WOODS CREE WOMEN'S LABOUR WITHIN THE SUBSISTENCE-BASED MIXED ECONOMY OF PELICAN NARROWS, SASKATCHEWAN

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Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

by

Colleen Youngs
September, 1991

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GEOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

WOODS CREE WOMEN'S LABOUR WITHIN THE SUBSISTENCE-BASED MIXED ECONOMY OF PELICAN NARROWS, SASKATCHEWAN

The subsistence-based mixed economy of Northern Canada is both productive and essential to community life and survival (Berger, 1977; Brody, 1981; Wenzel, 1981; Asch, 1982; Feit, 1982; Usher, 1982). Usher further states that this economy needs to be maintained for its economic value and fundamental linkages to social and cultural conditions. Most researchers state that the productivity of this economy depends on the interdependency of women's and men's work; however, within the extensive literature on this subject few writers examine the labour of women. The purpose of this thesis is to document and analyze Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy. Their labour, which is embedded in the profoundly different voice of Woods Cree culture, is best understood through detailed case studies. Oral histories were collected from three generations of Woods Cree Women aged sixteen to seventy, covering the period between 1900 and 1989. Usher's analytical framework of the anatomy of the Northern economy is a most useful model; however, it required some adjustment in order to address gender-affected production. The feminist critiques of Delphy and Nicholson are used in analyzing the nature of women's labour. The research found that although Woods Cree women's labour has changed over time and space, it is still essential to the functioning and maintenance of the subsistence-based mixed economy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have many people to thank for their contributions to this thesis. I wish to thank Chief Ron Michel and the Band Council of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation who initially approved of my research and supported it. I wish to thank Dale Reid for his help in opening the door and providing many resources. I wish to thank the people of Pelican Narrows for their time, consideration and understanding. I want to thank Rhoda Bear, whose humor and kindness helped me begin the interviews. I am especially indebted to the Linklater family. Their friendship, generosity, knowledge and guidance made this dream a reality. I wish to acknowledge Catherine Linklater, Susan Custer and Evelyn Nabess for their special attention. Without their encouragement and guidance there would be no thesis. I am very grateful to have had this opportunity to learn.

I wish to express my appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Michael Wilson, for his patience, advice, his detailed editorial work and his encouragement. I wish to thank my committee members: Professor John McConnell, for his stimulating comments and his knowledge of the North; Dr. Frank Tough, for his critical comments, his support and his wealth of knowledge on the fur trade; Dr. Peggy Brizinski for coming in at the end and providing support, encouragement and insightful comments. I am grateful to Dr. Peter Usher for his time and patience in discussing his model. His extensive knowledge of the North and the workings of the subsistence-based mixed economy provided an opening for my own understanding. I wish to thank Freda Ahenakew for her wisdom and guidance. I wish to thank Anna Leighton for continuous encouragement, help and for having gone first and leaving the door open. I wish to acknowledge the financial support from DIAND for research through the Northern Scientific Training Program.

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WOODS CREE WOMEN'S LABOUR WITHIN THE PRESENT 
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.0 The significance of the study

The subsistence-based mixed economy in Northern Canada is crucial to local Northern Indian communities and needs to be maintained as a central part of community and economic planning. Dr. Peter Usher, in his paper "Towards a strategy for supporting the domestic economy of the Northwest Territories", points out the productivity of the domestic component of the economy. He argues that with the growing economic needs of Northern communities, the domestic economy is "a central and integral part of the mixed economy which is the basis of community life and survival. When the domestic economy is widely understood and appreciated as being a strength on which to build, rather than a weakness to overcome, the NWT will have made a major step forward" (Usher, 1989, p.18). Although he refers to the NWT, the same words apply to Northern Saskatchewan.

For non-native people who are trying to understand how the subsistence-based mixed economy functions, it is essential to look at how a northern household operates. The household functions as a 'micro-enterprise' and is structured around the extended family. Labour within the household is drawn from all household members and is integrated between the economic and the social aspects of daily life. The feminist perspective in geography examines interrelations between waged labour and domestic labour, between the organization of production and the organization of the family, and between the economic and the social. This thesis documents and analyzes Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy. The feminist perspective used in this thesis exposes the links between the social and the economic aspects of Woods Cree women's labour and reveals the complex nature of women's work.

Dr. Pamela White, in her Ph.D. thesis *Restructuring the Domestic Sphere--Prairie Indian Women on Reserves: Image, Ideology and State Policy 1880-1930*, wrote, "By including the study of Indian Women, we can make important contributions to the development of geography as a gender sensitive
discipline" (White, 1987, P.273), and I would add that such research and writing can form an integral part of strategies for community and economic planning.

1.1 Objective

The purpose of this thesis is to document and analyze Woods Cree women's labour, as embedded in the extended family within the subsistence-based mixed economy of Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan. Throughout this thesis when I use the term women's labour I mean the labour that most women do. This labour is not exclusive to women, except in the case of childbearing. Men do care for children and they do cook, just as women do hunt and do trap. However, women's labour as outlined in this thesis is the work that is mainly done by women. The thesis documents women's labour rather than men's because: first, Woods Cree women's labour clearly demonstrates the articulation between the social and the economic dimensions of the subsistence-based mixed economy; and secondly, women's labour has largely been ignored or misrepresented within the literature on the subsistence-based mixed economy.

Usher's model of the subsistence-based mixed economy was chosen as the most effective available tool for my purposes to examine women's labour. His model is intended to demonstrate the articulation between the capitalist and domestic components of the subsistence-based mixed economy and for that reason provides a deeper understanding of the social reality than a dualistic perspective (Brody, 1981, Feit, 1982) could. However, as Usher acknowledged (personal communication, 1990), he constructed the model for men's labour. Therefore some modification may be necessary when documenting women's labour.

This thesis, in documenting and analyzing Woods Cree women's labour, attempts to demonstrate where modifications to Usher's model are required. It also demonstrates the interdependency and interlinkages between the social and economic dimensions in Woods Cree women's labour. These things underscore the decision-making process that Woods Cree women engage in every day.
1.2 Study location and population

This section details the location and community of Pelican Narrows. This background information is necessary because it informs the reader of some of the external constraints that affect women's labour. The community of Pelican Narrows is located in the Northern Coniferous Ecodistrict, a subdivision of the Northern Boreal Ecoregion (Map One). This ecoregion is described by Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources (SPRR) as having a long, cold winter, with a short cool summer. Mean daily temperature for January is -23.7°C and for July it is 16.9°C. The average yearly precipitation is 450 mm (SPRR, 1983, p.9). The Woods Cree, who are the local residents, say something rather different: to them the winter in a southern city, Saskatoon, is much colder than in the bush.

Bedrock underlies the shallow soils, where there is soil. Forty-five percent of the area is composed of exposed bedrock; 30% is organic terrain; and 25% of the area is covered by water (SPRR, 1983, p.9). Underground sewage and water lines are very difficult and expensive to install in such terrain. Farming is not possible because of the shallow soils, although gardens were frequently prepared at the trapline. The area is one quarter water, and that water and its edges have provided the Woods Cree with food sources and most of their transportation.

The bush includes a wide variety of trees. Jack Pine is the most common, followed by black spruce, white spruce, balsam fir, trembling aspen and white birch. At ground level there are feather mosses with low herbs or shrubs such as bunchberry, dry ground cranberry, bishop's cap and twinflower. There is also black spruce, tamarack, peat moss, labrador tea, and cloudberries (SPRR, 1983, p.10).
MAP ONE: Ecological Regions of Saskatchewan

Legend:
- Subarctic Boreal Ecoregion
- Northern Tundra Ecoregion
- Boreal Taiga Ecoregion
- Northern Coniferous Ecoregion
- Southern Boreal Ecoregion
- Aspen-Chokecherry Ecoregion
- Meadowland Ecoregion
- Northern Low-Temperate Ecoregion
- Southern Plains Ecoregion
- Grassland Ecoregion
- Mesic Grassland Ecoregion
- Riparian Ecoregion
- Transition Ecoregion

Source:
Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources (SPRR) 1983
These lists are not exhaustive but rather give an outline of the environment. The Woods Cree of Pelican Narrows have used this environment in the past to support their economy. It is still an important and vital element within the subsistence-based mixed economy. Anna Leighton's thesis, *Wild Plant Use by the Woods Cree (Nihithawak) of East-Central Saskatchewan* records plant uses from the past and those that continue today.

The principal uses of wild plants by this group [Woods Cree] were herbal remedies (78 plants) food and teas (37 plants) and building materials (5 species plus an undetermined number of willow species were extensively used). The Saskatchewan Woods Cree also obtained fire starter (including tinder), diapers, kinnickinick, chewing gum and materials to produce smoke (used in hide tanning and food preservation) from wild plants, and added plant materials to trap lures. A few plants used as aids in cooking and as indicators of recurring natural events were recorded (Leighton, 1985, p.5).

Species within this ecodistrict, include "waterfowl, colonial nesting birds, 22 species of fish, woodland caribou, black bear and moose. There is spruce grouse, willow ptarmigan and bald eagles. Fish include: northern pike, walleye, lake trout, whitefish and Arctic grayling" (SPR, 1983, p.12).

The Woods Cree utilize a wide range of species listed below:

**Mammals trapped:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>beaver</td>
<td><em>Castor canadensis</em> Kuhl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coyote</td>
<td><em>Canis latrans</em> Say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fisher</td>
<td><em>Martes pennanti</em> (Erxleben)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lynx</td>
<td><em>Lynx lynx</em> (Linnaeus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marten</td>
<td><em>Martes americana</em> (Turton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mink</td>
<td><em>Mustela vison</em> Schreber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muskrat</td>
<td><em>Ondatra zibethicus</em> (Linnaeus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otter</td>
<td><em>Lontra canadensis</em> (Schreber)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabbit</td>
<td><em>Lepus americanus</em> Erxleben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red fox</td>
<td><em>Vulpes vulpes</em> (Linnaeus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>squirrel</td>
<td><em>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</em> (Erxleben)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>timber wolf</td>
<td><em>Canis lupus</em> Linnaeus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weasel</td>
<td><em>Martes americana</em> (Turton)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Mammals hunted:**
- bear: *Ursus americanus* Pallas
- caribou: *Rangifer tarandus* (Linnaeus)
- deer: *Odocoileus virginianus* (Zimmermann)
- elk: *Cervus elaphus* Linnaeus
- moose: *Alces alces* (Linnaeus)

**Birds hunted:**
- Canada goose: *Branta canadensis* (Linnaeus)
- grouse: *Pedioecetes phasianellus* (Linnaeus)
- Mallard: *Anas platyrhynchos* Linnaeus
- Pintail: *Anas acuta* Linnaeus

**Fish (domestic):**
- Lake sturgeon: *Acipenser fulvescens* Rafinesque
- Lake trout: *Salvelinus namaycush* (Walbaum)
- Lake whitefish: *Coregonus clupeaformis* (Mitchill)
- Northern pike: *Esox lucius* Linnaeus
- small perch: *Perca flavescens* (Mitchill)
- sucker: *Catostomus commersonii* (Lacepede)
- tullibee: *Coregonus artedii* Lesueur

**Fish (commercial):**
- Lake whitefish: *Coregonus clupeaformis* (Mitchill)
- Northern pike: *Esox lucius* Linnaeus
- walleye: *Stizostedion vitreum* (Mitchill)

Pelican Narrows (Map Two) is one of six communities of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. The population of Pelican Narrows is about 2,500 with a composition of seventy percent native people and thirty percent non-native. The first language of the native community is Woods Cree, [the "th" dialect of Cree]. The second language is English. This thesis focuses on the Woods Cree population.
MAP TWO: Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan

Source: Surveys & Mapping Branch Department of Energy, Mines & Resources 1968
printed in 1971

Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991
The community of Pelican Narrows (Map Three) has a number of services and facilities. The local government includes: the Band Council for the entire Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation in Pelican Narrows; a Local Advisory Council (L.A.C.); and a Northern Municipal Council. Once a week a provincial judge and lawyer are flown up to the community for court. There is no federal government representative present as of December, 1990. There were ten private business establishments, including three taxis, two arcades, two gas stations, one restaurant and two convenience stores. The major retail business was formally the Bay, now renamed the Northern. Income is also derived from: fishing, forestry, trapping, hunting, mining, wild rice, tourism, and transportation.

Communication services for the community include: a post office, with mail delivery three times a week; T.V. from Winnipeg, with cable hook-up available through the L.A.C.; and telephone service is available, both local and long distance through Sasktel, (however, less than 5% of the population people have telephones, and those people usually have telephones for 2-3 months at a time ). Transportation services include the STC bus three times a week out of Sandy Bay; a road into Pelican Narrows since 1963; and an airstrip, twelve miles out of town that is used for chartered flights (e.g. to fly in the judge for Thursday court day) and other private chartered air carriers that work in the summer. They, too must be chartered. The Band owns a summer facility that includes tenting grounds and cabins. There is a community hall and an arena. There is one Roman Catholic Church and one Anglican Church, and two Baptist missionaries. The community has a Retirement Home with four units. Recreation services include: a library and gym in the school, a skating rink, arcade, and an arena used for hockey and broomball. Dances are held in the community hall.

Community services for water vary. The water source is the lake and one well. The distribution method from the well is by pipe to less than ten locations. 52 houses have individual systems but most residences receive water by truck, delivered once a week. People often run out of water before the week is through, due to the large number of individuals in each house drawing on a limited supply. On the reserve side no homes have running water. Water treatment includes filtration, chlorination, and fluoridation. Sewage is collected by truck.
MAP THREE: Community of Pelican Narrows

Source: Bob McLean 1990

Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991
and individual septic systems. Again, 52 houses have individual systems, as do some commercial and government buildings. Sewage disposal is in the treatment plant. Garbage is collected by truck twice a week.

Heat is provided primarily by wood. Twelve homes have propane and some stoves use oil. Everyone has electric power from the dam at Island Falls. Protection against fire is provided by an organized volunteer force of ten people. There is an R.C.M.P. office and holding tank in Pelican Narrows with a force of six officers.

There is one nursing station in the community with a staff of five nurses. One doctor comes twice a week. For medical emergencies, individuals are either taxied or flown out to Flin Flon in Manitoba, or to Prince Albert or to Saskatoon in Saskatchewan. There is one new school for grades 1-12. It is already overfilled, with about 50 new students entering grade one yearly. Post-primary upgrading is available through Northlands Career College.

The above description of the community of Pelican Narrows provides an outline of the post-1960 facilities and services. If those were the only conditions one knew about the community, it could be possible to forget that native people moved into the community as recently as the 1950s, and then only on a part-time basis. At that time they were still mainly land-based, living by hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering. On my initial entrance to the community, the continuing importance of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering was not immediately apparent. The extent of hunting and gathering have decreased, and most families are now permanently resident in the community. However, about 50% of the families eat wild meat, fish and berries. In general the diet of families consists of about 35% wild meat (George Linklater, 1988 interview with author). This clearly establishes the subsistence base of the community. Furthermore hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering continue to play an important role socially and culturally. Failure to appreciate the social and cultural dimensions of the subsistence base, even in the modern context and in spite of tremendous external pressures, would lead to a mistaken interpretation of the social dynamics within this community.
The next chapter examines the literature concerned with women and labour and the subsistence-based mixed economy. This approach was conducted to enable the author to situate Woods Cree women's labour within the context of their daily lives.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I interweave several threads within the literature concerning gender as a social variable, the theoretical implications of women and domestic work, the value and the definition of the subsistence-based mixed economy, and the interdependence between the economic and the social dimensions within the household. These interwoven threads situate Woods Cree women and their labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy.

