"Now I'm A Mandow":
Cree Students Adaptation to Studying in the South

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ABSTRACT

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The rate of secondary school success in Chisasibi is low. In the 2000-2001 school year, only six students out of approximately sixty[1] graduated from the Chisasibi high school (excluding mature student graduation). The previous school years have yielded similar amounts of high-school graduates. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) reported in 1996 that only fifteen percent of Chisasibi residents have a high-school diploma (see Table 10 on page 69). Despite this low number of high-school graduates every year, one would assume that those who graduate high-school in Chisasibi and decide to study in southern post-secondary institutions would be well adjusted and succeed at the post-secondary level. This is not the case for Chisasibi students and Cree students in general. Many Cree students registered in post-secondary institutions have difficulty completing their post-secondary studies. This also seems to be a trend across most Native communities in Canada (see Figures A4-A9 in Appendix).

This thesis attempts to answer the following question: "Why do so few Cree students stay the amount of time necessary or pass the required amount of courses to graduate from the post-secondary programs in which they are enrolled?"

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[1] Approximately sixty students were of graduation age. The exact number of people of Grade 12 age is not available. The method I used to determine this number was by looking at the population chart (Table A2, p. 97) and dividing the number given by 5. 295 people were aged between 14 and 19. Thus, approximately 60 were of graduation age.

Meaning of Mandow

Mandow means visitor in Cree. Non-Cree strangers are considered Mandows; anyone who is passing through a Cree town who is unfamiliar. Euro-Canadian tourists are usually referred to as Mandows.

The use of the word "Mandow" on the title page derives from an interview I conducted in Montreal with Dave, a Cree CEGEP student in his early twenties. He mentioned that he was now a stranger in a new environment and that he sometimes felt uncomfortable. I feel like a "long-term Mandow here" (Montreal).

Acknowledgements and Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my loving parents Caterina and Raffaele who have given me tremendous support throughout my life as a student and researcher. I would also like to thank my girlfriend Chantal Baril for her overall support and knowledge in the field of education. Chantal's knowledge and opinions were a great contribution to this thesis. Thank you to all my friends in Chisasibi for your hospitality and contributions to my thesis. Thank you Simone, George, Marie-Claude, and Georgie for letting me stay in your home throughout the course of my research in Chisasibi and for introducing me to people who have greatly contributed to this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Kavi Gossal who was a great help with finding me a place to stay in Chisasibi.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

My original topic of interest for this thesis was to study Cree perceptions of Euro-Canadian lifestyles. This quickly changed once I began interviewing Cree students in Montreal. In my initial interviews, I realized that the Cree students I interviewed commented more on their adjustment process than on general perceptions of Euro-Canadian lifestyles. These initial discussions led me to believe that a study on Cree student adaptation to living in urban environments was needed and would be more useful than a general study of Cree perceptions of Euro-Canadian lifestyles.

The central question of the thesis: "Why do so few Cree students stay the amount of time necessary or pass the required amount of courses to graduate from the post-secondary programs in which they are enrolled?" is an important question because it is directly linked to the future of Chisasibi. The unemployment rate in Chisasibi is almost twice as high as the rest of the province of Quebec (14.6% for Chisasibi compared to 8.2 % the province of Quebec as seen in Table 6 on page 14). This high rate of unemployment in Chisasibi can be reduced if the jobs held by non-Crees in Chiasibi were held by Crees. Over half the teaching jobs as well as most of the professional jobs at the Chisasibi hospital are held by non-Crees. If more Cree students graduate from the post-secondary programs which they are enrolled in and move back into their community, it will undoubtedly help the economic situation of many families in the community. Also, although the hospitals and schools are run by the Cree Health Board and Cree School Board, many of the decisions are made by non-Crees. By filling these positions with Cree employees, it will help the Cree to better control these two sectors of the community

which are regarded as very important to them.

The second chapter entitled "Who are the Cree" briefly introduces the reader to the Cree culture. Both traditional as well as contemporary issues are addressed. Much of the information obtained in the second chapter was gathered by reading the works of Toby Morantz, Colin Scott, Harvey Feit, and Richard Salisbury, all of whom conducted research on the Cree while at McGill University.

Chapter 3 is a review of literature on dropout rates including articles by various researchers on the topic of lack of school success with Native students. Albert Memmi's "The Colonizer and the Colonized is also included in the literature review because it is a classic book in the sense that the colonial context discussed in Memmi's book can be compared to some features which have arisen after colonization in Canada. Questions of self-esteem are major characteristics found with Cree students. One major reason for including Memmi in this thesis is that he discusses low self esteem.

Chapter 4 is a summary of the methodology used while conducting research in both Montreal and Chisasibi. A brief description of how permission to conduct research in Chisasibi is also included in Chapter 4. It explains the time and energy that was lost in order to obtain permission. This section will hopefully help future students interested in studying in a Cree community prepare for such a process.

The fifth chapter will look at the adjustments Cree students have to face when studying in a different educational system. Some examples of these are: adjusting to a heavier work load, tardiness, and lack of direct teacher supervision (I.e. - teachers being more distant toward their students). Other topics overlap and apply to both the social and academic adjustments Cree students face. Personal characteristics such as shyness and lack of self-esteem, which appear to be common in Cree students, are some of the issues

which affect both the social and academic adjustment process.

The sixth chapter examines the views of Euro-Canadians toward the Cree sponsorship program. This chapter is relevant because the negative views Euro-Canadians have of Crees may be one reason why the Crees have low self esteem.

The seventh chapter will look at the views of Cree elders and adults and how they feel about youth studying in the south. It is relevant to look at the views of adults because it is well documented that students who are supported and encouraged by their parents to do well in school are more likely to succeed at the post-secondary level. Also, many elders feel that although having youth with a good education can help their community, that it also can influence the youth in a negative way. As one elder commented "learning the ways of the White man can help us but it also put us in a trap, where we think like them and solve problems like them" (Field notes, July 2001)

The eigth chapter will include proposals made by the researcher to help alleviate the problem. Many of the recommendations were discussed with the students themselves and some were even suggested to me by the students in Chisasibi. Both post-secondary students (past and present) and high-school students contributed to this section, as well as insightful suggestions made to me by the members of my thesis committee.

Chapter 2
Who are the Cree?

The first chapter of this thesis briefly introduces the reader to the Cree culture. Both traditional as well as contemporary issues are addressed. Although the focus of this study is to understand the adjustment Cree students undergo while studying in an urban environment by answering the question "why do so few Cree students stay the amount of time necessary or pass the required amount of courses to graduate from the post-secondary programs in which they are enrolled?", I firmly believe that an introduction to their culture (both traditional and contemporary) will help the reader better understand the adjustment process that Cree students face.

The People

In their language, the Cree refer to themselves as "Eeyou" (in the dialect of the more northerly and coastal communities). The term means, simply, "the people." There are approximately 15,000 Cree in Quebec, based mostly in nine villages. The five communities located along the coast are: Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji, Chisasibi, and Whapmagoostui. The four villages located inland are: Nemaska, Waswanipi, Oujé-Bougoumou and Mistissini (see Figure 1 on the following page).

Figure 1: Map of Cree Territory

The Cree have inhabited their land for thousands of years, and have historically been hunters, fishers, and trappers (Feit 1991, Salisbury 1984, Tanner 1979). As with many hunting and trapping societies, the Cree are a traditionally egalitarian society in that they accept few differences in wealth, power, prestige or status . An example of this in Chisasibi can be seen with the houses in the community. Most houses are practically identical and the only homes that are different are those that have been built in the last few years. Many of the "nicer" houses are inhabited by workers at the Chisasibi hospital (mostly Euro-Canadians) and are owned by the Cree Nation. Another example of

egalitarianism can be seen in the way parents raise their children to not stand out from the rest of the crowd. Often parents scold their children for showing off and outshining their peers.

Language

The Cree Language is part of the Algonquian language family. In many native cultures, the influence of Southern ways has eroded some native languages, often to the point where some of their dialects have disappeared (Miller 1994). With the James Bay Cree, the Cree language is very much alive: spoken by almost all Crees; taught in their homes and in school; and everywhere you look on signs, banners, books, and films.

Despite its relative health, some Cree believe that the Cree language is still threatened. Cree society has been subject to the same forces that have resulted in language loss in other communities: residential schooling and the ensuing break between the generations, economic changes in the communities and the lack of Cree terms for many elements of modern life. However, by continuously improving their education system and speaking Cree in the home, the Cree hope to keep their language alive. As seen in Tables 1 and 2, over ninety percent of the Chisasibi population claim that English and French is not their mother tongue.

Table 1: Language and Mobility Status (Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census)

Characteristics	Chisasibi			Quebec		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Language(s) first learned and still understood						
Total - All persons	3,455	1,740	1,715	7,125,580	3,491,685	3,633,895
English only	175	90	85	557,040	273,130	283,915
French only	170	80	90	5,761,765	2,815,930	2,945,840
Both English and French	0	0	10	50,060	24,800	25,265
Other languages	3,110	1,570	1,540	756,710	377,830	378,885

Table 2: Language and Work (Statistics Canada 2001)

	Chisasibi			Quebec		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Language Used Most Often at Work						
Total - Population 15 years and over who worked since 2000	1,420	720	700	3,938,510	2,101,635	1,836,875
English	410	185	225	486,640	264,535	222,100
French	60	20	35	3,205,110	1,704,890	1,500,225
Non-official language	855	465	390	28,655	14,575	14,085
English and French	15	10	0	197,990	106,895	91,095
English and non-official language	65	30	40	4,665	2,520	2,145
French and non-official language	0	0	0	5,560	2,835	2,720
English, French and non-official language	15	10	10	9,885	5,375	4,505

Thus, the principal language spoken in the community of Chisasibi is Cree and English is the second language of choice. Although half the students attending the James Bay Eeyou School are in the French sector, many of those students choose to speak English as a second language outside the school.

Traditional Way of Life

In Cree life, the importance of what is often called "the bush" in English (traditional lands outside of the villages) cannot be overstated. Apart from its purely

economic significance, bush life and bush skills are at the heart of Cree culture and identity. Sebastian, a Cree man in his mid-forties commented:

> I remember when I first got out of school, I was sixteen years old and I didn't think that I had learned enough, of even the language, to go and look for work in the white society. I went to the bush with my family right after because my father was still hunting and trapping at that time. Sometimes I almost cried when my mother told me to do something because I knew I did not know how to do it or maybe because I hesitated to do it. Then one time my father told me that you will not be sure of yourself in doing something that you have been taught, even if the person who teaches it to you is very good, unless you give yourself to the task of leaving it and want to do it.

Many Crees have told me - "I'm happiest when I'm in the bush." Today, many Cree families have bush camps that have been passed down from generation to generation. Sometimes, they are accessible only by canoe, and include many portages; in other cases, they are near modern roads. In bush camps you will often see ATV's, snowmobiles, and power boats, but you will still find snowshoes, sleds, and traditional dwellings such as the *michuap*, often referred to as teepees (Scott 1993, Feit 1986).

The Role of Elders

Elders are given the responsibility to keep the memory, history, and knowledge of their Cree ancestors (Morantz, 1983). Elders possess the knowledge and understanding of Cree teachings and have the responsibility to share life experiences and stories to help people make decisions. In speaking with Sara, a thirty-six year old mother of three, she mentioned that "elders play a major role in the resolution of personal, family, and community matters."

Comments such as Sara's are common in Chisasibi. It is apparent that elders are a voice of moderation, experience and guidance and that they are a valued part of the community. Despite this important role, many believe that the role of elders has been slowly diminishing. At present, most important community decisions are made by the

Cree Nation's office and although they often consult with elders on what can be done, the final decisions are out of the hands of elders.

Cree School Board and Local Education

The Cree School Board (CSB) is responsible for the education of Cree students at the secondary and primary school levels in the nine James Bay Cree communities (Grand Council of the Crees, 1992). The CSB oversees the operations of all schools within the James Bay area including the hiring of teachers and administrators. A team of pedagogical experts employed by the CSB develop and translate educational materials to be used in Cree classes.

Although the 1975 James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) ensured Cree control over their education, classroom educational materials are still expected to meet the Ministere de L'Education du Quebec (MEQ) requirements in terms of subjects, time allocated to deliver the lessons and student evaluation. Much of the material used is a derivation or a simple translation of Euro-Canadian educational resources.

The 1997 CSB report shows that out of a total of 292 teachers in the nine Cree schools in the James Bay area, that 166 were non-Cree and 126 were Cree. Thus, non-Cree teachers outnumber Cree teachers by a significant amount. The majority of non-Cree teachers are found at the secondary level, where English and French become increasingly important. Conversely, Cree teachers outnumber non-Cree at the primary level, mostly due to the almost total absence of English and French during the first few years of primary school (until grade 3, including Kindergarten). Tables 3, 4, and 5 show how money is spent and distributed by the Cree School Board.

Table 3: Cree School Board Budget for 1997 (Cree School Board 1997 report)

General Administration	$2,097,858	(3 per cent)
Finance and Administration	$4,672,471	(7 per cent)
General Education	$5,409,529	(8 per cent)
Schools	$36,577,062	(58 per cent)
Adult Education	$5,499,827	(9 per cent)
Post Secondary (excluding Travel)	$5,960,826	(11 per cent)
(with Travel = $6,910,826)		
Transportation	$2,064,182	(3 per cent)
Others	$642 606	(1 per cent)
Total	$62,924,361	

Table 4: Spending by schools (Cree School Board 1997 report)

Chisasibi	$7,901,856
Waskaganish	$5,253,092
Wemindji	$3,700,408
Eastmain	$2,217,373
Whapmagoostui	$2,607,415
Mistissini	$7,306,277
Nemaska	$2,540,887
Waswanipi	$4,076,030
Ouje-Bougoumou	$1 787 906
Total	**$37,391,244**

Table 5: The distribution of the Board's work-force by category in 1996-97 (Cree School Board 1997 report)

	Native	Percent	Non-Native	Percent	Total
Managers	27	80	7	20	34
Professionals	17	52	16	48	33
Support Staff	209	97	7	3	216
Teachers (Pre-K&K)	18	100	0	0	18
Teachers (Elementary)	82	64	46	36	128
Teachers (Secondary)	26	18	120	82	146
School Managers	5	36	9	64	14
total	384	65	205	35	589

Students at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels attend the James Bay Eeyou School located on the territory of the reserve. Approximately one thousand students are registered in this school and approximately seventy other members of the community attend post-secondary studies at the CEGEP and university levels.

Chisasibi

Situated at Kilometer 6 of the James Bay Highway, since 1980-81 when it was relocated from the island of Fort George, Chisasibi is a vibrant, young and growing community with a population of approximately 3,500. The territory of Chisasibi is designated as Category 1 land.[2] Cree is the language of the community and English and French are the additional languages of work.

Chisasibi means "great river," and is named after the river on which the

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[2] Category I lands are lands set aside for the exclusive use and benefit of the respective James Bay Cree "bands" or Nations. Local "bands" have most administrative power over Category 1 lands.

community is built, known by its official name, the La Grande River. The original settlement of Fort George, has been the site of Hudson's Bay Company trading posts since 1803, initially located on the north side of the river, and then after 1837, on the present location of Governor's or Fort George Island. Throughout much of the 19th century, Fort George was one of the largest trading posts in the James Bay, along with Rupert House, located at the present community of Waskaganish.

Chisasibi is one of the Cree communities most directly affected by the Hydro-Quebec projects. Flooding of the hunting and trapping territories and the uprooting of the community to a new location, resulted in tremendous social, educational, and economic changes. Consequently, the community has been and is actively searching for and initiating a range of viable local educational, social and economic development programs to meet the needs of its rapidly expanding population and work force.

Local administration is assured by the Council of the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, under the direction of Chief Abraham Rupert (Violet Pachanos while I was doing my fieldwork). The council of Chisasibi is part of the Grand Council of the Crees of Quebec which represents Crees in all matters affecting Cree status lands, rights and society.

The James Bay Eeyou School provides educational programs from pre-kindergarten to secondary five for over 1000 students, Cree being the language of instruction until grade three and English or French as a second language follows this. Students at the pre-school, primary, and secondary levels attend the James Bay Eeyou School located on the territory of the reserve. The James Bay Eeyou School is part of the Cree School Board (CSB) and is under the jurisdiction of the Quebec Ministry of Education. There are approximately seventy members of the community attending post-secondary studies programs at the CEGEP and university levels (outside Chisasibi).

Services are provided by many public institutions and facilities within the community, including, the Anjabowa Day Care, Job's Memorial Garden arena, a hotel, Chisasibi Radio Station, and a modern 28-bed hospital administered by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. The community is host to numerous regional offices, including the Educational Services of the Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. There are many community owned and private businesses including restaurants, hardware and grocery stores, arts and craft store, two gas stations, a canoe repair shop, and taxi services. Despite a growing economy, the rate of unemployment in Chisasibi (14.6%) is still 6.5% above the provincial average of 8.2% (Statistics Canada 2001 Census on Chisasibi).

Table 6: Employment Statistic for Chisasibi (Statistics Canada 2001)

Characteristics	Chisasibi			Quebec		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Labour Force Indicators						
Participation rate	53.3	54.1	52.6	64.2	71.1	57.7
Employment rate	45.5	42.7	47.8	58.9	64.9	53.2
Unemploy- ment rate	14.6	21.0	9.2	8.2	8.7	7.7
Industry						
Total Experienced labour force	1,140	565	580	3,644,375	1,962,300	1,682,075

The rate of unemployment for non-natives living in Chisasibi is zero (or close to zero). I have not spoken with or heard of a non-native person living in Chisasibi that is not

employed.

Mamoweedow, a celebration of the past with an awareness of the future, is held on Fort George Island annually. A traditional Powwow is held with special dancers and guests to celebrate the Cree traditional way of life. The Chisasibi Dance Competition, which welcomes Native dancers of all Native backgrounds is held at either Job's Memorial Gardens or the high school gymnasium and is met with enthusiastic participation every year.

