The Eskimo Rental Housing Program (1965-69): A Case Study in Cold War Authoritarian High Modernism

Erika Ashley Couto

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts (Art History) at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

September 2015

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Erika Ashley Couto

Entitled: **The Eskimo Rental Housing Program (1965-69): A Case Study in Cold War Authoritarian High Modernism**

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Art History)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair

Dr. Cynthia Hammond

_____ Examiner

Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim

_____ Examiner

Dr. Nicola Pezolet

_____ Supervisor

Dr. Heather Igloliorte

Approved by:

_____

Dr. Alice Ming Wai Jim

Graduate Program Director

_____2015

_____

Rebecca Taylor Duclos

Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts

Abstract

Erika Ashley Couto

The Eskimo Rental Housing Program (1965-69): A Case Study in Cold War Authoritarian High Modernism

During the Cold War years of 1965-1970, the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Development implemented the Eskimo Rental Housing Program (ERHP) across parts of the Central and Eastern Arctic. Using the work of Inuit graphic artists alongside archival visual culture materials, this thesis argues against previous claims that the program was instituted as a welfare-improving measure in the Arctic, instead providing evidence that the ERHP was an act of acculturation, meant to sedentarize and drastically alter social patterns of the Inuit for the intended and exclusive benefit of the Canadian state.

To establish the framework for this argument, this thesis begins with an examination of James C. Scott's discussion of Authoritarian High Modernism, expanding upon it in the context of the Arctic in order to understand the Canadian federal government's eagerness to protect and harness its resource extraction rights through the progress and ordering of the land and people on it. Additionally, the government was concerned about invasion and challenges to its Arctic sovereignty from both the Soviet Union and the United States and to this end, the state enacted modernist and authoritarian schemes to assert its ownership over the Arctic.

Through an examination of shifting housing prototypes introduced to the Arctic throughout the 1950s and 1960s, this thesis argues that while the ERHP was purported to have been introduced to aid the Inuit, in reality, the federal government's sedentary housing initiative was intended, first and foremost, to bolster Canada's claims to the North. Archival research reveals that while efforts were made during the 1950s to create culturally sensitive architectural forms modeled from Indigenous housing prototypes, within the span of a decade, government-built homes shifted to small, Southern-style housing models. These scarcely equipped houses designed for the 'nuclear family' were a poor match for Inuit families and had ongoing impacts on communities. Furthermore, by examining illustrated 'educational' booklets that were distributed as part of the Adult Education initiative that accompanied the building of the houses, this thesis demonstrates that the ERHP primarily meant to modify behaviour and control the Inuit population by reforming their way of life.

Acknowledgements

When I walked into my “Introduction to Inuit Art” class on a September afternoon in 2012, little did I know that it would be the start of my life-altering path to graduate studies. Consequently, first and foremost, my sincerest thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Heather Igloliorte. I would not be the scholar nor the person that I am today without your mentorship, guidance, and friendship. I am forever indebted to you.

To my reader, Dr. Nicola Pezolet, I have benefitted immensely from your guidance and enthusiasm; you have really gone above and beyond the duties of a reader over the last two years and I am so grateful to have gotten to learn from you and work alongside you.

I can truly say that I have learned so much from everyone in the Department of Art History, and in particular my wonderful cohort, but a special mention goes to my friend/roommate/long-lost sister, Lucile Pages. You have been a constant source of inspiration and laughter. Victoria Nolte, I have made my fair share of huge mistakes but being friends with you is not one of them - #bossladies for life. Jamie Jelinski, I could not have asked for a better friend to go on this adventure with. To my ladies in the AARG, thank you for being constant rays of light in my life. Tom, Carly, Amanda, Anna, Phoebe, and the rest of my wonderful HoM people – you have all been my second family over the course of the last decade. Thank you all for being the creative inspirations and writing partners that you are day in and day out. Many thanks are also due to Arctic Monkeys, Beyoncé, Taylor Swift, and Troye Sivan for writing perfect albums that I have listened to on repeat while writing.

This project could not have been realized without the support of the Hydro-Québec Award; the Graduate Mobility Award; Nunavut’s Department of Culture and Heritage; the Social Science and Humanities Research Council; les Fonds de Recherche du Québec - Société et Culture; Feheley Fine Arts; and Mobilizing Inuit Cultural Heritage.

To my mother, Mary Susan, my father, John, I am so fortunate to have had your support, particularly over the last year. Thank you for buying countless cans of spray glue during my K-11 years so that my poster boards looked immaculate – you really taught me how to separate myself from the pack early on. Aunt Maria, thank you for supporting me through the day in and day outs of the writing process. Finally, to the rest of the Couto/Santos/Pacifico clan, thank you for all your love and support. Obrigado! I love you all so very much.

Dedication

To my grandparents, Maria and Antonio, who continue to look out for me. Not a day goes by where I don't wish that you were both still here, but I know that you've already planted an apple tree for me in your back yard and plan to have mancha palancha waiting for my arrival, even though I doubt I'll see you for a while. I could write a dissertation-length text and it still wouldn't begin to cover how much I miss the two of you. I hope that wherever you are, you are proud of me.

"You can love someone so much. But you can never love people as much as you miss them."

-John Green, *Paper Towns*

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction: Housing Policy in Canada's Cold War – Altruism or Neo-Colonialism?

One of the most humorous historical myths in circulation, popularized by Georg von Helbig, is that of Prince Grigory Aleksandrovich Potemkin-Tavricheski's fake villages. Potemkin (1739-1791), a statesman and military leader, was briefly the lover of Catherine the Great (1729-1796), and even after the end of their three-year romance they remained great friends; in fact, Catherine held him in such high esteem that she appointed him as the Governor General of New Russia (present day Crimea and Southern Ukraine) in 1774. Von Helbig claimed that in order to prepare for Catherine's 1787 grand tour of New Russia, Potemkin ordered the creation of fake, mobile villages erected along the coastline and had his army men pose as peasants in order to populate the 'villages,' creating the illusion that the area was prospering under his leadership. After Catherine's ship sailed by a particular area of the coast, the villages were dismantled and reassembled further down the coastline in order to keep up the ruse.[1] While there is no historical evidence to support the idea that this was anything more than malicious gossip spread by von Helbig, the term 'Potemkin village' has been popularized in politics to mean a façade that is used to disguise something unfavourable.[2]

In the mid-20th century - and more specifically during the Cold War[3] - the Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Development (DIAND) created a series of what could arguably be known as Potemkin villages in the Central and Eastern Arctic, in partnership with the territorial government of the Northwest Territories (NWT), through the Eskimo Rental Housing Program (ERHP). Active from 1965-1970 with ramifications still being felt in the North today, the ERHP's mandate forcibly transitioned thousands of Inuit from a semi-nomadic lifestyle to a sedentary one and consequently moulded the Inuit into Potemkin citizens in order to establish the sovereignty of the Canadian North during the Cold War. The issue at hand is the manner in which the program was introduced in the Arctic and its intent not only to sedentarize the Inuit but also to drastically alter their societal patterns through a comprehensive and wide-

---

[1] Lurana Donnels O'Malley, "Catherine the Great's 'Rage aux Proverbes'," in *Eighteenth Century Russia: Papers from the VII International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Wittenburg 2004*, eds. Roger Bartlett and Gabriella Lehmann-Carli (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 91.

[2] "Potemkin Village," Merriam Webster, accessed July 20, 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/potemkin%20village.

[3] The author is aware of the debates in Cold War history and theory about the colonial implications of the term "Cold War," however it is beyond the scope of this thesis to engage in this debate. For a summary of the problems with this term, see Jeremy Suri, "The Cold War, Decolonization, and Global Social Awakenings: Historical Intersections," *Cold War History* 6 (August 2006): 353-363.

reaching adult education program that was modeled in the image of the Southern nuclear family and meant to alter every aspect of Inuit family life. In other words, the circumstances surrounding the program's implementation suggest that the housing communities were erected as a strategic device meant to assert Canada's dominance over the Arctic in response to interest by both the Soviet Union and the United States in the North.

In its understanding of the ERHP as a tool of colonization and war, this thesis argues against the prevailing scholarly narrative of this period, which has by and large concluded that the ERHP was largely a health-improving measure. These conclusions are based on the results of the government-mandated *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report (1960), which examined high infant mortality rates in the Arctic and its purported link to inadequate housing. Although the ERHP did lead to a slight improvement in the health of the Inuit over time, I am arguing that rather than being an altruistic life-saving measure, the ERHP was a defensive strategy on the part of the federal government and was meant as an insurance policy to establish an ongoing relationship with the inhabitants of the Arctic as proof of their control over the North. In other words, the Arctic settlements served as a real-life manifestation of the imaginary lengths von Helbig claimed that Potemkin was willing to go to just to impress.

While this thesis is not the first attempt to position the ERHP as a modernist project of neo-colonialist intent, it is by far the most comprehensive. It investigates existing literature about the project, contextualizes the ERHP within the Cold War in Canada, introduces extensive archival documentation about both the program and DIAND policies, and incorporates art and visual culture to resituate the ERHP not as a health-improving measure in the Arctic but rather as a tool to cement Canada's place in the complex political relations between Canada, the United States of America, and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. While Thomas and Thompson (1972) and Robson (1995) respectively emphasize the acculturative and sovereign aims of the program, the majority of the literature about this period speculates without elaboration that political motivations may have played a role in implementing such a widespread initiative. For instance, in their 2010 article "Culture as a problem in linking material inequality to health: On residential crowding in the Arctic," sociologists Nathaniel Lauster and Frank Tester suggest that "claims have been made that Canadian sovereignty concerns over the Arctic played a role" in the shift towards the creation of permanent settlements in the North, but fail to examine these claims

within the context of their article.[4] This failure to recognize the ongoing impact of the Cold War on policy formation in the Arctic prevents a real understanding of the motivations of the program. It is necessary to move past these "claims" mentioned by Lauster and Tester and to provide a persuasive argument for the re-examination of the ERHP as a concerted effort on the part of the federal government to assert its sovereignty over the North under the auspices of the Cold War.

This blindspot for examining the impact of the Cold War and military strategy recurs most notably in ethnographer David Damas' *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic* (2002). Deconstructing and problematizing Damas' narrative of housing policy in the late 1950s and early 1960s is necessary, as *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers* has become the primary reference point for scholars working in the fields of architectural history and housing sociology in the Arctic. It is difficult to find any scholarly text on the subject of Arctic housing in the last decade that does not make at least a passing reference to Damas' work. Indeed, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers* has become the primary perpetrator in furthering a consistent and, to this point, unquestioned narrative of the events leading up to and directly following the ERHP. Comprehensive in its scope and complemented by extensive archival research, Damas' work should be commended for its rigor and its attempt to resume such a complex and dynamic history into a book-length examination. In fact, this thesis is peppered with references to his text throughout, as his work represents one of the most importantly scholarly contributions to this narrow yet expanding area of inquiry.

However, it is crucial to understand that while Damas has done a tremendous amount of archival research, much of *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers* is based off of his own experiences as a field researcher in the Arctic during the 1960s, and this is where the majority of the aforementioned scholars fall short in their unquestioning incorporation of Damas into their own work. While this field experience has enriched Damas' text, it has also resulted in the glossing over of certain subjects, particularly the political motivations related to the Cold War that propelled Northern housing policy during the 1960s. Furthermore, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers* is littered with sweeping generalizations about the Inuit and government housing, many

[4] Nathanael Lauster and Frank Tester, "Culture as a problem in linking material inequality to health: On residential crowding in the Arctic," *Health & Place* 16 (2010): 526.

of which can be directly countered by Inuit testimonials about the housing situation in the 1960s that will appear throughout this thesis. Ultimately, my aim is not to discredit Damas' work, but rather to provide an alternate reading of this period that challenges the dominant narrative of the altruistic federal government coming to the aid of the 'helpless' Inuit and their dying children. In other words, improving the health of the Inuit and recognizing the value of cultural traditions and a well-designed housing scheme through the ERHP often came second to political showmanship.[5]

This thesis arrives at a timely point in the investigation of the history of housing in the Arctic. Over the last decade, Arctic housing has gained favour as a subject of inquiry amongst the scholarly community, and this thesis contributes to the ever-expanding literature about housing in the North. However, while architectural historians, sociologists, social workers, and geographers in several countries have all been turning their attention towards Northern housing, until now there were minimal contributions to this discussion by art historians. While Inuit artists have increasingly taken up housing as subject matter—in particular graphic artist Annie Pootoogook, who is known for her depictions of contemporary Northern interiors—curators and members of the arts community in Southern Canada have been slow to respond to this shift. While exhibition catalogues of Pootoogook's work exist, there has yet to be a comprehensive exhibition or a concerted scholarly examination of the increasing tendency towards depicting contemporary housing in Inuit art. While Canada's most recent Venice architecture biennale exhibition Arctic *Adaptations: Nunavut at 15*, explores the oftentimes insufficient attempts by architects and federal agencies to respond to the Arctic climate in design and proposes housing and commercial projects that may become the future of building in the Arctic, it was led by the Toronto-based Lateral Office and not by not art historians. Therefore, this thesis represents the first scholarly effort to bring this plethora of visual cultural material, both in contemporary art and from the era of the ERHP, to attention.

This thesis is divided into three parts. I will begin by examining the work of another scholar who frequently appears in the discussion of Arctic housing: Agrarian Studies scholar James C. Scott. In the short discussions of the acculturative motivations of the government in

[5] While a detailed analysis of the report is beyond the scope of this thesis, in sum, the report claimed that traditional Inuit housing, namely *iglus* and sod houses, was responsible for the rampant transmission of disease and the high mortality rate among infants in the Arctic. The report is significant as its year of publication corresponds with a shift in governmental housing policy in the Arctic and has often been seen as the motivating factor for the ERHP rather than Cold War motivations.

implementing the ERHP, nearly every article references Scott's seminal discussion of Authoritarian High Modernism (AHM) in *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998). Peter C. Dawson (2006) has even acknowledged the usefulness of this model in pointing out problems with the ERHP, most notably the lack of local knowledge in its conception, but the consensus has generally been that the program was not an act of AHM. However, Scott's account has routinely been dismissed as scholars have come to this conclusion based on the premise that the ERHP was "not so much about acculturation, as [it was] about alleviating poverty, and the dangers many Euro-Canadians associated with traditional Inuit life."[6] As my thesis argues against this interpretation, it is essential to re-examine Scott's theory as well as to expand upon it in the context of the Arctic. While Scott primarily applies his theory of Authoritarian High Modernism to totalitarian regimes, his work aligns itself with broader examinations of social engineering and power relations between neo-imperialist nations and their indigenous populations in the 20th century.