First, gender is examined as a social variable. Second, a discussion of the Northern economy in Canada is discussed with a focus on the subsistence component. Third, a description of Usher's model of the subsistence-based mixed economy is described. Fourth, the household unit within the mixed subsistence-based mixed economy is reviewed. Fifth, Usher's four categories of household labour are described. Sixth, those categories are discussed in relation to the theoretical implications for women's work. Seventh, the interdependency and linkages between the social and the economic dimensions in women's labour are examined. Eighth, the linkages between the extended family and the community are discussed and finally some conclusions are framed.

2.1 Gender as a social variable

Rayna Reiter wrote in 1975, "A great deal of information on women exists, but it frequently comes from questions asked of men [by men] about their wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters, rather than from the women themselves" (Reiter, 1975, p.12). Often that information about women has then been glossed over or placed in the margins of the literature. Does that literature then provide appropriate attention to gender as a social variable, and specifically to women's experience? There are exceptions to this male bias within anthropology, beginning with Margaret Mead's Sex and Temperament (1935). Almost ten years have passed since Liz Stanley and Sue Wise wrote, "The most simple and in many ways the most powerful criticism made of theory and practice
within the social sciences is that, by and large, they omit or distort the experience of women" (Stanley and Wise, 1983. p.13), and there is still not a massive literature concentrating on women in the social sciences. This powerful criticism has serious implications for scholarly research, especially when that research is presented as objective reality (Reiter, 1975; Slocum, 1975; Rohrlich-Leavitt et al., 1975).

The monosexual tradition in Western thought leads to omissions, blind spots and biases which distort reality and may invalidate a research project and its findings. Linguistics, psychoanalysis, philosophy, sociology of knowledge and other disciplines have shown that there is not discourse without a subject speaking -- a subject who, consciously or unconsciously, transmits his or her own interests and socio-cultural conditioning. Similarly, we are now aware that there is no value-free science. This realization does not mean that we give up standards of scientific rigor and of objectivity, but it does mean that we should question traditional ways of conducting research (Eichler and Lapointe, 1985, p.5).

In the extensive research on the subsistence-based mixed economy of Northern Canada, few writers focus on women's activities. Most authors note that the productivity of the domestic component depends on the interdependence of men's and women's work, but they rarely speak specifically and at length on women's work. Brody, (1981) in Maps and Dreams, does stress the value of women's work. He recognizes that researchers have been predominantly men, that male informants controlled the research and explained the system, and therefore women's contribution, which was not insignificant, was not adequately discussed (Brody, 1981, p.197). Again there have been some exceptions, for example, Woman the Gatherer (1981); however, this text does not address the question of women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy.

The purpose of this thesis is to document and analyze Woods Cree women's labour within the present-day subsistence-based mixed economy. The data for this thesis was collected from Woods Cree women by the author. The documentation of Woods Cree women's labour has not been done before
and therefore fills a gap in the literature. Also the analysis of their labour is from a feminist perspective and that provides new critical insights about their labour. Further, the analysis provides a key to understanding the interdependency of the social and the economic dimensions when looking through a cross-cultural window. Therefore, gender as a social variable offers valuable insights and enriches our understanding of the social formation of society.

2.2 The components of the economy of Northern Canada

Much of the academic writing about the economy of the Canadian North refers to a 'dual' economy. Canadian subsistence land use activities were analyzed and categorized as the 'native' sector of the economy by Usher (1981), Asch (1982), and Feit (1982). The 'industrial' sector of the economy was taken to be the dominant mode of production in the regional economy. The industrial mode includes three components: government, corporate and resident small business. The native mode of production includes two components: subsistence and commodity production. The subsistence component produces goods for direct domestic consumption while the commodity component produces goods for exchange, either for cash or other goods (Usher, 1981). Feit (1982) suggests that the subsistence sector predominates over the commodity sector (fur trade and arts and crafts). In Feit's study of Waswanipi hunters of Quebec "the value of subsistence production was ... about six times the value of fur-pelt production" (Feit, 1982). Further, Feit points out that in 1969-70 among the Waswanipi [those] "who hunted intensively derived 55 percent of total income from subsistence foods" (Feit, 1982).

Asch also uses mode of production as an analytical tool when he discusses the Dene of the Northwest Territories. He suggests the Dene have two modes of production: the bush subsistence mode of production based on cooperative labour, collective responsibility, communal land tenure, and reciprocity; and the capitalist mode of production based on individual ownership, private accumulation of goods, and individual responsibility (Asch, 1982). In the Report of the Berger Inquiry, Asch also found conclusive data that
the Dene, like the Waswanipi, derive an essential and significant income\(^1\) from their subsistence production. At the time of the Berger Inquiry, subsistence production was estimated to be approximately 39 percent of the Dene's total income.

Brody (1981) also discusses different sectors of the economy in *Maps and Dreams*. On one end of the spectrum is the hunting and trapping economy, and on the other is wage labour and transfer payments. In Brody's data on the three Beaver Indian communities in Northeast British Columbia, the subsistence sector is mainly dependent on the meat of large ungulates. The value of the subsistence harvest against the value of income derived from the capitalist mode of production "refutes any suggestion that the renewable-resource economy is defunct or impoverished" (Brody, 1981).

The figures for the different communities may not agree on the exact value of subsistence production, but they do substantiate its undeniable importance. Feit (1982) tells us that hunting-and-gathering may not be the only economic activity, but that it is a significant economic activity with essential linkages to cultural, ecological and social conditions. The author agrees that the economic value of hunting and gathering must be recognized. The problem that I want to address is the failure of a dualistic perspective to account for the labour of women.

Patricia Albers (1983), in her work with Sioux women, has found two essential drawbacks to this dualistic perspective. The first problem is empirical. The dualist approach suggests a rigid public/private dichotomy and does not examine the articulation of the capitalist and domestic spheres. The second problem with the dualist approach is its argument that capitalism as the dominant mode of production continuously pushes against the domestic mode of production, which in turn offers no resistance. This argument fails to explain the vitality of the domestic component and fails to explain why women choose to participate in the domestic component, sometimes at the expense of a wage labour job.

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\(^1\)Income refers to the cash replacement value of subsistence production, for example the cost of buying blueberries at the store rather than having picked them for eating in the home.
Questions of change are presented in a unilateral fashion, ignoring the dialectical realities of the encounter which, among other things, includes the resistance and challenge of those who labour under capitalism, either in the home or the marketplace. In failing to grasp the nature, dynamics and historical specificity of this articulation, the explanatory power of dualistic approaches is severely impoverished (Albers, 1983, p.178).

While documenting the labour of Woods Cree women, it became abundantly clear that their labour was integrated and interactive and thus could not be separated into a domestic economy and a capitalist economy. Woods Cree women use cash from their wage labour jobs, or transfer payments from the capitalist sector, to buy guns, boats, bullets and gas for the hunt in the domestic sector. This means of maintaining the domestic sector demonstrates resistance; it indicates that the domestic sector is valuable to these women and that they participate in it.

Given the failure of the dualistic approach to explain the Northern economy it became urgent to find a model that offered a more integrated approach. For the purpose of this thesis, the writer was specifically interested in understanding women's work within the domestic component of the Northern economy. Peter Usher's model of the subsistence-based mixed economy appeared to hold the greatest promise as a way to begin to understand the dynamics of that complicated process.

### 2.3 Usher's model of the subsistence-based mixed economy

Usher (1989) has developed a model for the social organization of the Northern economy. His model demonstrates the interconnection and linkages among the public, private and domestic components of the Northern economy. He states that the domestic component "exists not in isolation, but as a central and integral part of the mixed economy which is the basis of community life and survival" (Usher, 1989, p.18). He argues that the domestic component of the Northern economy needs to be widely understood and valued, so that it may be
recognized as an economic strategy to build on rather than seen as one that is dysfunctional and failing (Usher, 1989, p.18).

In Usher's model, the economic accounts include: (A) the market/private firms, and (B) the government/public departments. Both include jobs and money with complex output and private and public consumption. (C) The domestic or community component is not normally included in the economic accounts. It is composed of households which are organized along kinship lines. They are self-producing with simple output (Usher, 1989 p.2 (Figure One)).

The domestic component is another term for the subsistence sector. The household, as modelled by Usher, (Usher, 1989, p.5 (Figure Two)), draws income from four alternative activities. Cash comes from jobs, from transfer payments, and from the sale of commodities (fur, fish, handicrafts, firewood, baked goods, etc.). Income "in kind" comes from subsistence production, (country food, firewood, gauntlets, etc.). As Usher points out, how all these income sources combine depends on household composition, (age, sex, skills and interests), the seasonal nature of various resource harvesting and wage labour availability. Therefore transfer payments are sometimes used on a seasonal basis in a complementary way with other incomes (Usher, 1989, p. 4).

Incomes "in kind", as products of subsistence activities, are not restricted to aboriginal peoples in the north. Many households in southern Canada, both rural and urban, do some sort of self-provisioning in the form of gardening, hunting, cooking. However, as Usher stresses, these subsistence activities provide a much larger proportion of household consumption for aboriginal peoples in the north. For these economic reasons alone, the domestic component of the Northern economy is necessary to the health and survival of aboriginal communities (Usher, 1989, p.3) and for this reason I will call it essential. However, as Usher reaffirms, this 'traditional sector' must be combined with other cash income (Usher, 1989, p.3) in order to purchase necessary goods. Without these other incomes it would be impossible to capitalize hunting or trapping or fishing by buying boats, guns, traps and gas. It would also be very difficult to purchase essential goods such as refrigerators, stoves, clothing, flour, etc. However, Usher states that because "almost
FIGURE ONE: Usher's model of the economic accounts

MARKET OR PRIVATE Organization:
- Corporation
- Cooperative
- Owner-operated enterprise

GOVERNMENT OR PUBLIC Organization:
- Department
- Agency

Both provide:
- wage employment
- goods and services
  which are bought and sold with money
  and measured in economic accounts

DOMESTIC OR COMMUNITY Organization:
- Household
- Kinship
- Community

Provides:
- work
- goods and services
  directly to households
  but are not measured in economic accounts

Source: Peter Usher 1989
FIGURE TWO: The social organization of the subsistence-based mixed economy as modelled by Usher

Source: Peter Usher 1989
everyone depends on domestic activities in some way, the communities have subsistence-based economies" (Usher, 1989, p.4).

The domestic component is organized around the household and extended family, and as Usher says this is both an economic and a social unit. Usher identifies the household as

a "micro-enterprise" which, like other enterprises, controls and allocates resources, capital and labour. Its resources are the animals, birds, fish, trees, plants, and other materials on the lands and in the waters traditionally used by the community. These are communally held resources, to which each household has access by virtue of community membership (i.e. aboriginal harvesting rights) rather than private ownership. Its capital is the harvesting equipment that members of the household use: the skidoos, rifles, boats, nets, and traps. It has a pool of labour consisting of all household members who can contribute to its economic welfare (Usher, 1989, p.6).

Because the domestic component of the subsistence-based mixed economy is composed of households it is useful to have some general idea of their membership and structure. Until recently it was assumed in the geographic literature that there was a normative type of household that was universal. This normative type was considered to be the nuclear family of two parents and their children. Pratt and Hanson argue that even within the mainstream urban social strata it has become necessary to reassess this position, and begin to see a real and growing diversity of household types (Pratt and Hanson, 1989, p.302). Within Woods Cree society there is also a growing diversity in household types.

Asch points out that among the Dene, another Northern boreal society with a subsistence-based mixed economy, prior to the introduction of family allowance and old age pensions in the 1940s, "it was the whole membership of the local group and not each family or individual that defined the self-sufficient unit" (Asch, 1977, p.48). In the 1960s the primary self-sufficient production unit was typically composed of an elder married couple, their adult and younger children. The forced move into town meant that men spent large parts of their
time in the bush fishing and trapping, while the women and children were in town because the children were in school.

This new settlement pattern, which was also the case for the Woods Cree, created a change in the size and composition of the household. Mobility and travel also changed. What Asch has failed to elucidate is the extent of change within the household unit that occurs over time. Today, with a dramatic rise in the population, housing shortages and a rapidly declining fur trade, (due in part to the anti-fur lobby) resulting in a changing economic base and dispersed extended family, the definition of the household appears even more elusive. However, as Asch so aptly states, "despite our intrusions into virtually every facet of native society, traditional economic, social, and political institutions and values persist and in some cases flourish" (Asch, 1977, p.60).

It is at the household level that this persistence is most evident. The predominant Woods Cree household is composed of extended family members, ranging from infants to great-grandparents, but its membership changes often, with individuals entering and leaving for a variety of reasons and for differing periods of time.

The household, I would suggest, is not a thing that can be tied to a permanent location or membership. Rather, the household is a set of social relations that functions as the primary cooperative unit, the primary social unit, the primary economic unit, and the primary consumption unit (Wenzel, 1981)\textsuperscript{2}. The household unit, then, is indeterminate not only in size and composition but also in location. This high degree of mobility within the household is directly linked to both internal and external economic and social decisions. The internal decisions are based on long term rights and obligations where the individuals are not viewed as atomized beings, but rather as beings within a set of social relations that are the basis for survival.

The household's membership provides the labour for the household and Usher has identified four categories for that labour: "harvesters -- hunting or

\textsuperscript{2}Wenzel(1981), in his work with the Clyde Inuit, found the extended family to be the secondary unit of consumption.
fishing for food for the table; processors -- butchering meat, preparing meals, skinning and stretching pelts; servicers -- fixing machinery, equipment, clothing; and supporters -- those who have jobs and contribute their income to purchasing equipment or gasoline" (Usher, 1989, p.6).

Usher's model provides a critical insight into the workings of the subsistence-based mixed economy. His model integrates the three components: the private or market; the government or public; and the domestic. His model demonstrates that the domestic component is organized around the extended family and the household. Usher states that the household is both a social and an economic unit. Usher provides all these essential reference points and he names them.

His model opened a window on a complex process and is an excellent guide to the structure and functioning of labour at the level of the household. However, Usher states that he designed the model with men in mind (Usher, 1990, personal communication with author). This fact posed theoretical problems for my thesis, because my objective is to examine Woods Cree women's labour. To critically investigate women's labour I turned to the French feminist, Christine Delphy and to the Canadian feminist, Linda Nicholson.