The community of Chisasibi (as well as all of the other eight James Bay Cree communities) is considered a "dry" community. The distribution and sale of alcohol is illegal within the boundaries of Chisasibi. However, many residents still purchase alcohol in Radisson, a small Euro-Canadian town approximately 90 km east of Chisasibi mostly comprised of temporary French-Canadian Hydro-Quebec workers. Chisasibi residents purchase alcohol in Radisson and transport it with their vehicles back into the community. A few Cree people in Chisasibi sell alcohol at a high profit to teenagers and to people who run out of alcohol while hosting parties. Those who sell alcohol for high profit are known by community members as "bootleggers". Although statistics on alcohol use and other substance abuse are not available, alcohol is regarded as one of the problems plaguing Chisasibi's youth and community meetings sometimes revolve around this issue.

Chapter 3
Literature Review

Many researchers have looked at the topic of dropout rates with Native students in mainstream educational systems. There are two areas of research on dropout rates for Native students in mainstream educational systems. One area of research looks at the magnitude of the problem (Levin & Levin, 1991; Bowker, 1992). They also reveal that dropout rates are often very difficult to measure because there is no uniformity across school systems with regards to their data-collecting methods. A committee on Aboriginal Education and Northern Development also reported differences in methodology for the measurement of dropout rates. The committee states that although Native students are staying in school longer, it does not mean that they are graduating from high schools and post-secondary institutions in any great numbers (House of Commons, 1995). This researcher also had problems obtaining reliable and accurate statistics from the school board. Although precise statistics on this topic are not available or are unreliable, there is general agreement that Native students at all levels of schooling have a higher dropout rate than other minority groups in Canada. This view is supported by Archibald & Urion's study (1995) of Native students enrolled in post-secondary institutions in Canada, estimating that over seventy percent of such students do not complete their undergraduate university degrees.

A second area of research attempts to look at the predictors for persistence as well as some of the factors that put Native students at risk for leaving school (Brandt, 1992). Some researchers (including Brandt) go beyond specification of the causes that may lead to high drop out rates and make recommendations for the design of interventions that address the needs of these students

Because my topic is specific to the James Bay Crees, I have focused, with the exception of a few examples, on the research related to Native students in Canada. Although the review of Canadian and American literature reveals similar themes and issues, it is important to note that differences exist between the two countries and within the countries as well. There are many different Native groups within Canada, and it is important to note that each group has its own distinct culture, characteristics, and needs.

Within the research on dropout and persistence among Native students there are three categories that overlap to some degree. One body of research (More, 1987; Anderson, 1988; Swisher, 1991; Backes, 1993) suggests that cultural differences explain why dropout rates are higher amongst Native students. Another body of research suggests that student and institutional characteristics explain the academic difficulties experienced by Native students (Brandt, 1991; Dehyle 1992). Some researchers look at the academic deficits of individual students, but most often researchers acknowledge that higher dropout rates and low academic success (lower grades) arise from both the student and the educational institution. The third body of research has a larger scope (Ledlow, 1992; Wilson, 1992). It goes beyond looking at the culture, student, or institution and looks at socioeconomic and political issues. This last body of research has only emerged in the last several years.

Cultural Differences in Learning Style

Many studies have attempted to show that Native learning styles are different from the learning styles of Euro-Canadians (More, 1987; Swisher, 1991; Anderson, 1988; Backes, 1993). The problem with this area of research is that there does not seem to be a consensus on how people learn, each school of thought having their own terminology and perspective. It is apparent that no one theory on learning and teaching

styles provides a complete explanation of how knowledge is gained and retained. Mitchell (1994) argued that measures of learning styles vary widely in rationale, means, and validity. Therefore, results in this area must be viewed with caution.

Although there are tendencies toward certain learning styles in Native cultures in Canada, researchers have pointed out that it is important to guard against stereotyping because it may ultimately harm the student (Anderson, 1988; Swisher, 1991; Pepper & Henry, 1986). With these issues in mind, the results of some studies on this topic are presented.

More's research attempts to show that the learning styles in "traditional Indian culture can often be described as watch-then-do or listen-then-do or think-then-do" (1987: 21). More differentiates the Native style of learning from the "trial and error learning" practiced in classrooms. More, as well as Swisher (1991) conclude that, although there are certainly differences among and within Indian cultures, there is evidence from the research that there are common patterns in the way Native students learn. Swisher argues that although Native students have learning styles different from the mainstream, Euro teachers continue to use the same style of teaching for everyone. This, they conclude, puts the Native student at a disadvantage.

Anderson (1988) takes Swisher's argument one step further. He notes that many non-Western cultures have a learning style that is concrete, holistic, and drawn from everyday life (relational). Anderson shows that mainstream forms of education are abstract and non-relational. He believes that the non-recognition of Native learning styles in mainstream education is a form of academic racism. Anderson's comments on academic racism seem a little strong. His point on the added difficulty Native students have to overcome is a valid one, however. Adjusting to a newer form of learning is a

strong argument and a partial explanation as to why students may drop out of high school, not succeed, or adjust well to post-secondary schooling.

Backes (1993) conducted a study of high school students to determine and compare the dominant learning styles of Chippewa students (both graduates and dropouts) and non-native high school graduates. Backes' findings are in direct contrast with those of Anderson (discussed in the conclusion of this chapter). Backes' findings indicate a preference for an "abstract" channel of learning for the Chippewa students i.e. a learning style that "coincides with a deductive, holistic instructional methodology" (1993: 25). The learning style preferred by the non-Native students was "concrete", i.e. a learning style that coincides with the "inductive, linear methodology that dominates mainstream classrooms" (ibid). Backes' findings therefore support More's views that the method of education preferred by Native students is different from the mainstream.

Another body of research offers different explanations of high dropout rates and low academic success for Native students. This approach, called the deficit/discontinuity model supports the theory that Native students drop out of school at a younger age and at higher rates than mainstream students because of cultural differences (Reyhner 1992). Reyhner suggests that learning occurs in culturally different ways that do not coincide with the expectations of teachers and schools. According to this hypothesis, culturally based differences in the manner people communicate lead to unsuccessful student results. Reyhner believes that teaching must therefore adapt to include what is known about the student's culture, mix that in with culturally relevant material, and a more active teaching method.

Adapting to New Institutions and Methods

Many researchers attempt to look at the topic of Native students' high dropout

rates and difficulties with adjusting to urban life by looking at the following question: "What is wrong with the student?" Levin and Levin's (1991) analysis of minority students in U.S. colleges found that two indicators were of primary importance in evaluating students' success and dropout rates. The students and family characteristics as well as the experience within the college itself were seen as most important. Levin and Levin mention that adaptability, academic preparedness, commitment to and perception of progress toward academic goals, self-confidence, socioeconomic status and willingness to ask for academic assistance are important topics to look at if one is to predict whether a student is likely to succeed before starting college. Levin and Levin also mention academic and social interaction as being important indicators as to the likelihood a minority student has to succeed at the college level. They believe that a sense of belonging, strengthened by interactions with other students and staff, increases the likelihood of a minority student succeeding.

Bowker's study (1992) on Native females' dropout rates in the United States indicated that no exact formula for success or dropping out should be used. Bowker did, however, find that most of the successful students had a lot of support from extended families and that a good indication of whether a student will succeed in post-secondary institutions is to examine the support a student feels from their immediate and extended family.

Others have indicated that when analyzing the problem of dropouts, the academic institution must also be looked at. Deyhle's study (1992) indicates that personal problems and lack of family support were important factors for the success or lack of success of Native students. However, many problems associated or originating from within the institution were also mentioned. Institutional racism, insensitive

teachers, and boredom with the school curriculum were all mentioned by Deyhle, pointing to the importance of looking outside the student and the student's family and focusing on the problem within a larger context.

Brandt (1992) also mentions that it is important to look beyond the student and his family to determine the factors that may lead to a student dropping out. His basic argument is "focusing on the student and family as the primary source of difficulty makes it almost impossible to make changes since the school can't alter these characteristics. However, it is not impossible to make changes with the school and improve the interaction and curriculum at the schools." Brandt mentions that school staffs tend to place the problem with the student or family, and the students and family tend to put the blame on the school.

Racism

The issue of racism for Native students is another issue that has been discussed by numerous authors (Archibald & Urion 1995; Callion, 1995). Suffice it to say, these authors have discussed the destructive effects of racism on Native students studying in non-Native institutions. In order to properly understand racism (particularly institutional racism), we must have a definition of it first. Pepper's definition of institutional racism in educational facilities is "practices within social institutions favoring one ethnic group over another. Racist practices may develop with deliberate intent or without conscious racist intent (as with educational differences based on economic disparities)" (Archibald & Urion Eds., 1995: 151). Racism is an issue that Cree students have to deal with frequently. In fact, the problem is so frequent that it is addressed in a booklet given to all the Cree students by the Cree School Board. Examples of both direct and institutional racism will be given later in this thesis.

Socioeconomic and Political Structures

Many researchers believe that it is important to look at variables beyond the boundaries of the educational institution and that economic and social issues should be examined. Ledlow (1992) claims that cultural explanations and other hypotheses are overly simplistic and a more multi-dimensional look at the issue of dropout rates and social adjustment should be taken. Wilson (1992) agrees with Ledlow and his research with Sioux Indians in a Western Canadian high school suggests that structural as well as cultural factors affect school performance. Wilson's study focused on the dropout rate for Sioux students moving from an elementary school on their reserve to a high school outside their reserve. Wilson found that social and cultural factors, especially language, were important determinants of whether a student was likely to succeed in the new high school. Wilson's approach recognized a wider variety of possibilities than the other hypotheses mentioned earlier in this literature review.

Following the same principles as Wilson, McLaughlin states: "curricula constitute, and are constrained by, key aspects of social structure, such as domination, stratification, and empowerment" (1994: 55). He believes that empowering the students is important and one way to do so is to attempt to develop school knowledge that is based on the minority student's language and culture. McLaughlin believes that minority language students will begin to succeed at a higher frequency only once the political processes in schools are changed to the point where legitimizing the domination and disablement of minority group members is eradicated.

There are some examples of programs that attempt to integrate what has been proposed by McLaughlin. Lipka (1994), describes how the use of the Yup'ik language, culture, and worldview, helped improve the math scores for Native students in Alaska.

A similar structure is used in Akwasasne, where directors of these programs maintain high academic standards with the incorporation of Native-based curriculum.

The approaches utilized by Wilson and McLaughlin are similar to the approach I use in that they offer a wider variety of possibilities. They believe that school success cannot be explained by one single variable. In addition, McLauglin and Wilson use cultural, political, and socioeconomic explanations, left out by most other studies. As one school counsellor in Chisasibi pointed out to me: "unfortunately school programs are not available to post-secondary students leaving their native reserve to live in urban centers. Most adjustments must be made on the spot, by the student. We can only describe to them some of the adjustments they have to make and help as much as we can" (Field notes, August 29, 2001).

The aforementioned quote by a counsellor in Chisasibi clearly demonstrated that that there is a wide range of variables that can affect the performance of students and that it is difficult to anticipate and address all the possible problems that a student may encounter. One such variable is the legacy of colonialism and the negative effects it has had on the Crees. The effects of colonialism have led to major problems (Adams 1989, Miller 1989) which can be seen in the adjustment process of many Cree students.

The Colonial System

Albert Memmi's "The Colonizer and the Colonized" (1965) is a classic in the sense that it is one of the first books which attempts to look at colonialism on both the side of the colonizer and the side of the colonized. Like myself, Memmi uses a multi-dimensional approach in that he examines the psychological effects of the colonized through historical processes. According to Memmi, racism is ingrained in every colonial institution, and establishes the "sub humanity" of the colonized, fostering poor

self-concepts in the colonized, this poor self-concept can be seen amongst many Cree in that they are shy and sometimes look down on themselves, believing that they are inferior to Whites. One comment given by a female Cree student in Montreal was particularly striking. Christy, a twenty year old female CEGEP student comments:

> Sometimes I walk around and I feel like I'm different, but in a bad way. I am proud to be Cree but the way we look is not cool, I think. Us Cree girls are bigger and we look a little different and I don't feel comfortable sometimes... It's not an issue I deal with in town, I mean sometimes I'll see someone on TV and wish I was like her, but here I feel like that every time I see a pretty girl on the street or if I see a guy I like that's not Cree.

This is a topic which was brought up by many over the course of my fieldwork and will be addressed in greater length later in this thesis.

The post-war colonial situation in Algeria which Memmi describes involved the French using terror to quell any liberation uprising and that the colonizers reinforce fear and submission. Native-White relations in Canada were not as violent as the Algerian example given by Memmi. Different circumstances determined this. In Canada, numbers were not an issue. It did not take long for the White population to surpass the Native population in Canada. The strategy in Canada was to convert the Natives so that they would lose their culture and became European-like. An example of this is with residential schools[3] where Native students were taken away from their family in an attempt to convert the students into Christians and encourage them to become more European. The strategy used in Algeria and Canada were very different but the results

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[3] In the 1960s, many First Nations children were removed from their homes by the child welfare system. The removal of children from First Nations families and cultures had damaging and traumatic effects upon many First Nations children. Residential schools operated in Canada prior to Confederation with the first schools established by the churches as part of their missionary experience. The Government of Canada played a role in the administration of this system as early as 1874, mainly to meet its obligations, under the Indian Act, to provide an education to Aboriginal people and to assist with their integration into the broader Canadian society. The last of the federally-run schools closed in 1996. It is now widely understood that this system has contributed to weakening the identity of First Nations, by separating children from their families and communities and preventing them from speaking their own languages and from learning about their heritage and cultures.

are similar in the ways they affected the colonized.

The striking example of the residential schools which Cree children endured was one method the Canadian government used in order to assimilate Natives. Native students were not taught their own history but the unknown settings of their colonizer's history. Much like the situation in Algeria which Memmi describes, the colonizers (Canadian government) attempted to "divorce [the Natives] from reality" (Memmi 1965: 106). The Cree learnt that they were inconsequential, no longer in the game, so to speak and because they were excluded from government, they became uninterested in it. They were conditioned that their inadequacy is what makes them unable to "assume a role in history.... Colonization usurps any free role in... cultural and social responsibility" (ibid: 91). Once more, this quote shows how the courage of the colonized was destroyed, leading to deficiencies in self-assurance and pride. It took many years before Cree leaders such as Matthew Coon-Come and Billy Diamond emerged in national politics, taking their cases to a world stage.

Although some vocal Cree leaders do exist, it is not common for Cree people to exhibit the boldness and vocality that is shown by some of their leaders[4].

Memmi touches on an important point with regards to colonization destroying the confidence of natives, leading to deficiencies in pride. This is a major point I will touch on in this thesis. It is my understanding that the long history of unequal and unfair relations between Euro-Canadians and the Cree can be seen in the low self esteem and shyness that is common amongst the Cree and native youth in general.

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[4] Although these politicians are looked upon as heroes by some, others complain about them:
I don't like Coon-Come. I mean he did a lot for the Cree I think, but sometimes I wonder if he is Cree... I mean I know he is but sometimes I look at him and I see a White man, you know?

Conclusion

My interpretation of the situation in Chisasibi, and with Cree students in general, is that there is no singular explanation for the lack of success and low graduation numbers at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. Often, students gave me or hinted at various reasons for their lack of success. Kris, a former post-secondary student (did not graduate) gave me a variety of reasons why he had a hard time in a new system and culture. He felt that it was wrong to explain something so complex with singular answers. Kris commented:

> I read things and people think they know all of our problems. You will never know all of our problems because you are not Cree... But I think that if you take the various answers given to you and divide them in your work, then maybe you will have something interesting. There is not one answer or one solution to this. Each student has different experiences. Don't lump everything together as one reason for our students not doing so good. Try to include the different reasons. Do it like that, it'll be better (Field notes: August 25, 2001).

Following Kris' comments, it is my belief that a singular explanation to the difficulties Cree students face in post-secondary education is not the correct way of looking at the problem. This thesis will explore a variety of situations and adjustments that have affected the Cree students with whom I have spoken. The thesis will cover some of the topics that were seen in the review of literature. The study will also explore other topics not mentioned in the literature review. My approach is holistic, choosing to mention an array of possible problems to understand the current state of Cree student adaptation to a new school system and Euro-Canadian environment.

Another reason that I decided to use a multi-disciplinary approach is that I found contradictions between some authors. The most obvious contradiction found was between Anderson and Backes. Anderson states that Native learning style is concrete and grounded in everyday life whereas Backes states that it is abstract. These are

opposite results. I believe that my method of choosing a more holistic approach in examining the problems faced by Cree students eliminates the possibility of such clear contradictions.

Chapter 4
Methodology

In this chapter, I will discuss the methods utilized while conducting research as well as the procedures gone through in order to obtain permission to do research in the Chisasibi. Participant observation, which is the most common method used among cultural anthropologists was the key to developing relationships and establishing trust with the residents of Chisasibi. By participating in the community's events and everyday life, I was able to persuade forty-six residents to be interviewed, nineteen of whom agreed to be tape-recorded. Although many of the questions asked during the interview process were determined and thought of in advance, it is important to mention that the interviews were open-ended, allowing the person being interviewed to discuss what they felt about the topic of adjusting to studying outside Chisasibi, in an urban, Euro-Canadian city. Many of the recommendations and much of the content in this thesis originate from open discussions with informants.

Obtaining Permission to do Research

Although the focus of my study was to determine the reasons for which Cree students have a hard time adjusting to studying in Euro-Canadian post-secondary institutions, I felt that it was important to conduct part of my research in Chisasibi. The reason I decided to conduct research in Chisasibi was because I wanted a more holistic view of the the situation Cree students face while studying in the South. By conducting interviews in Chisasibi with parents, siblings, elders, and school staff, it gave me a better understanding of the adjustments Cree students make while studying in the Euro-Canadian academic institutions.