I will then apply this theoretical framework to the Canadian context, specifically during the Cold War decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Relying primarily on archival documents that I consulted during a 2014 trip to the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center in the Northwest Territories, I will demonstrate that the Canadian government was eager to protect the Arctic against takeover attempts by both the Soviet Union and the United States, as it believed that the North held great potential for natural resource extraction. As such, it enacted a variety of modernist and authoritarian schemes that were meant to develop the Arctic and realize its potential.

After establishing the modernist intentions of the federal government during this period, I will then turn to a brief history of housing in the Arctic, focusing primarily on the 20th century. While the ERHP was the most wide-reaching program and has had the most enduring effects on the Inuit, it was not the first housing experiment in the Arctic. It is necessary to examine the shifting housing prototypes throughout the 1950s and 1960s to question the intentions of the federal government in implementing its sedentary housing initiative. Within the span of a decade, as concerns mounted over Arctic sovereignty, the intent of government housing projects would shift from creating culturally sensitive architectural forms modelled from Indigenous

[6] Peter C. Dawson, "Seeing Like an Inuit Family: The Relationship Between House Form and Culture in Canada" *Études/Inuit/Studies* 30 (2006): 118.

housing prototypes to shipping ill-conceived, cramped, and untested housing models to the Arctic that were based upon Southern housing models and did not lead to a significant improvement to the health of the Inuit.

Building upon this investigation of the change from cultural sensitivity to acculturation in housing policy, I will then discuss the aims of the education program that was implemented alongside the construction of the houses. By using illustrated educational booklets as the primary evidence for my arguments, it will become clear that the ERHP had little to do with improving the health of the Inuit and was primarily meant to modify behaviour and control the Inuit population by reforming their way of life.

Modernism in the Canadian Arctic

This section explores the rise of modernism in the 20th century and its implications on federal policy in the Canadian Arctic during the Cold War, arguing that factors such as the potential of natural resource mining and a desire to technologically develop the Arctic propelled the enactment of the ERHP. However, in order to understand the relationship between the Canadian government and the Inuit during the mid-20th century, it is useful to first examine a selection of political cartoons produced by the late Iqaluit artist and writer Alootook Ipellie. Drawn in Ipellie's typical pen and ink on paper style, his works capture the mounting tensions between the Inuit and the federal government during the 1960s and 1970s, with subject matter ranging from the consequences of natural resource mining to land rights to the events leading up to the creation of the Nunavut territory. Ipellie never shied from adopting a critical tone that often lampooned the federal government and connected instances of colonial violence to their direct ramifications in the move towards Inuit self-governance. His most all-encompassing critique, *Map of Canada* (n.d.), depicts several self-benefitting policies and injustices committed by the federal government using the format of the circular circumpolar map to relay the message (fig. 1). Much like the latitude lines on a map, which help delineate geographical areas, the divisions in Ipellie's map separate various injustices, all tied together by the circular panel that portrays a demonic government official incoherently telling the Inuit that he wants their non-renewable resources. The map depicts everything from the banal platitudes about remaining optimistic that dominated government rhetoric in the North to the horrors of residential schooling and forced migrations. A panel that is particularly apropos in the context of this thesis is situated in the top

right hand corner, in which an Inuk is handed an eviction notice because the government needs him to move in order to put down a highway. The scene is curious, considering the fact that, as shall be discussed in section two, the government was responsible for housing the Inuit and chose the placement of their communities. This incongruity is but one example in the multitude that are featured on the map. In another panel, the government is asking for money from the Inuit for fishing licenses, despite the fact that they have fished on the Arctic land—their land—for years. Ipellie is clearly angered by the encroachment of the government into the North and the endless policies that were put into place for its own purposes. His work reveals the catalyzing factors during the 1960s, including forced housing, which led to the movement for Inuit self-governance.

The home held a critical role during the mid-20th century and became a contested site in which governments around the world increasingly attempted to intervene, blurring the boundary between public and private. For example, in postwar Britain, federal agencies began campaigning for a "sanitization of the working-class home" with the intent to 'civilize' and provide guidance about what was in good taste in the modern era.[7] Indeed, as Robert P. Wishart notes in the introduction to *About the Hearth: Perspectives on the Home, Hearth and Household in the Circumpolar North* (2013), "whether it is in a portrayal of the primitive North, an obsession with reform and domestication, or a state-sponsored snapshot of its Northern peoples, of where and with whom they live, there has been an ossification of the home as form, of transforming the hearth into its base utilitarian necessity, and fixing the household in time as a human resource or a social problem."[8] With the rise of the welfare state and concerns over military policy in the Canadian Arctic, the domestication of the Inuit into sedentary, government-built communities represents but one instance in a larger push amongst countries involved in the Cold War to incorporate the home into the war. Unlike schemes in the United States, which focused on technological progress as important hallmarks of the home or the improvement of middle-class taste in England, the ERHP represents a wide-reaching enterprise of colonial violence meant to permanently and drastically transform the Inuit way of life. But how was the

[7] Christine Atha, "Dirt and Disorder: Taste and Anxiety in the Homes of the British Working Class," in *Atomic Dwelling: Anxiety, Domesticity, and Postwar Architecture,* ed. Robin Schuldenfrei (New York: Routledge, 2012), 207-210.
[8] Robert P. Wishart, "Building a Home for Circumpolar Architecture," in *About the Hearth: Perspectives on the Home, Hearth, and Household in the Circumpolar North*, ed. David G. Anderson et al. (New York: Berghahn, 2013), 2.

government able to enact such a scheme? What shifts were taking place in international politics, specifically in the first two decades of the Cold War, which allowed for an acculturative project of this nature?

The answer to some of these questions can be gleaned from James C. Scott's *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (1998), which explores the shifting relationship between state and citizen since the turn of the 19th century. After the industrial boom in the late 19th century, technological progress became an area of focus not only for developed nations such as England and France but also for many authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, such as the Soviet Union, Brazil, and certain regions of Africa. Nations that actively sought to increase their productivity through industrialism began actively shifting their priorities in the wake of this transformational period to "engineer[ing] […] society according to the most advanced technological standards of the new moral sciences."[9] There was an emphasis placed on the rationality of urban planning and on the integration of the family into these new plans, and soon many of the nations involved in the technological boom sought to outdo each other and prove that they were the most modern and had the best and latest technologies. This obsession with the improvement of the human condition through science became one of the most important ideological battlegrounds of the Cold War. Take, for example, the infamous Khruschev kitchen showdown, in which the United States sent an example of its most revolutionary and cutting-edge kitchen technology to Moscow as a part of the American National Exhibition. Khruschev was so taken aback and enraged by the Americans' 'model home' that he famously declared, "in another seven years we will be on the same level as America. When we catch up with you, while passing by we will wave to you."[10] The postwar home, then, became a deeply politicized location both on the Western front and in the Soviet Union.

Scott examines several case studies of state-propelled high modernism throughout the 20th century from around the world, ranging from Le Corbusier's *Cité Radieuse* and unbuilt megacities, conceived around the principles of egalitarianism and utopianism, to Soviet urbanization. Despite his clear leaning towards exploring totalitarianism as an example of failed modernism, Scott's text has gained purchase with scholars whose works deal with imbalances of

---

[9] James C. Scott, "Authoritarian High Modernism," in *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 92.
[10] Nikita Khrushchev qtd. in Robert H. Haddow, *Pavilions of Plenty. Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), 215.

power and the ongoing legacies of colonialism. It is unsurprising, then, that Scott's name appears frequently in discussions of Inuit housing policy. As was previously suggested, Canada was not exempt from using the home for political ends, with the ERHP serving as a quintessential example. As the end of two world wars led to shifting political climates around the world in the mid-20th century, Scott claims that states grew to have unprecedented power, and this power reached its pinnacle when three factors combined: a scientific aspiration to order nature and society, the use of state power to create and implement policies and legislation to achieve this ordering, and finally, a society that does not have the ability to resist this plan for the rationalization of society.[11] Scott calls this utopian dream gone awry 'Authoritarian High Modernism' and argues that "where it goes brutally wrong is when the society subjected to such utopian experiments lacks the capacity to mount a determined resistance."[12]

In Canada, the Cold War provided an ideal circumstance for the enactment of a High Modernist project such as the ERHP, which assuaged Southern Canadian fears over Arctic sovereignty at the expense of consultation with the Inuit.[13] The lack of inclusion of local voices and knowledge into the project is a hallmark of AHM, which is elitist in its failure to allow for a multiplicity of voices and operates on the premise that "only those who have the scientific knowledge to discern and create [a] superior social order are fit to rule in the new age."[14] Indeed, AHM looks only towards the future while failing to recognize the importance of the past.

While Scott's theory has been widely cited amongst individuals working in the field of Inuit housing policy, they have failed to adequately explore the possibility of the ERHP as being an Authoritarian High Modernist project, likely because of Scott's focus on totalitarian regimes to the detriment of recognizing the ongoing effects of modernism in liberal-democratic societies. This dearth does a disservice to scholarship about the ERHP, as it fails to hold the government to account and to acknowledge the ongoing results of its colonial violence in the North. And yet, there is an abundance of evidence to indicate that the ERHP was, in fact, a project of AHM.

Partially due to the tenets of AHM, which place progress above all else, Canada was looking towards the future during the Cold War, and that future was often equated with the

---

[11] Scott, "Authoritarian High Modernism," 88-89.
[12] Ibid, 89.
[13] The organization that would be the primary agent of change for the Inuit, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), formerly the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, did not form until 1971. ITK formed out of a need to protect the political and cultural rights of the Inuit living in the four Inuit territories of Canada. For more on ITK and its role in acting as a voice for Inuit across the Canadian Arctic, see http://itk.ca.
[14] Scott, "Authoritarian High Modernism, 94"

Arctic. The country's official legal relationship with the Inuit was still in its infancy at the start of the Cold War, having only been given reluctant stewardship over the Inuit since 1939, as decided by the *Re: Eskimos* case.[15] Yet government policy regarding the Inuit would soon shift from one of state parsimony and Inuit self-reliance to reluctant federal management and imposed acculturation in a relatively short period of time.[16] As late as the 1950s, the federal government was intent on allowing the Inuit to maintain their semi-nomadic way of life, discouraging contact with *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit) and reliance on Southern commodities. It was not until the late 1950s that early housing experiments in the Eastern Arctic began to be implemented, but these really only took hold during the 1960s.

It is not a coincidence that the late 1950s and early 1960s would be the moment when the government would decide to make Inuit housing a priority. As is argued in the introduction to Nathaniel French Caldwell's *Arctic Leverage: Canadian Sovereignty and Security* (1990), "Canada shares a continent with a superpower, and the United States' presence is overwhelming. A shared language, economy, and culture have worked against a separate Canadian identity, but […] Canada intends to stay an independent and sovereign nation on the North American continent. Consequently, sovereignty protection has become a major goal of Canadian foreign and defense policies."[17] While protection of the North from the United States became an increasingly pressing concern during the Cold War, Southern Canadians have not always felt that Canada placed enough emphasis on protecting its Arctic waters and lands. Following the almost unilateral defense of the Canadian Arctic during World War II by the United States, the Southern Canadian population grew concerned about the sovereignty of the Arctic and it remains a

[15] The decision, which was handed out on April 5th, 1939 by the Supreme Court, stemmed from a legal challenge by the Canadian government that they were not responsible for the Inuit as they were not "Indians" under the law. Although the government had an interest in maintaining the sovereignty over the Arctic due to the untapped potential for natural resource extraction, they claimed that they were not responsible for the Inuit living on the land as they had been cared for up to that point by missionaries and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and were thus under their stewardship. *Re: Eskimos* established, through historical documents dating back as far as pre-confederation, that traders, businessmen, and even government officials considered the Inuit as part of the indigenous populations living in Canada and thus the supreme court concluded that the Government of Canada was indeed responsible for the Inuit. For the full decision, see: http://caid.ca/EskDec1939.pdf.

[16] The epitome of this self-reliance policy occurred during the High Arctic Relocations of the 1950s, in which Inuit from communities in Nunavik and what is now Nunavut were moved from their communities to the high Arctic in an effort to 're-indigenize' them and remove dependency upon Southern Canadian goods such as canned food and imported clothing.

[17] Nathaniel French Caldwell, *Arctic Leverage: Canadian Sovereignty and Security* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 2.

concern in 2015.[18] Southern Canadians feared that the continual financial support of the United States in defending the Canadian Arctic would result in an attempt to challenge Canada's ownership over the land and the federal government was under constant pressure to mount its own Arctic defenses. In fact, it was such a pressing and prevalent concern that it became the fodder of several political cartoons of the period, most notably a cartoon from the Gazette that appeared in November 1946 (fig. 2), which demonstrates the discontent of the Canadian public with the government's defense policy – or lack thereof. An ostrich, representing the federal government, sticks its head in the snow (a humorous play on the saying 'sticking one's head in the sand') in an attempt to avoid dealing with the need to create an Arctic defense policy.