2.4 The theoretical implications of women and domestic work

Delphy (1984) tells us that we owe the positing of housework as a theoretical problem to the new feminists. What has subsequently been agreed upon in the literature is that housework is work and that it is unpaid. (Pompei, 1978; The Staff of Women, 1978; Lopate, 1978, Dalla Costa, 1972; Edmond and Fleming, 1975, Armstrong, 1984). The 'commonsense' definition of housework is seen as "the work done within the house by the wife: cooking, washing, ironing, sewing, shopping, cleaning and servicing (i.e. housewifery in the restricted sense of 'doing the housework'), and the care of children (Delphy, 1984). However, Delphy argues that this definition of housework is unclear and leads to dead ends. Instead, she argues, "the defining economic characteristics of housework cover a great deal more than the classical contents and apply also to 'work' which is supposedly not 'of the house'" (Delphy, 1984).
Delphy's argument is as follows. First, that self-sufficiency is the direct consumption of what the household produces, so that if a household produced a pig and then ate it that would be considered self-sufficiency. However if the household had not eaten the pig they could have sold it or if the household had not produced the pig, then they would have had to buy it. The national accounting of France has taken the latter view since 1963, and invoices the pig at its retail price. The significance of this involves the transformation of the pig. If the pig was invoiced at its selling price, then "we would have to suppose that they [the household] consume pigs running around on their four trotters" (Delphy, 1984). Therefore some of the transformations of the pig are still not accounted for i.e., the pig has to be killed, and butchered. However, the pig is still raw: it still needs to be prepared, cooked and served. That is, it still requires housework.

Housework is productive if we adopt the terms of national accounting, which are legitimate in that they define as productive work all work which increases wealth. Accordingly, housework should be considered as productive along with other production accounted for under the title of 'for household self-consumption'. The process of production for one's own consumption is a whole: either all the operations which lead to the final consumption are productive, or none of them are (Delphy, 1984, p.84).

It logically follows that, although only farm households raise pigs, chops are consumed in all households: "consequently all households, and not just agricultural households, produce for their own consumption" (Delphy, 1984, p.85).

So why did the national accounting of France make the arbitrary cut by invoicing the pig at its retail price? Is it the difference between production for the market and production for self-consumption? Delphy suggests that if the difference were between exchange-value and use-value, then that would not separate housework from occupational activities but instead would represent a distinction between housework and some occupational work (as demonstrated by the example of the transformations of the pig), and all the other occupational work. The next logical step Delphy takes is to ask the difference between the
household and the holding, where the holding is the farm. She suggests that if you can find the definition for one then you can find the definition for the other because these two are so bound together. Therefore she asks what is the definition of the holding? "It is neither a place (because many occupational activities take place inside the house) nor a business (because it does not produce exclusively for the market)" (Delphy, 1970, p.86). This question about the definition of the holding and the household is important because it addresses the fact that for women who labour in the household and the holding, there is no separation between their subsistence labour and their domestic labour.

The argument that women do not separate their subsistence labour from their domestic labour is equally true for Woods Cree women. As Delphy suggests, this is because women pass continuously from one task to the next within the same hour. Why do women do this? "The underlying and principal reason why they do not draw a distinction, which is that the work-of the holding and the work-of-the-household are carried out within the same relations of production....they constitute but one and the same job: the job of the wife" (Delphy, 1984, p.91). Delphy's elegant argument provides us with a new definition of housework as the unpaid aspect of "all the work done within the same relations of production as a whole" (Delphy, 1984,p.91), rather than defining housework as a collection of tasks.

In the work on quantifying the subsistence-based domestic component of the northern economy, cost-benefit analysis is often used. Cost-benefit analysis calculates the saving in spending for the household by invoicing the meat at retail value. Cost benefit analysis makes the same arbitrary cut as the national accounting of France. Why value the hunting and the processing of the meat, but not its cooking? This suggests that the job of cooking is considered non-productive and that it is devalued.

In Woods Cree society men hunt some of the game, but not all; most processing of meat is done by women, but not all; and most of the cooking is

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3In the case of the north it is not the clear-cut case of a pig being replaced by another pig but rather a moose being replaced by a cow. Moose meat has more value both nutritionally and culturally and therefore should have a greater replacement value.
done by the women, (but not all). Where, then, is the boundary to what is considered productive work and what is not? The view that productive labour only includes the work of hunting and processing discounts women's household activities and their economic contribution to the domestic economy. Delphy states that some of women's productive labour is discounted because it comes within the framework of the job of the wife, that productive labour is within their relations of production.

Because the households of the Woods Cree are generally based on extended families, I would stretch Delphy's idea of the job of the wife to embrace the job of the women within the extended family. Delphy has suggested that one should replace the term housework with the term familial work, as that would indicate that the work is directly connected to relationships within the the family. For the purpose of this thesis I use the term familial work to refer to the intangible labour that women do. That labour such as the maintenance of family ties and production of knowledge, which functions as an integrating force within the subsistence-based mixed economy.

2.5 Interdependence of the economic and the social within the household

Delphy's argument, however, does not directly address the question of childbearing and childrearing, although it is important to recognize that if one defines housework as the 'relations of production' then it is certainly within the role of the women to care for and raise the children. Is it possible to say that childbearing and childrearing are a large part of the relations of production for women; is it possible to claim that childbirth and childrearing are productive activities? For a further investigation of these questions I turn to Nicholson, the Canadian feminist, in her chapter entitled, "Feminism and Marx: Integrating Kinship with the Economic"

Nicholson argues that although Marx, more than other economic theorists, recognized the interdependence of the economic with other aspects of social life, his theory was inconsistent. Specifically, she points to a 'significant strand' in Marx's writing that assumes that "there is cross-culturally an economic component of human existence which can be studied independently from other
aspects of human life" (Nicholson, 1987, p.16). She states that feminist theory must "challenge the assumption of the analytic distinctiveness of the economic present in both a liberal and Marxist worldview" (Nicholson, 1987, p.17). Nicholson proposes that Marx projected from capitalism to all societies by seeing the economic as both primary and autonomous. In capitalist society production relations are organized according to the profit motive, hence she argues those activities of production and exchange "assume a value and importance relatively independent of their role in satisfying human needs" (Nicholson, 1987, p.20).

Nicholson further points out that Marx's projection, that the economic is primary in all societies, fails cross-culturally. The separation of the economic from the social is a distinction formulated in capitalist society (Nicholson, 1987, p.24). This distinction negates the interrelationship and interdependency of the economic and the social when the production unit is based on a kinship network and functions as a self-provisioning group for use-value. This profound unity is further evidenced when examining the work of women, including the socially necessary work of childbearing and childrearing. It would follow that if the economic and the social are interdependent and if this is especially the case in societies that are kinship-based, then the socially necessary work of childbearing and childrearing must be viewed as productive work.

Furthermore, from Delphy's argument that it is in the relations of production that we can understand what is housework and familial work, it is clearly within the relations of production that childrearing is interlaced in women's work. Women turn incessantly from educating children, to washing the dishes, to processing meat, to caring for elderly parents, to cleaning the house, to washing the clothes, to bringing in firewood, to transporting people and goods. All these activities take place over a wide spatial arena. Nicholson’s argument helps us to expose and understand the interdependency and the linkages of the social and the economic aspects of women's work.
2.6 Linkages of the social and the economic dimensions between the extended family and the community

Marshall Sahlins, in his book *Stone Age Economics* (1972), presents and stresses the linkages and interdependencies of the social and the economic dimensions within the wider context of the extended family and the community. Sahlins holds the substantivist position, which honors the different epistemological basis of hunting and gathering societies. This is in marked contrast to the formalist position, which does not allow for a different world view and must therefore consider the economies of kinship-based societies to be underdeveloped (Sahlins, 1972), or at least that they must, out of historical necessity, change.

While it is the case that all cultures change continuously, it must be recognized that these changes do not occur in a unilateral fashion. There is resistance and challenge to the dominant culture. Hunting and gathering must be understood in this fuller sense. The values characteristic of hunting and gathering operate in all spheres of human activity. These values are constantly reaffirmed. This acknowledgement is imperative for understanding Woods Cree women's work, first because these values inform their decision-making process and secondly because it shifts attention from the isolated individual and places women and their labour fully within their social context. Because hunting and gathering societies are not based on the profit motive but rather on cooperative labour, collective responsibility and reciprocity, it becomes essential to find other theoretical frameworks to view them. I think we must credit and value Delphy's, Nicholson's and Sahlins' views as they point to ways to rethink our theories about social phenomena. In valuing these other views, we create a space for ourselves for that view to exist in, and therefore another vantage point in how we understand other societies. ⁴ This also provides a good tool with which to rethink our own society (Van Vliet, 1990).

Sahlins was examining "stone-age economies", and in the modern context in which I base my work, it is important to understand that it is not that

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⁴When I speak of another vantage point, I do not mean to imply that we are mere observers and at that objective, but rather in this intersubjective space there are subjects interacting with each other and that process creates an opening.
many Indian people do not want modernization, but that they do not want indiscriminate bulldozing of their values (Van Vliet, 1990). To find an effective way of looking at Woods Cree women's work I believe it is essential to understand that one is looking at a system that is predicated on a different epistemology. I propose that this difference is still present among the Woods Cree of Pelican Narrows, as demonstrated by the work of women.

2.7 Conclusions

Gender is a necessary social variable and it is important to write about women's work within the subsistence-based mixed economy of Northern Canada. The drawbacks of a dualistic perspective when examining the social organization within the Northern economy are sufficient to require a more integrated approach. Although it is difficult to define the household within the Northern economy, we can have some sense of its ever-changing form and composition. Usher's model of the social organization of the Northern economy provides an excellent demonstration of the linkages within the subsistence-based mixed economy; however, it does have some theoretical problems when examining the work of women. Both Delphy's and Nicholson's work have offered a more informed position regarding the labour of women. When considering the labour of women within the subsistence-based mixed economy it is necessary to look at the interdependencies and linkages between the social and the economic dimensions.

The following methodology chapter discusses the use of the case-study approach as a methodology when examining Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy. The methodology chapter also details how the research was conducted.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This methodology chapter addresses the theoretical concerns about conducting case studies and illustrates the various techniques of the case study approach used. The issues discussed include the reasons for: conducting a qualitative case study rather than a quantitative census-tract study; using a combination of participant-observation and open-ended interviews as a methodology; and defining participant-observation as a methodology. The second section discusses the actual implementation of the research.

3.1 The reasons for using a case-study approach

A case-study approach was used in this thesis rather than census-tract data or statistical techniques. While census-tract data and statistical techniques are appropriate in other contexts, they were not useful for the purposes of this thesis for the following reasons. First, a large scale sample survey was inadequate to the task. A survey is culturally inappropriate because asking direct questions is perceived by Indian people as rude and invasive. Also, a sample survey would have failed to describe the contemporary reality of Woods Cree women's labour with any depth because surveys do not allow for a detailed analytical response. Secondly, a statistical study based on census-tract data would be insufficient for the following reasons. The working paper series developed and distributed by the quantitative analysis and sociodemographic research services of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development have a number of problems in relation to this type of inquiry. The problems are as follows:

1. The census authority creates categories which do not meet my requirements.

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1 For further explanation please refer to sections 4.5-4.7.
2 For example the definition of a person 'in the labour force' is that s/he is employed, or unemployed (outside the home) and looking for work. This definition does not include a substantial part of the subsistence-based mixed economy, upon which my work is based.
2.- Access to original data on individual respondents is prohibited by confidentiality.

3.- The data can be aggregated, but not disaggregated at sufficient levels.

4.- Data is gathered at 5- or 10-year intervals, and therefore does not address the question of changing household composition over shorter periods of time.

6.- There is no breakdown by gender at the level of the household economy.

7.- There are no questions that examine the subsistence-based mixed economy, especially at the level of the household.

These census data are helpful in that they demonstrate some trends, such as steadily decreasing average annual income for individual status Indian people, increasing size of status Indian population, and the growing disparity between the incomes of non-native Canadian families and status Indian families. However, they lend no insight into the day-to-day work of status Indian women at the level of the household economy. This lack of information about day-to-day life does not allow a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary social situation at the level of the household, the scale of focus for this study. The data fail to take into account the value of women's work within the subsistence-based mixed economy, and in general they fail to grasp the multi-layered complexity of northern Indian life within that historical/social context. Because census data and statistical techniques could not answer the questions this study was asking other sources and methods were needed.

Instead, a case study approach was considered to be more effective. A case study is an in-depth examination of a locality that demonstrates a pattern of social life. It is a method which uses theory as well as description (Eyles, 1981,p.45). Derek Gregory states that:

... one of the raisons d'être of the human sciences is surely to comprehend the 'otherness' of other cultures. There are few tasks more urgent in a multicultural society and an interdependent world, and yet one of modern geography's greatest betrayals was its devaluation of the specificities of places and of people. It is in exactly this sense and for precisely this reason that the renewal of cultural geography is now so obviously dependent on
[Clifford] Geertz's (1973) 'thick description': on the ethnographic attempt to render the layers of meaning in which social actions are embedded less opaque, less refractory to our own (no less particular), yet without destroying altogether the strangeness [difference] which draws us to them in the first place (Gregory, 1989, p.358).

In addressing the specificities of places and people, Gregory is not calling for an 'unqualified relativism'. Rather, I understand his thesis to mean that we must begin to recognize difference to help us understand and accept how and what other people live. The danger with relativism is an examination of culture outside of its historical and social context. Gregory stands back from this kind of thinking by recognizing the necessity of an historically supported description, which helps us to locate the present context of any group. As Eric Wolf asked,

... has there ever been a time when human populations have existed in independence of larger encompassing relationships, unaffected by larger fields of force?... Europeans and Americans would never have encountered these supposed bearers of a pristine past if they had not encountered one another, in bloody fact, as Europe reached out to seize the resources and populations of the other continents (Wolf, 1982, p.18).

There is no pristine culture. However, if one wrote case studies without placing people in their greater social/economic/historical context then the readers might assume pristine culture exists. In that isolated and ahistorical situation the writer would erase the years of colonialism, oppression and resistance as though they had not happened.

The main entry point to the understanding of other cultures is the method of participant-observation. Participant-observation is a method that attempts to 'uncover the nature of the social world through an interpretive and empathetic understanding of how people act in and give meaning to their own lives' (Eyles, 1981, p.380).
3.2 A summary of participant-observation

Participant-observation is described as a set of interrelated methodological expectations about interaction in the field and its outcome, and which combines epistemological with ontological concepts about the nature of reality and its discovery. Hence participant-observation has personal, social and cultural meaning for the fieldworker who seeks to learn another culture through his [her] own; it is method underlain with assumption of theory and ideology' (Brizinski, 1989, p.10).

In this summary of participant-observation, it is recognized that there are underlying assumptions of theory and ideology. All methods are never theory or ideology-free. Therefore there is no value-free science. The researcher is learning about another culture through her own. That helps to inform us about the multi-layered interaction of the research. This awareness helps to identify the fact that there are at least two subjects involved in the interaction, the researcher and the respondent, rather than a subject and an object. This acknowledgement allows the researcher to recognize that reality does not exist in some pristine form out there to be discovered by some fly-on-the-wall technique. Rather, the very nature of reality is interactive, changing and ongoing.

Peggy Brizinski has developed a five-point definition of participant-observation [P-O].