Obtaining permission to do fieldwork in Chisasibi can be a frustrating experience. There is no published or legal protocol for gaining permission to do research in Eastern James Bay Cree Communities. My first attempts to gain permission

to do fieldwork in Chisasibi were based on the advice of Nancy LeClerc, a fellow student who did her fieldwork in Chisasibi in 1999. She gave me the telephone and fax numbers of the Local Band Council and told me to try to speak to the Chief via telephone. Anxious to get in touch with the local Chief, I immediately attempted to telephone the Chief, to no avail. The Village Chief is a very busy person and I overlooked that fact in my initial attempts in contacting her. I was met on the telephone by a variety of friendly people who were willing to answer questions but who were clear on the point that I would have to speak with the Chief directly.

A few pages in Richard Salisbury's book "A Homeland for the Cree" (1984: 105-108) also helped me understand a few points on how to go about seeking permission to do fieldwork in Chisasibi. The directions outlined in Salisbury's book confirmed that I would have to seek permission directly from the local Band Council rather than the Cree Regional Authority and that it might be difficult to gain permission from Montreal via fax and / or telephone. Salisbury's book also described the ambiguity and sensitivity of gaining permission to do fieldwork in an Eastern James Bay community: "if the council has recently had a problem with a researcher, does not know the applicant personally, considers the topic a sensitive one, or is alienated by the behavior of the applicant (too pushy or verbose an approach is not approved by the Cree), the decision may be negative even though the Chief and band manager approve" (Salisbury 1984: 107).

Through extensive contact with one employee at the Cree Nation's office in Chisasibi, I was finally able to gain permission to conduct my research. This employee managed to talk to the Chief in person and convince her that my study would benefit the community of Chisasibi. In exchange for permission to conduct research in Chisasibi, I was asked to submit a copy of my thesis to the James Bay Eeyou School and the Cree Nation of Chisasibi office.

Applied Anthropology

In Chapter 8 of this thesis, recommendations to the Cree Board of Education and the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi are proposed. My original intention was to provide an informative thesis that would describe some of the difficulties that Cree students have when studying in the south. Upon my return, I realized that many Cree students interviewed as well and my thesis supervisors brought up ideas that may help Cree students adjust better to living in a Euro-Canadian city.

It is important to underline that most of these recommendations originated from what the students (both post-secondary and high school) as well as staff at the school brought up while interviewed, often making recommendations to me without being asked to do so. A few important points about applied anthropology and some ethical and professional responsibilities that should go along with doing applied anthropology are:

1)   The participation of people in research activities shall only be on a voluntary basis. The confidentiality of those choosing to participate in the study should be maintained during and after the research activities.

2)   To the communities allowing anthropologists to conduct research, anthropologists owe respect for their dignity, integrity, and hospitality.

3)   And for anthropologists who have received sponsorship to conduct research that they avoid taking actions or making recommendations that maybe harmful to the community.

Participant Observation: Formal and Informal Interviews

Due to contacts established prior to my departure from Montreal to Chisasibi, I was fortunate enough to find a household which was willing to take me into their home and show me around Chisasibi.

Living in a household with full-time Chisasibi residents was a great start for me to meet new people and set up interview appointments. People spoke more freely with me in an everyday setting than they did during our scheduled "formal" interviews. In

fact, many of the everyday casual conversations and happenings inform this thesis. Practically everything an anthropologist does while in the field can be utilized as ethnographic data. Several hours a day were spent collecting ethnographic data in this informal setting. I talked to people before and after some of the softball games I participated in, spoke to students after school, chatted with neighbors over the course of the day. Discussions took place while having supper, talking to parents while I would wait for my friends to get ready, while sitting around and talking to people and friends at one of the restaurants, before and after community events like concerts and community meetings, at the Mamoweedow (celebrating the way life used to be on Fort George Island), and at the community center. The objective of these various forms of engagement was to gather information in a casual setting, knowing in advance that the Cree tended to be shy.

By participating in the day-to-day lives of community members, I gathered a lot of useful information that would not be possible to obtain through the more structured approach. I have been fortunate to be able to continue several interesting dialogues by phone, in letters, over the internet, and through visits in Montreal with Cree students.

The people I have met were generally amenable to the idea of talking to me and being interviewed for my research. With the help of the family I was living with and the help of a friendship established in Montreal over the telephone, my network of contacts in Chisasibi grew very quickly to include workers at the Cree Nations Office, students, hospital employees, teachers, traditional leaders, volunteers, elders, construction workers, business owners, as well as a host of other people.

Meetings with teachers, guidance counselors, and administrative staff at the James Bay Eeyou School allowed me to explore their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of the regional school system at the local school. They also discussed the procedures taken by the school to help students who decide to pursue post-secondary schooling in southern, urban areas.

Throughout my twelve-weeks of fieldwork, I met with forty-six Crees for formal and semi-formal interviews. Nineteen of the forty-six participants allowed me to tape record them during interview sessions (see Tables 7 and 8). Most of those who agreed to

Table 7: Interviews by Age Group and Gender

Age Groups	15-19	20-30	30-40	40+	Total
Male	8	8	6	4	26
Female	6	6	6	2	20
					46

Table 8: Tape Recorded Interviews by Age Group and Gender

Age Group	15-19	20-30	30-40	40+	Total
Male	3	2	3	2	10
Female	2	3	3	1	9
					19

be tape recorded only agreed after an informal interview had taken place. "Shyness toward strangers is pretty common around here. If the Crees like you, maybe you will have a better shot at tape recording them on the second occasion" (personal communication with James Bay Eeyou school teacher, July 7, 2001). I found this to be true. A list of questions was used during the formal, tape-recorded interviews (see Appendix p. 92).

During the informal interviews, no strict interview schedule or rigid questionnaire was used; rather, informal meetings encouraged individuals to express what they felt about life in their community as well as comparing it to urban areas, specifically Montreal. Other topics of conversation focused on the individual's impression of their own life, the paths taken to get there, the education system and their experiences within it (either as students at the school or as parents), and their perspectives on the opportunities and obstacles in the lives of youth in Chisasibi. While the specific direction and content of each informal interview was unique to the individual, all participants covered most of the topics of interest to the project.

Most interviews lasted a minimum of forty-five minutes (with the exception of four interviews lasting approximately thirty minutes); many continued for a second and third hour. I took very brief notes during the informal interviews so as not to disrupt the flow of the conversation. Many discussions continued beyond the interview meetings when I later met people in the street, while playing or watching softball (a popular sport in Chisasibi), in the commercial center, after school or work, at community events, or on Fort George Island.

In meetings with students in Chisasibi, I talked to them about their past times, interests, goals for the future, their education, and their perceptions of urban life. I spent a significant amount of time calling people for interview appointments while in Chisasibi. It was not very difficult to set up interviews with adults. Many adults were easily accessible at work or in their office. I could call their office, remind them who I was, and they would usually allow me to interview them while at work or during their lunch hour.

Although participant observation was a big part of my study, I was not able to witness Cree students in the classroom environment while in Chisasibi. The reason for this is that the fieldwork in Chisasibi was conducted over the summer and the Chisasibi school was open for only two out of the twelve weeks that I was in Chisasibi. However,

I was able to witness Cree student behaviour in the urban environment (which is the focus of this study) and I was also able to meet with students in Chisasibi on their recess and lunch hour and speak with them about how class went during those two weeks. This was enough for me to get a good grasp of the feelings of Cree students on the school environment and curriculum.

Setting up interviews with young people was a little more difficult in Chisasibi. Many young people did not work or did not work in positions where I could simply call and ask for an interview appointment. Another difficulty was that young people (under 18), especially women, were very shy and were initially reluctant to speak with me. One of the techniques used was to ask the youth questions while playing catch (boys under 15). Another was offering a group of friends a ride to Radisson and speaking with them during the drive and while in Radisson. Group interviews seemed to work a lot better in the informal setting because it seemed to put the youth at ease and talk a little more freely. Often, I was able to conduct one-on-one interviews with many of the people who participated in the group interviews.

Setting up interviews with young women was especially tricky. One of the techniques I would use was to propose to the couple (if she had a boyfriend or husband) to be interviewed at the same time or consecutively. Having their partner with them usually put the women at ease, especially if their partner was already interviewed by me.

In addition to the individuals interviewed in Chisasibi, I also interviewed ten Cree CEGEP students and four university students in Montreal. All of the students interviewed in Montreal were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six. Out of the fourteen postsecondary students interviewed in Montreal, eight were male and six were female. These students were interviewed before I left for my fieldwork in Chisasibi. With the Cree students living in Montreal, the same structured set of questions used pertaining to urban life and the adaptation process they encountered once they arrived in

Montreal were used for the students and former students I interviewed in Chisasibi.

Thus, the research has been multi-dimensional with multiple sites and perspectives being used. It involved both structured and informal techniques as well as a knack for fitting in as best as one can. In my case, my everyday personality meshed well with the personality of many Crees. I am a shy person myself and this shyness was undoubtedly sensed by the Cree. In many cases shyness can be a negative trait, but I believe that my shyness was a positive characteristic because the Cree did not see me as they see many Euro-Canadians; as "a loud mouth-telling people what they should do or talking down on us" (Eric, 28 year old Chisasibi resident). This multi-dimensional approach is suited to the holistic approach I take in attempting to understand the adjustments Cree students have to make while studying in the city. I firmly believe that by looking at a question from different angles, one gets a better understanding of it and is in a better position to analyze it.

Attempting to give voice to the people interviewed was one of the goals of my study. By keeping the interviews fairly open-ended and allowing the informants to ask me questions as well as allowing them to discuss how issues can be corrected was a vital part of my research and enabled me to obtain information which would otherwise be difficult to obtain.

Chapter 5
Adjusting to Urban Life

Most Cree students interviewed in Montreal as well as the residents who either have attended school in the south or are currently attending school and returned to Chisasibi, have mentioned that social adjustment was a major factor they had to deal with when moving into a Euro-Canadian center, especially the larger urban centers. Almost all the students mentioned that there were many changes in lifestyle they had to face when they went away to college or university, some pleasant and others more difficult. In this chapter, I discuss the most common issues and difficulties of adjusting to studying in an urban environment. These issues and difficulties were brought up during interviews with Cree students, teachers and school staff (both Cree and non-Cree), parents, and elders. Loneliness, low self-esteem, shyness, pace of urban life, racism, financial issues, and adjusting to a more difficult academic environment are all discussed in this chapter.

Loneliness

Forty-three of forty-six students formally interviewed mentioned that living away from their parents, friends, and family was very difficult. Only two males (former students in their late twenties) and one female (in early twenties currently in CEGEP) mentioned that they did not miss their family much. Loneliness was a major topic brought up in interviews, as evidenced by the following comments:

> During my first semester or two, it was hard. I was all alone and I really missed my friends and my parents. I was used to doing everything with my friends and all of a sudden all I was doing was watching TV all alone in my apartment. I mean it's tough being away. I felt alone for the first year. I thought of quitting so many times (Ben).

> I hated being alone. That's what I hated the most about the city at first. I had to make new friends and that was hard. There are like a million people around you but nobody knows you or gives a shit about you. It took a long time for me to make friends with strangers or even other natives. It's not bad now, but the first year was like hell…. I cried a lot…. I just wanted to go home (Alice).

The first couple of months were hard. None of my friends from back home were in Hull with me when I was studying. I started making friends with people from back home (Chisasibi) but when I go back, I don't even talk to them. I chose them because I felt alone. Even though they were not the best friends for me, I chose them because they were Cree. I kept telling my father that I wanted to go back... I wanted to be with my friends at home. I was so happy when I returned in the summer to Chisasibi. When it came time for me to go back to school, I didn't want to leave. It was the same thing over and over for 3 years (Chuck).

It was tough for me at first. I've been here for over a year and I still miss all my friends and family... The thing I miss a lot is the outdoors and just being alone over here (Montreal). Where I'm from, everyone knows you and will help you, but here it's different... Back home people don't lock their house doors or the doors for their cars. Now I'm used to doing all this stuff, but the other day I remember leaving my door open... Anyways, I can't wait to go back home for the summer (Bill).

Fifteen of forty-six students mentioned that their parents would often send them care packages with traditional foods like goose and moose. Those students who received the care packages mentioned that they felt better after receiving them. Alice commented:

I was always used to eating our food. It's hard to get some of the meat down there... Sometimes a relative or people I know would send me care packages or drive down to visit and they would bring me some stuff, like goose. I like when people do that for me. Goose is my favorite meat... I like turkey, beef, chicken, McDonald's and the other stuff I eat here (Montreal) but nothing is better than smoked goose.

Ben also mentioned that his grandparents would send him meat because they felt that it was important for him to eat Cree food. Ben mentioned:

My grandparents think that I have to eat Cree food or else I will stop being Cree. I think that that's funny sometimes. But I'm happy they send me those care packages because it helps me feel closer to home. Every time I eat goose or moose, I think of life back home and what I would do with my parents and grandparents. I think of going in the bush, I like that. It makes me look forward to going back home during the summer... It does make me feel closer to home and a little less lonely.

Many Cree students deal with being away from home by making friends with other Native students, especially other Cree students. Twenty-five of forty students mentioned that they had trouble trusting people from other cultures. Alice commented:

> In Montreal, everyone is different. I mean there are so many people from so many places that it feels so different from home. In Chisasibi, everyone is Cree or mixed and we have some Inuits and some people like people at the hospital and teachers that are white. I mean we have like one black guy in all of Chisasibi. But in Montreal, you get all kinds of blacks, you have those Arabs, Italians, Greeks, Jews, Chinks, and all sorts of people. It took me a long time to feel comfortable living next to all these different people. I still don't trust these people a lot, if I need anything, I would rather trust a Cree from my town.

Gisele, a French-Canadian high-school teacher at the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi, mentioned that many of the Cree students with whom she has had a chance to talk before they leave for the city worry about being away from family and friends and feeling alone. Gisele states (translated from French):

> It seems so weird to me that these students have a hard time adjusting. I mean they are exposed to the city life on TV. And I mean all of these kids have visited the city at one point in time or another… One of their main concerns is that they will miss their parents and their friends. I know so many smart kids who quit school because their friends did, they didn't want to stand out and so many who never wanted to go on to post-secondary schools. It's hard for us to understand because we come from totally different cultures than them. If you think you miss your friends and family now (referring to this researcher being away from home for a while), you can't even imagine how they must feel. They do everything with their friends and family and the word me "moi" or I "je" is not as important as the words we or us "nous". That's why they feel lonely a lot. Being with their family all their life and moving so far away to a place so different from Chisasibi makes for a lonely experience, especially for a Cree student.

As seen in Table 9, the average number of people in a household is way above the national average, by approximately 25%. Also shown in Table 9 is the amount of people per room is more than double the national average in Chisasibi.

Table 9 - Family and Dwelling Characteristics (Source: Statistics Canada 1996)

Characteristics	Chisasibi	Quebec
Selected family characteristics		
Number of married or common-law families	525	1,640,535
Average number of persons in husband-wife or common-law families	4.6	3.1
Average total income of husband-wife or common-law families $	52,850	53,192
Number of lone-parent families	120	309,440
Average number of persons in lone parent families	3.2	2.5
Average total income of lone-parent families $	40,501	28,421
Selected dwelling characteristics		
Total - Number of private occupied dwellings	625	2,822,030
Dwellings constructed before 1981	285	2,078,770
Dwellings constructed between 1981 and 1996	335	743,265
Dwellings requiring regular maintenance only	290	1,864,465
Dwellings requiring minor repairs only	140	726,620
Dwellings requiring major repairs	195	230,950
% of occupied dwellings with more than one person per room	31.1	0.9
Average number of persons per room	0.9	0.4

When a student moves from Chisasibi to the city, an obvious void is created. Sharing rooms and always having a relative around suddenly disappears. Living alone and not having familiar people around is especially difficult for Cree students. It is my belief that their communal nature mixed in with living alone often results in prolonged periods of loneliness.

In Chapter 8 of this thesis, I offer recommendations that can help alleviate the problem of loneliness. Recommendations include a mentoring program and the purchasing of apartment buildings where Cree students benefit from living with other

Cree students as well as a mother and father figure.

Friendship Centers Helping with Adjustment Process

Some students overcame loneliness by meeting people at the local Cree School Board offices (both Montreal and Hull have offices). Students sometimes utilize these centers to discuss problems they have with school curriculum and social adjustment. When asked, only six out of nineteen Cree students interviewed in Montreal stated that they used the Cree School Board offices to obtain help on their own will. An additional four students mentioned that they saw people from the Cree School Board because they were under academic probation and met with people at the School Board in order to discuss probation. Unfortunately, many of these services are not put to good use. As one guidance counselor mentioned:

> We have all these services put up for our kids but most hardly use them. The ones who come in seem to be the ones who are doing well. Often students come in too late, with problems that should have been addressed weeks before (Field notes: July 2001).

Many colleges and universities also have Native Friendship centers. Nine out of the nineteen Cree informants I interviewed in Montreal were first met at various Native friendship centers and clubs. Many others were introduced to me through Cree students I met at the clubs. The Cree students I spoke with tended to socialize mainly with other Native students, especially in their first few months in Montreal. Justin, a twenty year-old CEGEP student from Ouje-Bougamou (another Cree village) said:

> The Crees stay with the Crees and sometimes we'll hang out with other Native students like Mohawks and stuff... But I noticed that if there are people from your own community, you stay with them a lot. Like this other Cree guy I know from Mistissini, he hangs out with other people from there. It's the same for people from Chisasibi. I guess they can do that because those towns are big compared to Ouje. My town, Ouje, is small. There are not a lot of students in Montreal from my town... I guess it's good that people stay with friends from their town... But some people hang around with people from their town only

when they are here (in Montreal). When they go back home for the summer, they don't even talk to these people sometimes (*chuckling*)...

Others see the Friendship Centers as something very positive. John, a

Twenty-two year-old CEGEP student from Chisasibi comments:

> I'm really happy that these clubs and Friendship Centers are here for me. I only knew a few people in Montreal and it helps to have these things here. If I need to find someone to talk to or help me, I know that I can go to the Friendship Center. People sometimes help me with my homework and stuff like that. It's a good idea to have these places, even if some people use it to just hang around.