In addition to the threat of a United States takeover in the North, Canadians were anxious that the Soviets might launch a nuclear strike in North America through the Arctic. But an even more pressing issue that the Canadian government could not ignore was the submarines that the USSR had sent diving through the Arctic waters, as well as ice flotillas on which surveillance equipment and aircrafts were placed that sometimes floated into Canadian Arctic waters and perturbed both Canada and the United States.[19] As a 1958 article from the *Montreal Star* noted, "the Russians would like nothing better than to stir up a row between Uncle Sam and Canada over who owns the Arctic ice and sea on [the North American] side of the North Pole."[20] The ownership of coastal Arctic waters was clearly on the minds of Southern Canadians and it was an absolute necessity during the Cold War for the Canadian government to communicate to both the United States and to the USSR that Canada was in control of the Eastern Arctic, a task that was easier said than done. According to historian P. Whitney Lackenbauer in *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* (2008), sovereignty is usually established under international law through cession, purchase, or 'discovery.'[21] Canada's claims to sovereignty were complicated by the fact that "much of the North […] was discovered by men who were not

[18] Ironically, during the process of writing this thesis, security of the Arctic has again become a topic of discussion amongst Southern Canadians as the Stephen Harper government's relations with Vladimir Putin and the Russian Kremlin deteriorate.
[19] Shelagh D. Grant, *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010), 308-9.
[20] "Arctic Sovereignty: Canada Ownership of Polar Islands Tacitly Recognized," *Montreal Star*, August 8, 1958.
[21] P. Whitney Lackenbauer, "Planting the Flag: Establishing British/Canadian Sovereignty in the North," in *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North*, ed. Ken S. Coates et al. (Markham: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008), 9-11.

British or Canadian. As well, through indifference or neglect, Canada's control over the region was virtually nonexistent in the nineteenth century and spotty for much of the twentieth."[22]

These worries about invasion threats from both the North via the USSR and the West through Alaska, along with the supposed interest of the USSR in pitting Canada and the United States against each other required Canada to become less reliant on the United States' ability to defend the Arctic border and to become more proactive in its own defense policies. This led to a policy of 'defence against help,' a theory which "sees Canada as having a security dilemma based on the idea that the United States, in the process of guaranteeing Canada's safety, may itself become a threat to Canadian sovereignty [….] If Canada was unable or unwilling to defend its territory, then the Americans would be compelled to take whatever measures they felt were needed, regardless of Canadian preferences. So Canada needed to defend against the Soviet Union, as well as its American ally."[23] This placed Canada in a precarious situation and forced the federal government to funnel more money into its own defense system and consider any joint defense efforts as exactly that - a partnership rather than a simple ushering of the United States military into the Arctic with little Canadian say in the process. The defense against help assuaged the concerns of Southern Canadians, but the policy was not without its problems.

The new partnership mandate was first put to the test with the creation of the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, a radar and communications network that spanned the Alaska-Canadian Arctic coastline. As the main physical threat to North America during the Cold War was the "potential for a Soviet Strategic nuclear attack" through the Arctic, cooperation with the United States was in the best interest of Canadians. [24] The DEW line had the potential to prevent the loss of thousands of lives, or at the very least, allow Canadians or Americans to get to safety on time in the event of a nuclear attack. While the United States' government funded the stations, the work was subcontracted to Canadian contractors, and Indigenous labourers were hired to work at the stations alongside *Qallunaat* (non-Inuit peoples).[25]

While this represented a good first step in working as partners, there was, however, some dissent over the fact that "the failure to display the Canadian flag [by the Americans meant] that

[22] Lackenbauer, "Planting the Flag," 10-11.
[23] Coates et al., *Arctic Front*, 64.
[24] Caldwell Jr., *Arctic Leverage*, 4.
[25] Coates et al., *Arctic Front*, 71.

Canada again had lost *de facto* control of its Arctic."[26] In fact, Canadians made their discontent known throughout newspapers across the country and were "critical of letting the American military back into their country after paying for their anticipated departure."[27] The Government of Canada responded with skilfully worded press releases that played up the joint aspects of the defense initiative and downplayed the realities of the situation; according to historian Shelagh D. Grant, "even today the general public […] is unaware of the full extent of American activities in the Arctic during the Cold War, and possibly less informed about the precise nature of the agreements that established the Americans' right to remain there."[28] The deception on the part of the Canadian government about the reality of what was happening with the DEW line project supports Scott's idea of a prostrate civil society– the state exerted unprecedented power in its boldface lies to Southern Canadians, and while Southern Canadians were unhappy about the state of the DEW line partnership, they also needed the Americans and the best strategy was a more concerted, large-scale resistance led by the two nations.

This skilful mastery at wording releases and catering speeches to suit the needs of the federal agenda would continue throughout the Cold War. Indeed, one of the most influential Canadian speeches of the 1950s was Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's 1958 'Road to Resources' electoral campaign speech. The campaign appealed to the growing sentiment that the North represented a sense of 'Canadianness.' According to Grant, "the idea that their country's future might lie in development of its Northern hinterland caught the imagination of many Canadians and in turn increased public sensitivity to any incursion on their country's sovereign authority."[29] This popular appeal not only gave the government license to act on behalf of Southern Canadians in the North but it also fuelled the government's campaign towards resource development in the Arctic. By June 1960, based on a study from the Geological Survey of Canada, the federal government had issued 40 million acres worth of hydrocarbon exploration permits in the Arctic, primarily to small Canadian companies, but also to a few larger American conglomerates. [30]

This Modernist plan of turning the Arctic into the next major site for hydrocarbon development would continue despite the election of the Lester B. Pearson-led Liberal Party of

[26] Grant, *Polar Imperative*, 334.
[27] Ibid, 286.
[28] Ibid, 286.
[29] Ibid, 340.
[30] Ibid, 345.

Canada to power in 1963. With this election, the Honourable Arthur Laing was made the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, soon renamed the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1965.[31] This shift in name clearly indicates the direction of the federal government in its resource development strategy: harnessing the potential of the North. An ardent modernist, Laing was as keen as his Conservative predecessors to develop the North as the next Hydrocarbon capital of Canada. In a speech delivered to the Petroleum society of C.I.M. in 1966, Laing stated: "the task is to convince private industry that putting capital in the North is no long-shot, but rather [a] sound investment in Canada's future [….] Oil is big business in Canada. I see it as even bigger business if the industry itself will direct its activity North of the 60th parallel."[32] Laing created a fund for Canadian oil companies to conduct exploratory drills in the Arctic and was enthusiastic about transforming the North through the oil and natural resource industry.

The role of the Inuit in this development scheme in their homeland, however, and the impact of the exploration on Inuit subsistence patterns did not appear to be much of a concern for the Minister. Again, Alootook Ipellie provides a window into the reality of the situation. In *Northern Oil Fields* (n.d.), an American man, a representative of the oil industry, knocks at the door of a blockade, behind which oil is spewing from what is presumably a well, asking if he can come into Inuit territory (fig. 3). The Inuk, whose face is visible through the small window on the door, asks him to return in a week when their land claims will be settled. The drawing is humorous in its lampooning of the difficulties of sorting land claim agreements - Nunavut's claims would not be settled until the 1990s - but also in its clear elaboration of the fear of Southern Canadians that the Americans would try to take over Arctic Canada. In the miner's hand is a large hose with the words "USA" scrawled across them, which would lead to a presumably endless supply of oil for the United States, while Canada will only acquire what will fit in the bucket with its name on it. While there is a wall in Ipellie's drawing, this 'wall' (representative of Inuit activism through the ITK) would not come into play until the 1970s, well after the initial interest in the hydrocarbon potential of the North.

---

[31] Biography, Biography of Arthur Laing, Box 1, Folder 1, Coll. N-1979-092, Arthur Laing Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

[32] Speech, the Honourable Arthur Laing, "Road to Resources – A Two-Way Street," May 6, 1966, Box 1, Folder 16, Coll. N-1979-092, Arthur Laing Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Laing's faith in the transformative power of these industries in the Eastern Arctic was not entirely baseless; in the Western Arctic, residents were experiencing a higher standard of living because of the active mining industry that had been in place since the turn of the 20th century.[33] As of 1965, the oil and gas industry had spent 100 million dollars (over 755.6 million dollars in today's currency, according to the Bank of Canada's inflation calculator) searching for the Northern resource jackpot that they believed was located in the Eastern Arctic.[34] However, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development's agenda stretched far beyond oil and gas exploration. In fact, he was a subscriber of the High Modernist tenet described by Scott, in which both man and nature needed to be conquered through technological progress. In his "The Potential of the North" address to the Industrial Supervisors of New Westminster, British Columbia in 1965 - the same year that the ERHP was put into place, Laing proclaimed: "the world of science must be mobilized to bring 20th Century solutions to the age old problems of Northern Nature."[35] Despite acknowledging in this same address that the DEW Line and the exploration and trade projects of the 20th century had brought about shifts in the Inuit way of life, Laing was convinced that even further encroachment into the Inuit territory was necessary.[36]

The purpose of this additional intervention was to "make [the Inuit] full Canadians in fact as well as in name."[37] The vision was to acculturate the Inuit through "a broad-based program embracing the areas of education, welfare, social services, community development and housing."[38] This quote emphasizes the priority of housing as progress rather than housing as altruistic social program. In other words, the federal government was committed to instituting a wide-reaching program that would see the Inuit change their way of living, both in their physical habitat as well as in their cultural and social practices. Laing claimed that the changes being made were representative of the wishes of Canadians, as "governments are only agencies of the

[33] Address, the Honourable Arthur Laing, "The Potential of the North," March 18, 1965, Box 1, Folder 10, Coll. N-1979-092, Arthur Laing Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Talk, E.A. Côté, "The Administrator Takes a Look at Problems for Indians, Eskimos and Native People," June 8, 1966, Box 1, Folder 18, Coll. N-1979-092, Arthur Laing Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

people doing those things which the people want done."[39] Using this troublesome maxim as a guiding principle, the federal government would take its power to unprecedented levels in order to put into place what was clearly an acculturative initiative.

And therein lies the incongruity between the findings of the *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report, in which Southern Canadians became aware that the Inuit were experiencing high mortality rates, and the resulting program. As historians Lawrence Aronsen and Martin Kitchen suggest, "power [is] not measured strictly in military terms but [also has] a political and psychological dimension. Therefore [during the Cold War] the highest priority [was] given to economic and cultural cooperation among the Western Bloc nations to facilitate full employment and a high standard of living."[40] The housing program clearly played to the humanitarian sympathies of Southern Canadians, but, as shall be discussed in the following section, the program would not lead to a significant improvement in Inuit health; in fact, the houses would remain cramped and at times, the government appeared to act in direct contradiction to the supposed motivation of improving Inuit health.

Shifting Priorities and Shifting Policies: Inuit Housing During the Cold War

As was argued in the previous section, DIAND's implementation of the ERHP was clearly motivated by Authoritarian High Modernist motivations. The government took advantage of the *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report to act with unprecedented power, in order to structure both nature and society in the Arctic through Hydrocarbon exploration and the creation of a mass-settlement initiative. In order to understand the increasingly interventionist and acculturation-driven nature of state involvements in Northern Canada, it is apropos to briefly examine the house forms, both Indigenous and federal-government proposed, which preceded the ERHP. Examining the art of Nunavut graphic artists can provide a critical outlook into the changing Arctic landscape as a result of colonization and neo-imperialism during this period.

The work of Kinngait graphic artist Napachie Pootoogook (1938-2002) provides salient examples of the many changes that arose in the lifetime of a single generation, including the

---

[39] Address, Honourable Arthur Laing, "Address by the Honourable Arthur Laing Minister of Northern Affairs and national resources to the Annual Meeting of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada," October 21, 1965, Box 1, Folder 13, Coll. N-1979-092, Arthur Laing Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

[40] Lawrence Aronsen and Martin Kitchen, "Canada and the Soviet Union," in *The Origins of the Cold War in Comparative Perspective* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), 186-7.

introduction of the RCMP in the Arctic; the creation of print and drawing studios; and the move from *iglus*, tents, and sod houses to government housing. Pootoogook, who produced over 7,000 drawings throughout her forty year career, was best known for her documentarian style, which married a visual record of her life experiences with critiques of Southern Canadian stereotypes about the Inuit. Her drawing, *Untitled* (1980-81), reflects this tension between Pootoogook's artistic license and the expectations of the South (fig. 4). The work depicts Pootoogook outside her post-ERHP home holding up two finished drawings in her hands, one of birds and another of a tent, two of the most popular and highly valued themes in Inuit art for Southern collectors. The work is ultimately a critique of the Southern Inuit art market and its resistance to change, but the work is equally significant as an entry point into understanding how ill-informed the Southern Canadian populace is about the realities of Northern life. If, as Damas concluded, health concerns were the major motivating factor behind the ERHP, it would be logical to presume that the government would promote its welfare-improving initiatives and ensure that the popularized image of the Inuk living in an *iglu* or a tent was modernized to match the modernization of Inuit towns. Instead, the persistence of this stereotypical tent formation in Pootoogook's work points at a lack of knowledge on the part of Southern Canadians about the realities of the Arctic, suggesting that all of the money being spent on housing development in the North was not made a major news item in national networks. Indeed, it seems clear that Pootoogook's drawing is a critique of collectors' hesitancy during Pootoogook's lifetime to acknowledge the results of modernism in the Arctic, instead preferring the narrative that the Inuit continued to live mainly in their traditional dwellings from the 1950s, a period which Damas refers to as the "sustained dispersal of Inuit settlement in the Northwest Territories."[41]

This dispersal was meant to limit government intervention in the North, thereby restricting the funds allocated for social welfare in the Arctic. By the 20th century, although the Inuit had already shifted towards a wage economy propelled in large part by the fur trade, there were no plans to permanently alter the tent and *iglu* style of living until the 1950s. In fact, prior to this era, the federal government believed that "traditional native dwellings, especially snow houses, were superior to [tents, sod houses, or houses made from scrap lumber] in terms of

[41] David Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 27.

cleanliness, health, and comfort."[42] In fact, both the federal government and the territorial government of the NWT were so vehement that state intervention should be limited in order to ensure that the Inuit maintained their semi-nomadic lifestyle that in the 1940s, when an unconfirmed report claimed that the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was providing Arctic peoples with wooden housing, Roy A. Gibson, the Deputy Commissioner of NWT, wrote to HBC fur trade manager H.V. Chesshire to demand that the program be stopped immediately. [43] According to Gibson, "Eskimos confined to fixed positions lose their initiative. Their health likewise deteriorates, because the matter of heating and sanitation in wooden houses is not understood."[44] In fact, the government was so determined to ensure that the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic uphold their way of life that they even instituted the "Eskimo Rehabilitation Project" in 1953, which moved families from present-day Nunavut and Nunavik to the remote High Arctic community of Qaussuituq (Resolute Bay) in an effort to "preserve the 'nativeness' of the Inuit" by forcing them into desolate conditions. [45] The goal was to see if, when left in extreme conditions, the Inuit would return to hunting, building traditional shelters, and be able to live a life completely free of *Qallunaat* intervention (aside from the obvious intervention of being moved to an extremely cold and harsh part of the High Arctic).