1. The investigator enters into a field of social relations, the natural context of culture, and, like any member of the host community, manipulates these relationships to interact and to obtain particular information through interaction.

2. The investigator must structure these social relations in such a way that he [she] is a mediator between his [her] own and his [her] hosts' communities; the marginality which ensues from this intermediary positioning tends to structure both access to and processing of information. This is the "duality" of P-O, by which the investigator
simultaneously enters these social relations through participation and stands apart from them.

3. Participant-observation is bounded by a set of rules for its practice\(^3\), but which themselves display an emergent, flexible quality. In other words, the investigator enters the field with presuppositions about how to structure interaction, but the very process of interaction modifies and defines the rules further.

4. Participant-observation is essentially a circular inductive method, whereby the researcher induces generalizations from the data and tests them in the field, through further P-O, for validity and applicability. It combines scientific principles of empirical observation with the intuitive assessment of situations and the intersubjective creation of conclusions.

5. Because of this combination, participant-observation is often conceived as the creation of an environment for the employment of specialized techniques, such as questionnaires, archival research, or formal interviews. P-O can be used to "test" results against the daily requirements of experience and living. (Brizinski, 1989, pp.12-13).

The intersubjectivity of the method of participant-observation is crucial to the development of in-depth social relations. It is essential for the researcher to enter into these relationships with an informed but open position. Any rigid bounds defined by the researcher as to how the work should proceed increase the possibility of failure. Rather, a highly flexible method must be in place.

Brizinski has discussed at some length the importance of ethics within her rules of participant-observation. I would emphasize that it is necessary for the researcher to be explicit to the Chief and Band Council and the Band members s/he works with about: her goals, (no hidden agendas), who benefits from the work, what use it is to the community, who has access to the data, and who controls the final product.

3.3 The implementation of the research

Initially, a preliminary study was conducted to determine: a) whether women were willing to be interviewed about their work; b) whether women were still engaged in harvesting activities; and c) how long an interview would take, and as a pointer to the number of interviews possible. Because this was a cross-cultural study, I felt it necessary to discuss with Cree women how to develop a culturally appropriate study based on in-depth interviews, what kinds of questions would generate the kind of information I was seeking, what kinds of meetings would be most comfortable, and how to set up those meetings.

Those discussions took place over a period of a four months with a woman who is a Cree Elder. Based on these discussions, it was suggested that: a) the interviewer must be introduced to the respondent by a contact person, someone known and trusted by both parties; b) the interviewer could bring a traditional gift, tobacco, tea or cloth as a sign of respect; and c) the interviewer must have an understanding that the first meetings are to develop rapport.

3.4 The preliminary study

Initially, permission must be obtained for a study through the Chief and Band Council. It is important for Indian Bands to: 'control' the research; limit access to the research; and in general to choose which research they want conducted. The most simple and direct reason for this is that the research is ultimately about Indian knowledge and Indian Band members own their knowledge. Also, research results have sometimes been used against the interest of Indian peoples, even when the researcher had the best of intentions. "The accumulation of knowledge about colonial or tribal populations is often a facet of control and exploitation - even when the researchers firmly believe otherwise" (Brody, 1981, p. xiii). Therefore, it is necessary for the Chief and Band Council to be presented with a proposal so they can make a decision about the usefulness of the research. It would be a mistake to assume that a researcher could go into a community uninvited and unacknowledged and easily obtain information that the membership did not want to be public.
For the ten-day preliminary study I obtained permission from Chief Ron Michel and the Peter Ballantyne Band Council. In an oral presentation, I explained what the study was about, how I intended to conduct the study, and what its relevance to the community might be. For the first part of this study I had no funding. It was suggested by the executive assistant of the Peter Ballantyne Band that I write a proposal for the work I was engaged in, including maps and a written document. This would be a way to obtain funding for the project and do something that the band wanted. The next day I gave a written submission to the Chief and Band Council and it was accepted. This allowed me the necessary funds to conduct my first series of interviews.

3.5 The first interviews

After I received permission to conduct my study, I was given a list of possible people to interview along with the name of a woman to help me conduct the interviews. She became the contact person who assisted me in arranging the interviews and interpreting, and by her presence she established me as a reasonable person to talk with. It was suggested that I give gifts in cash, not in kind for the interviews, because cash is always needed.

In this study the interviews snowballed; essentially the initial meeting was an interview. Interviews generally lasted about one and a half hours and were open-ended with directed questions. The questions I asked were primarily developed to ascertain the extent of women’s land use in the past and how that had changed in the present. The changes I was interested in documenting were spatial, temporal and qualitative. For example, one question asked when, where and what animals were snared. Because I was able to interview both elders and younger women I was able to collect data for the entire period from 1900 to 1989.

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4 Pelican Narrows is one of the Nihithawak communities within the Peter Ballantyne Band.
3.6 The importance of the preliminary study

Two important ideas were made clear to me at this time. First, women did not separate their land-based activities from their other domestic work. Second, everyone encouraged me to spend time on the land so as to experience how life is lived there. After ten interviews were completed (at about two per day), we arranged to go out onto the land. By this time my original assistant had to return to her studies in Prince Albert and I was working with a second assistant. She organized a trip to the land. It included twelve people going to Pita Lake in the Churchill River system for several days. I acted as a participant-observer on this trip. A more detailed description is included in the data chapter in the sections, Organizing a trip to the bush, 5.2 and Women's work in the bush, 5.3. The complexity of organizing that event can only be understood by observing and participating in it. This was my introduction to understanding the relationship of women to the land.

From my preliminary study I was able to develop a model of the seasonal round of women's country food production. However, this left out numerous essential aspects of women's work. Therefore, I decided to examine in greater detail all of women's work within the subsistence-based mixed economy. The sample study enabled me to develop a more comprehensive and critical approach for the remainder of the study.

3.7 Time, openings and listening

Over the following winter, spring and summer I had the pleasure of being visited in Saskatoon by my friends from Pelican Narrows. One close friend was especially courageous and initiated these visits. These developing friendships helped me both directly and indirectly to better understand my friends' lives. My constant questions and confusions were met with tolerance, humor and patience, a response that has been essential to the research. The intersubjectivity of this visiting has given me valuable insights that could not be gained in a formal questionnaire-based study. My friends worked hard to pull me across the cultural gap so as to enable me to have a more complete understanding of their life and work. These visits informed my final questions
and analysis; however, only the data taken through informal interviews (given at this time and in Pelican Narrows) have been used in this thesis.

During this period, over the winter of 1988-89 and the following summer and fall, I developed an interview schedule to be used in my second stay in the community. I used an interview schedule and not a questionnaire because questionnaires are not culturally acceptable as a method for transferring information. I did have the interview schedule written and before me during all the interviews, which were open-ended in structure. Most of the women asked to read the questions prior to the beginning of the interview, so that they could inform themselves as to the nature of the inquiry. All the interviews were taped with the permission of the respondents and I did record some of the information in note form at the time.

3.8 The study

During the winter of 1989-90, I returned to Pelican Narrows to complete my interviews. Again I asked permission from Chief Ron Michel and the Band Council to conduct my research. It was my intention to make the nature of my work clear to all. I had five informal interviews with women aged twelve to twenty-seven. I stated from the outset that all information given would be considered anonymous. These informal, open-ended interviews were useful and they did give very specific information. However, the problem remained that they were my questions, and they failed in terms of following a more culturally appropriate method of learning about life and work: directly asking questions is considered rude and invasive.

3.9 Another way to learn

When you want to learn something within Cree culture you listen, observe and follow. This is difficult for people taught within a tradition of asking and was a challenge for me. However, encouraged by my friends/assistants to try another way of learning about women's work, we arranged for a feast and asked several elders to attend. On this occasion seven women elders were free
to come for the feast. This is not a usual situation; it was organized as a means of getting elders together so that they would talk about their lives in a more comfortable setting. For the purpose of this research it was an excellent opportunity to learn more about women’s labour, especially as only women attended.

Country food was given by the band and other individuals in the form of frozen fish and moose meat. The original plan was that I would buy all the food for the feast but once individuals knew the food was intended for the elders, they gave it. I paid for the groceries and tobacco from town. The feast consisted of eating preferred Cree food. The women told stories about their lives during and after the feast.

This form of oral history is invaluable as the participants helped each other to recall the past. There were some directed questions and everything was taped with permission of the elders. The tapes were later transcribed from Cree to English by the two women who helped organize the feast.

I was in the position of being a participant-observer during my winter stay of about fifteen days. I found this method to be the most valuable source of information. I was able to experience what day-to-day life was like and I was able to ask questions as we went along. In conducting research that relies on participant-observation as a methodology, the researcher must become aware that there are at least two subjects involved in the interaction. This leads to a greater understanding that there is no objective science out there, but rather that reality is interactive, changing and ongoing. It is a process. This intersubjectivity was crucial to the development of in-depth social relations that enabled me to see the pattern of women’s decision-making based on the constant negotiation and integration of two life worlds.

Woods Cree women make decisions about their labour on an basis that is epistemologically different from that of Euro-Canadians. That difference is based on historical and social roots. The recognition of that difference, which in part is a negotiation and integration of the past wholly land-based way of life and their present community context, directs one to a greater understanding of the complexity of women’s labour in the subsistence-based mixed economy.
4. HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE WOODS CREE 1670-1900S

4.0 Introduction

The purpose in presenting the historical geography of the Woods Cree is to demonstrate three points: first, to show the movement of the Woods Cree as their dependency on the fur trade increased; second, to demonstrate their decreased mobility due to declining animal numbers, primarily in relation to the role of the fur trade; and third, to situate the Woods Cree in their historical context in order to develop an understanding of their current subsistence-based mixed economy.

This chapter relies primarily on Arthur Ray's interpretation of the historical movement of the Woods Cree. His interpretation focuses on the adaptive responses of various Indian groups to the fur trade, specifically "the different roles that key Indian groups played in the fur trade and to the implications that this role differentiation had for tribal migration, inter-tribal relations, material culture changes, and ecological adaptations" (Ray, 1974, p.1).1 One implication for change was the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company to subsidize the price of flour and biscuits in an attempt to urge Indian peoples to eat more starch, thereby affording more time for trapping. This was a forceful manoeuvre to further enmesh Indian people into the fur trade, particularly given the declining numbers of animals at that time.

4.1 Movements east and northwest

According to Ray (1974), prior to 1670 the Western Cree were connected to the Ottawa-Indian-French trading network. The Cree would trade their furs to Indian middlemen in exchange for trade goods. Ray suggests this may have meant that the Cree were drawn eastward (Map Four).

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1There are many theories debated within the fur trade literature. One of the conflicting theories is 'partners in trade', a theory which maintains equality between Indian peoples and the fur trade companies. This theory has many problems, especially given that fur prices and demand were fixed in Europe, outside the decision-making realm of Indian people. This important debate is outside the bounds of this thesis. see Frank Tough, The Northern Fur Trade: A review of Conceptual and Methodological Problems, in Musk-Ox 36, 1988.
MAP FOUR: Cultural geography of Northern Ontario and Manitoba to 1690

CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN ONTARIO AND MANITOBA TO 1690

- Limits of Blackduck Area
- Assiniboine Tribal Territory 1658-1690
- Probable Limits of Cree Territory, 1658-1690

○ Sites with $^{14}$C Dates of 500 BP
○ Other Prehistoric Sites
○ Historic Sites

- Areas Frequently for Trade by Assiniboine 1658-1690
- Principal Orientation of Fur Trade Prior to 1670
- After 1670

Source: Arthur Ray 1974
In 1670, the Hudson's Bay Company was formed. After this, trading posts were built on Hudson Bay, with York Factory being the most important. The Western Cree then moved back in a northwesterly direction and by 1680 the Cree were the middlemen, trading furs with bands from the western interior for trade goods. Kelsey's journals of 1690-91 suggest that the Western Cree "territory included all of the forest region between the lower Nelson River and the lower Saskatchewan River" (Ray, 1974, p.12). The Cree traded with the fur traders for a supply of European goods including guns and ammunition. The arms gave them a military advantage and allowed them to expand their territory by force, thereby increasing their trade networks. This northwesterly push included a move into some of the territory of the Chipewyan (Ray, 1974, p.23) (Map Five). This placed the Western Cree between Reindeer Lake and Lake Athabasca until 1760 (Ray, 1974, p.22 (Map Six)).

4.2 The seasonal cycle: prior to 1763

Prior to 1763 the Woodland Cree depended on two large ungulates, the woodland caribou and the moose. For small species, there were marten, fisher, lynx, otter, mink, muskrat and beaver. These small species were valued for both food and fur.\(^2\) Fish and migratory waterfowl were also very important foodstuffs for the Woodland Cree (Ray, 1974, p.27). Ray writes that although late summer to early autumn was a period in the seasonal cycle when food was generally abundant, the period between December and February saw food shortages, including the threat of starvation (Ray, 1974, p.31). Woodland caribou and moose could be obtained at those times; however, their populations were widely scattered and therefore not dependable. The Woodland Cree travelled in migratory bands, the size of which depended upon

\(^2\)Because of this, during the lean year of 1821 when Simpson, the governor of the H.B.C., tried to enforce a conservation practice on the beaver, the Woodland Cree resisted. Out of necessity they were eating the beaver and probably wearing the fur.
MAP FIVE: Distribution of Indians Trading at York Factory, 1714-1717

DISTRIBUTION OF INDIANS TRADING AT YORK FACTORY, 1714-1717

Principal Habitation Areas of Cree And Assiniboine

Parkland Belt

Source: PAC HBC B 239/a/1-5 in Ray 1974
MAP SIX: Tribal Distributions, C.A. 1785

Source: Arthur Ray 1974
the season and the local resources. Rogers and Smith stated that,

As a general principle of Shield Subarctic social organization, the maximum size of the group was the largest that could be supported at those times of the year when the natural resources were the most abundant; the minimum size was that required for efficient exploitation of the resources under the most difficult conditions" (from Rogers and Smith n.s.:24 in Ballantyne, 1976, p.5).

The basic unit of production was the household; the social organization of labour and the process of production seem to have been quite similar throughout the boreal forest. The division of labour was generally along the lines of sex and age (Ballantyne, 1976, p.6).

Between 1690 and 1765, the seasonal cycle was altered, according to Ray. Conditions were becoming more difficult in the woodlands during the winter. Hearne and his men nearly starved in the Cumberland Lake region in the winter of 1774-5. Alexander Henry the Elder, while travelling through the boreal forest in January 1775-6, met no Indian bands and he and his companions almost starved to death (Ray, 1974 p.45). Ray describes the seasonal cycle utilized by most Woodland Cree at this time:

This cycle was one in which the tribal bands spent the warmer months of the year in the forests. At that time the men made their trading expeditions to the Bay while their families fished and hunted along the shores of lakes and rivers in the forest land beyond the Shield. In late August, September, and October they hunted in the wooded areas adjacent to the prairies, taking moose and trapping beaver. From November to March they moved into the parkland belt proper where they often lived with the Assiniboine, hunting bison and trapping wolves and fox. In March, April and May they reassembled along lakes and rivers to build their canoes, trap furs, fish, and hunt waterfowl" (Ray, 1974, p.46 (Figure Three)).