As seen in this section, Native Friendship centers offer a place for Cree students to meet with other Cree students and students from other Native cultures as well. As John mentioned, the clubs and Friendship Centers offer a place for Native students to receive help, both personal and academic from other students and it also is a place to just relax and be with people from a familiar background as well as a convenient meeting place for Native students. As Justin mentioned, one of the downsides of having Native clubs and Friendship Centers is that some students limit their social interactions to people within the club (Native students), resulting in distancing themselves from making friends with Euro-Canadians and students of other cultures.

I support the idea of having Friendship centers for Native students because I believe that a good mix of interaction between Native and non-Native students is most beneficial to Cree students. Although it is apparent that some Cree students choose to interact primarily with other Cree students, it is also apparent that a place for them to feel comfortable and feel more at home aids in their adjustment process.

Difficulties with Making Friends, Shyness, and Self-Esteem

Due to shyness, many Cree students have a hard time making friends with people from other cultures for the first little while. When asked if they considered themselves

shy, fifty-three of sixty-five informants (both Montreal and Chisasibi) considered

themselves shy. As Pamela put it:

> In Chisasibi, all we have in our schools are Crees, some mixed, and some Inuit. Before I left to come here (Montreal), Joy (counsellor) told me to meet with different people and to try to make friends with people of other cultures. I think that was hard. I had a hard time trusting people and meeting them. I guess I am also too shy.

Comments such as Pamela's were common. Many of the students mentioned

that they had a hard time making non-Native friends because they were too shy to

approach people to start a conversation. Brian mentioned:

> Back home there is no need to make new friends. Everyone knows you and you know everyone. Back home there is no such thing as "making friends", the groups are there from the time you are a kid. Here you have to approach people and ask them questions and just chitchat. I hate that. I mean I'm not any good at that stuff cause I'm shy, a little. I just hang out mostly with natives, except for this one guy I talk to after class sometimes. He's cool.

Shyness is also a factor when approaching school staff and other students for

help with their studies. Wanda, a Cree nurse in Chisasibi mentioned that when she was

in Hull studying nursing, many of her Cree friends would never go up to an instructor to

ask for help because she claimed that her friends were too shy. Wanda claimed that she

was not as shy because her older brother also lived and studied in Hull with her and that

she had his support and an idea of how people in bigger towns act:

> I was never afraid to ask for help even though sometimes I get shy too. But I was a good enough student to pass without getting a lot of help from others. It was a different story for a lot of my friends.

Wanda's friend Lucy had a more difficult time with shyness. Wanda mentioned

to me that Lucy was "like a typical Cree kid, she answers by nodding or shaking her

head or by shrugging her shoulders" and that when it came time to talking to new people

from other cultures that she would not feel comfortable at all. Lucy comments:

> Shyness is not a bad thing in town (Chisasibi). Even adults do this when they

talk to people (shaking her head and shrugging her shoulders). I don't know why I'm so shy, I was always like this. My mother always told me that nobody likes a big mouth and a show off and I guess she was always shy too. I guess that stuck with me. I was just brought up to speak when spoken to, you know like that saying… When I was in Hull, I had the hardest time making friends with students and going to teachers for help. I'm not as shy as I used to be and I wish I was more like this when I was younger. Maybe I'm not as shy cause I'm home and not in town… Maybe I would be more shy if I lived in Hull again.

Luke, a CEGEP dropout, believed that if he was not as shy to ask his instructors for help, that he would probably have passed most of the classes at which he did not succeed. In fact, Luke was too shy to allow me to tape record my interview with him and preferred to conduct an interview in a restaurant, with some of his friends around. Luke said, "I'm shy to talk into that thing (tape recorder), I'd rather do it as friends." Even while he was a student, Luke told me that those few times he would ask his instructors for help, he never would go alone. He would always bring a friend along with him.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, shyness, especially with Cree women, has been well documented. In his study of Chisasibi youth culture, Martin Hayes writes:

> Most of the younger people that I tried to interview (generally between the ages of 14 to 18) were shy and were very reluctant to speak with me. I found this to be particularly true with young women. I approached a number of young people under the age of 18 and only seven would agree to talk with me, and of this group only four would speak with me for any great length of time (Hayes 1998: 8).

Alice also had difficulty dealing with shyness and making new friends outside and within the school setting. Alice claimed that it was difficult for her to make new friends because she always had the same friends in Chisasibi and that it was hard to start all over. She also mentioned that she felt like she spoke with a different accent than the other students and that she felt as if they would make fun of her. Alice did not like to stick out of a crowd:

Even in Mistissini, I was like that. I did not like to be the one that would stick out or talk much. I just hung around with my friends and did whatever they did. It was always like that for me. Here it's all screwed up. People are nice to me sometimes but I have a hard time opening up. Like the other day a girl asked me for my class notes because she was sick and I gave them to her. She asked me if I wanted to go for lunch with her and her two friends but I didn't go because I felt like I would be out of place. It's not like I had anything to do, I was free... I just made up an excuse... I don't know why. I was too shy.

Shyness is something that seems to be more common with Cree women, but as was seen with Luke, it is not exclusive to women. Jared was another student who felt that making friends was a difficult thing for him at first. Jared, like many Cree youth, has visited Montreal in the past and enjoyed his stay. He commented that living in Montreal on his own and shopping and visiting with his older brother (who was studying at the time) are two very different things:

> I used to come down to Montreal every semester to visit my brother. He always made time for me and who ever I would visit with. He felt lonely too, that's why I would come down with other family and visit him. It is so different visiting the city and living in it. When you visit, everything is fun, you are with people you love and care about you and you visit nice places. But when you live alone, it's not the same thing. I wish I had my friends here with me to see all the cool stuff together. I can't do that by myself. For me it is so different living in Montreal. I mean people don't know you here and the teachers don't know you and the other students don't know you either. I have a hard time making new friends because I feel like my real friends are back home and that I want to be with them. It's bad because I feel alone but whenever I have a chance to make a new friend, I always think about my old friends.

Stephen, a mature student, beginning CEGEP at the age of twenty-six, also mentioned that he was shy and that he was having difficulty making friends. He mentioned that most of the students in CEGEP were eighteen and nineteen years of age and that he did not want to have eighteen and nineteen year olds as friends. Making friends that were not Cree was a challenge for him at first:

> I would drive down to Val D'Or and sometimes Ottawa and Montreal to do shopping and I even bought my car in Mont-Laurier. I would visit often enough to buy stuff and I even made friends in Val D'Or. Montreal is so big though. I

think that it's tough for me to adjust to this. I have to drive far to do some good hunting and fishing. I'm like most Cree, I'm shy. I miss my daughter back home and it's tough. I started to make some friends at this job I'm working part time, on weekends.

Although shyness is common with young people in Chisasibi, the shyness decreases when the youth are put in a group atmosphere. On several occasions, youth appearing to be uninterested in answering my questions, were in reality too shy to have a prolonged face-to-face conversation with an interviewer of a different culture than themselves. This became apparent when youth would approach me in the street several days after I attempted to interview them, answering some of my questions while their friends were listening to the conversation. The following is an example of the aforementioned:

> Hey Tony, you asked me those questions that other day about school and stuff. My friend here went to school in North Bay too... Can we talk like this, with everyone here; you don't have a tape recorder do you? It's a cool topic maybe we can walk around and talk about it? (Field notes July 2001).

It is my belief that this shyness is a form of protection that some students use to not stick out and be noticed in a negative way by other students. Establishing friendships primarily with other Cree students ensures a level of security and familiarity, which may be a positive thing, but it can also foster negative results such as establishing an even greater polarity between the Cree students and the Euro-Canadian students. By separating oneself from other groups, it is possible that a resentment or misunderstanding of the other group may develop (see also Martin 1991: 182-184).

Many of the youth directors and teachers believed that much of the shyness comes from a lack of self-esteem. Gina (half Cree) and a coach and organizer of many youth activities and sports in Chisasibi, mentioned that Cree youth are especially shy

when put in an atmosphere that is foreign to them. One example Gina gave me was with her figure skating students. Gina mentioned that her students would often not skate well at competitions where Euro-Canadian youth would compete because they lacked confidence in themselves versus white kids. This was frustrating to Gina because she believed that the youth were not performing up to their potential and that "it was as if they were doing it on purpose to skate poorly." According to Gina, many of the children improved in these situations over time but that it is a constant issue that she has had to deal with. She also felt that this would probably apply to students studying outside Chisasibi.

A lack of self-esteem was found amongst Cree students in Montreal. Out of the nineteen students interviewed in Montreal, twelve Cree students (seven females and five males) openly admitted to sometimes feeling inferior to Euro-Canadian students. Many students felt that they were "not as smart as White kids" and that they were "not as good at school." When asked why they felt that way, the students replied that they hardly passed their classes with 60% grades and that the Euro-Canadian students would receive better grades. Briana, a twenty-one year old CEGEP student studying Humanities responded:

> I think I'm going to quit school next semester. I was such a good student back home... I used to get good grades but now I'm hardly passing. I think I'm not as smart or something. It's like all of a sudden I'm stupid. I'll never get grades as good as those other people, like you must get eighties and nineties, right?... I try hard and I don't party... I still can't do it.

It must be noted that not all Cree students mentioned that they felt inferior to Euro-Canadian students. Mark, a twenty-four year old university student, is a good example of a young man with plenty of confidence in himself. Mark does not believe that Euro-Canadians are inherently more intelligent that himself. Mark said:

> I'm fed up of Cree kids saying that they are no good at this or no good at that...
> I'm just as good as all those other kids. My grades aren't as good, but it doesn't
> mean anything... If I would try harder, I would do better. All the Cree students
> are always looking for excuses on why they fail. All I know is that not all those
> white kids in there (pointed toward the school cafeteria) can do half the stuff I
> can. Those guys can't hunt or even survive for a day out in the bush, I can... It
> doesn't make them stupid or make me smarter than them, it's just the way we
> were brought up, I guess... We were taught different things back home, not just
> school.

There were a few other students (particularly males), who were disappointed
with their friends believing that they were not as intelligent or have as much potential as
Euro-Canadian students. Even some adults mentioned that low self-esteem and lack of
confidence was a problem. Ben, a man in his late fifties and a former residential school
student, mentioned that he was frustrated with the conduct of some students. Ben felt
that many Cree students give up too quickly and that "these kids need a kick in the butt
sometimes". He felt that those students who go on to college and university and succeed
do not have problems with low self-esteem. Ben went on to say that:

> If they (students) have low confidence, they shouldn't go down (south) to study.
> These kids have to understand that they are just as good as any other kid. I see so
> many coming back with all kinds of excuses.... It hurts me to see that.

Alice, who also admitted to being shy, felt that she looked different compared to
the other girls and that she felt bad because she felt like she was not as pretty as most of
the other students in her CEGEP. She mentioned that the young women in her
community did not wear skirts and that they dressed very casually. The normal,
everyday outfit of young women in Chisasibi is running shoes, white sport socks, jeans,
a T-shirt (when warm) or a sweat shirt (hooded sweat shirts were very popular in
Chisasibi). Alice felt out of place in CEGEP:

> The girls here look so good. They dress up all fancy everyday. Some of the girls
> dress up like they are going to a wedding or something really important. I feel
> like I don't fit in well and that sometimes the other girls look at me and make fun

of me because I dress different from them. When I talk to my parents about it or with my other sisters they tell me that it doesn't mean anything and that I should still try to make friends. I find it hard because I standout in a bad way. Back home everyone is the same. Everyone dresses the same, you know like me now... Jeans, runners, and sweaters. I just feel down a lot when I walk into the school.

The above passage demonstrates that although young Cree women do not wear the same type of clothing and follow the same trends, they believe that their choice of clothing is inferior to the Euro-Canadian choice of clothing. Memmi (1965) points out that the look of the colonizer is usually the preferred look. Following Memmi, I believe that much of the insecurity felt by young Cree women stems from wanting to look like the "colonizer", in this case Euro-Canadian women. As one doctor in Chisasibi pointed out:

You look at many healthy girls in town and they are healthy but they don't look like the girls in the city. There are some thin Cree women but they are in the minority. Cree people are just built a little different, they are a little more husky and thank God for that, it's freezing here in the winter (laughing). And the fashions available at the Northern [the only store in Chisasibi that sells clothes] is casual, jeans and stuff. You won't find Armani or DKNY at the Northern (laughing). So, to answer your question, I think that some girls who go to Montreal feel different right from the beginning because of this. They don't look the same; they don't dress the same, so some feel inferior.

Pace of Urban Life

When speaking with Cree students who have studied or continue to study in Montreal one of the adjustments that every student has brought up was adjusting to the pace of urban life. Public transport schedules, being on time for class or appointments, traffic, and the hurry that everyone in the city seems to be in have all been discussed in my interviews with Cree post-secondary students, past and present.

Regarding public transportation, thirty-seven of forty-seven students had difficulty being on time. Ben, a twenty year-old CEGEP graduate, spoke to me about

the public transportation system. His comments on public transportation represent the views of many Cree students I have interviewed. Ben said:

> When I first came to study and live in Montreal, I thought I would get used to it because I used to come to Montreal to visit friends and party. I was twenty when I first came to study here and it was weird... All of a sudden it wasn't just to party, I had to get to places on time... It wasn't like when I would just visit and party... I remember that I used to live about thirty, forty, minutes away from school and that I was always late for class at first... not always but a lot.

Ben graduated from CEGEP several years ago but other Cree students felt the same as him. Brian, currently living and studying in Montreal also had a difficult time adjusting to the public transport system. Brian said:

> There are so many buses, I think over a hundred different bus lines and four metro lines. I'm used to it now but it took me a few months to get used to it... Sometimes I still get lost going to new places because I don't always know what bus I have to take. There are no buses in Chisasibi, except for the tourist buses (laughing). Everything is simple back home... You know where everything is and you know where everything is in Radisson. Here it's so big; you need a map to get around. My father makes fun of me sometimes; he says to me 'you don't get lost in the bush but you get lost in the city.' He tells me that all the time.

Both male and female students had trouble adjusting to the bus schedules and being on time. Alice points out:

> Back home I would just take my father's van everywhere. I would walk to school and take my father's van to go wherever I had to go... Here I don't have a truck or a car to drive and I have to take the bus everywhere. I hate taking the bus with all those people in it. The bus is so crowded and sometimes I get mad before I even get to school because the bus ride gets me nervous. Back home I never took the bus anywhere, we didn't have any buses except for when the younger students needed to go to Radisson for swimming lessons or something like that... In Montreal, I was always late at first because it took me a while to get used to the buses and the big buildings. I had one class three times a week it started at 8:30 in the morning and I was always late for it. One day I was twenty minutes late and the teacher kicked me out of the class... I was so embarrassed to go back to that class the next time.

Life in Chisasibi is a lot more laid back. People are often late for work or extend their lunch hour by fifteen or twenty minutes. City life is more hectic and being on time

is one adjustment with which many students have a hard time. Much of this tardiness on the part of Cree students is due to adjusting to the public transport system, but others have a hard time adjusting to the importance of being on time in the south. Alice pointed out:

> People sleep in a lot in Chisasibi, and a lot of times people show up to work or school late cause they stay up late... Here, the teachers don't like that. One teacher told me that I have to be at school on time or else she would take off points from my final grade. She told me that I can't pass the class if I'm always twenty minutes late... It was tough for me to be on time at first because I was lost in the school... My college is so big; there are more people in one building here than there is in all of my town... Back home, people are always late... I think we were all born late, just kidding (laughing).

Alice went on to say that she would often arrive for appointments or social functions after the scheduled time because it is customary for the activities to start after the scheduled time. I found this to be true with many of the appointments with my informants, even the informants which whom I gained a friendship. One example is Lorne. I booked an appointment with Lorne at Chisasibi's arena restaurant for two o'clock in the afternoon and he showed up fifty minutes late. When I asked him what took him so long, he just shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and replied, "I had to go to the bank machine to take out some money".

The pressure some Cree students feel to be on time often results in poor attendance. Many students decide that they would rather not show up to class if they are late because they realize that the other students will stare at them or that the instructor will make a comment concerning their tardiness. Brian mentioned:

> Sometimes I would skip class because I realized that I was like fifteen minutes late... My first semester what happened was that I would be at the class door ten or fifteen minutes late, look through the window and see that the class already started and that the guy (instructor) was teaching... I couldn't open that door (laughing)... I was too shy for everyone to look at me and stare at me... So what I would do was I would go to the arcade and play pool with my friends there...

A lot of my Native friends were there on their breaks and a lot would skip class too.

As was hinted in Brian's comments, it is not only the pressure of being on time that results in poor attendance records, but low self-esteem. Not being able or willing to face the instructor's comments or the staring of fellow students, some students decide to not attend the classes for which they are already late. Ronald mentioned that he would often not attend the classes that he was not doing well in, particularly because he felt that:

> The Chinese (referring to Asian students) kids were better at some classes than us. I was good at math in Chisasibi but those Chinese kids are so smart at math... Even in the language classes, I got discouraged because I was so good at those classes here. I used to pass those classes without much trouble here. Then, all of a sudden, you get your first grade back and it's a failing grade. It's so tough. Sometimes I felt like I was not good enough... The counselors said that I was good enough but I never finished my college...

Ronald went on to say that his decision not to complete his college studies and return to Chisasibi after two semesters was supported by his parents. Ronald mentioned that his parents were sad that he did not complete his studies but that they were glad to see him return to Chisasibi.

As will be discussed in Chapter 7, a mentoring program, a student exchange program, and a boarding home can all help the student with adjusting to the faster pace of living in the city.

Discrimination and Racism

Twenty-six of forty-six students I interviewed had something to say on the topic of discrimination and racism. Twenty students felt that they were never a victim of discrimination but that they know a Native person or friend who has suffered discrimination. Regardless, discrimination and racism were often brought up by many

of the students themselves and for this reason could not be excluded from this study.

