieldwork demonstrated, both in nutshimit and in Sheshatshiu.

Finally, in this chapter I demonstrated that Innu practices of place are related to the activities the Innu consider being at the core of their identity and in which they can practice their values. These activities include hunting and sharing meat, camping in nutshimit, or using Innu place names. Through these and other practices the Innu people re-enact their social relationships with human and non-human persons and contribute to the network of relationships that constitute Nitassinan.

Chapter 2 focused on the production of Labrador as place, showing the extension of the colonial practices of place and their multiple entanglements with Nitassinan. Just like in Nitassinan, in Labrador different influences interact in the practices of place, as religious, moral and socio-economic ideas, most of them produced from far away, have local expressions contributing to the production of Labrador. Through this process, multiple, sometimes contradictory, visions of Labrador emerged.

The first written accounts of the territory and the people who dwelt in what would become Labrador reflect the vision of the writers, based on their, more often than not, Eurocentric conceptions and on the agendas that brought them to the “new world.” Ideas of progress, nature and society are on display in these conceptions. The narratives of explorers, missionaries, traders, and later, doctors, administrators, scientists, researchers and settlers contributed to the creation of Labrador as a place. These narratives, repeating well known colonial tropes, tend to emphasize the pioneer roles of their narrators, downplaying the presence of aboriginal people and the help provided directly and indirectly by them. Thus, these conceptualizations obscured Innu and Inuit presence and their territories. Some of these ideas, such as Labrador as pristine wilderness, are still informing some approaches to Labrador, including those of environmental groups, adventurers and even provincial tourism advertising. Yet, the idea of pristine wilderness has been mixed with other -sometimes related, sometimes contradictory- conceptualizations of Labrador: a place abundant in natural resources waiting to be developed, a place for adventures and scientific inquiries, a place in need of evangelization or medical attention, and a place for military expansion. These notions usually included calls for external intervention, ultimately presented in terms of progress: to bring civilization, scientific knowledge, or economic development to the territory.

The colonial practices of place challenged or limited Innu people’s access to their territory. While Nitassinan emerged from practices based on social relations across the human and non-human collective, thus tinged by expanding notions of responsibility, the practices from which Labrador emerged were grounded on notions of European

superiority and land ownership. The Innu people were consistently conceptualized as primitive and backward, even by early anthropologists. Innu behaviors related to their values were negatively perceived by the Europeans. Colonial claims of sovereignty were based on legal artifacts built upon self-authorizing power, such as the doctrine of Discovery and the associated doctrine of *Terra Nullius*. These artefacts continue to influence the aboriginal/state relationships in Canada.

Based on colonial claims of sovereignty, in Labrador the French and the English crowns (and later Quebec and Newfoundland) granted concessions for various Europeans groups, allowing, as Samson states, “to trade, possess and convert” (2003:41). Through this process, the colonial ownership of Labrador, however, remained ambiguous, and would not be partially resolved until the Privy Council Decision resolution that in 1921 established the Labrador boundary. This boundary has yet to be recognized by Quebec.

As the European ownership of Labrador followed the fluctuations in the relative positions of the Imperial powers, a series of competing land concessions were granted to commercial enterprises related to the fur trade, such as the Hudson’s Bay Company but also independent traders, such as Courtemanche and Louis Fournel, while fisheries were exploited on the coast, continuing the European exploitation of natural resources that had started earlier by the Basque whalers. The perceived potential for forestry opened speculative activity in Labrador and competitive ownership claims from Quebec and Newfoundland. The installation of military bases and other military sites expanded the presence of the state and its conceptualizations of Labrador. Later, the state fomented industrial development and extractive activities, which modified the physical landscape.

In addition, these changes attracted a new population that competed for resources and access to the territory, further marginalizing aboriginal practices.

These developments were sustained and accompanied by cartographic practices that were key in the colonial production of place. These cartographic practices were produced as part of a set of technologies (including census, scientific reports, Royal Commission's reports, etc.) that contributed to the production of Labrador as a colonial place. Maps were produced under a number of different circumstances and for diverse objectives. Explorers, fishers and merchants, missionaries and scientists made contributions to these cartographic representations, which at the same time that they helped to represent Labrador, contributed to the invisibility of Nitassinan and its practices of place. However, the maps of Labrador portray and arrange a space where another place "Nitassinan" continues to be produced by the network of practices of the human and non-human persons that dwell there.

### **Places in tension and Forest co-management**

At the end of Chapter 2 I analysed moments in which the tension between the practices of place of Labrador and the practices of place of Nitassinan were particularly clear: the Labrador boundary decision, the exploitation of the hydro-electric resources of the Churchill Falls and the creation of Smallwood reservoir, as well as the low-fly conflict. Building upon these examples, I looked at the way the tension in the production of place appeared in the co-management process.