Why conditions in the forest were becoming more difficult is not clear. However, Ray posits that this dual exploitation pattern allowed Woods Cree to exchange ideas with Plains Cree, which helped prepare them for the rapid
FIGURE THREE: Western Cree Seasonal cycle 1690-1775

Source: Arthur Ray 1974
economic changes that took place in the late eighteenth century (Ray, 1974, p.48).

Between the years 1730 and 1750, the Woodland Cree were trading with both the French and the English for somewhat different goods and furs. Guns and ammunition were incorporated into hunting, and became essential trade items. Blankets and cloth also became important as the Woodland Cree were finding it difficult to obtain the necessary number of hides. There were at least three possible factors responsible for the decline in the numbers of animals. There was a natural decline in the number of animals; second, the use of firearms may have depleted the number of animals. Third, trapping reduced the numbers of fur-bearing animals (Ray, 1974, p.81).

4.3 Increasing dependency: from competition to monopoly

By 1763 there was intense rivalry in trading between the English and the French. This competition "led to a rapid spatial expansion of the fur trade in western Canada" (Ray, 1974, p.131). The expansion also lead to a greater dependency on European goods by the Indians because the number of local trading posts increased, and also the system of gift-giving and credit was increased to encourage the Indians to trade (Ray, 1974, p.141). Although there was an increase in dependency, the Woodland Cree were still only trading for necessities; they were not engaged in trade for accumulation or luxury. "With them, [Woods Cree], the principal purchases are of necessaries;" (from Henry the Elder in Ray, 1974, p.146). "Chief trade in the Boreal Forest is Cloth, Blankets, Powder, Shot, Guns and Ironwork and some Tobacco" (Philip Turner of the Hudson's Bay Company quoted in Ray, 1974, p.146).

In order to support this expansion, provisioning centers were established and some Indians became involved in provisioning rather than in their previous economic roles as long-distance middlemen. The Woodland Cree were probably not involved with provisioning. ". . . the Kinistineaux [Cree], on the contrary, attend fur-hunting" (Alexander Mackenzie quoted in Ray, 1974, p.133).
Competition continued until 1821, when the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company merged. There is evidence from the annual reports filed by different traders and by George Simpson (Governor of the Hudson Bay Company) that the intense competition led to serious resource depletion (Ray, 1974, p.117). The archival record also points to natural disasters having played a significant role in this depletion, including disease, fire and drought (Ray, 1974, p.119).

It was not only the animals that were dying in large numbers: between 1780 and 1782 there was a smallpox epidemic that devastated Indians of the Western interior of Canada. The Woodland Cree were widely scattered at this time and lived in small groups. No clear records exist as to their population numbers, and therefore it is not possible to know how severely affected they were by the epidemic (Decker, 1988, p.21). However, the records show that on the plains about half the population died. This may be some indication of what happened further north (Map Seven).

In 1810, the Woodland Cree were still travelling to the south to take part in the buffalo hunts. On January 20, Alexander Henry the Younger wrote from his post in Fort Vermillion, Alberta,

Missisticoine, a Cree, arrived with his family from the strong wood on his way to the Cree camps below. This is the first of my Crees who has come out of the woods this season; when once they take the route for the pounds below, we expect no more fur from them during the season, as they idle, playing and eating buffalo (in Ray, 1974, p.171).

Later Henry describes a family leaving the forest on March 30, 1810, "It is uncommon for a Cree family to stay so long alone in the strong woods" (in Ray, 1974, p.171). Ray remarks that Henry wrote that the Woodland Cree lived in small isolated families while in the woods but when they come onto the plains, they gathered in much larger groups. Henry's patronizing tone implies that he positioned himself on a superior level to the Cree and suggests that he did not favour the Woodland Cree being involved in any activities other than those directly related to the fur trade. However, had the Woodland Cree not participated in the buffalo hunt, starvation might have been the result. This also
MAP SEVEN: Smallpox Epidemic, 1780-1781

Source: Arthur Ray 1974
indicates that the resource strategies pursued by the Indians sometimes clashed with the plans of the European traders. In this case it also indicates that this trader was more interested in obtaining furs than in the well-being of the Woodland Cree.

4.4 Changing mobility

With the merger of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies, the new and expanded Hudson's Bay Company (H.B.C.) had a monopoly of the fur trade. George Simpson became the governor of the H.B.C. and tried to implement a series of economic practices to lessen costs for the H.B.C. His plans included a conservation scheme. The depletion of the beaver at this time (perhaps due to over trapping as encouraged by the rivalry in the fur trade), led Simpson to want to move Indian peoples out of the over-hunted areas. Simpson stated,

> We are endeavoring to confine the natives throughout the country now by families, to separate and distinct hunting grounds...and in a few years I hope it will become general, but it is a very difficult matter to change the habits of Indians although they may see the ultimate benefit thereof to themselves and families (in Ray, 1975, p.61).

The Woodland Cree's subsistence was dependent on mobility. Hunting large ungulates required that people have freedom of movement. However, as Ray points out, these large species were depleted so that the Woodland Cree either had to move to the parklands to hunt buffalo part of the time or increasingly hunt small game and fish. By 1840 the Woodland Cree were leaving the upper Churchill River country because there were so few large animals. John Rowland, the Chief Factor of the Saskatchewan District, wrote to Governor Simpson in 1843,

> I fear from all what I see and hear the best days of the fur trade is gone bye unless something brighter is hid in store from my view of [the] matter & thing. Large animals have become that scarce of late years it is now almost impossible the poor natives can live in
the woods, where the most valuable fur bearing animals are to be trapped.

The whole of the strong wood Indians are out in the plains not only those connected with this district but from many other parts of the Country who are now to be found living in the different camps with the plain tribes on the south side of the Saskatchewan River who are afraid of starving to death with their families if they are made to return to their land... (Rowland quoted in Ray, 1975, p.64).

Ray stated that the Indian population was lower than it had been in the pre-contact or early fur trade era (Ray, 1975, p.64). Because the H.B.C. had a monopoly in this region, the conservation measures ordered by Governor Simpson were effective for the families who remained resident. The Woodland Cree were in a difficult position because of the declining animal population and their growing dependency on the H.B.C. for some food stuffs and trade goods. Therefore the strategies of fishing and hunting non-migratory small game which required less mobility were adopted by the remaining families. This change, later coupled with Simpson's economic/conservation plan, led to the establishment of the family hunting territory (Ray, 1974, p.204).

... as resources became valuable commercially and in turn more scarce as a result of heavy hunting and trapping, more rigid and spatially restrictive land-tenure systems began to emerge. The hunting range was supplanted by the system of band territories in many areas by the middle of the nineteenth century. During the late nineteenth century and the early part of this century, the trap line replaced this system in most of the woodland areas. In this way the mobility of the native peoples was increasingly curtailed (Ray quoted in Krech, 1984, p.6).

The curtailing of mobility had an enormous effect on the ecologically-based aboriginal economy. The Woodland Cree had been highly mobile, hunting moose and woodland caribou. As Ray points out this was in opposition to the European fur trade that "required the maintenance of large, spatially fixed settlements, together with rigid time schedules for cargo shipments along set routeways" (Ray quoted in Krech, 1984, p.9). They also required provisioning houses with distribution locations (from Ray in Krech, 1984, p.9).
By 1870 the Woodland Cree were also dependent on the H.B.C. for flour and biscuits. This increase in dependency on the H.B.C. posts for food was partly because of the declining animal numbers and, as Ray so clearly points out, partly a "deliberate policy of the H.B.C." (Ray, 1984, p.9). Because it took so much longer to hunt for food, there was less available time to trap. The H.B.C. sold flour at a subsidized price in an attempt to encourage Indians to eat more starch and spend less time hunting, thereby providing more time to trap. This policy worked and it created greater dependency on the H.B.C. (Ray, 1984, p.10). In 1860 the buffalo herds were becoming scarce and by 1870 the buffalo hunt was a total failure (Ray, 1974, p.225). Those Woodland Cree who had migrated to the south for the bison could not all go back to the forest. In 1876 Treaty Six was signed at Fort Pitt (Map Eight). This treaty was negotiated out of economic necessity by the Indians. They "agreed to settle on reserves with the promise that the government would look after their welfare and help them make yet another adjustment to changing economic conditions" (Ray, 1974, p.228).

4.5 Seasonal Cycle: 1880

The Woodland Cree who did manage to stay north were primarily trading with the Rapid River post of the H.B.C., which served the area from Southend Reindeer and Frog Portage to Otter Falls and south almost to Montreal Lake (Ballantyne, 1976, p.19). Their seasonal cycle around 1880 no longer included going south to hunt buffalo. Rather, at the end of March families would come in to trade their furs from their winter trapping grounds. A feast and games would be held. After 2 or 3 days most families would return to their traplines but some men would stay on at the post to be employed "squaring timbers, cleaning the stable, cutting and piling firewood and generally getting ready for the summer" (Ballantyne, 1976, p.22). During Easter families would come in for trading and services at the mission. Again, after 2 or 3 days the families returned to their camps for fishing and planting gardens. At the post gardens were also started.

June was the beginning of the H.B.C.'s fiscal year so Cree employees went to the trapping grounds to trade goods, clear off debts and set up new credit. Some families would return for trading and stay two weeks at the post.
MAP EIGHT: Indian land Cessions, 1871-1877

Source: Arthur Ray 1974
Later they returned to their camps for fishing. Some men were hired by the post as trippers on the York boats to take goods to Cumberland House. Some families brought in dried fish and fish oil to trade, as the fishing was poor at the post. By the end of July to late August many Cree men were hired to work around the post, especially preparing the boats which were going to the outposts. September saw most families returning to their trapping grounds. The fisheries were active until late October and at the end of that season the people were busy cleaning, repairing, drying and storing nets. In late December the Cree came back in to trade furs and to attend Christmas services. Some Cree hired on to work around the post from November to December (Ballantyne, 1976, p.23).

This detailed account gives part of the picture of the seasonal cycle of the Woodland Cree in the late 1800s as seen by the clerks of the H.B.C. It is essential to remember that those diligent clerks were men from a Victorian patriarchal background, and this may have blinded them to at least half of the social reality. Women are not mentioned except in general terms of 'the family', and this may give a very misleading impression that the economic roles of women were less important or less evident than those of men.

4.6 Necessary adhesion

By 1888 the Woodland Cree were integrated into the market economy of the fur trade. They were dependent on European trade goods and most men who traded with the post were occasionally engaged in labour for credit (Ballantyne, 1976,p.19). By 1889 a large number of men a few women worked at the posts at least 3 to 5 days a year for wages. This work was essential, as food and fur from hunting and trapping at that time were not always available. During these periods of resource depletion they also relied on the Bay for relief.

In 1898, through an adhesion to Treaty Six, the Peter Ballantyne Band made an agreement with the state out of economic necessity. The signing of the treaties, according to the Woodland Cree, was a way to protect their economy.
In the signing of the treaties the Indians just gave up their land, land exclusively. Only land. Not their natural resources, neither their lakes nor any other thing. These treaty rights were to last as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow (Angus Merasty, quoted in Ballantyne, 1976, p.64).

The Woodland Cree believed that in signing their treaties they would have access to the animals, and to the waterways on which their livelihood depended. Keith Goulet reaffirms this, "When the treaties were signed, only the land was given up. The living resources, the water, and the minerals were not surrendered" (Goulet, 1985, p.7).

4.7 Seasonal cycle: 1900s

The following diagrams of seasonal cycles are based on oral histories collected by the author in the Pelican Narrows community. They are representative for both women's and men's land-based activities during the early 1950s to the late 1970s (Figures Four and Five). Oral histories were also collected for the period before 1950.

The seasonal cycle can be divided by the two major events of break-up and freeze-up. Break-up occurs generally from early to late May. Freeze-up occurs about the beginning of November until early December. The main subsistence events were: 1) winter trapping of beaver; 2) spring muskrat trapping; 3) summer garden and domestic fishing; 4) fall duck hunt; 5) spring berry collection; 6) August berries and medicine collection.

Before 1953 families tended to travel to their traplines in the winter and their fishcamps in the summer. For some these two locations were the same.

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3 "A closer examination of the language shows the place of land in Cree terminology...Cree classify their meanings into the animate and the inanimate. The animate gender refers to nature, living things or that which relates to life. The inanimate gender generally refers to that which is made by people or that which is not living. The animate also refers to the whole while the inanimate generally refers to the parts of a whole. It is clear that the people who signed the treaties did not sell the living resources on the people's land. The trees, the rocks and minerals are referred to in the animate of life part of the classification. Those were not surrendered." (Goulet, 1985, p.7).
FIGURE FOUR: Seasonal cycle for women 1953

Source: Colleen Youngs 1989
FIGURE FIVE: Seasonal cycle for men 1953.

SOURCE: Colleen Youngs ©
These fixed bases served as the main residential location for the women. From these points they would set their snares, generally within walking distance or snowshoeing distance from their cabins (Catherine Linklater, 1988, interview with author). Two or three related families, who shared the trapline, composed the extended family unit. Fixed locations of cabins did not mean that people were fixed. People travelled frequently. Families would meet along the major routes and exchange information and news (Catherine Linklater, 1988, interview with author).

Women's work on the land, when they lived on the trapline in winter and fish camp in the summer, looked something like this. The women prepared wild meat and hides throughout the year. The hides of moose or caribou, collected in winter, would be left frozen outside if the weather was too cold to work on them, then the hide work would be done in the first warm spell. The furs were prepared for the major fur-trading period in December.

**Stretching beaver skins:**
skin the beaver and put the skin in the ice, clean and scrape the fat off; nail the skin to the board [on to the stretcher board]; there is a pattern for stretchers; it takes a skilled woman about ten minutes to stretch a beaver; take the stretched ones off, and dry them overnight; start again; a skilled woman can stretch about twenty beaver skins in a day (Catherine Linklater, 1988, interview with author).

The women shot and snared rabbits and prairie chickens from November through December. They snared squirrels in March and April and they put in the garden at the fish camp in May/June. The women picked cranberries in April and in May and they collected and preserved raspberries and tended the garden in July. They collected blue-berries and low bush-cranberries and medicine in August. They fished for household consumption year-round and especially between April and August. The women harvested their gardens in late August and early September. They prepared fish for dogs in September and October and they hunted and prepared duck and wild grouse in September and October.
Throughout the year women cared for and taught children. They cooked, they cleaned, they nursed the ill, and cared for the elderly. They were working from sunrise to sunset and more.

Generally the men were hunting, however it is not unusual for a woman to hunt also.

One woman was widowed and she managed the trapline and her children at the same time. She used a dogteam. She snared lynx and trapped muskrats. She shot moose, elk and deer with a twenty-two shotgun. She shot a bear, skinned it and processed it for food. She trapped until she was 77 years old, until her eyesight wore out. She was such a good hunter that she took three elk with three bullets. At the time of this hunting her son was in the sanatorium with tuberculosis. She sent that elk meat to her daughter-in-law to dry the meat to give to her son. She fished for her family and also for her dogteam. She had nine children. She had a horse that she rode out of the bush. The only time that horse went fast was on its way home. She was self-taught. She taught her daughters how to hunt and trap. She had a big garden at her trapline. In the winter when the river was frozen she would skate to her trapline (Mary Ballantyne, 1988, interview with author).