Again, Napachie Pootoogook's work sheds light on the lifestyle that the government was adamant about maintaining. The artist's lithograph and chine collé, *Interior View* (2000), aerially depicts a family carrying out various activities in their *iglu* and highlights another important facet of the artist's work: keeping a record of camp life through the graphic arts, a need that directly correlates with the shift in governmental policy from Inuit self-reliance to hands-on management in the mid-1960s. The scenario that Pootoogook depicts was typical for 20th mid-century Inuit families (fig. 5). The family is gathered in the central hearth of the *iglu*, with the majority of the family resting on a bench in the back. While the others rest, a woman butchers walrus parts on another bench; on the opposite side, tools and supplies are stored out of the way of the main seating area. The intrusion of Southern objects in the scene, such as the kettle and clock, reveal a

---

[42] Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers*, 41.
[43] It was, of course, easier said than done to insist that the Inuit should continue to maintain their habitual living practices. The fur trade was increasingly becoming a reliable source of food and goods for the Inuit and their hunting patterns had already begun shifting towards a market economy mentality.
[44] Letter, Roy A. Gibson to H.V. Chesshire, 19 December, 1942, Box 7, Folder 1748, Coll. RG 7, Correspondence, Eskimo Welfare Records, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
[45] Alan Marcus, "Place With No Dawn – A Town's Evolution and Erskine's Arctic Utopia," in *Architecture and the Canadian Fabric*, ed. Rhodri Windsor Liscombe (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 298.

shifting dynamic between North and South and the increasing effects of colonization upon Inuit life, however the main focus of the scene is on the various functions of the *iglu,* as a work space, as a place of warmth or security, and as a resting place. In other words, despite the increasing *Qallunaat* presence in the North during this period, the family maintains its habitual living structure and continues performing everyday tasks in a manner that is continuous with the way that Inuit society had been living for centuries.

This snow house, sodhouse, occasional wooden house, and tent-based way of life was essential to Inuit existence until the 1960s, when the government intervened more readily in Inuit housing. According to anthropologists Marcel Mauss and Henri Beuchat in their seminal article *Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo* (1979)*,* Inuit organized their communities according to moral and religious associations that required Inuit to gather in their communities at specific points during the year; the majority of Inuit religious and communal life was organized around the winter, when communities would settle along the coastlines and partake in ceremonies and observances that were based around a group, while religious observances during the spring and summer tended to focus on individual prayer.[46] Accordingly, they described Inuit settlements as "concentration[s] of [*iglu* or sod] houses, a collection of tent sites, plus hunting grounds on land and sea, all of which belong to a certain number of individuals. It also includes the system of paths, passages and harbours which these individuals use and where they continually encounter one another."[47] Every winter, members associated with a specific group would return to their communities for spiritual rituals, competitions, storytelling, family gatherings, etc, barring a major disaster that would have forced the group to relocate.[48] The central unit of the winter habitats was the *iglu*. Even following the conversion of the Arctic to Christianity by missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries, *iglus* maintained their importance as a gathering point for communities who began observing weekly mass.

The federal and territorial governments felt so strongly about the importance of maintaining this *iglu*-centered camp life that their first housing forays in the Arctic even sought to replicate these forms. The first short-lived housing experiment, Styrofoam *iglus*, were introduced to the community of Kinngait in 1957; as the name suggests, Styrofoam *iglus* were

---

[46] Marcel Mauss and Henri Beuchat, *Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo: A Study in Social Morphology* (London/Boston: Routledge, 1979), 21. Original version: Marcel Mauss and Henri Beuchat, "Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés eskimos. Étude de morphologie sociale," *L'Année Sociologique*, vol. 9 (1906): 39-132.
[47] Ibid, 27.
[48] Ibid, 27.

housing units that resembled an Inuit *iglu*, but were made entirely of Styrofoam (fig. 6). According to an article in Australian newspaper *The Age*, the project was originally proposed by James Houston and tested in the South. Unlike the projects that would follow it, it was an Inuk, Pitsiulak, brought in from the North, who would test the structure.[49] The *iglus* were built from 18 by 36 inch pieces of Styrofoam that were secured to the ground with wooden meat skewers and glued with Styrolok, an adhesive used for gluing Styrofoam together.[50] Despite the title of the article, "Eskimos Find Plastic Igloos Better Than Snow Houses," the project ended in 1959 and was never sent to communities outside of Kinngait as it proved insufficient to the needs of the Arctic climate.[51]

While the project ultimately failed, the Styrofoam *iglu* experiment was significant for several reasons. Unlike later housing schemes that would be realised by the government, the Styrofoam *iglu* project had been conceived by someone who had lived in the North and had regular contact with the Inuit. As James Houston played an important role in the promotion of Inuit art in the South and the introduction of printmaking across the Arctic, he frequently traveled throughout the North and was aware of the housing conditions in the Arctic. The unit was also initially tested and subsequently constructed in the North by an Inuk who would have been familiar with snow *iglus* and been able to provide feedback and suggestions. Most notably, the Styrofoam *iglus* also attempted to replicate an existing house form from the Arctic, which, aside from being built with a new material that was meant to provide increased warmth, was already familiar to the Inuit. This makes it the most culturally sensitive housing project implemented in the mid-20th century by the federal government.

Given the government's initial reluctance to intervene in Inuit life at all and its subsequent attempt to improve on what the Inuit were already using as housing, why would it make such an about face in policy in a little under a decade? The answer to that question is where this thesis diverges from the existing literature. As discussed in the introduction, many scholars working in the area of Northern housing policy have concluded that the *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report played a significant role in increasing Southern Canadian awareness about the living conditions of the Inuit and would have been a contributing factor in

[49] Basil Silcove, "Eskimos Find Plastic Igloos Better Than Snow Houses." *The Age,* September 9, 1960, 16.
[50] Ibid, 16.
[51] Sarah Bonesteel, *Canada's Relationship with the Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development* (Ottawa: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2006), 202.

the decision to move the Inuit into sedentary housing. I do not doubt this claim, but concerns over Inuit living conditions had been raised for nearly a decade prior to the publication of that report without any sense of urgency on the part of the federal government to intervene.

For example, in 1951, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Inspector H.A. Larsen, Officer Commanding "G" Division, visited the Northwest Territories and described "appalling conditions of destitution and filth, confusion about government aims, poor clothing and habitation, lack of adequate and local health treatments, the dominance of the fur trade over subsistence hunting, and undesirable concentrations of people around [*Qallunaat*] settlements."[52] Larsen's words make it clear that the Inuit were living in unacceptable conditions and that their way of life had been fundamentally altered thanks to the presence of the HBC and the fur trade. The rapid changes that the fur trade had brought about, including the shift towards a wage-earning economy, were clearly resulting in a decrease in the standard of living for Inuit. But despite Larsen's concerns, there would be a six-year delay before the federal government's first concerted effort to remedy the situation.

In fact, it was not until 1959 that the Department of Native Affairs and Natural Resources (DNANR) would make housing and social welfare in the Arctic a priority. In an article for Weekend magazine entitled "Slum Dwellers of the Wide-Open Spaces," senior DNANR officer Robert A. J. Phillips writes: "while education was a right for others, Eskimos could never know a schoolroom […] Their culture ebbed away, and no one helped them keep it. Their voices became silent as white men told them what to do, what to trap, what to wear, how to think and how to die."[53] Phillips is openly critical of *Qallunaat* intervention – particularly with regards to the interventions of religious officials and the HBC – but also makes it clear that the government would be proposing some changes in the near future, with an emphasis on education. To Canadians who were sceptical of these state-led interventions in the Arctic, Phillips was quick to counter that "if ignorance, disease and economic serfdom are definitions of happiness," then indeed, intervention was not needed.[54] As is typical of texts from the period, however, Phillips ignores the fact that the very department that he worked for had become and would continue to be the biggest agent of change in the North throughout the Cold War period and fails to see the

[52] Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers*, 44.
[53] Robert A. J. Phillips, "Slum Dwellers Of The Wide Open Spaces," *Weekend Magazine* 15 (1959): 20.
[54] Ibid, 21.

irony in the fact that their policies were equally as intrusive as any religious or economic changes introduced in the Arctic by other external agencies.

While Phillips' text indicates a shift in government attitudes towards intervention in Northern affairs, the looming question is: why did it take nearly a decade after the initial raising of concerns and another five years after the publishing of *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report for the government to create new housing policies? This gap in time between the rising consciousness about Inuit health and the formation of the ERHP does not support a theory based on the improvement of Inuit welfare – if improving Inuit welfare was really the priority, then allowing the Inuit to continue to live in the conditions described by Larsen or attempting to 're-indigenize' them through forced migration would directly contradict that goal. And even if DNANR did begin to change its approach in the late 1950s, why did it take another five years to put together a policy to 'fix' the 'slum' conditions that Phillips described?

Military strategy becomes the only logical explanation to account for the long delay in creating policy and the rapid rolling out of the ERHP. In other words, while on the surface, the ERHP appears to have been conceived from utopian, idealistic ideals meant to improve the living conditions of the Inuit, in reality, the ERHP was the solution (at least in the view of the federal government) to concerns about Northern sovereignty, with improved health and welfare coming as an added bonus. However, these plans involved a complete disregard for the value of the Inuit perspective, and the mandatory nature of the program ensured the establishment of political sovereignty and the creation of a society modeled after the Southern Canadian nuclear family.

This disregard for the Inuit perspective is made clear in the compulsory nature of the ERHP, which stands in marked contrast to any prior government initiatives. Briefly, as a precursor to the ERHP, a house-purchasing program was offered to Inuit. Kuppaq, an Inuk from Arctic Bay who was interviewed by Rhoda Inuksuk and Susan Cowan in the early 1970s for the oral history anthology *We Don't Live in Snow Houses Anymore*, described the situation thusly: "They started to build the houses in 1963: the matchbox houses. They were the only ones. That year my family came to live in Arctic Bay […] the people started moving into the community after the houses were built. Perhaps the government thought it would be better for people, especially those with lung problems, to live in heated houses."[55] These houses, and the models

[55] Kuppaq, "Kuppaq," in *We Don't Live in Snow Houses Now: Reflections of Arctic Bay*, ed. by Susan Cowan, (Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers, 1976), 53.

subsequently built for the ERHP, were described as 'matchbox' houses because they were so small that inhabitants were crowded into their living spaces like matches in a matchbox. Unlike the houses built during the implementation of the ERHP, these houses were built for Inuit on a voluntary basis; those who wanted to move into a house were given a loan and a house to move into on the condition that they pay the loan back so that eventually they would own their home. However, due the economic realities of the North, where wage labour was still scarce, of the 800 families that partook, over 90% had fallen behind on their payments by the termination of the program.[56]

This inability to keep up with loan payments led the government to approach housing from a different angle, and what would result was the ERHP, which was approved on October 12, 1965.[57] It is significant that the program would appear just a year after the futile *White Paper on Defence,* which attempted to define Canada's military strategy, clearly with a look towards the Arctic. The Canadian defensive strategy served "to preserve the peace by supporting collective defence measures to deter military aggression; to support Canadian foreign policy including that arising out of our participation in international organizations, and to provide for our protection and surveillance of our territory, our air space and our coastal waters."[58] What better way would there be to ensure the protection of the land, air, and waters of Arctic Canada than by settling the semi-nomadic and often difficult-to-track Inuit population into settlements? Due to the practice of naming children after their ancestors, as well as the lack of last names amongst most Inuit, the government had already instituted a numbering system known as the Eskimo Identification Numbers, in which necklaces with a number were assigned to each Inuk and became the basis for establishing their identity in government documents.[59] The semi-nomadic lifestyle that saw the Inuit roaming the land also made it difficult to control and account for the Inuit population, which was especially important during war.

The solution to this problem was the ERHP, the mass-settlement project that would group Inuit into communities according to a planned grid that was determined not by the Inuit, but by

---

[56] Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers,* 121.
[57] DIAND, "The Engineering Construction Program," *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 1.
[58] Honourable Paul Hellyer and Honourable Lucien Cardin, *White Paper on Defence* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, March 1964), 5.
[59] For more information about the Eskimo Identification system, see James C. Scott, John Tehranian, and Jeremy Mathias, "Government Surnames and Legal Identities," in *National Identification Systems: Essays in Opposition*, eds. Carl Watner and Wendy McElroy (Jefferson: McFarland, 2004), 11-54.

the federal government. In order to ensure the correct execution of the program, four phases were established. First, in advance of the building of government homes, regional administrators for the Arctic would travel to communities and inform Inuit that housing would be arriving for them shortly. Then, the homes would be built and families would move in. Once families were settled, adult educators were sent to the Arctic to help Inuit families acclimate to their new dwellings – according to Southern Canadian homemaking styles, of course – and finally, housing co-operatives were established in each community to look after the houses and help coordinate services such as garbage collection and water delivery.