In Chapter 3, then, focusing on the co-management of the forest land in Forest District 19a allowed me to approach the current ways by which practices of place are developed and interlinked, by looking at how the Innu Nation and the provincial government developed, negotiated, and conceptualized these practices of place in a context that continued to be colonial. Labrador and Nitassinan are not simply different names for the same space, but different places that are constituted by different practices. The practices are never quite established and secured, and always interfere with each other.

Nevertheless, the co-management process mostly replicated and facilitated Labrador's practices of place, and, at the same time, marginalized Nitassinan's practices of place. This happened in a number of ways, including the definition of the object, the scope, the language of the co-management process, as well as the forms of representation and the types of knowledge considered valid through it.

In the first place, this co-management process focused on the management of forest land. Through this co-management process, forest is assumed to be an uncontested term, as there is no definition of what the forest is in any of the documents. However, the conceptualization of the forest as a particular type of land derived not from some intrinsic characteristic of it but from the intersection of western ideas of wilderness, development and land ownership. Thus, it is a colonial creation. In order to create the Labrador Forest, "explorers" settlers and other visitors to the area first needed to be able to perceive a forest as a particular type of land, different than other types of land. Even in this context, far from being self-evident, what exactly constitutes forest land is ambiguous. For example, the Newfoundland and Labrador provincial definition of forest land, which

could be assumed to be the one used through the co-management process analyzed here, included trees but also dry marsh, bog land and barrens, rivers and ponds.

In any case, in opposition to the colonial construction of the idea of forest, for the Innu people there is no clear division between forest and other types of land. To the contrary, as discussed in Chapter 1, the elements that could be used to define what a forest is, such as trees, shrubs, rivers and ponds are considered a constitutive part of Nitassinan. Even more, the non-human persons who dwell there are fundamental parts of the network of social relationships that form Nitassinan. These different approaches also implicate different ideas related to the forest's value. While from the western point of view value refers principally to the market value of the forest, which is usually associated with the value of trees as wood, the more recent approaches to forest management recognize other values, including recreational and environmental values. (However, even these continue to be linked to the market, i.e: carbon credit market.) On the other hand, for the Innu, the value of the forest does not refer simply to market value, but to the wellbeing of a whole set of persons, human and non-human. Moreover, it is impossible for the Innu to single out the "forest" and separate it from the social relationships that are constitutive of Nitassinan and, thus, the base of Innu values. This impossibility was not considered through the co-management process, which assumed the existence of a forest with market value.

Second, the scope of the co-management process was predefined by the provincial government. In effect, the co-management process was limited to a particular section of what the province defined as forest land: the Forest District 19a, just a small portion of

Nitassinan, and an area much smaller than the one initially claimed by the Innu Nation on the land claim, and even smaller than the area potentially under co-management according to the Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle. Third, the Forest District 19a, with the short-lived exception of it being referred to as Nitassinan/Labrador, is repeatedly referenced as part of Labrador. For example, successive forest plans and documents locate District 19a in Labrador, Goose Bay or Labrador, and Innu place names are almost completely absent. Thus, with regard to its location, including the toponymic level, the forest district under co-management is neither in Nitassinan, nor in Labrador/Nitassinan; it is simply in the colonial place of Labrador. In this way, Innu place names, a fundamental part of Innu practices of place, which link the Innu people to their territory, to the non-human-persons that dwell in it, and to their history, were excluded. It is not surprising, then, that the cartography devised by the co-management process was colonial. It followed Labrador practices of place, using almost exclusively colonial toponymics. In the forest plans and in other documents, there is an extensive use of western cartographic representation. These maps not only represent Labrador, without references to Innu place-names, but also fail to even acknowledge the location (one could almost say the existence) of Innu settlements.

Following this almost exclusively recognition of Labrador's practices of place, English was the language of the co-management process. All of the co-management documents, including agreements, forest plans, FMC agendas and budgets were written in English (in some cases, they included short executive summaries in Innu-aimun, which however, did not change the pre-eminence of English throughout this process). FMC meetings were

integrally conducted in English (although some public consultations with Innu community members early in the 2003 forest plan planning process were conducted in Innu-aimun.) The use of the colonial language was naturalized and never contested during the co-management process. However, the almost exclusive use of English during the co-management process resulted in restriction to Innu participation: it not only naturalized the colonial nature of the relationship between the Innu Nation and the provincial government, but also reduced the number of possible Innu representatives able and willing to communicate in English, and made invisible core ontological differences. The technical language utilized in the co-management process further entrenched limits to Innu participation. The use of forestry lingo made FMC meetings difficult to follow and boring for anyone without specific technical knowledge. Beyond this, forestry technical lingo is based on a paradigm of resource development, which supports the exploitation of the forest as an economic resource, and links its value to the market, further reinforcing western notions on Innu conceptualizations of Nitassinan. At the same time, core terms in the forest plan, such as landscape and ecology, are used inconsistently, and their meanings are never explained.