Prior to the 1950s many children went to the residential school at Sturgeon Landing. From the 1920s to the 1950s this school was in operation and then most of the parents were living on the trapline. In 1953 a school was built in Pelican Narrows. After that the women and children moved into the community from September to the end of April. I have chosen 1953 as a transition date because this thesis examines the labour of women and this year represented an important time of change for the women. Women did go out to the trapline during those months for varying periods of time; however, they were primarily based in the community with the children.

In September the men hunted for ducks. They also prepared fish for the dogs until 1968. Late September was the beginning of the moose hunt.

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4 Other dates have been suggested as transition dates such as, the beginning of the use of the outboard motor, 1911-15 (John McConnell, personal communication, 1991).
October until January was the winter trapping season, for example beaver trapping. In March and April the men hunted for domestic consumption. In April and May the men trapped muskrat and they planted gardens with the women in May. The men helped tend the gardens in July. From April to August the men fished for domestic consumption. Commercial fishing was carried on year round.

The men did not stay at the trapline throughout the year. "The husbands would bring in lots of meat and furs, then the women would prepare them" (Catherine Linklater, 1988, interview with author). They would come in periodically with meat and furs. Prior to 1968 they could travel by dogsled; after 1968 they would come in by skidoo. The change in transportation from the dogsled to the skidoo meant that the men could travel to and from the community more quickly and more frequently. In the past the journey to the trapline "used to take one day with the dogs, now it takes one hour" (Horace Sewap, 1988, interview with author).

When people are on the land the above activities are still the ones followed, however most families are no longer on the land full-time. Now people will prioritize the land-based activities they engage in, partially because the decline of the fur trade has meant that most people cannot afford to go out on the land to the extent they did in the past. Without the cash derived from the sale of furs, it becomes more and more difficult to capitalize hunting and trapping. Now people will try to get out for the fall moose hunt whereas gardens at the trapline are now unusual.

4.8 Conclusions

In pre-contact times the Woodland Cree were trading with other Indian people (J.V. Wright quoted in Harris, 1988, plate 14). This trade was one example of the living and changing culture of the Woodland Cree. There was no untouched traditional culture of Woodland Cree that European fur traders of the contact period encountered. However, given that, the fur trade was the most powerful force in changing the economic/social development of Western Canada (Ray, 1974, p. xi), and it was a major force in the change of the Woodland Cree's culture. In the early period of the fur trade the Woodland Cree
were probably migrating to obtain access to European trade goods. At this time they still maintained their own social organization and they managed their own land tenure system.

From 1690 to 1765 the Woodland Cree were migrating south to hunt bison during the spring. This was a significant shift in their seasonal cycle, one that may have been a reflection of the fur trade's role in the decline of the northern animal populations. With the amalgamation of the H.B.C. and the North West Company in 1821, the Woodland Cree were in a weakened position. Animals were very scarce and the H.B.C. monopoly created a situation whereby the Woodland Cree were made increasingly dependent. The land tenure system changed dramatically from a hunting range system to family hunting territories. This decreased mobility was also a direct result of the fur trade.

With increased dependency and decreased mobility, the Woodland Crees' economic and social context changed from a hunting, trapping and gathering economy to a subsistence-based mixed economy. From the 1920s children went to residential school and the women stayed on the trapline with their husbands and younger and older children. These activities were engaged in until 1953 when the school was built in Pelican Narrows. This marked an important change because the women and children's primary residence then became Pelican Narrows. Around 1968 snowmobiles again changed the seasonal cycle because; it became possible to travel in a 3 to 5 hours, a distance that had previously taken 2 to 3 days by dogteam. These seasonal cycles are still in evidence today. When people are on the land they still follow the seasonal cycle (Figures Three and four). People will go onto the land for specific activities such as the fall moose hunt, the fall duck hunt and to pick blueberries in August. It is now uncommon to plant and harvest a big garden at the trapline. The seasonal cycle has always changed, as the animals moved locations or stocks where depleted, as the people moved to obtain different food sources. Now the seasonal cycle is used more intermittently than prior to 1953. This background leads directly to the beginning of my data chapter, which chronicles the labour of Woods Cree women in the present-day subsistence-based mixed economy.
5. DATA

5.0 Introduction

I wanted to find a graphic device to represent what women's labour might look like. A seasonal cycle was the most appropriate tool for data from the past. However, in the present context it did not demonstrate the full extent of women's work, because less than 10 families are still living on the land full-time. To merely record that women worked outside the home, or went to school or lived part-time in the bush, would be misleading and a misrepresentation of women's labour within the extended family. It is important and necessary to examine women's labour within the extended family because the subsistence-based mixed economy is structured around the household and the extended family. For this reason, examining women's work within the nuclear family would fail to describe the social reality.

To document and analyze women's work through the life-cycle may not be as revealing as other techniques in part because there is a large area of overlap in jobs for women between the ages of 14 to 65. In other words, women within these age groups do most of the same jobs. Who does what and at what time may be more dependent on other factors, such as who is available. Women over 65 also share in some of the jobs. What they do may depend more on the individual's ability to function rather than on her age. Some women at age 75 still go out on the land to hunt, trap and gather.

Woods Cree women have very different types of day-to-day work. Their days seem to be based on individuals' ability to give and share their labour and resources, and the needs of the extended family. Clearly, to share and to cooperate are essential values that underlie most decisions about action. However, the level of sharing and cooperation changes both over time and space.

Women have multiple labour roles, and these labour roles are interactive. Because women's lives are deeply embedded in the extended family, women's labour must also be understood within that context. Women are constantly negotiating and integrating two ways of life and two worlds. In
looking at their land-based work, which is still very important economically and culturally, there is a seasonal cycle. However, in the wider context of women's present roles, there is a decision-making process that is profoundly influenced by both their legacy of a wholly land-based way of life and their present, fixed-community residence.

I decided to examine women's labour by documenting and analyzing six events that are common to their daily lives. The events chosen examine a broad range of their labour that takes place in different locations and different contexts, in the community, on the land and in the city. They are not meant to comprise a statistical sample, but rather a series of case studies that exemplify patterns in Woods Cree women's decision-making processes. They demonstrate the interdependency of the social and the economic dimensions in women's decision-making regarding their multiple labour roles.

These six events have been titled: One day; Organizing a trip to the bush; Women's work in the bush; Illness in the family; Winter moose hunt; and Bullets to Caribou. The description of each event consists of four parts. First, a written text describes the event. The description demonstrates women's work as embedded in the extended family and the household. This fits with Usher's model of the subsistence-based mixed economy. Second, a map of the area shows the spatial extent of women's labour. The map demonstrates that women's labour covers a very extensive range and is not limited to a specific location. Third, a diagram outlines the event and clarifies the women's labour. The diagram provides some idea of the sequence of their labour and/or the simultaneous nature of those jobs. The diagram also clarifies which jobs take place in which location. Fourth, a chart describes where women's labour fits into Usher's model of the mixed subsistence-based economy.

The purpose of this thesis has been to describe and analyze Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy. As was stated earlier, Usher's model was chosen because it best describes that economy and is still useful when examining women's labour. His four categories of labour -- harvester, processor, servicer and supporter -- are capable of including some of women's labour. As Usher has stated, his model was designed primarily to account for men's labour, therefore it was necessary to build on his model in the following ways. The categories now include:
harvester -- hunting, trapping, fishing, collecting berries and medicine; processor -- butchering meat, preparing and drying fish and meat and berries, preparing medicine, preparing and cooking the meals, skinning and stretching pelts; servicer -- fixing machinery, equipment, clothing, driving people, shopping, planning and organizing trips, clean-up, tending the ill and the elderly, organizing equipment and labour and childcare; supporters -- those who have jobs and contribute their income to purchasing equipment or gasoline.

I include more jobs in the categories of harvester, processor and servicer than Usher. He does not include these jobs because he claims that they are unrelated to resource harvesting (Usher, 1989, p.1); however, this author claims that these jobs are an essential part of the subsistence-based mixed economy. Women's labour is essential to the maintenance and functioning of that economy. Under the category of harvester I included the jobs that directly involve obtaining food and medicine from the land. To the category of processor I added women's labour of preparing and drying fish, meat and berries, and cooking meals because these are jobs of processing. The jobs I have included under the category of servicer fit because they are legitimate professions in the service industry. For example, we pay for childcare, nursing, and taxi rides.

I have also created a new category which I refer to as familial work. Familial work is the category directly connected to relationships within the extended family. This labour functions as the integrating force which binds together the social and the economic dimensions. For example, maintenance of the kinship network reinforces ties, values and connections. Those ties, values and connections enable the subsistence-based mixed economy to function because that economy in turn is based on the household and the extended family. Also, the transmission of knowledge about the land, plants, animals and social relations provides the younger generation with the information they need to maintain the economy.

I have modified and expanded Usher's model to include all of Woods Cree women's labour which serves to integrate and maintain the subsistence-based mixed economy.
5.1 One day

This first event describes one typical day for a Woods Cree woman. This woman, in her mid-thirties, lives in Pelican Narrows (Map Nine). She is a single parent and has five children, aged five to eighteen. Her household fluctuates in size depending on whether she and her children stay with her mother, or if relatives are staying with her, or if some of her children are staying with other relatives. In the morning she rises with her children and helps them prepare for school. After breakfast and dressing, some of the children board the schoolbus. Then the mother drives to her brother's house at the edge of the community, about 30 kilometers away, to check his health: does he need medicine, does he need a lift to the nursing station (fifteen kilometers away); does his wife need to go to the nursing station; do they need staples from the Hudson's Bay Store, the main store in the community? During this visit they make plans concerning extended family needs; who needs to go where, for what service or goods, or do they need to go at all?

Next the woman drives back to the community center with at least one other passenger, plus giving lifts to people walking into the center of the community. Many people do not own or have access to vehicles, so they must walk into the center of the community to buy groceries and other goods, and for health care, etc. She drives to her mother's house with her children, whom she has picked up from the school. There again she makes a health check on her mother, an elder, and there she prepares lunch for the family. At her mother's there are usually two or more extended family members staying for varying periods of time. These family members enable the mother to remain in her home.

The children return to school on the schoolbus after lunch and the daughter remains with her mother, visiting, exchanging information, cleaning, ironing, and cooking. Later she returns to her brother's to see what is needed. Then she goes back home to clean house, prepare food for the supper and generally tidy up. After supper she visits at several neighbors with some of the children to check on ill and elderly relatives. Later in the evening she goes home to put the children to bed and usually to receive visitors (Map Ten).
MAP NINE: Pelican Narrows

Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991

Source: Surveys & Mapping Branch Department of Energy, Mines & Resources 1968
printed in 1971
MAP TEN: Homes visited in Pelican Narrows

KEY

Δ - school

+ - homes within the extended family that were visited

⊕ - home of the main woman in One Day

Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991
Visiting is not only an important time to exchange information about the events of the past, present and future, but also it is 'time to cultivate social relations' (Fuglesang, 1982, p.37). It is important to notice the number of labour roles this woman engages in; the interconnection between social and economic roles; and her labour as embedded in the extended family.

Maps Nine and Ten indicate where the woman's labour takes place and also demonstrates that her labour is spread over time and space. Figure Six highlights the process of her labour. Chart One drafts the modifications needed to include all of her labour when using Usher's model.

5.2 Organizing a trip to the bush

This particular trip (Map Eleven) was organized primarily to get me onto the land to see what life was like there. It was also intended as a moose hunt, and to hunt other wild game if possible. As was discussed in section 4.8 the seasonal cycle is now intermittently used. The fall moose hunt is still an important activity. This trip to the bush required preparatory two days of hectic visiting, inquiries, driving and shopping. One woman was the prime organizer and the event finally involved twelve people. Support for the trip came in the form of capital resources including boats, motors, guns, bullets, a tent, blankets, a car and a truck. Cash was needed to buy some supplies for the trip, mostly in the form of foodstuffs, and there was also a call for gas money. Although only twelve people went to the bush for several days, at least twenty-four other people shared in making the event possible.

The first person to be contacted was the brother of the woman organizing the trip. He is the primary hunter in the extended family. The trip was to his family's trapping area on the Churchill River system. Initially he, his wife and his son-in-law planned to go. However, as time went on more individuals from the family decided to go and another boat was required. The first boat and motor were from the primary hunter's nuclear family and the second boat and motor were borrowed from another brother and wife within the same extended family.

This sharing of expensive equipment needs to be underlined. A boat and motor are not owned by every family, and the cost of repairs is high. If
The woman prepares breakfast and dresses some of her children. She walks them to the schoolbus.

She drives to her brother's for a health check and general planning.

She drives to the nursing station and/or to the Bay.

She drives to her mother's.

On the way she picks up her children from the school.

At her mother's she does a health check, prepares the lunch, and visits.

The children return to school on the schoolbus, and their mother stays to clean-up her mother's house do their laundry.

The woman later drives to her brother's to check on his health and to see if they need anything.

Then she drives home to clean-up her house, to prepare the supper, and to wait for her children.

After supper she will go visiting to check on the elderly and the ill.

Later she returns home to put the children to bed and to receive visitors.
# Chart 1. Labour for One Day

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvester</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>cutting up fish and/or moose for supper, cooking the meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicer</td>
<td>driving people to the nursing station, the Bay, into the community, to school; childcare; acting as a health promoter within the family; cleaning the house; shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>uses cash to buy car, cash for gas money, food, clothing, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, these categories do not include all the work done by this woman on this particular day. They exclude the familial work that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- maintenance of the extended family network
something had happened to the boat or motor no one had the cash to repair or replace them. The wife of the brother who shared the boat and motor works full-time. Some part of her wages went into buying the boat and motor. To organize the use of the boats was a major task. It required driving around to locate the owners of the boats and asking both the wife and the husband for permission to borrow. This points to joint decision-making within the household. This also demonstrates one of the links between the wage economy and the bush economy: the purchase of the boats and motors for use in the bush to obtain bush food came from wages earned within the cash economy.

The next major task was to shop for twelve people. With a limited budget to cover a period of several days this task required a good knowledge of what kinds of food to buy and in what quantities. The hope was to kill a moose but if that did not happen, and/or the fish catch was limited, how much food would be required? Most of the food purchased1 was comprised of starches, carbohydrates and sugars. This shopping was done by the woman who organized the trip.

A truck was now needed to haul the food, people and equipment fifty kilometers to the location of the boats. The remainder of the journey was by boat on the Churchill River system. The truck was owned by the niece of the woman organizing the trip. The niece had a full-time job at the band office which provided the wages with which she bought the truck. She also gave gas money to provide fuel for the vehicles and the boats. Guns and bullets were supplied by a variety of people within the extended family, some people giving a 2 or 3 bullets.