One example of racism was given to me by Wendle, a twenty-eight year old and former CEGEP student in Hull. Wendle mentioned that he had a hard time finding his first apartment in Hull because he felt that the landlords would ask for an unreasonably high amount for rent. Wendle described to me one instance where the landlord demanded 700$ a month for an apartment that he was renting for 550$ to other tenants in the same building. Wendle hesitated before using the word "racism" but after thinking about the situation and looking back, he had no other explanation:

> What else could it be? The guy had other students living there and they were paying five fifty (550$) a month for the same one (apartment). I didn't want to believe it was racism because I was too busy looking for apartments and I found another right away, but it had to be that.

Dawn had something similar happen to her. She was looking for an apartment in Montreal and met with landlords who simply refused to rent her the apartment she was inquiring about for no apparent reason. Dawn mentioned that she remembered one landlord speaking to her husband in French, thinking that Dawn did not understand. Dawn believed she heard the landlord say something about Natives being dirty and that she would not be able to pay for her rent. The landlords again asked for a very high rent. Dawn ended up moving a couple of streets from that location and was paying two hundred dollars a month less for a similar apartment.

Others have spoken to me about racism that took on a different, more obvious form. Chester spoke to me several times about a few incidents that occurred while he was living in Hull. A group of skinheads would often pass by the school Chester was studying at and harass the Native students, challenging them to fight and throwing rocks and other objects at Chester and his friends. The racist comments and rock throwing only ended once the Native students decided to fight back. Chester commented:

It was so hard not to fight back because we knew we could fight them ... we were stronger than them. We didn't want to get into any trouble, that's why we didn't fight them right away. But one day this guy threw a rock at us and it hit one of my friends in the head and hurt him. We had to fight them, we knew it had to come to that... After we took care of them, we never saw those guys again (Field notes: August 10, 2001).

Brian, in his late twenties, spoke to me about several instances in Montreal where he and his friends were teased and racist comments were shouted in their direction. Brian mentioned that the racism he encountered usually occurred in bars. He said that these comments did not affect him or his friends much because they often came from drunken people and that drunks sometimes say things that they do not mean or that they would regret. Brian admitted that when those comments were directed at him, that it angered him a lot but that he always remembered what his guidance counselor in Chisasibi told him as well as what was written in the information session guidebook:

Prejudice is caused by fear and ignorance. Pity those people who are prejudiced because they have allowed narrow views to dominate their lives. Don't fall into the same trap, and don't let yourself get discouraged when you encounter biased people. For every negative person you meet, you are also going to encounter positive ones who are very interested in you and your culture (Cree School Board document, 2000: 8).

Students preparing to leave Chisasibi are given a guidebook in order to help prepare them for post-secondary studies in Euro-Canadian environments. One topic addressed in the guidebook is racism and discrimination. The fact that the Cree School Board publishes and distributes such documents reflects that racism and discrimination is a recurring problem.

Many Cree students state that although many of them were not the targets of direct racism themselves, that they often feel uncomfortable in social situations because they feel like they are the "other". Dawn explained that she does not have to worry about who she is and what she looks like when she is in her home community, but that

when she travels and lives outside Chisasibi, that she feels like she has to be someone else. Dawn states:

> When I walk around in a town outside Chisasibi, I feel like I have to behave, like I was in first grade again. I feel like I'm not myself and that others look at me like I'm strange. Sometimes I feel like yelling out 'haven't you ever seen a Native person before?'... In the end, I just don't feel comfortable in the big towns. It's o.k. to visit, but living here means so much more. It's tougher to deal with everything. At home, you are just yourself and people know you and trust you and talk to you, in town nobody cares, nobody knows you, and people look at me funny sometimes. I guess most try to figure out what I am (ethnicity) because there are so many races in the city. But I hate it when people look at me.

Nate, also felt like people acted differently toward him because of the way he looked. Nate mentioned that he spoke with his sister about the topic of racism (they lived together when they were in Ottawa studying). Nate's sister used to come home upset because she felt like she was too different and that nobody liked her, both guys and the other girls. She did not have that problem in her home community, but she felt like the city was a cold and mean place.

Nate mentioned:

> I think that girls are a little more worried about what they look like than guys but I had moments too, where people judged me because of the way I looked. One day I was playing pool with some of my friends and one guy walked in with his friend and they were talking about which table they should play against. So the guy tells his friend in French, that they should play with the guys at the next table and not us because he thought we were going to hustle him. Anyways, I overheard them talking to each other at the other table and they were making fun of us. I know it because I understand French and they were even making fun of my jeans because they were a little dirty because I helped my friend paint his apartment before. Some people are just stupid, so it didn't bother me too much. But I could understand my little sister because she wanted to fit in and she felt uncomfortable.

Financial Issues

As mentioned earlier, many of the students who attend post-secondary institutions are mature students. Many of these mature students are married and have

children and a house of their own in Chisasibi. For most of the mature students, managing money is not as big an issue as it is for the younger students entering post-secondary institutions in their teenage years or in their early twenties. Most mature students have more experience with managing money.

Because of a shortage of houses in Chisasibi, most youth do not move out of their parents house until they are older. Most young couples have no choice but to live in the same house as their parents or in-laws for several years until the Cree Nation's office decides that a house should be built for their family.

For the mature students, the main issue is that the amount given to the students is not enough for them to support a family. For example, Candice is a single mother with two children. Candice received $1511 per month in 2001 from the Cree School Board to live and study in Montreal with her two young daughters, aged three and four (see Figures A13 and A14 in Appendix to see how sponsorship is determined). Candice claimed that that amount is not sufficient to support two young kids and that money is very tight. Other mature students feel the same way. Don mentioned:

> Why go back to school and live like that, always struggling for money. It's good that the school board gives us money, but it's not enough… I have two kids and a wife and it was tough to go through two years like that… I worked under the table on weekends at a restaurant to make extra money.

It must be noted that sponsored students are not permitted to work over the entire course of their sponsorship. Parents, students, and a counsellor were asked what they felt about students being able to work while attending post-secondary studies. Responses were mixed, here are a few examples:

> I don't know about that rule. I think that students who feel like they are able to work and do well with their studies should be allowed to work at least part-time. I know that the Cree Education Board wants to make sure that their money doesn't go to waste but if someone is good enough, why not? I mean I'm a father, I have a wife I take care of my kids, my grades are good enough. Last

semester my lowest grade was 68%, I passed all my classes and I feel like I need to support a family. It's not fair that I can't even work full-time. I took a job anyways but it was bad cause the guy paid me five dollars an hour, this is way below the minimum wage. If I didn't have to work for "cash" I would have at least made a few dollars more an hour (Sal, 27-year-old student).

I don't know if I would do well if I had to work during school... It's hard enough the way it is now, you know. Did you work when you went to school...? OK, but you worked with your dad, all you had to do is go into your basement and work like that. Anyways, I wouldn't work while I study, it's hard enough as it is and if I manage my money right, I'll be O.K. (Linda, a 22-year-old student).

Why would they need to work? They are getting money from the Cree School Board. Listen, if someone offered me three hundred dollars a week to go to school and get my books and tuition taken care of, I wouldn't have to work. The problem is that these kids don't know how to handle the money given to them. They order out and party with it and when the end of the month comes along, they don't have any money left. (Teacher, James Bay Eeyou School).

Don't know about if the kids should be allowed to work as they go to the school to study. They are sponsored and get money, they should just study. But I guess it's not right to tell an adult with kids or married to say 'you can't work'. Maybe if the student does well in the first year they could allow it. I know my son washed dishes at a restaurant when he went to school. He worked on Friday and Saturday night. Do you think kids actually do their homework on Saturday night? As a parent, at least I knew that he was working and making money and not getting drunk and that stuff. I know kids do that (a 55-year-old father of former student).

I think the plan is a good one. There are always exceptions to the rules but I think that the Cree School Board invests a lot of money in these kids and that they want them to succeed. People here don't like to make exceptions to the rules. They feel that if it applies to one student then it should apply to all the students. I'm sure many students can handle work and school but we are giving them this money to be students. We are paying them an amount of money that equals many people's weekly wage. I think that if we make exceptions, everyone will be upset. This way it is fair and the same for everyone. (School Counsellor, James Bay Eeyou School).

When discussing financial issues with youth under twenty-five years old, many

topics would be discussed.

Thirty-seven of forty-six students under twenty-five years old did not pay their

own bills in Chisasibi. Bills such as maintenance for their home, telephone, cable

television, heating, and electricity were paid for by the heads of the households. These new financial responsibilities posed a challenge for many of the young students. Johnathan, a 10th grader, mentioned that his brother once studied in Hull and that he had difficulty managing his money. Johnathan mentioned:

> My brother was no good at paying his stuff like bills and rent and all that stuff. He said it was hard because he never had to do that stuff and he ending up spending the money in the first couple of weeks. My parents think he probably spent it on beer... because he used to drink when he was here with his friends.... That's what I think he did too; I think he would probably spend too much on beer or maybe order food, that's expensive, eh? Anyways, he used to call home and ask my parents for money... He said it was for groceries, I don't know.

Johnathan's parents were frustrated when talking to me about their son's trouble paying his bills. His parents mentioned that their son would call almost every month to ask for money and that they would give it to him but that this made them angry. Jody, Jonathan's mother said:

> This was five years ago and I still get upset about that. He was not responsible, I think. He used to get drunk, I think. That's why I had to give him money every month. But what else was I supposed to do, he said he needed money for food... He didn't graduate, he was smart, but I think he partied a little too much.

Amy, a nineteen-year-old student returning to Chisasibi for the summer, after spending the school year in Montreal studying, mentioned that she too had a hard time adjusting to paying the bills at first. However, she did mention that she did not have as much trouble as some of her friends with money because she tried hard to budget the money she received. Some of the budgeting practices were difficult for her at first but after a month or two, she mentioned that she was able to put money aside and have enough to pay all her expenses. Amy said:

> At first it was hard, you wanna go out and see everything in the city. After that, I got used to it... I got used to putting money aside and to not spend it all in one shot... Some of my friends were not good at that and they would spend their

money on partying and then they would ask me to lend them money.

Christine, a twenty-year-old student, is one of Amy's friends from another Cree village. She spent some time in Chisasibi visiting some of her relatives and I was introduced to her through Amy. Christine had a lot more trouble budgeting her money, mentioning that the money given to her was not enough to pay for all of her expenses. Christine mentioned that it was difficult for her to properly manage the money because she never had to do it before and that she did not have a good financial cushion, like some of her friends. Many of Christine's friends worked for a whole summer prior to moving to Montreal for their education but Christine had not. She believed that this was a mistake on her part because if an emergency came up, she would not have enough money to pay for it. The example Christine gave me was with her laptop computer. Christine's laptop needed to be serviced and because she did not work during the previous summer and did not have much money saved up, she had to wait a few months to get her laptop serviced. Christine commented:

> It's hard to save up when all the money coming in goes into bills and rent... I still don't know what to do sometimes. I remember going hungry once last year because I didn't have enough to do the groceries. I was too embarrassed to ask a friend for money... I think I should have saved up more before going to Montreal.

Others openly mention that they chose to study and live in Montreal because they simply want to see what city life was like and the sponsorship money gave them the opportunity to do so. Paul, now 28 years of age, was one such student. Paul studied in Montreal several years ago and he decided to live in Montreal because he thought that it would be a good experience and a lot of fun for him. Paul mentioned that he would party and drink a lot and that school was not a primary concern for him. Paul confided in me, telling me that he would never consider attending a college and have to pay for

the expenses himself. He mentioned that the only reason he decided to leave Chisasibi was to take advantage of the money given to him through the sponsorship program and to have a good time. Paul never felt like he was going to succeed in his studies and that he never had the intention to finish his schooling. He spent a lot of his time drinking and playing pool with his friends.

After his first year in a Montreal CEGEP, Paul was put on academic probation because he did not complete and pass at least 75% of his course credits. The Cree School Board has a policy on academic achievement which states that in every semester, in order to continue receiving financial support, a student must complete and pass at least 75% of the course credits that he/she is registered. Paul was asked to sign a document stating that he was on probation and that if his grades were not to improve past CSB standards, his sponsorship would be revoked (see Figure A12 in Appendix).

When asked why he would want to study and live in another city if he did not plan on completing his studies, Paul replied:

> I was sick of people telling me what to do. My parents tell me what to do all the time and I couldn't take it... I wanted space to breathe, away from all the shit happening over here (Chisasibi)... I wanted to see what it would be like and I had a good time and made new friends... I don't think I would change anything, I'm working now and I have a family... It worked out O.K. for me in the end.

It must be noted that Paul was the only student who mentioned that he abused the system. All the other students mentioned that sponsorship helped them a lot and that they used it to get an education. Even those students who did not complete their program of study felt that sponsorship was a good idea. Ben mentioned:

> Of course there will always be people who take advantage of a system. I mean there are so many students getting sponsored every year. I think there are over five hundred students from the James Bay who get sponsored. Out of all these people, I am sure most don't look at the money as an opportunity to spend it carelessly and have fun. The original intention is probably good for most of these students.

In Chapter 7 of this thesis, I recommend that mentoring programs be implemented in order to assist the new students in adjusting to urban life. I also recommend that an apartment building be purchased and that it should be converted into boarding home. This can help with financial issues because rent will be free, resulting in much less money to manage.

Academic Adjustments

Thirty-nine of forty-six post-secondary students (under thirty) interviewed had never studied in an institution outside their community school, until the commencement of their post-secondary education. This is different from many of the older students who were sent to residential schools when they were younger. Students who have recently attended post-secondary institutions and present post-secondary students comment on how different it is, academically, to study in a post-secondary institution in the south. Peter, a twenty three year old CEGEP student from another James Bay Cree community mentioned:

> Over here (Montreal) the teachers ask for stuff to be printed, I don't have a computer and in high school, I wasn't used to typing stuff out... So many little things that I didn't have to worry about in my old school. The subjects are so much harder than they are at home.

Rose, twenty-eight, comments on her adjustment to college:

> It was tough at first, I guess it still is... I'm taking subjects in college that I never took before, like the subject you study, anthropology. I like learning new stuff but it's hard to do all that reading. In high school it was so easy compared to the way it is now. We never had much homework. I used to get good grades but now I get by and I'm happy with passing and understanding the classes.

Steven, a twenty-four year old university student from another Cree village commented that the courses were initially very difficult to get used to because the expectations of CEGEP and university teachers / professors are much higher:

I have to say that in high school I was pretty much treated like a baby. My first semester was so hard for me to get used to when I moved down here (Montreal). At my high school, the teachers were concerned with the basic stuff; attending regularly meant you were a good student. Over here, it was so difficult to get used to the deadlines, the assignments and in general, the amount of work it takes to do well. I thought high school was high school for everyone but that is definitely not the case. I noticed the difference right away. All the other kids looked less worried and seemed more prepared. I was scared and really didn't know what to expect... And the professors are so strict. They know exactly what they want and if you don't give it to them, you can't pass. I looked at some of my assignments from high school and I didn't even answer the question that the teacher was asking of me and I still got a good grade. There is no way a student can do that here in university. The teachers here expect so much more.

Gina's parents, a Cree man in his sixties married to a non-Native woman,

remarked:

Father: Kids here are so lazy.

Myself (Interviewer): Why do you think that?

Mother: The parents are responsible for much of it, I think.

Myself (Interviewer): Can you give an example?

Father: I can give millions but it seems like the kids here are so spoiled and the teachers can't do their job properly. God forbid you give the kids homework, the parents don't even care whether the kid does it or not.

Mother: It's true. If the parents hear their kids complaining that they don't like the teacher or that they give too much homework, the parents automatically take their kid's side. When you go through thirteen years of school like that, if you finish, the student will have a hard time succeeding compared with kids who have been pushed more to do their best. Like the kids down south.

Father: People complain that the teachers here are no good and that they are basically teachers who can't find a job down south or who don't even have a degree to teach but I can tell you that they are not bad. The problem is that you can't push them, many parents won't allow it. How are they going to succeed at higher levels like that? (Field notes, mid-August 2001).

Comments such as these are common amongst mixed families as well as Non-

native, temporary inhabitants of Chisasibi. One explanation given to me by one of the

academic advisors was a "culturally based response" (Field notes: August 23, 2001).

The academic advisor, married to a Cree man, explained that the comparatively low

success rate of Cree children could be explained by looking at cultural factors. As

previously noted in this thesis, the traditional Cree method of education came in the

form of story telling and it was very much a group oriented activity and not a

competitive endeavor. The academic advisor noted that many of these traditional values

are still very present in contemporary Cree culture and that students are not encouraged

to outperform their colleagues or appear better, fearing exclusion:

> Students go through school here and don't push themselves or their parents don't push them to do their absolute best. Kids just want to be like their friends, so if one student in the group does better academically, they may be teased or not accepted. It is a mentality which results in mediocrity. Now when it comes time to being a serious student and to try their best at a higher level, it becomes hard for them, very hard. How are the students supposed to just turn on the switch after ten years of mediocrity? It is not a typical situation. There aren't too many people in Canada who come from a culture which traditionally encourages egalitarianism. Also, the kids here don't speak English or French as well as kids in the south because they only start teaching in those languages in grade three. You see many kids speaking broken English and their French is even worse. That's why we try to merge both ways of teaching, but it's tough.

As mentioned in the above passages, one can easily see that the adjustments Cree

students make when moving into Euro-Canadian centers are multi-dimensional.

Adjustments made come in the form of cultural adjustments, academic adjustments,

financial adjustments, and institutional adjustments.

The next section explains an experience that I went though while I was

conducting research in Chisasibi. The experience provided me with a situation

analogous to the Cree School Board Support Program. It is relevant because it describes

an adjustment I had to go through and it triggered a thought process which led me to

better understand many of the adjustments Cree students have to tackle.

A Personal Experience Analogous to the CSB

While walking through the bush just outside Chisasibi with a few of my Cree friends, I had an experience which enlightened me as to the way the Cree confront many problems. My friends and I were confronted with having to cross a stream that was about fifteen feet wide (we were approximately twenty feet above the stream). We walked a little to find a better crossing, with no success. The only way across was to walk on a log that was placed there previously. With our wet running shoes (it had rained earlier that day), we took turns crossing over the stream. My heart was beating heavily from fear; I relied on my Cree friends and their encouragement that I would not get hurt before gathering the courage to cross over to the other side. Aiding me as I crossed over was laughter, joking, and helping hands. In that moment, a valuable insight into the way many Cree students experience the south was born.