Fourth, planning worked in a similar fashion, reinforcing Labrador's practices of place. These practices were presented as rational and neutral, hiding the role of the ideologies that sustain them. In this context, Innu practices were considered, if not directly irrational, "cultural" and were mostly excluded from the forest plans. Planning not only reinforced particular ideas of place, but also galvanized particular ideas of time. In effect, planning assumed a linear conceptualization of time, with a future that can be thought of in

advance and can be compartmentalized in blocks (i.e.: five years, twenty years, etc.).

Under these circumstances, the only legitimate ways to produce knowledge about the area under co-management were to use the frames of reference of the government and its agencies. Innu people were not considered to be legitimate knowers of their territory, as their practices and their knowledge were considered to be irrational, thus incongruent with the basic premises that support planning. Innu knowledge, then, was not considered to be real knowledge but “belief”. Consequently, in order to participate in the co-management process, the Innu people were required “to build capacity.” Such a requirement was not extended to the state.

During the planning stage of the co-management process, the forest land was conceptualized in terms of three different landscapes: ecological, cultural and economic. The 2003 and all the successive forest plans for the forest district under co-management organized the territory in this way, reinforcing western ideas of division of nature and culture. To each landscape corresponded a chapter, and there was no integration among these categories: what was deemed ecological was not cultural or economic, what was cultural was not economic or ecological, what was economic was not ecological or cultural. The forest plan’s system of categorization has thus implications for a number of issues, including ideas of culture and knowledge, conceptualizations of animals and other non-human persons, and perceptions of gender with regard to economic activities

The examples of the workings of the FMC that are at the center of Chapter 4 further show the limitations of the co-management process and the ways the practices of place of Labrador were ratified to the detriment of the practices of place that contributed to the

production of Nitassinan. The example of the treatment of the hemlock looper infestation shows a disdain for Innu preoccupations, preoccupations that are informed by ideas that are fundamental to the Innu understanding of Nitassinan, the non-human persons that dwell there and Innu relationships with them.

The management of the hemlock looper infestation illustrates divergent conceptualizations of the forest: the Provincial government conceptualized the forest in terms of resources, while the Innu Nation conceptualized it in terms of relationships. Consequently, the parties conceptualized their responsibilities regarding the forest in divergent ways. For the Innu, to be responsible towards the forest was related to taking care of the territory and of the human persons and the non-human persons that dwell in it. For the provincial authorities, on the other hand, responsibility was understood in terms of preservation of the wood supply, as the forest has been conceptualized as “natural resources.” That meant that the responsibility of the government was conceptualized in terms of potential commercial loss. While Innu opposition to spraying was acknowledged, it was also clearly dismissed, as it was incompatible with the government’s vision of responsibility and of the forest as a natural resource.

Finally, this example shows the limits of the forest co-management process, particularly of the FMC as a participative and decision-making institution. While the Innu Nation expected to take part in the decision-making process through its participation on the FMC, the provincial government saw the FMC as a consulting institution that could be ignored. The province’s unilateral decision to spray the trees affected by the hemlock looper infestation illustrates how, at the end of the of the day (and contrary to the rhetoric

of empowerment related to aboriginal participation in the co-management process and its institutions), the territory continues to be conceptualized as Labrador, a colonial place that is Crown land over which the provincial government continues to have the ultimate decision-making power.

The example of the lost tent illustrated different understandings of accountability, and different approaches to ideas of property. These issues were expressed on different scales. First, there was a request for accountability for the tent itself, a tent that allowed the government representatives to participate in community meetings that they perceive as “culturally sensitive.” Such “cultural sensitivity,” paradoxically, was used to require a use for the tent adjusted to the ethnocentric ideas of property and accountability. The request of accountability for the tent did not take into consideration the Innu’s sharing ethic, patterns of consumption or ideas of value. Second, there was a general request of accountability for the Innu Nation towards the government, reproducing the colonial situation. Thus, the request for accountability in these terms is an ethnocentric concept which takes for granted western ideas about property, presuming the universality of accountability without taking into consideration the intercultural relationships that the co-management regime is supposed to be empowering. While the tent was used metonymically to exemplify the Innu’s lack of accountability, other ideas of accountability, such as those based on Innu relationships and obligations among them and also in reference to other than human persons, were not considered. Paramount in reference to this are the Innu’s expectations of generosity, thus, of sharing. These expectations of generosity include tents.