The mobilization of labour for the trip to the bush was in part done by the woman who organized the trip. Again, her knowledge of who would be needed, what work would be involved, and of who was available to fulfill those jobs, demonstrates a broad and complex knowledge of life in the bush. It also demonstrates a close relationship with extended family members in order to

1 The cost of food in the north is much higher than in the south.
plan the trip in the first place. This is one economic consequence of maintaining social linkages.

Only two young children came on the trip, a fact that meant someone else needed to take care of the children who stayed behind in the community. In this case the children were staying with their aunt and grandmother. This required shuffling of clothing, some food and other things for the children to various households.

A special trip was required to buy oil for the boats; the motor on one of the boats was broken and took a half day to repair; and one of the guns jammed while firing and it took time and expertise to repair.

Navigating a boat on the Churchill River system through its rapids demands a thorough knowledge of the river. Since the building of the dam at Island Falls the water levels are unpredictable. There is more loose debris in the water and these factors create a need for excellent navigation skills.

This trip to the bush demonstrates how cash from the wage sector is used to subsidize the hunt. It also clearly points to women's role in using their wages to purchase capital. Long-term reciprocity and sharing are the connections that made this trip possible.

Map Eleven shows the excursions made to organize the trip to the bush. Then comes Figure Seven, which highlights the principal woman's labour in order of its occurrence. Finally there is Chart Two which modifies Usher's model to include the labour of women.

5.3 Women's work in the bush

Upon arriving at a fixed camp (Map Twelve) the first task was to unload the equipment and goods and set up. Both men and women did this work. Chopping wood, starting the fire, and putting on the tea came next. This was done by the women, as the man who was driving the boat was needed back at the starting point due to a faulty motor in the second boat. Three women and
FIGURE SEVEN: Organizing a trip to the bush

Deciding on a trip

Visit brother to plan trip

Borrow a second boat and motor, ask another brother and sister-in-law.

Organize childcare, plus shuffling of food, clothing and medicine.

Borrow guns, bullets, etc.

Shop for foodstuffs for twelve people.

Borrow a truck and gas money.

Ask people to come and help navigate, load etc.
## Chart 2. Labour for Organizing a Trip to the Bush

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvester</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicer</td>
<td>driving people to buy food, goods; childcare; organizing for childcare; planning and organizing the trip; borrowing various equipment; organizing the labour; shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>uses cash from job or transfer payments to buy car, truck, boat, motor, gas, oil, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories do not include all the work done by the women in organizing the trip to the bush. They exclude the familial work that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- maintenance of the extended family network
MAP TWELVE: Travelling to and from the bush

Pelican Narrows

KEY
- community locations
- Boats docked
+ trapping cabins on Pita Lake
○ tourist camp - park the car
--- travel by car & truck
--------- travel by boat
---------- day trips

Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991

Source: Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation 1986
one child were left in the camp to finish setting up and to prepare a meal. The women needed to fix up the outdoor kitchen by placing a large tarp over the table to provide protection from the wind and rain. A gun was left in case of bears. Although some of the labour of setting up camp could be gender specific, it was clear that everyone knew what work was necessary. Many of the tasks were interchangable for men or women.

Throughout the stay in the bush the general ambience was relaxed, and no individual gave orders. On this occasion the men would often, but not always, go out together to hunt in the boat. The women and children would stay in camp preparing for the day. The work these women did included smoking the fish caught early in the morning, cooking and processing wild game birds that had been shot by one of the men, washing dishes, preparing the table, caring for the young children, and general clean-up of the camp site. There was no gardening work at this time. The women did some berry picking, and some medicine was gathered to cure diarrhea in one of the children. Some birch bark was gathered for the fire to smoke the fish. One of the women went hunting rabbits. All the women knew how to use guns and they did some practice shooting. The women also did some fishing and some of the cleaning of the fish.

All these bush activities by the women resemble the activities of the past in terms of what goes on in that season. When women are in the bush they do the work they did in the past in the bush. The seasonal cycle is still in evidence today, with certain activities taking priority, such as the fall moose and duck hunt, fishing and collecting berries and medicine in August. This demonstrates a continuing knowledge of the land and also the transmission of bush knowledge. One of the older women showed her daughter where to gather the medicine for diarrhea and how to prepare it. These activities hint at the sophistication of women's work in the bush, and imply a vast knowledge of the land, the animals, the plants and their complex interrelationships. It involves differing patterns of movement for the purposes of resource harvesting and conservation methods. During this period in the bush, specific known locations were sought out to find specific plants and animals.
The day trips from camp to specific locations (Map Twelve) seemed to occur at a moment's notice. One minute we were sitting in camp visiting and the next we were in the boats, with the equipment and food all packed. The high level of social organization required for this flexible system to work, while involving twelve people, was a demonstration of the sophisticated and direct connection between social, cultural and economic formation of the society.

Map Twelve shows the trip to the land via truck and boat. It also shows where the trapping cabins are located and the general area where the day trips occurred. Figure Eight shows women's labour, including the continuous activities and the work that took place at a variety of times. Chart Three indicates what is needed to modify Usher's model to include all of women's labour.

5.4 Illness in the family

In Woods Cree society when you are first introduced to someone, you are introduced by the kin relationship that person has to the speaker. For example, if someone wanted to introduce their son James, they would say "this is my son," not "this is James" (Cecil Ballantyne, 1991, personal communication). This is very important because it indicates membership in an extended family group, rather than focussing on individuality. Therefore, within this event I refer to the individuals through their kinship positions. This helps to provide a window on the way collective labour within the extended family is sometimes allocated. This event involves a large number of individuals and to use their relationship statuses rather than their names became very awkward; to make the text more readable, initials are used to represent individuals. Here is a list of the relationships and the initials used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>the ill husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD</td>
<td>his wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>his sister, resident in Saskatoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YT</td>
<td>that sister's husband also in Saskatoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW</td>
<td>that sister's daughter-in-law, also in Saskatoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>the ill husband's sister, resident in Pelican Narrows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE EIGHT: Women's work in the bush

Check campsite and area.

Unload equipment and food

Set up camp, pitch tent, cover eating area, organize space.

Chop wood and start fire, put on tea.

Care for children.

Prepare food.

General camp clean-up

Process and cook wild game and fish.

Hunt rabbits and go fishing.

Pick berries and medicine.

Practice shooting.

Help load boats.
### Chart 3. Labour for Women's Work in the Bush

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvester</td>
<td>pick berries, medicine, hunt rabbits, go fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>process fish and wild game birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>process berries and medicine, chop wood, cook meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicer</td>
<td>fixing and securing the roof for the outdoor kitchen, childcare, general camp clean-up, cook meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>cash from jobs or transfer payments used in the purchase of boats, motors, gas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories do not include all the work done by the women in the bush. They exclude the familial work that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- transmission of knowledge about the land, the plants, the animals and social relations
- maintenance of the extended family network
RR the ill husband's brother, resident in Prince Albert
HH the ill husband's sister-in-law, wife of RR, also resident in Prince Albert
LL the daughter of AZ, also resident in Saskatoon

The following example of women's labour illustrates events related to an illness in the family. In this particular case a husband falls ill while in Saskatoon to pick up a part for his van. When TT gets sick he is staying with AZ. Previously YT, who knows the city well, helped TT to locate the van part in the city. TT goes to the emergency in the hospital and from there telephones WD, at her job in Pelican Narrows, to come and help him because TT is too sick to drive home. When TT returns to AZ's it is decided that he should move across the hallway of the apartment building to WW's because there is more room for him there.

Meanwhile, in the north in Pelican Narrows, WD receives the news of TT's illness from her boss, and begins to organize the trip south. WD first goes to MM to ask if MM will drive WD south and then drive one of the vehicles back north. However, on the way they meet a friend who is going to Prince Albert and offers WD a ride. WD gives MM money for the bus to Saskatoon from Pelican Narrows.

When WD arrives in Prince Albert, she immediately goes to RR to ask for a ride to Saskatoon. HH is at the bingo with the car. RR and WD go to the bingo where they meet HH. They all make plans about driving WD to Saskatoon.

LL is visiting in Prince Albert with HH and RR. LL stays in Prince Albert to babysit the HH and RR's children, while they drive WD to Saskatoon. Before leaving Prince Albert for Saskatoon RR, HH and WD leave a message at the bus depot for MM to wait in Prince Albert. To take the bus from Pelican Narrows to Saskatoon, it is necessary to change at Prince Albert.

When WD, RR and HH arrive in Saskatoon (Map Thirteen), they go and pick up TT. WD, TT, RR and HH decide to stay overnight as TT is too ill to travel.
Source: Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation 1986
Cartographer: Lambert Fung 1991
RR phones the bus depot in Prince Albert to cancel the message to MM. The two couples then go and stay in a hotel. That is Thursday.

RR and HH return home on Friday. At four p.m. that day MM arrives on the bus. The bus from Pelican Narrows to Saskatoon leaves at eight a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. YT is at the bus depot and together they walk over to his home. On the way they bump into TT, WD and AZ. They all stay over Friday night and MM drives the van with TT and WD back to Pelican Narrows the next day.

WD took two days away from full-time work to go and help her husband. Most women do not have full-time jobs in the community of Pelican Narrows. It is important to notice that she took time off work. It is important to know that TT fully recuperated within 3 days of becoming ill. Although his illness was never life-threatening, he was ill and he needed help. MM, who came down from Pelican Narrows on the bus, is a single parent with five children. Yet, in this event she arranged childcare so that she could help her brother. All the cooperation in this event was usual and did not appear to be extra work. No one complained about being put out by their effort. It was expected that those who were asked to help would do so without question. This is an example where family needs took priority in labour allocation.

Map Thirteen shows the extent of this event. The bus trip takes about nine hours. Figure Nine illustrates the course of this event, as it took place through three locations. Chart Four shows where Usher's model needed to be modified to include the work of women.

5.5 Winter moose hunt

Word of an impending trip to Flin Flon was spread through the extended family the evening before the travelling couple was to leave. Various family members and friends made requests for groceries and goods to be purchased in Flin Flon. Some members asked for a ride. Throughout the extended family,
FIGURE NINE: Illness in the family

Husband drives to Saskatoon for a van part

Husband stays with sister from Saskatoon

Saskatoon brother-in-law shows where to obtain part

Husband gets sick in Saskatoon, and calls his wife's office in Pelican Narrows

Husband goes to Emergency at Saskatoon hospital

Husband moves across the hallway to stay with sister's daughter-in-law.

At the office the director takes the message

Later, the same day the wife gets the message

The wife arranges for a ride with her sister-in-law

They meet a friend who offers the wife a ride to Prince Albert

The wife gives the sister-in-law bus money to Saskatoon and she accepts the ride to Prince Albert.

Daughter of sister in Saskatoon is visiting in Prince Albert. She stays in Prince Albert with the children while her aunts and uncle go to Saskatoon.

Before they leave for Saskatoon they leave a message at the bus station for the sister-in-law from Pelican Narrows for wait in Prince Albert.

They go to sister's in Saskatoon to meet the ill husband and they phone the bus depot to leave a different message for the sister-in-law from Pelican Narrows.

The couple from Pelican Narrows and the couple from Prince Albert stay at a hotel in Saskatoon.

Sister-in-law from Pelican Narrows arrives on the bus to Saskatoon and bumps into brother-in-law from Saskatoon

As they walk home they run into sister from Saskatoon and the ill husband and his wife.

The couple from Prince Albert return home

The next day the ill husband (who is now better) and his wife and the sister-in-law return to Pelican Narrows.
### CHART 4. LABOUR FOR ILLNESS IN THE FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HARVESTER</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESSOR</td>
<td>cooking meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICER</td>
<td>driving people to Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Pelican Narrows; childcare, tending the ill, cleaning house; shopping; organizing the rides; organizing the labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTER</td>
<td>uses cash to buy car, cash for gas money, food, hotel, medicine, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories do not include all the work done by the women during the course of this illness. They exclude the **familial work** that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- maintenance of the extended family network
arrangements were made to borrow a truck and to get gas money. Childcare
was arranged with the wife's parents.

The married couple drove to Flin Flon the following morning. During the
course of the day they shopped for themselves and those others who had made
requests. On their return home the wife spotted a moose. The couple tracked it
into the bush and shot it. They left the carcass in the bush, returned to their
truck, and drove to the home of some close relatives in Denare Beach to warm
up, to phone Pelican Narrows and to get help. The wife phoned Pelican
Narrows to have their children brought home, to tell about the moose and to
tell family members to meet at the grandmother's house to celebrate and share the
moose. All were to meet at the grandmother's because she is the head of the
extended family.

Few people in Pelican Narrows have a telephone, so word about the
moose kill was spread through the extended family by individuals walking,
skidooing and driving around the community. Some family members began to
gather at the grandmother's home and some drove to the kill site to help
process the carcass, along with the original hunting party and their relatives
from Denare Beach (Map Fourteen).

Finally, nineteen adult family members were gathered at the
grandmother's to celebrate the moose hunt and share the meat. The hunt was
retold and social ties were reaffirmed.

Why did this couple stop on a cold winter's night to track and kill a moose
when their truck was loaded with groceries? Why did the couple phone to tell
people to come and share the moose? One moose has about five hundred
pounds of meat, enough to sustain their nuclear family for the winter. Why are
their relatives willing to go to the grandmother's at 3:30 a.m., especially when
some members go to work, go to school, or take care of the children later the
same morning? These individuals prefer wild meat -- and moose is especially
valued. The moose hide will later be used for the production of mitts and
moccasins. However, the fact that people are willing to stay up through the
night has more to do with social and cultural values than having something to
eat.
MAP FOURTEEN: Winter Moose Hunt

Cartographer: David Lapen 1990
Source: Allmaps Canada 1989
Flexibility, openness and opportunism are valued qualities in hunting and gathering societies that have been well documented over the years. (Asch, 1982, Brody, 1981, Feit, 1982, Freeman, 1975, Jarvenpa, 1975, Tanner, 1979, Usher, 1971, 1981, Wenzel, 1981). This would appear to hold true today. The moose hunt was unplanned, but once the moose was spotted, hunting it became the priority and not the groceries in the back of the truck. Long-term reciprocity, sharing and co-operation are values that are essential in reaffirming and maintaining this extended family network. Immediate reciprocity is not expected\(^2\), but in the next two weeks or months or years this couple will depend on meat or something else coming back to them from someone else in the extended family. Every individual in this extended family will contribute to, and depend on, that network.

Map Fourteen shows the approximate location of the kill site and the area this event takes place over. Figure Ten shows the time and various locations where different elements of the hunt took place. Chart Five demonstrates the modification needed to include women's labour in Usher's model.

### 5.6 Bullets-to-Caribou

An example of the importance of the subsistence-based mixed economy is typified in the bullets-to-caribou, Saskatoon-to-Brochet route. This distribution, processing and sharing network covers 1400 kilometers, following the road from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan to Kinoosa, Manitoba. The remainder of the route is an ice road in winter and a boat or plane route after break-up. This network involves 220 people who are all part of an extended family (Map Fifteen). The bush begins at Prince Albert. There is only one road. Commodity costs increase as you travel north.