Unlike the previous loan-to-own program, where participation was voluntary, the information from housing administrators was not so much a question as to whether the Inuit wanted to participate so much as a warning of what was to come. According to Arctic Bay resident Muckpaloo, "One summer […] some men came here to ask those of us who were living in Arctic Bay whether we would be able to pay the rent if they brought houses to the Arctic. Every one of us answered that if we were able to pay, we would be willing to. That's when we learned that they were planning to bring houses to Arctic Bay."[60] While Muckpaloo's words seem to imply that the Inuit had a choice as to whether they would be able to afford housing, this was not the case. In fact, all families in each community received a house which they were expected to rent, but the rent itself would be determined by three classifications of workers: fully employed, welfare or pension workers, and casual labourers (such as hunters, artists, and trappers).[61]

While the graded rental scheme was primarily aimed at ensuring that families were not being charged above their means, the categories were also enacted because it was believed that the Inuit were incapable of managing their own finances. What the federal government failed to understand was that their one-size fits all classifications of Inuit labour did not necessarily correspond to the reality of specific communities. For example, in Baker Lake, the scaled rent scheme was well-received by the community, as it was consistent with an Inuit worldview that those who were less capable of providing for their families should be helped by the rest of the community.[62] However, in Cape Dorset, the thriving arts market gave artists a considerably

[60] Muckpaloo, "Muckpaloo," *We Don't Live in Snow Houses Now*, 57.
[61] Charles Thomas Thompson, *Patterns of Housekeeping in Two Eskimo Settlements* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1969), 9.
[62] Thompson, *Patterns of Housekeeping*, 7.

higher and steadier income than even some of the Inuit who were employed full-time in government jobs. This meant that people who were, in fact, more capable of paying a larger share of rent were allowed to pay less than those people who were earning a lesser salary, which led to dissent amongst some members of the community.[63] A community-specific approach would clearly have been needed for effective financial management of the homes.

As a part of the preparatory work in Phase One, regional administrators distributed booklets to families about the terms and conditions of the houses that they were expected to move into the following year. These booklets, many of which were paternalistic and patronizing towards the Inuit, laid out in no uncertain terms the expectations of the government. For example, in *Rent for Houses*, the Education Branch of DIAND makes it clear that the government owns the houses and that they are providing the Inuit with a service, the terms of which they are expected to comply with. "The owner (Government) and the tenant must sign a rental agreement. The rental agreement tells the amount of rent, when it should be paid, and the rules [….] The tenant should understand what is written in the rental agreement before he signs it."[64] The government dictated all of the rules in question and the Inuit were left with little agency about what type of house they would move into or the terms and conditions for rent. The rationale for the program provided to the Inuit was that it was an equalizing measure for all Canadians, since "many people in Canada rent houses, and Eskimo and Indian people will now be able to do the same."[65]

Unlike previous experiments, the clear emphasis on renting houses from the government placed the Inuit in a position of reliance and constant deference. All houses had to be on "a piece of land measured and drawn on a government map" and if a family could not afford to eventually buy the house that they were renting, they were expected to pay the government indefinitely in order to live in a home that they were being forced to move into.[66] As social geographer David Sibley notes in *Geographies of Exclusion*: "power is expressed in the monopolization of space and the relegation of weaker groups in society to less desirable environments."[67] By controlling the map and the placement of houses, along with forcing the Inuit to initially rent their home, as

---

[63] Thompson, *Patterns of Housekeeping*, 8.
[64] G.H. Needham, *Rent for Houses* (Ottawa: DIAND, 1968), 1.
[65] G.H. Needham, *Living in the New Houses* (Ottawa: DIAND, 1968), 2.
[66] Ibid, 4.
[67] David Sibley, "Introduction," *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West* (New York: Routledge, 1995), ix.

opposed to purchasing it, established Inuit reliance upon the government. This relationship, in which the federal government was the owner of the property and the Inuit were renters, allowed the government to establish claim not only over the land but also over the people living in the houses that were on that land. The paper trail that was created through the signing of rental agreements, the transit of mail to and from the North and the sending of educators to the newly established settlements provided the government with solid evidence that the land was indeed a part of Canada.

Given all the conditions and stipulations, many Inuit were reluctant about moving into the settlements, because while the ERHP "seem[ed] to have a great deal to offer [Inuit], it also ma[de] a great number of demands upon [them]," including the fact that in many cases, the houses were "too far from the main part of the settlement" and some families were made to move into older houses which were left in a "deplorable condition."[68] Additionally, despite claiming that the purpose of the ERHP was to ensure that there would be "less chest sickness [tuberculosis] and other illness[es]"[69] amongst the Inuit, the promise of housing came with the caveat that the homes remain clean and were used properly—not according to Inuit standards and Inuit spatial organization, but according to *Southern Canadian* standards. The rules were made clear in the *Living in the New Houses* brochure distributed to Inuit during Phase One: "if anyone does not keep his house clean and repaired, or does not pay the rent, the Housing Association Council will move him into a smaller house."[70] The threat was implicit: Inuit needed to maintain a certain standard of cleanliness or they would face the potential repercussions of eviction or further relocation.

Considering the purported aim of eliminating overcrowding and therefore disease, the threat of moving Inuit into smaller homes is counter-intuitive to that goal. In other words, given the rationale from the *Eskimo Mortality and Housing* report that the close quarters of the *iglu* was partially to blame for poor health and rapid transmission of disease amongst the Inuit, why would the government knowingly threaten the Inuit with a return to cramped quarters? This disjuncture between the purportedly altruistic motivations of the government and the reality of

---

[68] DIAND, "The Educational Program," *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 6.
[69] Needham, *Living in the New Houses*, 5.
[70] Ibid*,* 7.

the program lends further credence to the argument of this thesis, that the ERHP was, in fact, motivated by sovereign and militaristic aims.

It is important to note that while the Inuit were threatened with being moved to a smaller home, none of the houses that were provided could be considered spacious to begin with. Of the ten housing archetypes shipped to the Arctic, the largest (the *Ukuvik*) had a total liveable area of 640 square feet, just 140 square feet more than most bachelor apartments in the South today, and was meant to house more than six people.[71] The smallest model, Plan 319 (fig. 7), had no bathroom or any kitchen materials. It was little more than a shack with a door and a single window, meant to house childless married couples, single people, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, or two adults in 256 square feet of liveable space.[72] While the conditions of the *Illukallak* (fig. 8) along with its counterparts, the *Angirraq* (fig. 9) and the *Tisi* (fig. 10) presented slightly better living conditions with a sink, a bathroom, and a porch, each unit had only around 200 square feet of liveable space and according to the standards set by DIAND's Branch Housing Committee, was meant to house two adults or a married couple with a child under twelve.[73]

The smaller two-bedroom models, consisting of the *Qarmaq*, Plan 395, and Plan 397, ranged between 252 and 600 square feet of liveable space, but conditions varied widely between the houses. Some had no bathroom, while others had cold rooms and bathrooms along with a defined kitchen space.[74] These two-bedroom houses were meant to shelter anywhere up to six people, and required two married couples to live together if they were childless or if they had children under the age of two.[75] There seems to have been no provisions made for what would happen once couples had children or when their children had matured past the age of two. For example, when a Kinngait man moved out of his home upon getting married and wrote to the government asking for a home as he was now living in a tent, rather than providing him with a new house, the solution was to offer him an older home needing repair when it would be available a few months down the line.[76] It is not beyond the scope of reason to assume that

---

[71] Thompson, *Patterns of Eskimo Housekeeping*, 46.
[72] Ibid, 39.
[73] Ibid, 39-40.
[74] Ibid, 44-5.
[75] Ibid, 39.
[76] Letter, Letter to R.J. Orange from F.A.G. Carter, February 28, 1966, Box 7, Folder 19, Coll. N-1990-021, Robert J. Orange Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

incidents of this nature would have been handled in a similar fashion, by giving old housing, likely from the purchase program that had already been deemed inadequate, to Inuit in need.

The three-bedroom houses, while they were the most spacious, had the least regulations. To qualify for a three-bedroom home, a family had to surpass the number of people meant to be living in a two-bedroom home. These models, the *Urquaq* (fig. 11), and the *Ukuvik* (fig. 12), were meant to house any families that had more than six people without any cap on the number of residents. While they were the roomiest at 630 and 640 square feet respectively, the lack of guidelines for how many people could live in these models meant that as large families grew even larger, they would end up being even more cramped.

The inadequacy of the housing provided to the Inuit is made even more evident when considering that at the start of the 20th century, government standards had addressed similar overcrowded housing conditions in Southern Canada. In fact, by the 1960s, this problem had been nearly completely rectified in the South, where on average, only four people occupied a house with four or more rooms (fig. 13).[77] In the North, the same number of rooms was meant to house six or more people. In fact, in 1965, the population of Kinngait was 165 people, and there were only 25 houses provided to everyone in the community. This means that on average, there would have been seven people to each household that had a maximum of four rooms, a standard that was considered unsanitary and overcrowded in Southern Canada.

Furthermore, as was seen in Napachie Pootoogook's previously discussed *iglu* work, Inuit social patterns favoured a communal sleeping area shared by all members of a family rather than individual rooms. This meant that many Inuit families used their living room space as sleeping quarters, further adding to the overcrowding. Had the government taken into account local knowledge or taken the time to conduct preliminary surveys of what the best housing models would have been, they would have created dwellings which allowed for this kind of sleeping structure rather than trying to force the Inuit to adopt a Euro-Canadian model of spatial organization.

Adding to the insufficiency of the ERHP was the fact that many of the building projects could not be completed in one year, which left multiple families crowded into homes that were not meant to house so many people, and the houses that *were* completed were riddled with problems. According to Koonoo Muckpaloo, "the houses finally arrived but they were very, very

[77] Peter Ward, *A History of Domestic Space: Privacy and the Canadian Home* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 21.

small. The following year […] I moved into Qamanirq's house, so for a year we were two families sharing a house. After that, we moved into a bigger house – the first time we had had a house of our own – and since 1967, we have been in this one, which has a furnace [….] Proper development of this community only began recently [1970s], after I was already a full adult and had had something like five children." [78] Muckpaloo's account is particularly important as it provides evidence contrary to Damas' assertion that "the Inuit were in general pleased with the housing that was provided."[79] While some Inuit were satisfied with the conditions of their housing, testimonials are increasingly emerging which counter this generalizing sense of satisfaction with the housing. Paulassie Pootoogook of Kinngait provides one such account; according to Pootoogook, "in an *iglu* we used to have the same food for a couple of days. It used to be frozen all the time and we ate it for a long time. Now when we have food as soon as we put the food inside our house, it rots [….] Because of the warmth in the house."[80] Indeed, it would have been difficult for many to be pleased with the housing provided, particularly when the units were untested for the Arctic climate and resulted in problems such as frost buildup seeping in through the floors collecting on pipes and mould formation along the walls (fig. 14).

In other words, the Canadian government sent up insufficient numbers of housing units, leading to overcrowding, and the units that they did send up were untested and ultimately insufficient to the needs of Inuit families. Given the widespread scholarly belief that the rental program houses were supposedly meant to prevent overcrowding and lead to an improvement in the overall health of the Inuit, why would the government knowingly spend money to provide housing to the Inuit that would not resolve these issues? In other words, why would the federal government knowingly send up small, health-risk prone houses to the Arctic when the purported reason for settling Inuit in homes in the first place was to do the exact opposite?

All these questions appear to be driven by the same answer: the assertion of Arctic sovereignty. Scientific development in the North and moving the Inuit into housing was not enough to establish Canada's claim over the Arctic. The federal government also had to prove that they had control over the Inuit in order to prove its entitlement to this territory and to ensure

---

[78] Koonoo Muckpaloo, "Koonoo Muckpaloo," *We Don't Live in Snow Houses Now*, 61.
[79] R. Quinn Duffy, *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War* (Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), 45-6.
[80] Oral History Transcription for the DIAND Inuit Land Use and Occupancy Project, Paulassie Pootoogook of Cape Dorset, April 15, 1974, Box 1, Folder 4, Coll. G-1985-001, DIAND Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

that a Soviet attempt to breach Canadian borders in the North would indeed be just that: a breach. By creating homes that automatically entered the government into a relationship with the Inuit through the rental scheme on a spatial grid established by the government, the ERHP allowed the government to lay claim to the vast Arctic lands of the Northwest territories and, from the outside at least, establish communities which mirrored the look of towns in the South.

Adult Education/Acculturation

While settling the Inuit into communities represented an unprecedented use of state power to work towards a rational ordering of Inuit society, the government still faced a challenge in asserting Arctic sovereignty: ensuring that the Inuit behaved in a way that was consistent with Southern Canadian ways of living. This section will explore the adult education program, with an emphasis on instructional booklets that were distributed as a part of the program, arguing that the acculturative program was used as a military strategy in order to ensure that the government of Canada could claim occupation over the land through settlement.

As established in section one, the Canadian government was on shaky legal ground in establishing its sovereignty in the North. While *Re: Eskimos* officially granted stewardship of the Inuit to the federal government, the land on which the Inuit were residing could not soundly be deemed Canadian by international law. The majority of Arctic voyages were not undertaken by British or Canadian vessels, there was no formal cession of land made to Canada, and it did not purchase the land from the Inuit. This meant that a different strategy had to be adopted: sovereignty through effective occupation. According to lawyer Eyal Benvenisti in the seminal work *The International Law of Occupation* (2012), effective occupation was developed as a result of war, though "occupation is not necessarily the outcome of actual fighting."[81]

One of the most damning pieces of evidence against the Canadian government comes from D. Davies, who, in a letter to the Chairman of the Eskimo Camps Committee stated that "the Government of Canada has at least three main interests in the North and, indirectly therefore, the Eskimo people: (a) territorial rights and jurisdiction, (b) mineral resources, and (c)

[81] Eyal Benvenisti, "Overview: The Phenomenon of Occupation," *The International Law of Occupation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

political and economic development."[82] There is a clear connection, then, between the housing policies put into place in the North by the federal government and the assertion of ownership over the Canadian Arctic. However, in keeping with the principle of effective occupation, which tends to deemphasize the circumstances that lead to state intervention in a particular territory in favour of placing attention on the occupation itself, extensive archival research has not discovered any evidence that the political and jurisdictional motives of the adult education program were discussed in official government documentation.[83] The Hague Regulations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which helped determine wartime laws, even stipulate that effective occupation can be maintained when that occupation is met with "no armed resistance."[84] So while the government would have been implementing the ERHP for its own purposes, it could make the argument that it was protecting the Inuit through occupation by housing them and providing for their guardianship against potential threats. Indeed, given the uncertainty surrounding Canadian ownership of the Arctic, effective occupation using the Indigenous population that already lived in the Arctic would have been an ideal way of establishing control over the Northland.