The forest co-management process was initiated amidst pre-existing practices of place that created Nitassinan and Labrador. But these places were unevenly reflected, recreated and recognized in the co-management process. Labrador's practices of place were fully acknowledged and reproduced, while Nitassinan's practices of place were marginalized. However, the Innu Nation decided to participate in this co-management process. The question, then, is why?

The discussion in Chapter 5 shows that the Innu Nation's participation in the forest co-management process was part of a wider strategy toward self-government. Although this goal has yet to be reached, the co-management process offered access to symbolic and material resources through which the Innu could produce and reproduce Nitassinan. The forest co-management process implied recognition of Innu Nation claims over Nitassinan. At the same time, it gave visibility to such claims. The forest co-management process was based on the recognition made by the provincial government regarding its obligation to consult the Innu Nation. Through this process, the Innu Nation was not only able to reaffirm the province's obligation, but also to take advantage of the forest co-management dynamic that represented it as an equal party vis-à-vis the provincial government. In synthesis, the co-management process legitimated Innu claims over their territory.

The forest co-management process gave the Innu Nation access to funds and opportunities that would not be available to them otherwise. The Innu Nation used these according to its own necessities and goals. By participating in the forest co-management process, the Innu Nation expanded its capacity to determine the agenda of issues related

to the forest. At the planning level, this was reflected in specific measures linked to the protection of caribou, including the extension of protected areas, the establishment of corridors and the subsequent diminution of the area available for exploitation. At the research level, this allowed for the establishment of the Climate Change Monitoring program, among others.

Innu participation in the co-management process allowed the Innu Nation to sustain its Environment Office and offered capacity building opportunities to its members. These opportunities were useful beyond the co-management process, for example, in terms of expertise in support of Land Claim negotiations. It also allowed for the development of communication channels with provincial officers, and a better understanding of the working ways of the state's bureaucracy. Finally, Innu participation in the co-management process allowed them ways to exercise specific Nitassinan practices of place. For example, the co-management process implicated and injected money into the community. This money, available mostly in the form of salaries, was incorporated in the mixed economy, stretching people's capacities to sustain trips to nutshimit.

### **Toward the future**

The Innu people continue to be immersed in a colonial situation, which requires multiple strategies to defend their existence as people and their access to their territory.

Negotiations with governments and participation in co-management boards continue to be part of the Innu Nation repertory of strategies. While the particular co-management

process analysed here is now finished, the Innu Nation is still linked to the provincial and the federal governments, as well as to other aboriginal governments, research institutions and extractive companies, by a constellation of negotiations and agreements. There is also an expectation that once the land claim is finalized, a new management board will be created. The Labrador Innu Agreement-in-Principle contemplates the establishment of a Resource Management Board to make recommendations on the Labrador Innu Settlement Area regarding resource management. The board would have a similar composition to the FMC, two members from the Innu Nation and two members from the government, with the difference that instead of two provincial members the new board would have one provincial and one federal member.

Thus, the Innu Nation continues, and will continue, to deal with other, often interlinked, productions of place, often in an institutional context similar to the one analysed in this dissertation. The findings in this dissertation can hence inform present and future negotiations and agreements.

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## **Glossary of Innu Terms**

Akaneshao: English speaking person

Atanogen/atanuakan: Innu legends

Atik: caribou (singular)

Atikut: caribou (plural)

Atikupimi: type of cakes, the most sacred element of the Makushan feast.

Innu-aimun: Innu people's language

Kakushapatak: a shaman

Kakushpnanut: outpost program

Katipinimitautsh or Atiku-napeu: Caribou man.

Kenauenitam: related to stewardship, taking care of something, or watching over it, preserving or conserving it.

Kuekuatsheu: the worlverine, a trickster figure.

Kushapatshikan: shaking tent.

Makushan: feast that distribute bush food.

Matshishkapeu: the Fart Man.

Matutishan: steam tent.

Mishtapeuat, giant beings that are not human or animals

Nitassinan (Ntessinan): our land, our territory.

Nutshimit: the bush, the county

Tipatshimun/tobajimun: Innu stories

Tipenitamun, an approximation to stewardship and to taking care of something

Tipentamun: kingdoms (in animals' classification system)

Tshishe-Manitu: Supreme Being

Tshushtashkamuk: the world of Mishtapeaut.

Wotshimao: boss, leader