A full-time hunter lives in Brochet with his family. He takes about 14-16 caribou a year. Previously, caribou were hunted in Pelican Narrows but since about 1945 they no longer come that far south (Linklater, 1989). This hunter

\(^2\)Jarvenpa writes of this same value with the Chipewyan of Northern Manitoba in, *The people of Patuanak: The Ecology and Spatial Organization of a Southern Chipewyan Band*, 1975.
FIGURE TEN: Winter moose hunt

- 9 a.m.
  - Pelican Narrows to Flin Flon Shopping

- 12 p.m.
  - Spot/Track/Kill Moose

- 1:30 a.m.
  - Leave Carcass and Drive to Denare Beach

- 2 a.m.
  - Phone Pelican Narrows

- 2:30 a.m.
  - Information Relay in Pelican Narrows
  - Denare Beach to Kill Site
  - Pelican Narrows to Kill Site

- 3 a.m.
  - Process the Carcass

- 3:30 a.m.
  - Gather at Grandmother's
  - Celebrate the Hunt & Share Moose

- 5 a.m.
  - Home to Sleep
  - Go to Work
  - Go to School

Source: Colleen Youngs 1990
**CHART 5. LABOUR FOR WINTER MOOSE HUNT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HARVESTER</td>
<td>participating in the killing of the moose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCESSOR</td>
<td>butchering the moose, cooking the moose, making tea and sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICER</td>
<td>driving people to the kill site, telephoning the news of the kill, purchasing food and goods for relatives and friends, childcare, borrowing a truck, obtaining gas money, shopping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTER</td>
<td>uses cash to buy car, truck, cash for gas money, food, goods, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories do not include all the work done by women during this event. They exclude the familial work that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- maintenance of the extended family network
with his wife and older children process the caribou, butchering and freezing it. They keep some for their own consumption and some for distribution among their extended family.

The man’s cousin lives in Lynn Lake with his family. This cousin is one of the distributors. He picks up the processed, frozen caribou in Brochet, returns to Lynn Lake with some caribou for his family. He then starts to travel south, distributing the caribou to various relatives along the way, first stopping at Thompson, Manitoba, and then going on to Pelican Narrows.

Once the frozen caribou arrives in Pelican Narrows, individual family members will come to one distribution point to pick up their portion of meat. This location is important because it is at the house of the grandmother, who is the head of the extended family. The cousin may receive gas money from relatives in Pelican Narrows. With this he may buy gas in Lynn Lake to take up to Brochet. It is cheaper to buy gas in Lynn Lake than in Brochet. He may also be given bullets in Pelican Narrows to take up to the hunter in Brochet.

This job as the distributor is not relegated to men only. Rather, it would appear that the decision as to who will fulfil this role is more likely to be based on availability rather than gender, as the following example illustrates. Some of the frozen caribou is still to be distributed to relatives in Prince Albert and Saskatoon. The bullets that were sent from Pelican Narrows to Brochet were purchased in Saskatoon—bullets are cheaper in Saskatoon. The frozen caribou is transported and distributed by a woman who is also a cousin of the hunter and she resides in Pelican Narrows.

A trip south is taken by this cousin for a variety of reasons: to purchase goods in the south that are unobtainable in the north, or to receive better health care in the south or to use other services that are not available in the north, or to visit relatives. Often most of these needs are met in one trip. At the same time she, the cousin from Pelican Narrows, will take some of the frozen caribou both to Prince Albert and to Saskatoon to other relatives in this sharing network. While she is in Saskatoon, she will also purchase bullets with money from the grandmother in Pelican Narrows.
Map Fifteen demonstrates the extensive area that this sharing network flows over. It does not recognize provincial boundaries as barriers. Figure Eleven shows the linkages between the sharing network and the various locations where meat and goods are exchanged. Chart Six demonstrates all of the women's labour for this event in the modified model of Usher's.

The conclusions in the following chapter are drawn from the above data. They include several statements about the essential nature and roles of Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy.
FIGURE ELEVEN: Bullets to caribou

BROCHET CARIBOU HUNT

BROCHET FAMILY PROCESSES AND FREEZES CARIBOU

LYNN LAKE COUSIN PICKS UP AND DISTRIBUTES CARIBOU

LYNN LAKE COUSIN TO LYNN LAKE WITH CARIBOU

LYNN LAKE COUSIN TO THOMPSON WITH CARIBOU

LYNN LAKE COUSIN TO PELICAN NARROWS WITH CARIBOU

DISTRIBUTION OF CARIBOU WITHIN PELICAN NARROWS

PELICAN NARROWS COUSIN GOES SOUTH TO PURCHASE GOODS & SERVICES

PELICAN NARROWS COUSIN DISTRIBUTES CARIBOU IN P.A. & SASKATOON

LYNN LAKE COUSIN RETURNS TO BROCHET WITH BULLETS & GAS

LYNN LAKE COUSIN BUYS GAS IN LYNN LAKE FOR BROCHET

LYNN LAKE COUSIN RECEIVES BULLETS & GAS MONEY IN P.N.

PELICAN NARROWS COUSIN RETURNS WITH BULLETS FOR BROCHET HUNT

PELICAN NARROWS COUSIN BUYS BULLETS IN SASKATOON WITH CASH FROM P.N.
### Chart 6. Labour for Bullets-to-Caribou

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harvester</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processor</td>
<td>cutting up moose, cooking the meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servicer</td>
<td>driving and distributing food and goods, buying goods and services for others, cleaning the house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporter</td>
<td>uses cash to buy car, cash for gas, money and bullets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These categories do not include all the work done by the women through the course of this sharing and distribution network. Again, it excludes the familial work that is directly connected to relationships within the extended family such as:

- maintenance of the extended family network
6. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine Woods Cree women's labour, as embedded in the extended family within the subsistence-based mixed economy of Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan. The reasons for examining women's, as distinct from men's, work is: because women's labour demonstrates the interactive nature of the economic and the social dimensions within the subsistence-based mixed economy; and because women and their labour has largely been ignored or misrepresented within that literature.

My examination of the various theories about the Northern economy revealed the failings of a dualistic perspective. The first problem cited was the existence of a rigid public/private dichotomy between capitalist and domestic components. Woods Cree women's labour demonstrates that, on the contrary, the articulation between the capitalist and the domestic components is very strong.

The above assertion has been demonstrated in the following ways. In the first example, One Day, the woman uses cash from past employment for the purchase of a car. She also uses cash from transfer payments for gas money, food, and clothing. She uses the car to drive extended family members to various services that they require. She pays for the gas, shares her food, and clothing with other extended family members. This labour falls under the categories of servicer and supporter. Those multiple labour roles integrate capitalist and domestic components of the subsistence-based mixed economy. The maintenance of the extended family network, under the category of familial labour, occurs at every intersection and that labour integrates the social and the economic aspects of the subsistence-based mixed economy.

Secondly, the dualistic perspective suggests that there is no resistance to capitalism, and that capitalism dominates the domestic component. The example of Illness in the Family strongly demonstrates resistance from within the domestic sphere. The wife of the husband who becomes ill leaves her full-time employment to attend to her family needs. Here the family takes priority over wage labour.
In this case it means that she travels to Saskatoon to help her ill husband. At this point one might ask whether this is a gender-specific situation. Would the case be the same if the wife had become ill; would her husband leave his full-time job to help her? Although it may not happen in every instance, depending on the seriousness of the illness and the urgency of the job at that time, men have left full-time jobs, on short notice, to help in family emergencies that took place over several days. Their family took precedence over the capitalist component of their lives.

Clearly, a dualistic perspective fails to explain the present day Northern economy with all of its historical underpinnings. A more useful perspective examines the articulation between the capitalist and domestic components. The best model within this perspective is Usher's, based on the subsistence-based mixed economy. Specifically this thesis examines women's labour within the household of the subsistence-based mixed economy.

The definition of the household became another theoretical problem. I conclude that the household is a set of social relations that includes the primary cooperative unit, the primary social unit, the primary economic unit and the primary consumption unit. The household cannot be tied to a specific location or to a specific composition.

The woman in One Day, cared for her extended family by sometimes staying with her mother for extended periods of time. She and her children became part of the household. At other times, members of her extended family came and stayed with her. This continual shifting of households was not considered 'visiting', but rather part of the regular course of events. The mobility of household membership often occurred because one house had: access to water; access to wood for heat; or access to country food. Another reason for this high rate of mobility involves helping an extended family member with childcare, or with the elderly, or with the sick.

Mobility between households is both common and frequent. It takes place throughout the entire extended family. Older children often stay for varying periods of time with other extended family members. I conclude from
the research that the household is a set of social relations and that it is very fluid
and moves not only in terms of composition but also in term of place.

Usher's model of the household within the subsistence-based mixed
economy incorporates four categories for labour including harvester, processor,
servicer and supporter. Usher has stated that his model was constructed with
men in mind. Therefore, there are theoretical implications for women's labour
when using his model.

Two feminist theorists, Delphy and Nicholson challenge the view that
productive labour does not include the work of women called familial work: that
labour which is directly connected to relationships within the family. Familial
work did not fit within the bounds of Usher's categories. It went beyond the
constraints imposed by the model. The data exemplifies those theoretical
concepts.

Delphy specifically examines the definition of housework. She argues
that women pass continuously from one task to the next, not drawing a
distinction between subsistence activities and other domestic work. Women's
work in the Bush exemplifies this incessant passing from one task to the next.
After the women picked berries they cooked the meal, then they cleaned the
camp, and chopped more wood. In Winter Moose Hunt a woman moved
between preparing tea and sandwiches to telephoning the news of the kill.
Later while cooking the moose, women told the story of the hunt. To tell a story
is one way to reaffirm social ties. In Bullets to Caribou women discussed and
organized distribution of the meat, while cleaning the kitchen and cooking.
When distributing meat in the city to other relatives they would include a
shopping trip, to purchase bullets that would be used later to kill more caribou.

There is ample proof that women turn from one task to the next because
the tasks are within the same relations of production, because they are the jobs
of women within the extended family. Delphy's argument concludes that all the
work that women do for the household should be considered productive work.
However, she does not discuss the work of childbearing and childrearing.
Nicholson takes the argument further by including the work of childcare.
Nicholson challenges the argument that there is an analytical distinctiveness between the social and the economic aspects of life, because it fails cross-culturally. Rather she argues for the 'profound unity' between the economic and the social. Included in this unity is the socially necessary work of childbearing and childrearing. The data constantly reaffirms this position. Women turn from cooking the meals, to caring for children, to cleaning the house, to driving extended family members, to processing meat and fish, and maintaining the kinship network. There are always children around that need attention and care, either your own or another relative's children.

Women's labour demonstrates this profound unity between the social and the economic. It helps us to understand the interdependencies and the linkages of the social and the economic aspects of the subsistence-based mixed economy.

These linkages and interdependencies go beyond the extended family. As Sahlins states, hunting and gathering societies are premised on a different epistemological basis than Western capitalist societies. Hunting and gathering societies are not based on the profit motive, but rather on cooperative labour, collective responsibility, and reciprocity.

These values are demonstrated over and over in the data. In One Day, the woman spends the majority of her time helping her extended family. She feels responsible to her extended family, especially to members who are older or ill. Although her primary responsibility is directed to her extended family, she also helps others in the community. When she is driving back into town, she often offers rides to those who are walking, especially the elderly.

Cooperative labour is well established in Organizing a Trip to the Bush. Twenty-four extended family members all participated with either their labour, or their resources or both. The women's work within this included driving, shopping, childcare, organizing labour, accessing boats, motors, trucks, tents, blankets and various other necessary equipment. The women's work also

1 Most women do not have a vehicle, some drive other family members' vehicles and some do not drive at all.
included organizing the entire trip, which included ten adults and two children under three.

Women’s work in the Bush shows another element of cooperative. As discussed in that section, there was no apparent boss; the cooperative labour took place without someone giving orders. This high level of cooperation translated into a very relaxed atmosphere, with everyone in the family knowing what was to be done and, perhaps equally as important, when it was to be done.

Long term reciprocity is depicted in Winter Moose Hunt. Gas money and a truck were lent through the extended family. The initial purpose was to buy groceries in Flin Flon. On their way home the couple shot and killed a moose. This moose was shared throughout the extended family. Although the couple does not expect immediate reciprocity for their sharing of the moose, they do know that in 2 or 3 days, or weeks or years they will receive country food or other things from the members of their extended family. Reciprocity is long term. A member of this sharing network knows that they can ask for help at any time from another member. The member asked gives what is possible on the side of generosity.

Although Woods Cree women’s labour has changed over time, and is no longer spent primarily on the land as was seen in the original seasonal cycle, it is essential in this modern context to recognize that hunting and gathering are still very important economically, socially and culturally.

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2 The cost of groceries in the north is very high. Groceries in Flin Flon are cheaper, and there is more choice.
3 This sharing extends beyond the extended family. I have witnessed many cases of individuals in the city, unknown to the family members or outside of their reserve community and even outside of their primary language group, ask a family member for help. Help could be asked for as food, cash, to be driven or walked somewhere, etc. It was always given! Sometimes this meant that the individual who gave had to ask for help themselves the following day, because they gave all that they had. In this way reciprocity does not mean that you receive back from the individual you gave to but rather that because you share, you too can ask for help from others, and expect to get it.
4 Unfortunately at the time of this writing fur prices have hit an all time low and many families were unable to capitalize trapping. Among those who did trap, they did not sell their furs, but considered other methods of making cash. One idea was to use the fur for making hats or for use on mitts and moccasins for later sale.
This change in women's labour demonstrated in One Day and also in Illness in the Family locates the majority of labour within the sections of servicer and supporter, whereas in the past the seasonal cycle shows their labour in the sections of harvester and processor.

Woods Cree women's labour has also changed over space. Because Woods Cree women no longer spend the majority of their time on the land, they spend more time in the community and in other locations. The physical access afforded by transportation such as snowmobiles, cars, trucks, and buses has meant that women, when they have access to vehicles or cash for bus tickets or gas money, can travel to different locations. They can also travel more quickly than in the past. A trip to camp prior to 1966, may have meant two days travel by dogsled, today it may mean several hours. A trip to Saskatoon in a car or truck takes six hours, in the past it may have been out of the question, except for medical reasons in very serious illness.

Increased mobility to larger communities exemplified in Illness in the Family has a large number of implications. Some extended family members relocated in larger centers. Questions of mobility and access are very important and need further investigation. It is not, however, within the bounds of this research project.

I conclude that Woods Cree women's labour demonstrates the negotiation and integration of the social and the economic dimensions within the subsistence-based mixed economy. The negotiation and the integration come from a decision-making process that is informed by the past, a wholly land-based way of life and by their present day community context. The acknowledgement of this ongoing negotiation and integration is vital to a more informed understanding of the decision-making process that Woods Cree women are engaged in on a daily basis. This understanding shifts your focus from the isolated individual woman to place her fully within her historically based social context.

I conclude that Woods Cree women's labour within the subsistence-based mixed economy is multi-layered, complex, flexible, sophisticated, creative and is essential to the functioning of the subsistence-based mixed
economy of Pelican Narrows. This has not been documented in any previous study.
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