Confronted with my mixed feelings about crossing, I knew that I really did not have a choice. I could not go back because I was driven there by others and I was at least a two-hour walk from Chisasibi. I had no choice but to trust that my friends knew what they were doing and that the risk was worth taking. After I had crossed, I was the same person physically, but a change had occurred. I had learned a new skill which was obviously familiar to my Cree friends (crossing over a long, narrow log), but was not a skill which I had ever practiced. What helped me cross over was the motivation, trust, and confidence, instilled in me by my Cree friends. If this example seems amplified, I add that I was at least a twenty-minute drive to the Chisasibi hospital and that if anyone would have fallen, serious injury may have resulted. There is no doubt that if I was faced with this task while alone, that I would have never attempted the crossing.

This experience provided me with an analogy to the Cree School Board's support

program. I envision the program as a provider of the tools needed to maintain balance and cross the bridge from secondary five in James Bay Cree schools to college and university in the south. But the bridge, allows the person to go in both directions. The students must be able to return to their communities with commitment to their cultural heritage intact. To accomplish this ideal, the design of the support program must recognize the influence of systems beyond the immediate boundaries of the educational institution. The program planners must also anticipate and/or identify short and long-term effects of any interventions.

Most Euro-Canadians have not had the same opportunity as I to experience life in a Native community in northern Canada. It is possible that one of the reasons why many Euro-Canadians do not understand the need for a sponsorship program for Native students is due to this lack of contact. In the next chapter, I briefly examine some Euro-Canadians' reactions to the Cree sponsorship program.

Chapter 6
Euro-Canadian Reactions to the Cree Sponsorship Program

I have decided to include in this thesis Euro-Canadian reactions to Cree students and their sponsorship program because the conversations I have had with Euro-Canadians on this topic have revealed that many Euro-Canadians feel negatively toward such programs. Including Euro-Canadian reactions to the Cree School Board's sponsorship program enables me to show both the Native point of view and the view of non-natives in this thesis. Including both points of view often helps in resolving many issues. A better understanding of the "other" may lead to improvements in the relationships and an elimination of negative stereotypes that have been discussed earlier in this thesis as well as those which will be discussed in this chapter.

Over the course of my graduate studies, other students, family, friends, and acquaintances have continually commented on my research topic. When explained to them that the Cree students are sponsored by the CSB and that they receive money for travel expenses (up to three round trips to their community and back every year), childcare, and school supplies, Euro-Canadian students have replied differently. Many of the people I have spoken with on this topic have strong opinions regarding sponsorship.

Most of the Euro-Canadian students I spoke with were rather envious of the amount of money given to Cree post-secondary students. One male university student in his early twenties was especially upset with this program, believing that it is a waste of money. He mentioned that he received a scholarship for university that only paid for his tuition and books and that he lost his scholarship because his Grade Point Average was

slightly below what was required for him to keep his scholarship (3.5 GPA). This student believed that money should go to the most deserving and that it was not fair that a poor or average student should receive money and a good student like him should have to work and take out bank loans to pay the bills and go to school. He went on to say that the Native students with whom he has studied were not very good and that they failed many of their classes. He made it clear to me that he only wished he could receive the amount of money the Cree students receive and not have to worry about getting good grades. He did not understand why the CSB rewarded the students so much "for just passing seventy-five percent of their classes! I wouldn't even go to school if I was that horrible a student. If they can't handle the school curriculum, let them be hunters" (personal communication, October 16, 2001).

Other Euro-Canadians understand some of the social and academic adjustments that Cree students have to go through and are not as harsh with their comments. Sue, a twenty-three year old university student majoring in history believes that sponsorship programs for native students is a good thing because she felt that many of the native communities in Canada do not have enough natives with the education or training for positions such as teaching, nursing, accounting, and medicine. Sue believes that a sponsorship program will help students fill many of the important jobs that are presently occupied by non-natives in Cree communities. Sue was surprised as to the amount of money given to the Cree students, commenting that she only wished she was given that much money.

Some of the older adults (over forty) I have spoken with regarding the financial aid given to Cree students believe that such programs are not fair. One man mentioned that:

In the end, we end up paying for it, right? I mean everything they have and all the money they have is through government transfer payments. It's not fair that I have to pay for my kid's education and other people's kids too... Why can't the government give my kid three hundred dollars a week to go to school?

Again, opinions on this topic vary from person to person and many adults feel that sponsoring students is a great idea and that it encourages students to improve themselves and fill positions in their community. However, envy with regards to the amount of money given to the students and the accommodations provided were obvious across all age and gender categories. In all, twelve of fourteen people openly claimed that they were envious of the amount of money given to Cree students studying abroad. One of the two who replied that he was not envious also mentioned that he had no trouble putting his children through school and that if he did, his response may have been very different. "I make enough money for my kids; thank God I don't have to worry about that" (personal communication, October 20, 2001).

From the interviews I have conducted with white people on the Native education system and the Cree support program, most Whites view the position of Native people as an injustice not to the Indians but to the Whites. They see their tax dollars "supporting the Indian" and in various situations, they regard this as a personal injustice. The negative attitudes of many White people toward Natives are closely bound up with the idea that Natives are dependent on the welfare state. There still seems to be a consensus that the state gives Indians too much. Indians are perceived to have special rights and privileges. The following is a list of negative comments I collected from white, working class Montrealers on Native people studying and living in Montreal.

Sometimes I wonder if they are normal. They are always fighting with each other and with other people. It looks like I can't go one week without reading in the news about what they want from the government or one of them dying or committing a crime because of alcohol. I hear they rape a lot too. I worked up north for a while and those Crees they have everything. They have new trucks

and they don't pay for their homes, but still they act like that. I guess it's just hard for them to obey laws and act like everyone else. (field notes, middle-aged man, approximately 50 years old).

I feel bad for some of these people. They come into town to study and they don't know how to act in public. Maybe where they are from they can do what they want. In the forest, where they live, they must not have as many rules; I guess they don't know better. (23-year-old truck driver).

You see these kids downtown all the time drinking and doing God knows what else. Causing trouble. They were never taught right from wrong. I guess this is why they always get into trouble. They do as they please, I guess. The fact that they also get money from their school board makes it worse. It's like giving a killer a gun. They have money, they will spend it on drinking, they all have that problem. (38-year-old housewife).

Thomas Dunk (1991: 110) points out that "the idea that Indians do not have laws or rules is consonant with the European tradition of juxtaposing white civilization, which is defined by the rule of law, to the state of savagery were there is no law." By saying that there are no laws or rules in the North, the southerner is saying that there are rules where they live (the city).

In conclusion, it is this researcher's belief that many Euro-Canadians have not given up the idea of Natives being lazy, violent, dependent alcoholics. This hinders Cree students from adjusting well to the southern environment because they undoubtedly feel that white people look at them in a negative manner. This comes back to the issue of self-esteem and racism, tackled earlier in this thesis. The following comment made by Kevin, a university student in his mid-twenties, sums up the feelings many Cree students have shared with me regarding living in the city.

It's hard to make friends with others because I really don't know how they feel about me. Sometimes I feel like they talk to me like I'm a baby or stupid or that they feel sorry for me. It makes me uncomfortable to even think about that so I just hang out with my Cree friends because I know what they think of me.

Chapter 7
Adult Perspective

As seen in the introductory chapter, traditional Cree culture values the importance of adults and elders perspectives. Because the Cree culture places such an importance on what adults and elders think, it is necessary to include their perspective, especially with topics having to do with youth. As seen in Table 10, many Cree students quit school at a young age or quit their post-secondary education. This is made possible with parental consent due to the lack of importance some parents and elders place on school education.

Table 10: Total Population 15 Years and Over by Highest Level of Schooling (20% Sample Data). (Source: Statistics Canada 1996)

Census Indicator		Detail
Less than Grade 9		32%
Grades 9 to 13		39%
	Without Secondary School Graduation Certificate	85%
	With Secondary School Graduation Certificate	15%
Trades Certificate or Diploma		1%
Other Non-University Education Only		19%
	Without Certificate Or Diploma	45%
	With Certificate Or Diploma	55%
University		9%
	Without Degree	35%
	With Bachelor's Degree or Higher	65%

The following section includes a sample of people from my interviews with Cree adults, explaining what they think is wrong with the youth in their community and why they have difficulty adjusting to life in the south. When asked what adults felt of

the youth in Chisasibi, most answered by explaining the problems experienced by young people in the community. Lack of discipline, alcohol and drug use, violent behavior (often associated with alcohol consumption), sexual promiscuity, disrespect of adults and elders were some of the more common characteristics that were used by adults and elders in describing the youth in their community.

Marge is in her early 50's and works at the high school. She is Cree and has always been part of the community. Marge explained the changes that have occurred with her community:

> A lot of changes have occurred here at a really fast pace. More people work for a wage now and so that means that there is more money to buy stuff. So now everyone has skidoos and trucks. Some of these changes are good, and some are bad socially. These changes have been coming too fast. Many teens and kids aren't keeping their traditional skills. Today young people have more complicated problems. In a way, choice is good, but they have too much choice. We didn't have all these activities when we were growing up and we had to organize our own activities. The choice to go to school in the south is a choice they have, but it is a mixed blessing. Some kids go there to party and take advantage of the system. They get money to go there and study but they end up spending it on parties. Many of the choices they have now are ruined by exposure to alcohol and drugs. We didn't have that.

I asked Marge how well she thought the youth in Chisasibi were adapting to change. She replied:

> I think that they are adapting not so badly. You know now the kids have TV, the internet, radio and when they go down south to study, they are not as scared as before. When I used to go down south, I was scared. I was afraid of racism and not fitting in. When I was young people didn't want to go down south into the cities to live, but now the kids think it is exciting. Many come back because they realized they missed their parents and family and friends. Others come back because they believe the curriculum is too difficult. But they are not as afraid or hesitant before they leave because they visit the cities like Montreal, Ottawa, Val D'Or more often and they think they know what it's like. So many think that they know what it would be like but get a big surprise and realize that they didn't fit in as well as they thought.

Walter is in his late thirties and was born in Chisasibi. He studied in Hull and

lived in the Montreal area for a few years. Walter worked as a police officer in Chisasibi but has recently left the police force because he felt it was too difficult confronting people he knows on a personal basis as a police officer. Walter feels like there are many new problems facing young people in Chisasibi. Walter was born and grew up in Fort George. Since the town was moved in 1980, he felt like there are new challenges and issues facing Chisasibi youth.

> The town of Radisson was built at about the same time as our community was moved. It's only about a fifty-minute drive there and it's so easy to buy alcohol there. This has a bad influence on everyone, especially the teens. It wasn't that bad on Fort George, I mean people managed to get booze but not as much as now. I think that the kids are influenced in a bad way by all the new things that we didn't have so much of in the past. Look at alcohol, the kids make it part of a good time and partying. When they go to the cities in the south, it's one of the only things that is familiar to them. They know that it is even easier to drink in the city and that they are allowed to do it, there is no ban on alcohol there. So that's what they do. They drink and party and stay up all night over here, so what do you think they will do over there (the city)? They will drink, of course.

Walter feels like crime has been increasing and he blames the increase on the alcohol and drugs that are becoming more and more available to youth in Chisasibi:

> Some of the crimes which are becoming more typical with the youth in Chisasibi are sexual assaults by teens on teenage girls, possession and sale of alcohol and drugs, disturbing the peace, drunk driving, common assaults, misuse of firearms, disturbing the peace, and public mischief. I feel like this stuff was not as bad when I was a kid. I just feel like a lot of it has to do with the alcohol and some drugs, like coke [cocaine] that has made its way into the community. These kids are going down south with all this bad baggage and they are supposed to compete with all those kids that have come from good schools and places where this stuff was not as big a problem? I don't think that all the young people do this stuff and that most of the ones who succeed in school down south were not troublemakers here. But with some of the kids, it's so predictable. I remember talking to a kid last year who was going to study down south. He came back the next year because he failed most of his classes. He was a troublemaker over here; imagine what he did in the city?

Noah is in his mid-seventies and he speaks English very well, with a Cree accent. Not unlike many elders, Noah chooses his words carefully and answers questions briefly

but with honesty, always looking you in the eye as he speaks. Noah is a very well respected member of the community (as most elders are). Noah worked with many young men in Chisasibi, helping them find themselves and turn their lives around. He often took young men into the bush and away from the troubles inherent in town life (alcohol and drug abuse) and showed them how to become responsible adults.

Noah is worried about some of the young people in the community because he feels like the youth are being influenced by southern values in a negative way:

> It is very bad, they (youth) try to be like the white people in the south. They follow what they see on TV and not their parents. It's like they forget they are Cree. They want to learn the white ways... I think it is o.k. to go to school and learn things that can help us, but they don't go to school in the south for that. They go to be like white people and have fun... School and learning is a serious thing.

Joe is another elder in his mid seventies. He speaks English very well and with only a slight Cree accent. Joe often works with youth and also brings young men into the bush to teach them traditional ways and to respect the land and everyone around them. According to Joe:

> The elders are not being paid attention to. We were taught that we were supposed to respect everyone and everything. But because the young people are in school and away from elders, they forget what it means to be Cree. They want to leave Chisasibi to go south, but the place of the Cree is on the land. They no longer respect tradition and they are not white either. The kids are lost, they are looking for an identity but can't find one, they get lost in the drugs and alcohol. When they leave to study, they either come back the way they were, lost and confused, or they come back being more like the white man. They don't understand the elders and the message that we are trying to teach. Young people have lost their attachment to the land and they lose more of it as they go south, to learn the white way. They don't do good because they are not white and they have to learn too many things. If they were happy with being Cree and all that it means to be a Cree, then it would be o.k. to study with the white man. But most are not ready for that.

As seen throughout this chapter, elders and adults put much of the blame of problems plaguing Cree youth on the negative effects introduced to the community's youth

by Euro-Canadians. Issues such as substance abuse and loss of traditional values due to an increased influence of Euro-Canadian culture on Cree youth have been discussed. Although I agree with much of what adults and elders say on this topic, I believe that some points are left out by them. Some issues, such as the lack of parental supervision and lack of involvement in children's studies by many Cree parents were not brought up by the parents themselves. In the next chapter, I make recommendations that include Cree adult involvement in their children's education.

Chapter 8
Recommendations and Conclusion

Work is being done by the school staff in Chisasibi, especially guidance counselors, to help Cree students make an easier transition to studying in an urban environment. Also, there are offices of the Cree Board of education in Montreal that handle issues dealing with student adjustment to urban life and Cree students are briefed and handed out manuals to "help them adjust, anticipate, and inform them on what they can expect to happen when they move to big cities" (Field notes: September 2001). My aim in this section is to complement the existing system used by the Cree Board of Education and the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi, with regards to helping Cree students adjust to urban life. Many of the ideas and recommendations presented in this section were discussed in collaboration with present and former post-secondary students as well as some high-school students in Chisasibi. These are only recommendations with no blueprint as to how these programs would be managed; I leave that to the Cree Board of Education to examine, if it were to find some of the suggestions valuable.

Mentoring Program

In conversations with some Cree post-secondary students in Montreal, I discussed the possibility of implementing a mentoring program. Many students agreed that a mentoring program could help students with issues dealing with both structural and cultural adjustment. Seventy-Five percent of students felt that a Cree student (or at the very least, a Native student) would make the best mentor. One thing that the students agreed on was that the mentor would have to be someone that feels comfortable living in the city and has a good knowledge of the education system and institution (a former student or a student who has been in the same school for a little while). Mentors

could serve as guides (important in the first few weeks) and study partners, helping the student situate himself/herself as they go through the first few weeks in a new environment. A mentor can also help the student draw up a budget and tutor the student in fiscal responsibility. Here are some reactions to the idea of being teamed up with a mentor:

> I guess that a mentor would be good cause when I first came to Hull I was all lost, I had no idea of what bus to take or how much time it would take for me to get from one place to another. All I was given was maps and bus schedules but I didn't know where to go. I had friends that would help but often they would feel just as lost as I was. If someone would have helped me more with that stuff maybe I would have felt more comfortable right away... I wished I had someone next to me, helping me through my first month, someone who knew all that stuff already... The person doesn't have to be Cree but it would be nice... (Tape recorded interview with former CEGEP student April 2001)

> I think some people need the mentors more than others. For me it was no big deal because I was living with my brother and I had six other Cree students studying nursing with me. Maybe someone to guide us around a little more than what we had. All we had was a two hour tour of the campus and most of us didn't show up. I think that it would be a good idea for those people who don't know anyone in the city. Maybe people to help find apartments and help the students get settled a little, people in the same department maybe. I never thought about it but it makes sense, I guess... (Tape recorded interview with former CEGEP student: May 2001).

These reactions show that there is a need to assist Cree students with the social and structural adjustments that they face while studying in urban centers and that a mentor could help in a variety of ways: finding an apartment, study partner, guide, and friend. The question of feasibility and planning is another topic. It would undoubtedly take up some human resources to implement such a program for every student and in every post-secondary institution where Cree students choose to attend (there are many post-secondary institutions in both the provinces of Quebec and Ontario). One way to solve this problem is to make mentoring part of the obligations for returning students.

To make the mentoring program more feasible to manage, a group of Cree students recommended the following:

1) Students entering their first year of post-secondary education will have a mentor.

2) Students living with family or friends who have been in that town for a certain amount of time will not be teamed with a mentor, unless they wanted one.

3) Students entering as mature students and who have lived in the city before will not be teamed with a mentor, unless they wanted one.

The positive aspect of such a program is that it can be implemented without much money, if my recommendation of making returning students mentors is followed. The only expense would be to hire people to coordinate it.