However, in order to irrefutably claim sovereign control over what the Canadian government felt was its rightful dominion of the Arctic, another hurdle had to be overcome to ensure that further challenges to its ownership could be quashed: the Inuit had to be 'civilized'. This was hardly new work for the Canadian government; it had long been on a civilizing mission for indigenous people in Canada. For example, Duncan Scott Campbell, the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs famously claimed in 1914 that "the happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population… this is the object and policy of our government."[85] It follows that the government would have understood the acculturation of the Inuit as being inseparable from the assertion of sovereignty. In keeping with the Potemkin village motivations examined in the introduction, not only did the Inuit need to seem like they were living in reasonable housing conditions, but they also needed to act like 'civilized' human beings within

---

[82] Letter, D. Davies to the Chairman of the Committee on Eskimo Camps, February 20, 1967, Box 9, Folder 7, Coll. G-1979-003, Northern Administration Branch Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.
[83] Benevisti, *The International Law of Occupation,* 4.
[84] Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Aug. 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135.
[85] Duncan Campbell Scott qtd. in Sonny Assu, "The Happiest Future," accessed July 23, 2015. http://sonnyassu.com/pages/the-happiest-future.

those houses. Primitivist and racist understandings of Inuit culture were not uncommon amongst officials within DIAND, but one of the most damning examples comes from Eskimo Affairs Committee (EAC) member F.K. Cunningham, in which he claims, "the basic issue seems to be this, are we to regard the Eskimo as a fully privileged, economically responsible citizen with the right to spend his income as he pleases, or are we to regard the Eskimo as backward people who need special guidance in the use of their income? [...] I personally feel that if we are realistic we must consider the Eskimo to be in the second category."[86] Cunningham's words reflect the attitude of the EAC that the Inuit were incapable of managing their own affairs and needed state intervention to teach them basic skills, despite the fact that Inuit had been increasingly participating in the wage economy for nearly a decade, particularly with the interest in handicrafts and printmaking that was accounting for an increasingly large percentage of the income of most families in the Arctic. The solution to the 'problem' was the comprehensive adult education program, which functioned alongside the construction of houses in each community.

In May 1966, DIAND received a grant of $169,000 (which amounts to over 1.2 million dollars in today's currency) from the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to undertake a widespread adult education program in the Canadian North.[87] The housing educators were trained in Ottawa and sent to communities in the North to instruct primarily women about topics ranging from infant care to the proper techniques to clean various parts of the home. The administrators would, on average, stay for a period of nine months and combine classroom teaching in model houses or motels with individual home visits designed not only to inspect the cleanliness of the homes but also to address individual concerns of the women. The educators received slides, photographs, printed booklets, and plans of housing models that they were able to take to the Arctic to distribute. According to the *Second Interim Report: Eskimo Housing Education* (1967), the materials for the program were hastily thrown together due to "lack of time and shortage of staff."[88] Though the reason for the haste was never specified, the abundance of evidence provided in this thesis pointing to concerns over Arctic sovereignty sheds light on

[86] Invitation, Draft Invitation by F.J. Cunningham to a conference of the Eskimo Affairs Committee, February 18, 1952, Volume 1069, Box 251, File 1a, Coll. RG 85, Northern Affairs Branch Program Records, National Archives of Canada.
[87] DIAND, "The Educational Program" in *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), I.
[88] DIAND, "Phase 1 Materials," in *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 3.

the probable reason – the faster the program could be implemented and the Inuit civilized, the faster any challenges to Canada's sovereignty could be laid to rest.

The educational program and adjoining materials "emphasize[d] the care and maintenance of property, which involves an understanding of housekeeping and home management. It also involved nutrition, health and sanitation, home safety, the budgeting of family money, and shopping."[89] The program was, therefore, extremely comprehensive and touched upon every aspect of everyday life "in its attempt to deal with complex social and human problems involving housing development for peoples of a minority culture."[90] For this reason, even the family dog was not exempt from the effects of the ERHP. In the *Living in the New Houses* (1968) booklet prepared and edited by G. H. Needham and illustrated by Jerry Montplaisir, a dog is depicted in the background as an emaciated, unhealthy animal with bones visibly showing and a matted, unkempt fur coat. In the foreground, however, the dog has a shiny, luscious fur coat with and appears larger and healthier, thanks to, as the caption beneath the illustration suggests, food (fig. 15).[91] Dogs held particular importance in Inuit society as they were used to pull *komatiks* (sleds), which was essential in order to get to hunting or trapping grounds. Without proper nutrition, the dogs would not be able to work as effectively for the Inuit – something that the Inuit undoubtedly knew as they had used sled dogs for transportation for hundreds of years. This kind of sensationalist teaching was prominent throughout the provided materials.

This illustration appears in a broader discussion in the booklet about the importance and value of food. According to the booklet, "Eskimos used to eat a great deal of fresh meat and raw fish which kept them healthy and strong. Now Eskimos are getting less food from the land and buying more store food."[92] These words serve as a preface for the introduction of the Canada's Food Guide which, unlike the current food guide that is shaped like a pyramid, presented each category of food as being equally important in a balanced, circular diet (fig. 16). Ironically, many of the foods presented in the guide, such as the fruits and vegetables, are presented in canned format, which would have had to be bought at the store and canned food was discouraged in

---

[89] DIAND, "Phase 2 Program," in *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 10.
[90] DIAND, "Report on Housing Education Program," in *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 1.
[91] Needham, *Living in the New Houses*, 12.
[92] Ibid, 3.

favour of fresh meat and fish. Conveniently absent from the text is also any recognition that the reason for Inuit reliance upon these packaged and process foods was due to increasing *Qallunaat* intervention in the Arctic over the prior 150 years.

The increasing encroachment of the South into the North is also evident in another illustration from this booklet, "Shopping for Food" (fig. 17). In this illustration, a woman is getting ready to purchase her groceries from a well-stocked store serviced by a poorly drawn man who is presumably Inuit. The man is depicted in a Southern-style shirt, while the woman is clothed in a melange of Southern and traditional Inuit garments; while this would not be atypical in the North in the mid-20th century, it indicates the already prevalent influence of the South in the Arctic. Particularly striking is the woman's purse, which was obviously imported from the South, and the unrealistically large wad of cash that she is preparing to hand to the salesman who has prepared her food for her. The image suggests that affluence that can be achieved through the adoption of a Southern lifestyle gained by following the instructions in the booklets that were distributed, and encourages a turn away from traditional divisions of labour, in which men were primarily responsible for buying food in addition to hunting and fishing.[93]

Cleanliness was another main goal that was emphasized through the education program. In most of the illustrated booklets, several pages are dedicated to tidiness and hygiene. In *Care and Use of Household Equipment* (1967), for example, emphasis is placed on the ways that household equipment can be used to increase sanitation or the way that equipment must be cared for in order to keep it sterile and clean; a cutting board becomes the barrier between meat and scrapes on the wooden or synthetic countertop, every item in the refrigerator must be neatly stored and carefully arranged (fig. 18), and there is even a suggested arrangement scheme for the cupboards (fig. 19), although the arrangement that is proposed seems impractical since large dinner plates must be removed and stored from behind the teapot, sugar bowl, and other afternoon tea items. Accompanying these diagrammatic demonstrations of how to use specific household items, there is an illustration about how to clean nearly every household surface, from cupboards, to sink strainers, to clothing (fig. 20). Curiously, it is suggested that clothing be hung indoors in the kitchen, without placing a towel down to catch the water. The constant wetting of the floor with the drip-drying of the clothing likely furthered the previously mentioned mould

[93] D.K. Thomas and C.T. Thompson, *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change* (Ottawa: DIAND, 1972), 13.

issues that were common in these houses. It was also expected that young women would share in some of the work, including sweeping the floor, making beds, and cleaning the washbasins.

In fact, there was a clear message relayed that nearly all household chores were meant to be the duty of girls and women. Men appear in the booklets rarely, mostly as father figures and heads of the household (fig. 21), or as handymen to build and improve upon the home (fig. 22). The education program thus placed an emphasis on transforming Inuit gender roles to conform to their counterparts in the South.

While traditionally, Inuit men were typically hunters and fishermen, it was the women who then used the animals caught in the hunt to feed the family, make clothing, or harvest supplies such as sinew and needles made from animal bones. Women were essential to camp life and the hunting and fishing mode of subsistence relied on the division of labour. There were no regulations in Inuit society preventing women and men from taking on tasks that were usually performed by the other gender, but the men depended on the women and vice versa; each gender respected the other's skills and while women certainly performed some tasks that female homemakers in the South performed, the family dynamic in the North implied a more egalitarian structure in which the work of both sexes was valued.[94]

The adult education program was actively attempting to shift these roles to conform to the notion of the man as breadwinner and the woman as the housewife, as the division of work along these lines is "generally rationalized as 'natural' and therefore 'inevitable'."[95] More importantly, codifying and regulating the behaviour of gendered bodies in the Arctic shifted the egalitarian balance of power shifted to favour a male-headed household. As with conjugal power structures in the South, it was expected that men would be the primary generators of income and would be expected to find employment, while the power of women would be restricted to the home.[96]

To ensure compliance with the new gendered household and the expectations for both men and women, the consequences of leading a reckless or untidy life were made clear in the *Safety in the Houses* (1967) booklet. Every type of problem is covered; for example, there was a

---

[94] Laakkuluk Jessen Williamson, "Inuit Gender Parity and Why It Was Not Accepted in the Nunavut Legislature," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 30 (2006): 53-54.
[95] Lorraine Davies and Patricia Jane Carrier, "The Importance of Power Relations for the Division of Household Labour," *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24 (1999): 36.
[96] Richard Centers, Bertram H. Raven, and Aroldo Rodriguez, "Conjugal Power Structure: A Re-Examination," *American Sociological Review* 36 (Apr. 1971): 296.

strong emphasis on fire and the causes of fire, such as refusing to put a cigarette in an ashtray, smoking in bed (fig. 23), or forgetting to clean the stove pipe. Childcare was also a concern, with illustrations emphasizing that children should be playing with educational toys, such as blocks, rather than scrap metal or other random things found around the house (fig. 24), and that adult supervision in the kitchen was required at all times in order to avoid burns and scalds from pots. The booklets make it clear that the government administrators in the South had no confidence in the Inuit's ability to manage their own homes.

Perhaps this preconceived expectation is the reason for the shocked reports of many adult educators working with women in communities. In fact, many educators and social scientists that traveled to the North both during and after the implementation of the ERHP were quick to point out the weak areas of the education program. The women in many of the communities felt that "they [were] competent enough to handle their own affairs" and could ask for help from a minister's wife if they ran into difficulty.[97] In fact, many of the women felt that the new program and the way that it was implemented commandeered their previous authority within the household. As the woman did not have any say in the building of the home, its overall layout, and the furnishings for it, they felt that "the home does not 'belong' to the woman [….] Also Eskimo women are supposed to have learned their wifely duties before marriage; adult education classes imply that they are not good wives and can involve a 'loss of face' for them."[98] This emphasis on women's education led to concerns that "no-one is working closely with the men in a similar way with parallel objectives."[99] Furthermore, the level of materials provided for the Inuit were "too simple" and clearly did not take into account the fact that Inuit were capable of learning complex concepts.[100] This paternalistic attitude is best seen, once again, in the booklets, where concepts were expressed in the simplest possible terms, using language like "This" and "Not this" rather than full sentences that clearly explained an idea.

Whenever an educator tried to make their disdain over certain elements of the program known, they became the subject of unfavourable scrutiny amongst government officials. For example, a female educator working in Cape Dorset "expressed a feeling that she did not have

---

[97] Thompson, *Patterns of Housekeeping*, 20.
[98] Ibid, 20.
[99] Report, Report from D.V. Fisher about the Cape Dorset Regional Administrator, March 29, 1967, Box 266, File 2, Coll. G-1979-003, Northern Administration Branch Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.
[100] DIAND, "The Educational Program," in *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report* (Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1967), 4.

enough time to work with individual families […] [and was] defeated by finding that [DIAND] simply do not have the resources to support the work she thinks she ought to be doing. These resources range from lack of water to general household equipment and general education."[101] Despite the fact that the educator brought up important concerns and was attempting to advocate on behalf of the Inuit, this approach was not looked favourably upon as she was meant to be helping to establish a Housing Association in the community, an Inuit-managed association to deal with these sorts of complaints in the long-term and communicate directly with the government in an attempt to rectify them. Ultimately, it was decided that the woman's contract should be terminated and that "Cape Dorset's needs are rather more for a male educator in a Community Development role than a woman at this juncture."[102]

Educators, however, were not the only people, both before and after the implementation of the ERHP, to express scepticism about the way that a wide-scale housing program in the Arctic should be instituted. In fact, numerous parties claimed that they could provide advice, but they failed to be consulted during both the research and the execution phases of the project. For example, Reverend Bernard Brown, the pastor in Colville Lake, sent a letter to DIAND employee Stu Hodgson in 1968, when the ERHP was in full force, expressing his concerns about the lack of communication between people who resided in communities regularly and government officials. While religious officials were some of the major agents of colonization in the Arctic and this is not to be ignored, Reverends and Ministers resided in communities and had some of the most regular contact with the Inuit in their roles unlike the majority of government officials. Brown said that he had his own ideas about how indigenous people in the Arctic could be helped, specifically "how they should be treated, housed etc. But I'm not on the Government payroll so I cannot effectively influence policy nor the local allotment of funds. Because of lack of communication, my experience is of no help toward shaping Territorial policy toward its natives… not even in Colville Lake. We simply need more and better communication, discussion of problems, etc."[103] Brown's implication was that the ERHP was ineffective and if consultation with local *Qallunaat* who had regular contact with the Inuit took place, it would lead to a better assessment of the needs of the Inuit.

