

Living in Northern Québec: Mobilizing, Understanding, Imagining Project summary

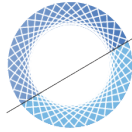
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada – Partnership (2015-2020)
Université Laval – École d'architecture

Research problem. The Innu communities of Nitassinan and Inuit communities of Nunavik are facing significant challenges related to their living environments. Since becoming sedentary relatively recently, these communities have had to deal with housing that is often designed in the South and planned according to Southern suburban models. They find it deplorable that their housing is insufficient in number; overcrowded; standardized; ill equipped to cater to their practices, representations and aspirations; and that it contributes to the development of social, familial and health problems. Moreover, current housing policies and programs lead, more often than not, to hasty construction in order to respond to the most basic of needs. The communities regret not being consulted during the decision-making process and thus not involved in planning and building housing that would be better adapted culturally and in terms of land use. Furthermore, the effects of climate change on Northern territories threaten development patterns prevalent in the area. For example, the melting permafrost and erosion of coastline prematurely degrade habitable territories, and the changing ecosystems threaten traditional diets.

Questions and issues. The project has as its research subject the culturally appropriate and sustainable planning of Innu and Inuit habitats. It will tackle Northern Native habitat in all its complexity (figure 1), by examining the three dimensions that provide structure and meaning, and direct its development: **communities, living environments** and **governance**.

Figure 1: Research strategy

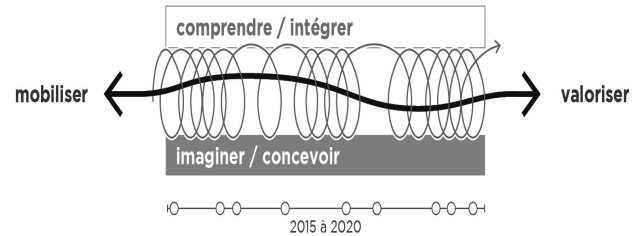
	Mobilizing / valuing	Understanding / integrating	Imagining / conceiving
Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities' social organization People's knowledge, representations and aspirations Newly generated knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic symbolism of habitable territories Uses and significance of houses, reserves, villages and territories Cultural methods of appropriating and occupying the territory (both traditional and current) Emerging Northern urbanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared visions about the healthy, sustainable and culturally appropriate planning of Northern Inuit villages and Innu reserves in the future Specific visions regarding housing and other culturally significant facilities
Living environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local natural and material resources Organizational processes for construction (transportation, material, worksites, labour, etc.) Technical knowledge and practices Training or educational institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic and climate constraints and potential Morphogenesis and morphology of Innu reserves and Inuit villages Formal composition, spatial organization, and housing construction material and methods Relations between physical space and people's well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requalification and expansion models for Innu reserves and Inuit villages, suited to the territory Construction and renovation models for housing that is healthy, culturally appropriate, and adapted to the climate and resources Intervention tactics: construction and evaluation
Governance of the habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal political and administrative structures (in the North and South) Professional knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge, representation and actions of professionals Planning mechanisms for Northern habitats Formal and informal decision-making processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scenarios and processes for implementing expansion, requalification, construction and renovation projects (in the short-, medium- and long-term). Scenarios and processes for increased mobilization and involvement of local resources (human and material). Tools to help planning and decision-making



The project is based on the hypothesis that a collaborative strategy among people with different knowledge can expand perspectives about how to look at the issue (**understanding/integrating**), about the variety of solutions that could be adopted (**imagine/conceive**), and about learning and adapting practices (**mobilize/value**). With a non-linear, interactive and iterative approach (figure 2), this strategy allows us to:

- Coproduce and integrate knowledge that paints a complete and sensitive picture of Northern Native living environments
- Call on partners' interdisciplinarity and imagination to define shared visions for the future, develop housing and planning models that bring these visions to life, and devise unprecedented and appropriate practices and scenarios for integrated planning.

Figure 2: Interactive objectives



Partnership, management and governance. The project implements a participative, interdisciplinary and intersectoral research framework with and for Innu and Inuit communities to combine Native knowledge with that of various other fields related to living space planning (architecture, urban design, geography, health, sociology, political science). The management and governance framework allows partners to develop and consolidate various responsibilities, including accountability and feedback, while monitoring progress, following up on activities and resolving problems. It aims for flexibility in attributing resources, and transparency in communication, even long-distance, in order to monitor governance (figure 3).

Figure 3: Management and governance framework

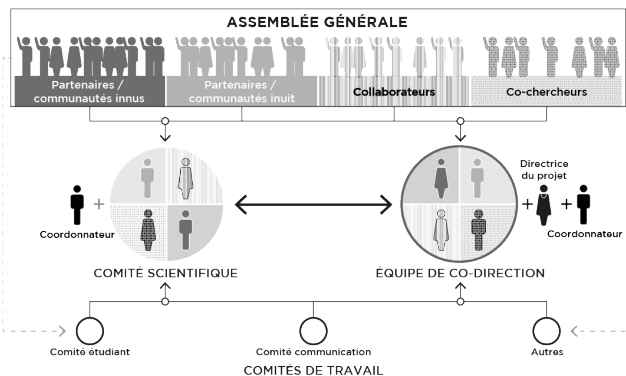


Figure 4: Timeframe for mobilizing knowledge

Public cible	année 1	année 2	année 3	année 4	année 5
Communautés	Expositions mobiles, workshops collaboratifs, ateliers universitaires, fascicules				
	Applications mobiles (consultation, diffusion)				
	Recueil de pratiques exemplaires				
Milieu scolaire	Stages (étudiants et formateurs)				
	Ateliers pédagogiques				
Organisations	Café des sciences sur l'habitat				
	Colloque				
	Workshops spécialisés				
	Publications interprofessionnelles				
Grand public	Expositions régionales				Exposition nationale + Livre
Milieu universitaire	Ateliers de design universitaires et brochures électroniques				
	Numéro de revue	Colloque	Livre collectif	Colloque	Numéro de revue + Livre collectif
Diffusion multidirectionnelle	Site Web multilingue + Café des sciences sur l'habitat				

Mobilizing knowledge. The multidirectional exchange of knowledge and its convergence towards the improvement of Innu and Inuit habitats are the main objectives of the knowledge mobilization plan (figure 4). To this end, the project aims to tackle the challenge collective productions that involve all disciplines and sectors associated with this project. By calling on a variety of mediums, it also hopes to work with the Innu and Inuit communities and their related sub-groups; the educational communities working within them; institutions, organizations and businesses involved in their habitat both in terms of decision-makers and professionals; the general public; and the research and university training communities.

Commitment of partners and collaborators. The partnership is based on the extensive research experience and work in the North of the researchers and collaborators that it mobilizes, as well as on the nearly 15 years of collaboration with Innu communities. The partnership includes:

- Co-researchers at Université Laval (architecture, sociology, political science, geography, social medicine), Université du Québec à Montréal, McGill University, Institut national des sciences appliquées de Strasbourg and Cégep de Sept-Îles
- Innu (Innu Takuaihan Uashat mak Mani-Utenam Band Council, Mamuitun Tribal Council, Shaputuan Museum) and Inuit collaborators (Kativik Regional Government, Kativik Municipal Housing Bureau, Saturviit, Inuit Women's Association)
- Public (Musée de la civilisation de Québec, Société d'habitation du Québec) and professional partners (ABCP Architecture, DMG Architecture, Fournier Gersovitz Moss Drolet Architectes, Groupe A\Annexe U, Hatem+D, Marc Blouin Architecte)