Sessions with Counselors

Guidance counselors at the James Bay Eeyou School in Chisasibi prepare information sessions and pamphlets on what to expect while living alone in a city. The information sessions are not attended by everyone and the pamphlets are not always read by the students. One student commented:

> Those information sessions are not bad. It helps a bit but you don't get the specific information you need to know for what you will be doing or for the city you will be living in. Some people go to those things and some people don't... The pamphlets are not bad, it's something you can keep and look at and it has some encouraging words in it. But I lose those things all the time... I think my friend even forgot to bring it with him when he left for Montreal.

The pamphlets can serve as a good reminder of what the students should be looking for in terms of rental rates, what to look for in an apartment, and important phone numbers and addresses. The problem with paper is that it can easily get lost or destroyed or, most importantly, it can easily be forgotten. The Cree School Board can alleviate this problem by sending copies of documents via e-mail.

Increasing the role of academic advisors to the point where every potential post-

secondary student (high-school students in grades ten and eleven) will have mandatory meetings with their advisors at regular intervals (example: bi-monthly meetings) can have a good impact on the student being more prepared to confront living in an urban environment. Meetings can focus on any concerns the students are having with school as well as a chance to discuss the various challenges a student has to face on a one on one basis.

Teachers in Chisasibi (both Cree and non-Cree) could also contribute by setting aside time every week to discuss some of the challenges Native students face when studying in the south. Group projects on topics such as making up a yearly budget can be easily introduced in the class curriculum.

Teachers at the post-secondary institution should be presented a document from the Cree School Board explaining some of the difficulties Cree students deal with. This will at least make the teachers aware of such difficulties and enable the teacher to establish additional aid (for those who need it) in the form of peer to peer tutoring, note sharing, and meetings with the teacher during the teacher's office hours.

Exchange Programs

During the course of my first interview session with a Cree CEGEP student, I asked the student what he thought about the possibility of exchange programs helping Cree students better adjust to urban life. This student immediately answered "yes, I really think that that would have helped a lot." Many of the students interviewed had never studied in a southern high-school and the possibility of an exchange program during their high-school years seemed to be a very popular option for the students.

Cree students engaged in an exchange program lasting a few weeks, would be exposed to many of the initial shocks that the post-secondary students are faced with: culture shock, being away from friends and family, being introduced to a public transport system, as well as familiarizing themselves with being around students of different cultural backgrounds. Being the "guests" of host families would promote a friendly first encounter with educational institutions in the south and may help the students with their self-esteem and confidence once they attain the post-secondary level. Academic success is always an important goal but those students who do not achieve high academic grades during the exchange program should not be punished for it. All failing grades during this period would be discarded and only those results from the local schools will be tabulated. The goal of the exchange is to make students feel comfortable in the Euro-Canadian setting

Another positive aspect of exchange programs is that students partaking in such programs are never alone; they would be studying with other Cree students as well as making friendships and contacts with southern students. As seen in earlier sections of this thesis, loneliness is one issue that bothers Cree students the most. Exchange students live with host families and this close contact and communication with southern

families would help students feel more comfortable.

Here are some comments made by present and former Cree students on the idea of exchange programs:

> Exchange programs seem like a good idea. I think I would have been shy to go live with another family for a little while. I think that in the end I would have been more prepared to deal with the fact that I would be alone and away from my family for a long time. I guess I would have gotten used to the way things work a lot better if I did an exchange (former Cree CEGEP student, twenty-nine year old woman).

> Being away from my family would have been tough but it's a lot tougher to be away from your family for a year when you are in college. I think that an exchange lasting a few weeks would be good enough. I think that an exchange program would have been a good help for me because it takes away a lot of the shock. I would make white buddies, maybe, before even starting school and this would have made me feel more comfortable my first semester of college. (Crystal, twenty-nine years old, former Cree student).

> The thing I took forever to figure out was the buses. I never got a hang of it because nobody really showed me how to get around. If these programs would include trips around the city or sessions on how to get around, then I think it would have helped me out a lot. I don't think I would have felt too comfortable with living with another family, but I guess it's better than living alone.

Exchange programs could be a reasonably inexpensive investment for the Cree School Board. Most of the expenses would be picked up by the host families, as is the case with other exchange programs. The students would also be able to visit various CEGEPS and universities allowing them to make a decision in terms of selecting the post-secondary institution with which they feel most comfortable.

Field trips would be an alternative to exchange programs. They allow for quick visits, enabling the students to visit various post-secondary institutions as well as get a chance to see some of the city. Some negative aspects of taking field trips are the lack of seriousness students display when on these trips. One teacher commented:

> Students will be all over the place during these field trips; they display a lack of seriousness and will probably not get much out of such a trip. The biggest problem students have when moving to the city is that they have trouble being

away from their family and closest friends. During these field trips students will be together with their friends. Field trips do not expose the students or simulate what it is like to study and live in the city.

Although lack of seriousness while on a fieldtrip is definitely an issue, I believe that it is better than having no city experience at all. At the very least, students will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with certain elements of city life like the transportation system and visiting various CEGEPS and universities.

Dealing with Alcohol

Alcohol consumption is a topic that is very difficult to resolve and is a sensitive issue for many Cree living on and off their respective reserves. Many Cree believe that alcohol consumption of any quantity should not take place on and off the reserve because of the destructive effects alcohol can have. On the other hand, many Chisasibi residents believe that the sale of alcohol should be made legal within the community and this will eliminate some of the problems in the community, such as bootlegging. Allowing the sale of alcohol within the reserve may also help the authorities control some of the problems associated with alcohol on the reserve. By opening one bar or pub run by the Cree Nation's office and distributing liquor licences to only a couple of stores, the problem of teenage drinking may be reduced somewhat. Some bootleggers will still sell to teens but the bootleggers will be a bigger target to the authorities because they will be in direct competition with the Cree Nation's office. It is my belief that reducing the amount of under age alcohol consumption can help raise the success rate of high-school students, leading to more Crees attending post-secondary institutions and more post-secondary graduates.

Debates on alcohol consumption and legalizing the sale of alcohol in Chisasibi are very touchy subjects. Although a delicate issue, grassroots programs aimed at

educating children and parents at a young age on the negative effects of alcohol are very much needed. As Sam, a man in his late twenties, comments:

> Just because it is illegal and we are not supposed to drink doesn't mean that people won't or don't. Some kids start drinking because their parents drink a lot and they steal some of their booze (alcohol) or they see their parents drink and they drink too. It has to change at a young age it sounds sad, but we have to talk to our kids about alcohol use at an even younger age cause some of our kids start drinking at twelve years old.

Assisting students who have drinking problems through various detoxification programs and the help of guidance counselors exists, but I believe that a more preventive approach should be the focus. The problem is present, those on the Health Board admit to it, as do students and educators. Incorporating the topic in class lectures and meeting with both parents and children on the topic may be beneficial. Regardless, I believe that more resources should be put in place at the grassroots level in order to help with this issue.

"Cree House"

Another possibility that may help Cree students adjust to life in Euro-Canadian cities is for the Cree School Board to purchase buildings in the cities where most Cree students choose to live. For example, an apartment building in the downtown or the vicinity of the downtown Montreal area would be a good location for those studying in Montreal. Other popular cities for Cree students such as the Ottawa/Hull area can also have buildings belonging to the Cree School Board.

These buildings can be paralleled to residence buildings for out of town students entering their first year of university in that it is used in order for the new students to adjust to a new environment, an environment that is equally unfamiliar to the others living in the same building. The Cree buildings can have an older married couple, paid by the Cree School Board, to attend to the needs of the Cree students as a mother/father

figure and ensure that the students are up to date with their studies. Also, traditional foods (important to many Cree students) can be served by the couple. It has been mentioned earlier in this thesis that one of the things that is most missed by Cree students is the lack of traditional food available to them in Montreal, as well as a sense of loneliness. This purchase of such building can certainly help in that regard. The issue of tardiness is also addressed because the students living in the buildings will have parental figures reminding them to be on time.

Purchasing such buildings undoubtedly require a big initial investment by the CSB in that apartment buildings are very expensive in urban areas, particularly downtown areas. Although the initial costs are high, such purchases can be seen as investments by the school board in that such buildings are an asset that can be sold for profit, if need be. In the long run, the CSB will save money on monthly allowances distributed to the individual students because they can deduct the rent subsidy from the cost of living allowances given to Cree students. For example, a student living alone in a one bedroom apartment in Montreal would receive 1194$ a month in 2001 from the Cree School Board. Out of 1194$, 560$ is distributed to the student as rent money. Students in the building no longer have to pay rent, so 560$ can be deducted from their monthly allowance. (See Figure A13 in Appendix to calculate Monthly allowance).

Living with other Cree students and having a family environment will undoubtedly help alleviate the issue of loneliness discussed earlier in this thesis. Although the void of not being with parents, siblings, and closest friends will still be felt, I believe that sharing the same building in a family environment would make the adjustment process a lot smoother for many of the students.

Trial Semester

Another recommendation that can aid in the adjustment period for Cree students is to negotiate a trial semester between the CSB and the individual post-secondary institutions. This transition period of a semester can be used as a practice session where students adjust to the new academic institutions by not worrying about grades. Academic success is always important but the main focus in the initial semester would be social and institutional adjustment.

Courses that students do not succeed in would be erased from their academic record and the student can start with the same class in the following semester. Naturally, the courses that the student succeeds in will be accepted and recorded on their transcripts.

Many people believe that such an approach may lead to a lackadaisical first semester because the new student may not take the introductory semester seriously. This is a valid point which has been discussed with educators in Montreal. One Euro-Canadian teacher in her mid-twenties comments:

> The only thing wrong with [a not for credit semester] is that some students may take the trial semester as a reason to party and have a good time instead of studying and taking things seriously. On the other hand, a serious student is a serious student and if this trial semester helps out some, it is definitely a good thing. In the end, most CEGEP students take extra semesters to finish their program, I did. In this case those who adjust well and do well academically do not get set back because it doesn't affect them. Those who need the break get it, sounds good.

Students in their first semester can be monitored a lot more closely by CSB staff in order to correct the problems the students are having. For example, if students are having trouble with tardiness, this issue can be discussed with a counselor or the responsible couple in the "Cree House" and by the second semester can be corrected.

The same applies to academic difficulties; difficulties can be tackled in the first semester without terrible urgency. For example, if the student is having difficulty reading, a tutor can be assigned to the student so that the problem can be addressed before the student returns for a second semester.

Having a "Native Day"

Having one day put aside every year for Cree and other Native students to talk about their cultures and traditions can help with issues of discrimination and low self-esteem. Many ethnic clubs (Italian, Lebanese, Greek, and others) at the CEGEP and university level have a day put aside for them in order to display their culture to other students not belonging to the same ethnic group. These events "can help the students feel comfortable with who they are and help bridge the cultural gaps between students" (personal communication with Dawson College advisor, January, 2002). It is also my belief that such exercises can also help with the issue of shyness and is a good initial step for students to make friends outside their ethnic group as well as a practice exercise for class presentations.

Projects of this nature may also help Cree students deal with racism and discrimination because if Cree students develop a bigger sense of pride, they can deal with such issues more calmly. Realizing that the problem lies with those discriminating against them will help the student deal with the problem effectively.

Involving Parents and Elders in the Education System

Involving parents and elders in children's education strengthens their interest in their children's educational success (Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 2000). The Cree School Board has already started utilizing this approach and early indications have shown that this approach is successful. It is important that teachers use this approach as an

opportunity to encourage parental involvement in the classroom and the curriculum. Some ways that families[5] can be involved are by:

1) Bringing their special skills to the classroom. Parents and family members can share these skills through a natural teaching style. Examples of some shared skills include cooking, sewing, simple woodworking, dance, music, sports, and fishing.

2) Making learning materials.

3) Accompanying the children on field trips.

4) Telling stories to the children, particularly stories of their own family background.

5) Holding workshops where family members and staff together design and create a cultural place for the children to reinforce and rekindle Cree traditions.

Conclusion

Most teachers will admit that a good education starts at home and most parents would agree with such a statement whether it takes the form of a Euro-Canadian education or a mix of Cree and Euro-Canadian (the Cree adults at the Boarding homes can supplement the Euro-Canadian education with some Cree). It is for this reason that I believe recommendations and structural changes are not valuable without the consent and encouragement of Cree parents. The Cree School Board works hard to demonstrate the importance of higher education (even though this education is obtained within the parameters of Euro-Canadian culture) and this effort should continue every year.

Although the Cree are slowly improving their academic success rate, the percentage of Cree university graduation is still far below the provincial average, 9.9% for Chisasibi as opposed to 16.9% for other Canadians (see Table A1 in Appendix).

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[5] This section emphasizes the importance of extended family to Cree society, and encourages students to explore their own extended families. However, some contemporary families may be very different from traditional Cree families. Single parents, divorces, separations, teenage parents, and interracial marriages are part of contemporary First Nations family landscape, just as they are in non-Aboriginal families, and the very meaning of "family" is shifting dramatically. Students may not have a "traditional" nuclear or extended family, and they should not be made to feel that their own family structure is more or less valid than others.

Statistics for secondary school completion shows an even bigger disparity. Twenty-three percent of Quebec Cree students in the 1989 age cohort (ending in 1996) obtained their high school graduation certificate whereas the average for the province of Quebec was more than three times greater with an average of 73.2% obtaining their high school certificate (see Table A11 in Appendix).

As I struggle with making recommendations, a Cree friend calls me to tell me that he wants to quit school, another sends me an e-mail, stating that a fellow student in CEGEP called her a savage during an argument. Regardless of which theory one chooses to use in attempting to help Native students in post-secondary education, "the theory collapses because the anguish the students felt at that moment can not be captured in theoretical analysis" (Hennepe 1993: 227).

The reflections of Harold, a former CEGEP student in his early thirties, offer some good advice to those wishing to better understand the needs of Cree students, both educational needs and otherwise. Harold shares important information he obtained from a conversation he had with a Cree elder named Joe before leaving Chisasibi to study in Montreal ten years ago, he states:

> I remember asking Joe a question about education and post-secondary   students going south to study but he (Joe) chose instead to talk about how we (the Cree) used to live in the past. When he started talking about this, I thought that he did not understand my question, but he did. I understood him later because what he meant was that if Crees are going to succeed, that the beginnings and traditions must not be ignored.

I hope that this thesis has illustrated some of the issues which have influenced and continue to influence Cree students success rates in Euro-Canadian cities. The recommendations made are basic but if implemented may have multi-dimensional benefits. Those responsible for making changes in improving the life of post-secondary

students will be left the task of following though with the details, if they believe them to be of use. As is usually the case, the path to change and improvement is sometimes long and painful. It is my firm belief that such a path can also be very exciting, if people allow it be.

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Appendix A: Research Questions

General questions

Note: When addressing former students, past tense was used.

1) Travel to Other Cree Communities? How often?

2) Travel outside the James Bay? How often?

3) Lived outside James Bay? How long?

Acculturation

4) Are you proud of your Cree culture and language?

5) Do you practice traditional Cree skills during your spare time (ex. Hunting)?

6) Do you respect your elders for their knowledge and wisdom?

7) Do you speak Cree with your family?

8) Do speak Cree with your friends?

9) Do you look forward to attending classes throughout the school year?

10) Do you help you parents with your younger brothers and sisters (if applicable)?

11) Do you enjoy your classes at CEGEP / university?

12) Do you find that you don't know what to do with your free time outside school?

13) Do you feel like you're learning useful skills at CEGEP / university?

14) Do you feel like your education will help your community in the future?

15) Would you rather go to school in the James Bay, if it was possible?

16) Do you miss your home community regularly?

17) Do you miss your family at home regularly?

18) Do you miss your friends at home regularly?

19) Have you made new friends at CEGEP / university?

20) Do you feel comfortable taking part in class discussion?

21) Your CEGEP / university has a friendly environment?

22) Do you enjoy working with other students from different backgrounds in your classes?

23) Are you happy with the way you feel in the southern culture?

24) Do you feel like your previous educational experiences prepared you well for CEGEP / university?

25) Do you enjoy the social diversity in CEGEP / university?

26) Are you happy you decided to study in the south?

27) Do you take part in the activities that are offered in the south?

28) Do you regularly spend time with other Cree students outside of school?

29) Are you more comfortable when you have other Cree students in your classes?

30) Are you more comfortable (or would be more comfortable) living with or near other Cree Students?

31) Are you comfortable talking with new people in school?

32) Do you spend time with southern classmates outside school?

33) Are you comfortable interacting with other Cree students in school?

34) Are you comfortable with the southern culture?

35) Are you comfortable interacting with my professors in class?

36) Are you happy living in the south?

37) Do you find it easy to speak to your college teachers outside class (ex. office hours)?

38) Do you work hard at home to get good grades?

39) Are you adjusting well to the southern way of life?

40) It is important for you to attend school?

41) It is important for your community that you attend school?

42) Are you feeling happy since you arrived in the south?

43) Since you arrived in the south, have you been feeling depressed?

44) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling nervous?

45) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling overwhelmed?

46) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling like you fit in?

47) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling out of place?

48) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling anxious?

49) Since you arrived in the south I have you been feeling frightened?

50) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling healthy?

51) Since you arrived in the south have you been feeling comfortable?

Appendix B: Tables and Figures

Table A1: Education statistics (Source: Statistics Canada 1996)

Characteristics	Chisasibi			Quebec		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Highest level of schooling for the population age 15 and over						
Total - All person age 15 and over	2,125	1,065	1,060	5,673,470	2,756,705	2,916,765
Persons without a high school certificate	1,370	705	665	2,013,810	971,055	1,042,755
Persons with a high school certificate	125	45	80	993,640	438,535	555,110
Persons with some postsecondary education (post secondary not completed)	175	70	105	498,225	246,530	251,695
Persons with trades or non-university certificate or diploma	305	175	130	1,304,410	662,360	642,045
Persons who have completed university	155	60	95	863,380	438,220	425,155
Highest level of schooling for the population age 25 and over						
% of the population 25 years of age and over with less than grade nine	32.2	31.5	32.2	20.4	19.1	21.5
% of the population 25 years of age and over with a high school certificate or higher	43.5	41.1	45.2	64.8	65.9	63.8
% of the population 25 years of age and over with trades or non-university certificate or diploma or higher	28.8	29.5	27.4	40.0	43.0	37.3
% of the population 25 years of age and over who have completed university	9.9	8.2	11.6	16.9	18.2	15.8

Table A2: Age Characteristics of the Population in Chisasibi (Source: Statistics Canada 2001 Census).