---

[101] Report from D.V. Fisher about the Cape Dorset Regional Administrator, March 29, 1967.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Letter, Letter to Stu Hodgson from Reverend Bernard Brown, Box 16, Folder 3, Coll. G-1979-003, Northern Administration Branch Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

This critique of a lack of consultation mirrors one of the primary arguments in D.K. Thomas and C.T. Thompson's 1979 DIAND report *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change*. The authors do not mince their words and are openly critical of the scheme imposed by the government roughly 15 years earlier in the Arctic. Thompson, in his 1969 report on housekeeping patterns in Kinngait and Baker Lake, had already suggested that the program was far from ideal, applauding Inuit women for the speed with which they had adapted to a new way of life while making sure to clarify that his remark was not meant "as praise for the rental program, but instead [was] meant for those women who are so greatly affected by these changes imposed from without and over which they have little control."[104] His report with Thomas builds upon this initial critique and outright states that the ERHP was "a massive effort to acculturate a people who have lived by entirely different values, into the mainstream of Canadian society."[105] One of the suggestions that the duo make in their report is that anyone tasked with designing a house for the Arctic should live there for a brief period of time, so that they can run tests on the basic design and troubleshoot problems while they are apart of the conditions themselves.[106] Both Brown and Thomas and Thompson clearly place a great deal of importance on the value of localized knowledge in the creation of housing for the Arctic.

Harkening back to Scott's statement that the failure of many high modernist projects was in their resistance to incorporating local knowledge, it becomes clear that the ERHP largely failed on this account. While attempts were made after houses were built to fix issues as they were discovered, they could have been prevented if consultations with people living in the North were conducted prior to the actual building of the houses to find out what people would want out of a home, what it needed, and pre-tested to explore the durability of the structures. The government's need to develop communities to "meet modern standards"[107] and ensure the security of its claims to the Canadian Arctic regions outweighed its own desires to provide "equality of treatment and opportunity for Indians and Eskimos" and "management of their own affairs." [108] The only point at which the Inuit were included in the decision making process came

---

[104] Thompson, *Patterns of Eskimo Housekeeping*, 29.
[105] Thomas and Thompson, *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change,* 13.
[106] Ibid, 15. As was discussed in section two, the only time that this approach was taken was when James Houston, who again, spent considerable time in the Arctic, helped to ensure that an Inuk was involved in the testing and subsequent distribution of Styrofoam Iglus in the North.
[107] E.A. Coté, "The Administrator Takes a Look at Problems for Indians, Eskimos and Native People."
[108] Ibid.

after all of the homes were in place, upon the formation of the Housing Associations in each community.

The government's failure to do any outside consultation in their decision making process is particularly suspect given that they ignored the advice of a survey which they commissioned. Although it is unclear when K. J. Crowe was hired to create a report for the Eskimo Camps Study Committee, the paper stands apart in a sea of government documents from this period. The committee was formulated to examine the relationship of the Inuit with Southern culture and the effects that it had upon the Inuit. Crowe insists that "the camp system is the prime repository and essence of the Eskimo way, and no stage of the transition to modernity can be sensibly planned without a basic understanding of, and respect for, this unique way of life."[109] Despite his findings that the "problem of the future of Eskimo camps is one of total human welfare, and can only be solved through a multi-disciplinary approach" which would affect every aspect of Inuit life, Crowe also believed in the need to introduce modernity to the North without causing a complete shift in the Inuit way of life.[110] In fact, in a proposition which was, for its time, even more radical than Thomas and Thompson's, Crowe actually insisted that whatever initiatives were to be undertaken, the "must include sustained and receptive consultation with the camp-people themselves."[111] A bold but accurate suggestion, and indeed, one that had already been successfully implemented with the Styrofoam *iglus* project.

This sentiment was also echoed by D. Davies in a 1967 letter to the Chairman of the Eskimo Camps Committee – the same man who, as was quoted earlier in this section, was blunt about the government's need to use the Inuit to achieve its own political and jurisdictional aims. Davies argued that the constant government intervention into the Northern landscape, through natural resource mining, military intervention, and housing did not "allow [for] a situation where the Eskimo [could] make a choice for himself – a choice founded on knowledge of both cultures or way of life."[112] Furthermore, Davies insisted that whatever choice an Inuit person made, whether it was to continue to live in traditional means or to adopt a more Southern lifestyle, that "it should be his choice – not ours. The temptation for us to play God is very apparent…. We

---

[109] Paper, Paper delivered by K. J. Crowe for the first meeting of the Eskimo Camps Study Committee, "Eskimo Camps, A Sociological Viewpoint," Box 9, Folder 7, Coll. G-1979-003, Northern Administration Branch Fonds, Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] D. Davies, "Letter to Chairman Eskimo Camps Committee."

should give the Eskimos the chance to find their own way."[113] Davies clearly favoured an approach to asserting sovereignty that allowed for some degree of Inuit agency. Despite these contestations, however, DIAND clearly decided to act against the counsel of *Qallunaat* living in the Arctic and even people it had instructed to study camp life.

This begs the simple question of why? Why would DIAND shift its position from trying to create culturally sensitive architectural forms to ignoring advice from its own employees and anyone with a vested interest in the welfare of the Inuit in favour of one of the most culturally destructive and life-altering programs in the history of the Canada? The answer seems clear: the Cold War and the widespread Southern Canadian fear of invasion by both the Soviets and the Americans prompted the Canadian government to examine their claim to the Canadian Arctic, which they found to be lacking in substance. As a result, the federal government needed to use the Inuit to ensure its control over the Arctic and implemented a mass housing project as part of an enforced occupation in the North that not only ensured the creation of paper trail proving a relationship between the Inuit and the federal government but also sought to mould the 'primitive' Inuit in the image of an idealized and gender-divided nuclear family.

Conclusion: The Aftermath of the ERHP and Looking Towards the Future

This thesis has examined the circumstances leading up to the ERHP, arguing that it was an Authoritarian High Modernist project design not only to ensure ownership over the Eastern Arctic through effective occupation but also to acculturate the Inuit and restructure their way of life to resemble more closely that of *Qallunaat* in the South. Building upon the cursory examination of the acculturative motives of the ERHP by scholars such as Dawson, Robson, and Thomas and Thompson, I have begun to expand upon the relationship between the Cold War housing policy in the North. Revisiting the narrative of the program as an act of neo-imperialist violence, as opposed to an altruistic attempt on the part of the Canadian federal government to improve the health and welfare of the Inuit, allows for a better understanding of its impact on the lives of the Inuit.

Not only did the ERHP forcibly relocate residents to sedentary housing according to a grid chosen by the government and with little Inuit input, but it also implemented a wide-reaching Adult Education program that drastically altered the Inuit way of life. Put into effect a

[113] Ibid,.

year after the failed *White Paper on Defense*, the ERHP is the culmination of the fear and real political threats posed by the Cold War. While it is clear that health and welfare concerns did partially motivate the aims of this project, the dubious construction of the houses and the Government of Canada's interest in the North as a national symbol and hopeful goldmine of natural resources required the state to settle its Arctic residents in one of the most wide-reaching and culturally impactful Authoritarian High Modernist projects implemented in Canada. Under the mounting tensions of the Cold War, the government's desire to assert its sovereignty and make ardent use of the natural resources that it believed were hidden beneath the Arctic ice, DIAND made the decision to ignore the advice of its advisors and institute an ill-conceived project that was riddled with problems and imposed it upon an unprepared Inuit population. This thesis has strongly argued for a reconsideration of the narrative of this period of Arctic history and recognition that its intentions were not altogether altruistic. There were clear problems plaguing the homes, including mould and frost build-up, which would actually compound the health issues such as tuberculosis and a high infant mortality rate that the Inuit were already facing.

Notably, this work has contributed to the growing scholarly movement to re-examine narratives of Inuit colonization in order to adopt a methodology that incorporates Inuit perspectives. Many works in this area of study have failed to incorporate the Inuit perspective at all, or when they have, they resort to paraphrases or blanket statements. While, regrettably, the scope of this thesis has not allowed me to visit Nunavut myself to conduct interviews, I have, wherever possible, included direct quotations by Inuit from across the Eastern Arctic about their experiences with the ERHP because I believe that there is no substitute for understanding the lived experiences of oppression and colonial violence that can be as effective or informative as hearing from survivors themselves. With this same goal in mind, in order to understand the overarching effects of the Cold War and increasing interest in the North on the part of the federal government, I have relied on the works of Inuit artists as a testament to the Inuit experience. Both Alootook Ipellie and Napachie Pootoogook have used their art as a way to communicate the changing realities of the North. While Ipellie's work was more critical in tone, Pootoogook was an avid chronicler of the shifting reality of the North and recognized the disparity between the lived reality of the Inuit and the perception of *Qallunaat* around the world. Their works

reveal a disjuncture between the modernizing North and the primitivist mindset with which Southern Canadians have often viewed the Inuit.

What about the housing situation today? A report by the Caledon Institute of Social Policy aptly resumes the situation: "The dream of a better future has not materialized. Instead of the anticipated prosperity, resettlement has hastened the deterioration of traditional skills. The loss of customary hunting and trapping has significantly limited these skills as a productive alternative to the wage economy."[114] True to the title of Scott's book, it appears that the ERHP scheme, meant to improve the human condition, has failed; perhaps, had the federal government continued to test culturally-sensitive forms and allowed the Inuit to have a say as to where their communities would be built, what their homes would look like, and what their needs would be, the outcome would have differed.

This dissent is prevalent in the work of two Kinngait artists who were a part of the forced settlement: Itee Pootoogook and Jutai Toonoo. They are two examples of a growing trend in Inuit graphic artists to recording the reality of living in settlements. For the late Itee Pootoogook (1951-2014), who grew up on the land as a child and was subsequently moved into permanent housing, his drawings represent a physical longing for a return to life on the land. Pootoogook's work is frequently devoid of humans and makes no apologies for its frankness. His work is a reflection of the isolation that he felt as a result of moving into a sedentary community. His drawings, rendered in a style that approaches photorealism, speak to a fractured connection with the land, gleaned through bright lights shining in through living room windows, the stark contrast between a dark kitchen and the whiteness of Arctic snow, or the comically rendered figure in an otherwise lifelike image.

Window (2009) is undoubtedly the artist's most poignant commentary on settlement life (fig. 25). The scene consists of a dark, sombre kitchen interior in the foreground and middleground, which looks ominous and uninviting compared to the bright, seemingly endless vastness of the land seen through the window in the background of the image. The reflection of the sky that illuminates the white snow seems to be the only source of light in what is otherwise a depressing and closed off scene. The viewer is left in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis the drawing. On the one hand, the cramped setting of the drawing provides a sense of claustrophobia

[114] Ken Battle and Sherri Torjman, *Poverty and Prosperity in Nunavut* (Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2013), 6. http://www.caledoninst.org/Publications/PDF/1027ENG.pdf.

for the viewer that can only be resolved by focusing on the seemingly endless landscape that is seen through the window; the viewer is confronted with the overwhelming feeling of being trapped in the scene that Pootoogook has depicted with no visible way out, except, perhaps, by opening the window and jumping out. However, on the other hand, the cropped frame of the drawing, inspired by the borders on photographs, reminds the viewer that what they are seeing is a representation, an allegory for the emotional harm caused by such a drastic shift in lifestyle. Placed outside of the scene, the viewer is confronted with their voyeuristic status vis-à-vis the drawing, left to stare at the cramped psychological prison of Pootoogook's home and the role of Southern Canadians in contributing to his situation. What the viewer is staring at is not actually the scene itself, but rather the artist's interpretation of what his kitchen looks like.

Similarly, in *Bright Light Coming Through the Window* (2009), Pootoogook again represents what he feels is the deterioration of Inuit culture at the expense of material goods and a sedentary lifestyle (fig. 26). Rendered in stunning realistic detail, the scene depicts a lone figure seated on a tattered couch that is in sore need of replacement. The person has a forlorn expression on their face and directly meets the viewer's gaze, addressing them head on. The white frame represents a snapshot as though this scene represents but a single fraction of a second in the life of the figure; a dismal, unhappy, and broken life. The brightest element of the drawing is the window, which reflects a light so bright that the landscape cannot even be seen. Its stark contrast with the rest of the more neutrally-toned interior forces the viewer's eye back to the decrepit couch, tattered and falling apart, crumbling and sagging with age and use. The only detail that seems out of place in the otherwise masterfully rendered scene is the Inuk sitting on the couch, whose cartoonish features and solemn expression stand out as the only element that does not belong in the scene. The metaphor is a powerful one, which expresses Pootoogook's own feeling: a life once lived on the land has now been so completely obscured that it can no longer been seen, a glimmering light of what once was. Instead, all that remains is the life that the Inuit were relegated to by the *Qallunaat*. As Pootoogook's primary audience was Southern Canadians, the direct meeting of the figure's gaze and the viewer's gaze forces the viewer to question their own implication in continuing to remain relatively passive and unencumbered with the current state of homelessness and disrepair in Nunavut. While many Southern Canadians are happy to collect Inuit art, far fewer attempt to serve as allies in the fight for Inuit sovereignty and the improvement of conditions in the Arctic.

Pootoogook's contemporary, Jutai Toonoo, incorporates tropes of the European artistic canon, particularly the still life, and experiments with mediums that are atypical in the Arctic, such as pastel and charcoal, to work through his own feelings of separation from the land. Never one to shy away from a pun, Toonoo's *My Dirty Laundry* (2013) depicts a pile of dirty clothes, which have been decontextualized and deterritorialized as objects suspended in a non-descript, darkened background (fig. 27). They simply float there, void of all other referent information; the viewer does not know where the clothing has been left, in what room, or why they have even been discarded. Against the stark charcoal background and lack of contextualizing setting, the viewer is left with no choice but to look more intently at Toonoo's discarded laundry, and in the folds of shirts and jeans and caps, snow, water, and other natural elements begin to appear. These formations resemble a topographical map, demonstrating layers upon on layers of different natural features. In his clothing, Toonoo has created for himself a landscape reminiscent of the land that his family lived on for generations.

However, not all Inuit see the shift away from semi-nomadic life in such a negative light, and this generational divide is indicative of some of the changes that are on the horizon. While the situation in present day Nunavut is still unacceptable, steps are being made in the North to provide housing to all those who need it and to upgrade housing to models that better respond to conditions in the North. The *Arctic Adaptations* exhibition at the Venice architecture biennale in 2014 is a good example about the ways in which architects and Inuit can work together and follow Thomas and Thompson's advice – to test structures in the North and design housing forms that specifically respond to the harsh Arctic climate.