Characteristics	Chisasibi			Quebec		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Age characteristics of the population						
Total - All persons	3,465	1,730	1,740	7,237,480	3,532,845	3,704,635
Age 0-4	430	235	200	375,765	192,275	183,490
Age 5-14	770	375	390	915,810	466,790	449,020
Age 15-19	295	155	145	462,070	235,855	226,215
Age 20-24	300	155	145	487,405	246,140	241,265
Age 25-44	1,045	520	525	2,165,760	1,077,480	1,088,280
Age 45-54	300	140	165	1,109,945	548,085	561,865
Age 55-64	185	85	100	760,905	370,960	389,945
Age 65-74	80	45	35	547,185	248,740	298,445
Age 75-84	45	20	25	318,180	120,940	197,240
Age 85 and over	10	5	10	94,450	25,580	68,870
Median age of the population	24.1	23.3	24.7	38.8	37.8	39.8
% of the population ages 15 and over	65.5	64.9	66.1	82.2	81.3	82.9
Common-law Status						
Total - Population 15 years and over	2,270	1,120	1,150	5,945,900	2,873,770	3,072,130
Not in a common-law relationship	2,125	1,050	1,075	4,933,975	2,365,765	2,568,205
In a common-law relationship	145	70	70	1,011,925	508,005	503,920
Legal Marital Status						
Total - Population 15 years and over	2,270	1,120	1,150	5,945,900	2,873,775	3,072,130
Single	1,120	570	550	2,421,290	1,270,285	1,151,005
Married	1,015	500	510	2,393,630	1,197,155	1,196,475
Separated	30	20	15	139,195	63,545	75,645
Divorced	30	10	15	595,170	268,670	326,500
Widowed	80	20	60	396,625	74,120	322,510
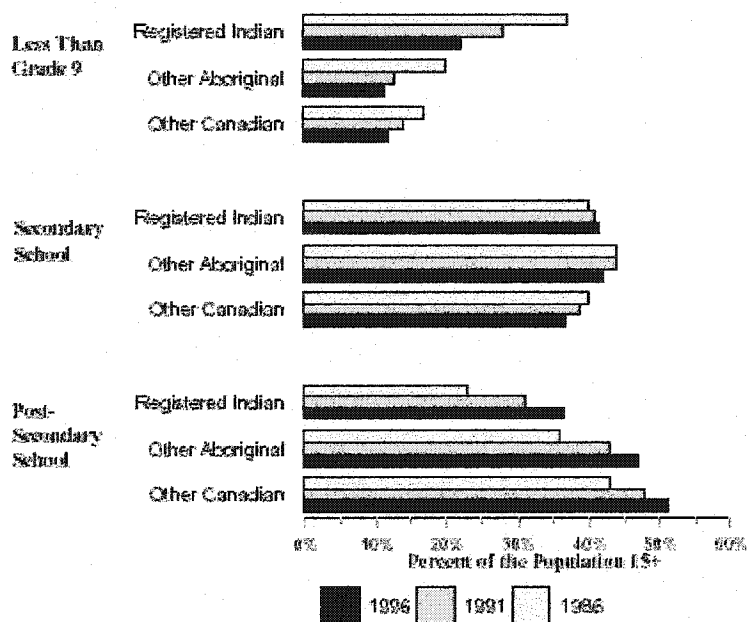
Figure A3: Level of Education by Ethnic Group (Statistics Canada 1986, 1991, 1996 Censuses)
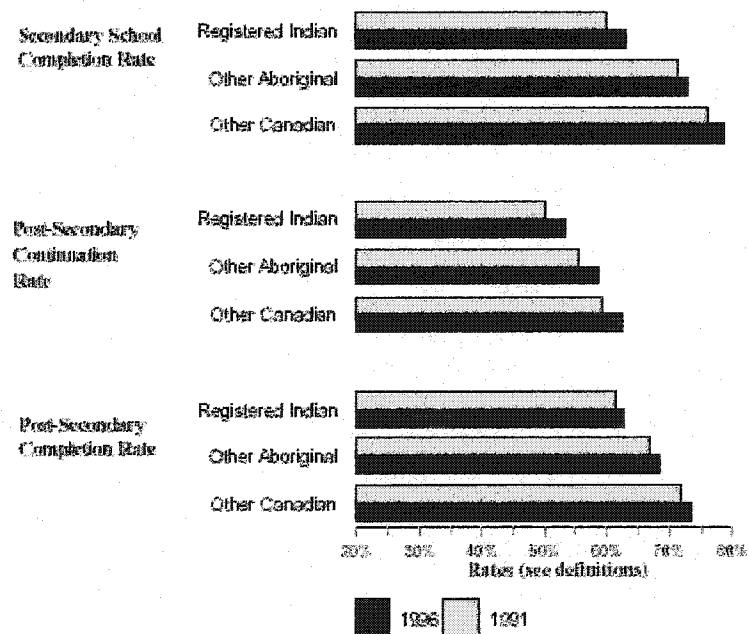
Figure A4: Indicators of Educational Success by Ethnic Group (1991 and 1996 Censuses of Canada)
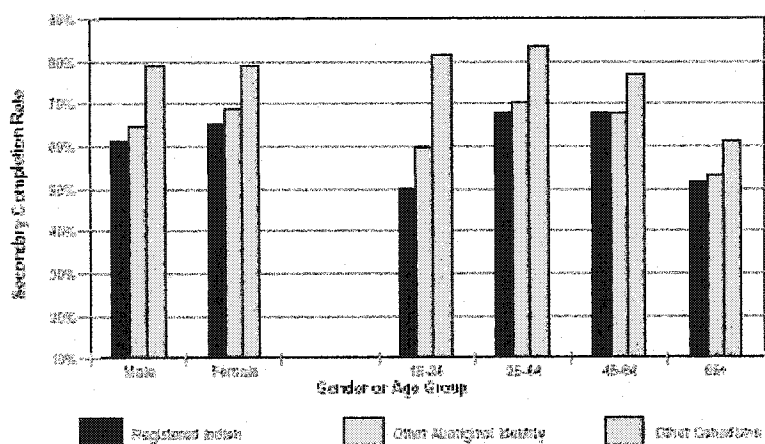
Figure A5: Secondary Competion Rate by Gender and Identity Group and by Age and Identity Group (1996 Census of Canada)

Figure A6: University Completion Rate by Gender and Identity Group and by Age and Identity Group (1996 Census of Canada)

Figure A7: Secondary Completion Rate by Identity and Detailed Age Group (1996 Census of Canada)
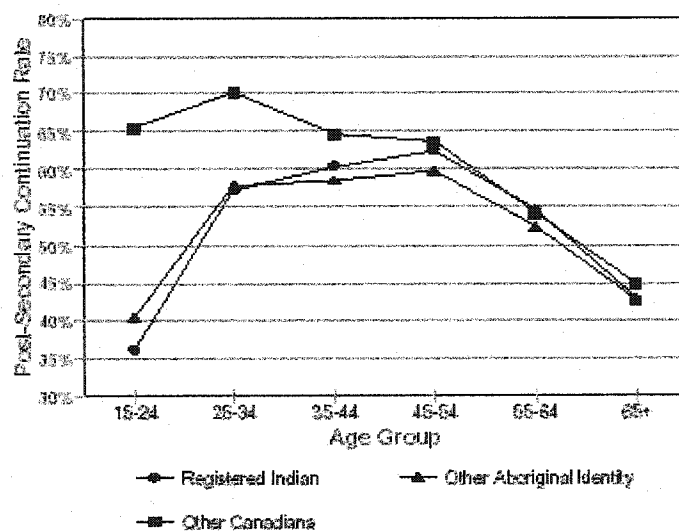
Figure A8: Post-Secondary Continuation Rate by Identity Group and Detailed Age Group (1996 Census of Canada)
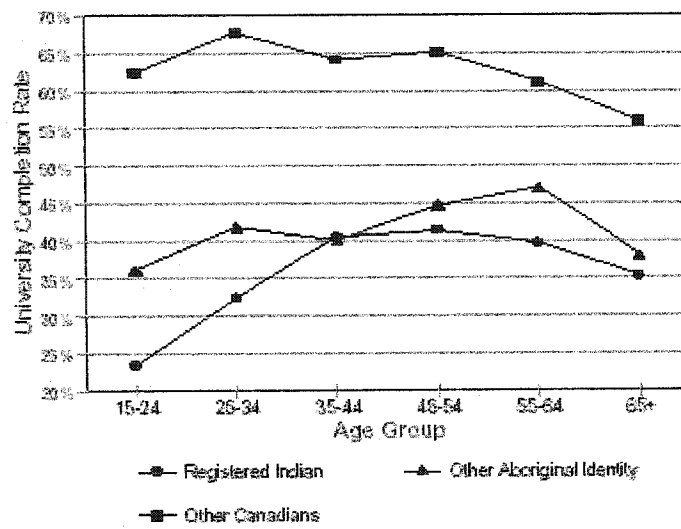
Figure A9: University Completion Rate by Identity Group and Detailed Age Group (1996 Census of Canada)

Table A10: Aboriginal Students In Quebec, 1997-98, by Grade and Type of Education (Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1996)

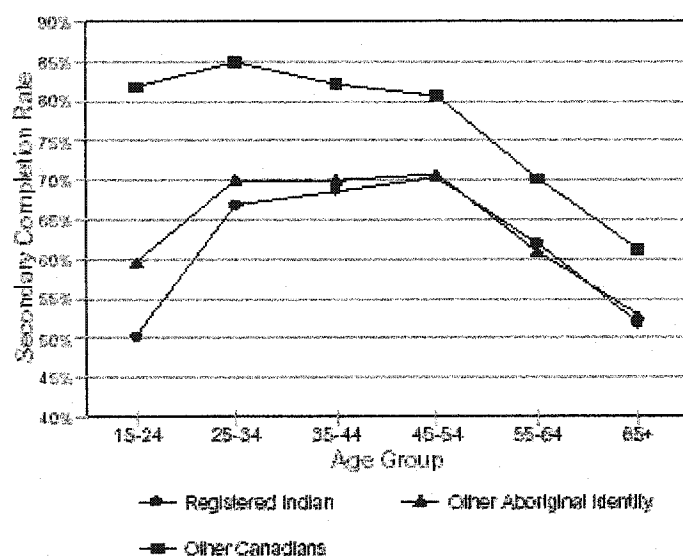| Grade and Level of Instruction	Federal Schools	Band Schools	Cree School Board	Kativik School Board	Naskapi School Board	Provincial Schools	Private Schools	Total
Kindergarten for 4-year olds	18	632	252	14	21	33	5	975
Kindergarten for 5-year olds	14	532	291	209	16	65	8	1195
Subtotal	32	1164	543	283	37	98	13	2170
Elementary 1	21	611	281	267	18	111	12	1321
Elementary 2	18	527	262	216	16	117	15	1171
Elementary 3	11	488	284	271	14	108	17	1193
Elementary 4	20	476	238	253	16	123	14	1140
Elementary 5	12	461	229	208	19	124	11	1064
Elementary 6	12	417	237	421	18	116	17	1238
Elementary 7	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
Subtotal	94	2985	1531	1636	101	699	86	7132
Secondary 1	-	654	374	239	13	270	94	1644
Secondary 2	-	405	260	166	11	178	39	1079
Secondary 3	-	259	210	154	11	184	24	865
Secondary 4	-	196	132	103	8	126	39	604
Secondary 5-6	-	107	96	58	5	132	24	422
Subtotal	-	1621	1072	720	48	890	263	4614
Special Programs	-	384	-	10	-	25	6	425
Total	126	6154	3146	2649	196	1712	368	14341

Table A11: Graduation Rates after Seven Years, School Population of Quebec, Cree, and Kativik School Boards (Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1996)

	Quebec as a Whole	Cree School Board	Kativik School Board	
Cohort of 1985 (1984-91)	65.1	22.1	18	
Cohort of 1986 (1985-92)	67.5	33.6	17.7	
Cohort of 1987 (1986-93)	69.5	28.7	24.4	
Cohort of 1988 (1987-94)	71.7	27.7	29.8	
Cohort of 1989 (1988-95)	72.2	24.8	29.8	
Cohort of 1990 (1989-96)	73.2	23.3	23.3	

Agreement For Student on Probation

I, _____, acknowledge that because of my poor progress and/or attendance, I am now on probation with the Cree School Board.

I agree that:

1) I will honour any agreement I have signed with my college/ University.

2) I will attend study skills lectures/workshops that are available at my college/university.

3) I will conslt my academic advisors for any difficulties that I am experiencing.

4) I will make appropriate arrangements to have the services of tutors. I will Attend tutoring sesions that have been set up for me.

5) I will submit all my required assignments and take all my required tests.

6) I will attend all my classes on a regular basis (except for medical reasons)

7) I will contact the post secondary Guidance Counsellor concerning my Academic difficulties.

8) I will submit my mid term report to the Cree School Board.

Failure to comply with the above conditions will lead to automatic termination of finincial assistance.

Also, I realize that I will be asked to withdraw from the Post Secondary program if I do not pass 75% of my course credits at the end of my next term.

Signed: _____   Date:_____
       (student)

Figure A12: Probation Agreement (Source: Cree School Board)

Calculating Your Monthly CSB Allowance

1. Circle your basic living allowance. The amount is determined by the number of dependents who will live with you while you are away at school.

Students living alone	$1050
With 1 Dependent $1215	
With 2 Dependents	$1330
With 3 Dependents	$1445
With 4 Dependents	$1560
With 5 Dependents	$1675
With 6 Dependents	$1790

    (Add 110$ per month for each additional dependent)

2. Determine which apartment size you are entitled to. (Note: you can rent a larger apartment or house if you wish to, but you will only receive a subsidy for the rate
    that applies to you)

    1 Bedroom: Single students or students living with a spouse are entitled to the one-bedroom rate.
    2 Bedrooms: Students living with one dependent other than their spouse are entitled to the two-bedroom rate.
    3 Bedrooms: Students living with more than one dependent other than their spouse are entitled to the three bedroom rate.

3. Find the town where you will study on the list on the following page. Circle the rate that applies to you and write the amount on line "A" below.

4. Calculate your rent subsidy by following the steps below:

    (A)   Enter the rental rate that applies to you: (A)_____

    (B)   Divide your basic living allowance by four
            And enter the result   (B)_____

    (C)   Subtract amount (B) from amount (A). The
            Result is your rent subsidy.   (C)_____

Calculate your total monthly allowance by adding your rent subsidy (C) to your basic living allowance from part 1: _____ + _____ = _____

Note: Any refunds that are due to you (travel, child care, school supplies, etc) will be added to your monthly allowance cheque, but to receive refunds you must submit all required forms.

Figure A13: Calculation of CSB Allowance (Source: Cree School Board)

RENTAL RATES
(valid until June 30, 2001)

The average monthly rental cost of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom apartments in selected municipalities as determined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Commission.

Town or City	1 Bedroom	2 Bedrooms	3 Bedrooms
Barrie	$685	$805	$908
Belleville	546	605	779
Brantford	507	622	694
Burnaby	625	789	857
Calgary	689	800	1071
Charlottetown	434	535	690
Chibougamou	350	424	427
Chicoutimi	350	424	427
Edmonton	426	549	587
Guelph	603	664	784
Halifax	435	539	601
Hamilton	518	670	758
Hull	420	510	583
Kelowna	528	624	718
Kingston	514	596	827
Kirkland Lake	355	446	473
Kitchener	563	708	768
Langley	587	662	970
Lennoxville	352	403	518
Lethbridge	489	543	609
London	533	618	1003
Montreal	416	455	514
North Bay	526	611	719
North York	824	960	1115
Ottawa	598	734	965
Peterborough	535	668	772
Prince George	464	551	624
Quebec City	451	490	560
Regina	438	529	649
Rouyn	360	450	591
Saskatoon	410	531	551
Sault Ste. Marie	465	604	654
Scarborough	753	863	1036
Sherbrooke	351	427	483
St. John's	428	467	524
Ste. Catherine's	511	617	794
Sudbury	469	606	718
Thunder Bay	519	646	855
Timmins / Moosonee	507	611	677
Toronto	785	900	1113
Trois-Rivieres	323	365	419
Val D'Or	347	448	507
Victoria	557	694	814

Figure A14: Rental Rates by City (Source: Cree School Board)

Table A15: The Aboriginal Population of Quebec by Age and Grade, 1996-97 (Source Department of Indian Affairs and Northen Development 1997)

Grade / Age	Preschool		Elementary							Secondary					Special	Total
	4 years	5 years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	I	II	III	IV	V		
4 years	769	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	781
5 years	202	1040	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	1260
6 years	4	139	1011	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1178
7 years	-	3	259	853	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	1158
8 years	-	2	32	265	761	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	1093
9 years	-	-	3	35	329	687	18	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	1093
10 years	-	-	-	2	53	341	582	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	1082
11 years	-	-	-	-	17	69	357	541	-	9	-	-	-	-	12	1016
12 years	-	-	-	-	6	19	78	491	4	362	3	-	-	-	30	1005
13 years	-	-	-	-	-	2	25	144	1	591	163	17	1	-	16	993
14 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	35	-	411	337	118	2	-	25	960
15 years	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	170	255	267	79	5	38	932
16 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81	192	215	169	59	61	815
17 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	101	154	179	116	55	777
18 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	25	71	102	81	46	616
19 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	19	50	87	37	332
20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	19	65	27	198
21 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	9	11	114
22 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	23
23 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	975	1195	1321	1171	1193	1140	1064	1238	5	1644	1079	865	604	422	418	14334