But it is not only the physical form of these houses that seem poised to change. A younger generation of artists, such as Oolooreak Etungat and Annie Pootoogook, who were born and have always lived in permanent housing, demonstrate the potential for a resurgence and continuity of cultural traditions within sedentary community life. Unlike their elders, whose experience of moving in off of the land was traumatic and isolating, Etungat and Pootoogook see the home as a site where customs that originated in the South can coalesce alongside traditional Inuit practices, not always symbiotically but together nonetheless.

In *Three Decades Plus & Later! My Father Carving and Myself Drawing* (2012), Etungat splits her drawing in half, aerially depicting the two primary activities of Kinngait artists: drawing and carving (fig. 28). On the left hand side of the drawing, Etungat portrays

herself, sketching a large drawing of what appears to be a woman and child in an *amauti* as her son watches on, learning drawing skills from his mother through observation. On the right hand side of the drawing, a young girl, presumably the artist, watches her father as he carves a soapstone walrus carving on their floor of their home. Artistic knowledge, though it has manifested itself in different forms, continues on in the family. Etungat is drawing the traditional clothing form and common depiction of mother and child, while her father showed keen observational skills in his mastery of the walrus – a skill which he has passed onto his daughter as the form being carved is discernable in her drawing. So while the setting of artistic production may shift, from out on the land or in an *iglu* to a home, knowledge is still being passed down from generation to generation.

Annie Pootoogook similarly reflects on the transmission of knowledge through generations in her artwork. While the artist never shies away from social commentary, such as the irony of having to watch the *Nunavut: Our Land* series on television for children to see traditional skills in action or the effect of Southern shows like *The National* or *The Jerry Springer Show* on Inuit perceptions of the south, Pootoogook also sees the home as a site for cultural continuity. Alongside these television depictions are traditional items such as *ulus*, or calendars depicting hunting scenes from the communities. And while watching *Nunavut: Our Land* is not the ideal way to learn about tradition, the Inuit-made and Inuit-produced series does provide the ability for all age groups to see traditional practices in action and these skills are recorded through the media of video and television broadcasting. But Pootoogook's home scenes also reveal the maintenance of many pre-existing traditions, such as sharing a meal with family on the floor or skinning animals with an *ulu*.

In other words, for Pootoogook, modernity and technology do not replace Inuit knowledge, but function alongside it. *Watching the Simpsons* (2006) is a depiction of a living room scene in which a child watches the popular Fox animated series *The Simpsons* (fig. 29). The fictional family depicted on the television, decipherable through the trademark towering blue hair of the family matriarch Marge Simpson, forms a relationship with the drawn family in Pootoogook's drawing. Both share the cartoon pen-and-line style of drawing and most of the family action within both *The Simpsons* and Pootoogook's drawings occur in the space of the home, and particularly the living room or dining room. But while the Simpsons represent the quintessential American suburban family, living in a multi-level home with a manicured lawn

and a large backyard, Pootoogook's family represents a blending of new and old, of tradition and modernity. Thus, despite the fact that her child uses a modern device to watch a cartoon on the television, this activity is just as normal in Pootoogook's home as carrying a baby in a traditional *amauti* (women's coat). Like the Simpsons' home, the walls of Pootoogook's home are adorned with photos of family and other Arctic homes. The narrative of the Simpsons' lives and Pootoogook's life may be fundamentally different, but Pootoogook's emerges as the more dynamic and interesting of the two, in which traditional clothing and tools have a place alongside contemporary elements such as televisions.

Posited against the Simpsons image, *Three Men Carving a Seal, Three Women Cleaning* (2006) further reinforces Pootoogook's belief that continuity and resiliency can function alongside modernity (fig. 30). Seated on the floor with traditional *ulus*, as they would have been in an *iglu*, the women prepare to clean the seal meat that their husbands have caught, and they will likely feast together, enjoying a meal as a community. Whether in an *iglu* or a prefabricated home, the practice remains the same. While the goal of the government may have been to eradicate most of the traditional practices of the Inuit through the adult education program, the presence of these practices in Pootoogook's drawings indicate the ongoing persistence of certain Inuit traditions in spite of these attempts. Although it is unwise to take Pootoogook's primarily autobiographical works as being indicative of a totalizing Inuit experience, her drawings do point towards recent attempts towards cultural resiliency and reclamation by the Inuit as they (finally) settle land claims and redefine the terms of Arctic Sovereignty within Canada.

When we consider the work of this new vanguard in relation to *Arctic Adaptations*, what emerges is the early signs of a better future. Although homelessness and inadequate housing remain an issue in Nunavut today, both of these separate bodies of work show an increasing consciousness about the need to provide culturally sensitive and functional housing to all families in Nunavut. This is a drastic shift from the reality of the Inuit just half a century ago, who were precluded from participation in discussions about their own lives on account of the fact that they were unjustly deemed to be incapable of brining anything meaningful to the discussion. While it is inconceivable that what the Government of Canada poorly began in 1965 still has no clear solution fifty years later, the possibility of change in the near future and the resurgence of tradition within the Inuit home is promising.

Figure 1. Alootook Ipellie, *Map of Canada*, n.d. Ink on paper, 10.25 x 7.5 inches. St. Lawrence University Art Collection.

Figure 2. John Collins, *Northern Lights*, November 1946. Source: Montreal Gazette.

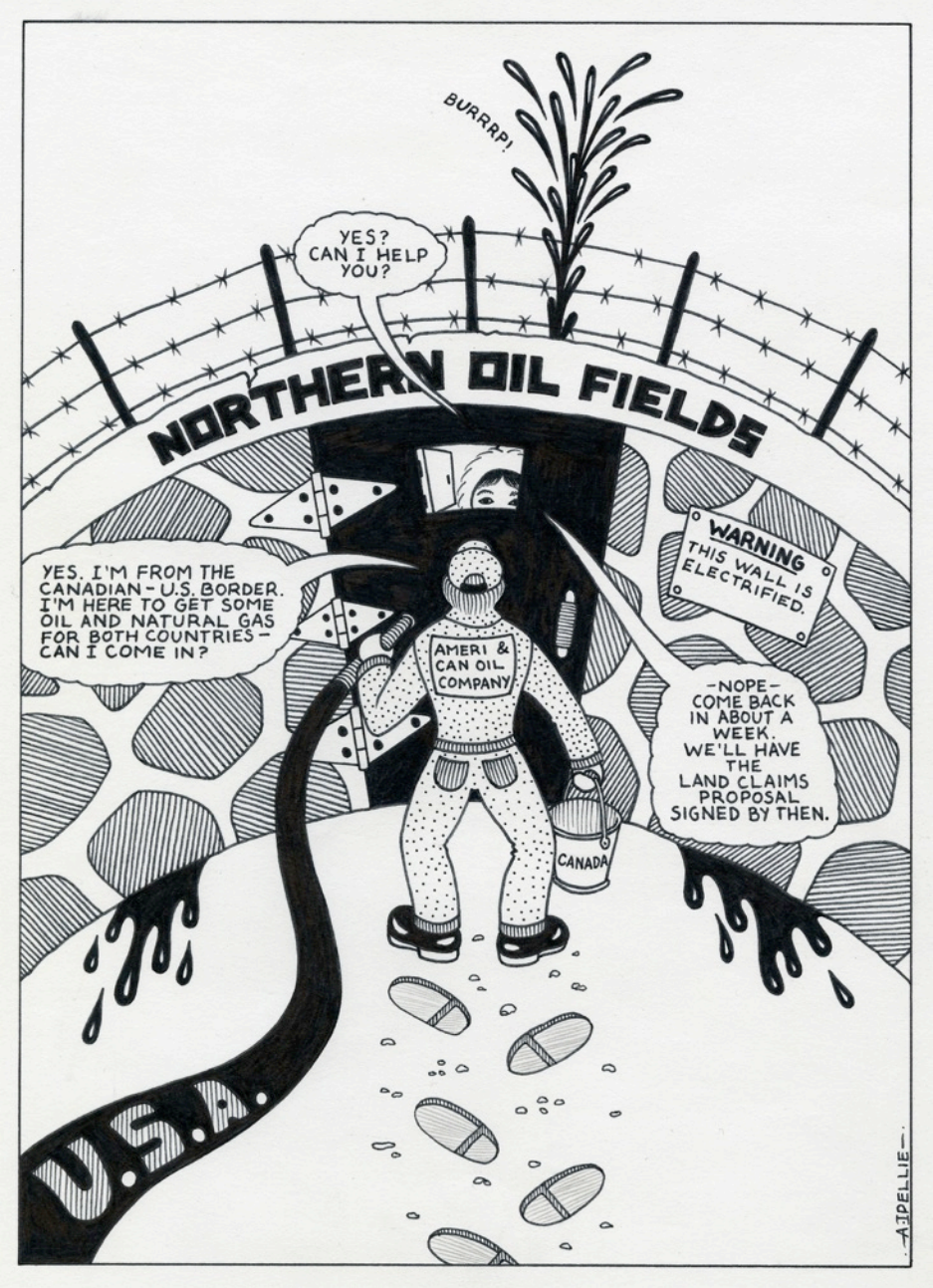

Figure 3. Alootook Ipellie, *Northern Oil Fields*, n.d. Ink on paper, 11.5 x 8.5 inches. St. Lawrence University Art Collection.

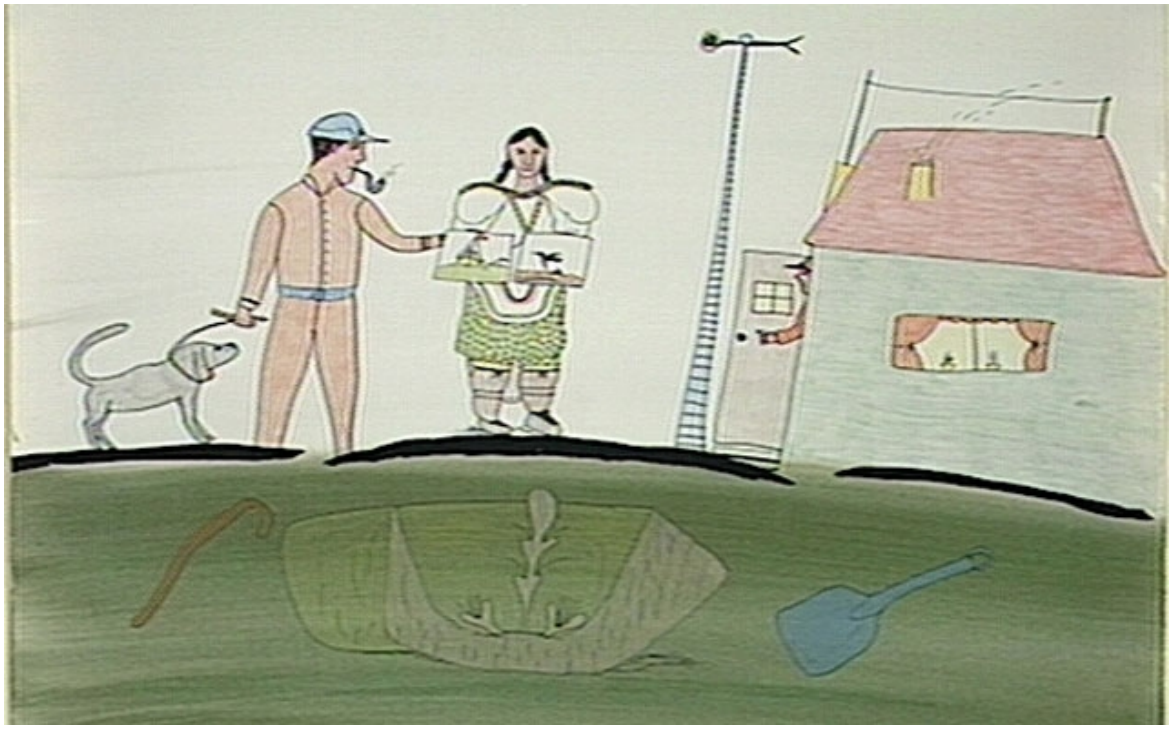

Figure 4. Napachie Pootoogook, *Untitled,* 1980-81. Colored pencil & Ink on paper. McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

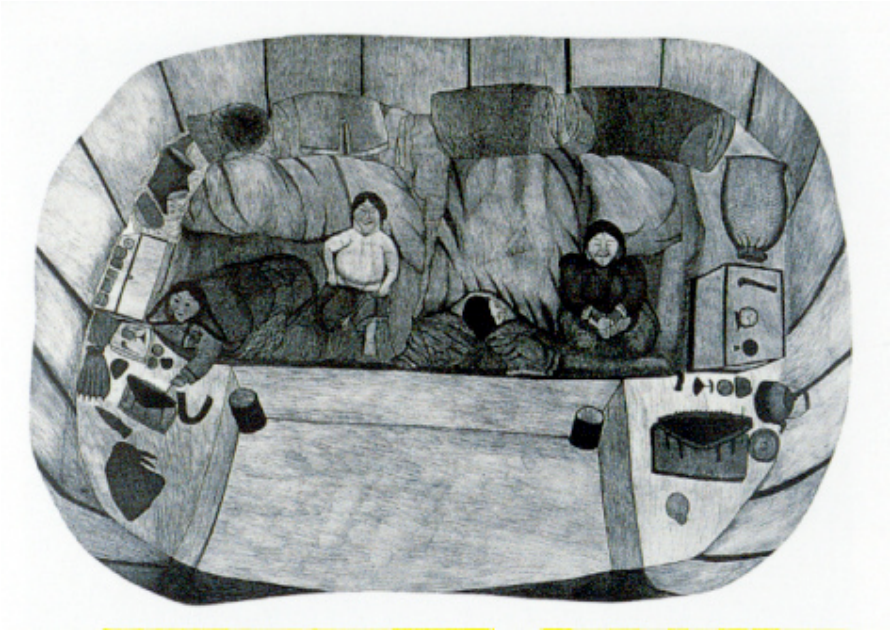

Figure 5. Napachie Pootoogook, *Interior View,* 1980. Lithograph & chine collé. 25.5 x 38 inches. Gallery Phillip.

Figure 6. Rosemary Gilliat, *Mackenzie Porter standing beside a Styrofoam igloo,* 1956-60. Film photograph. Library and Archives Canada, e10836042.

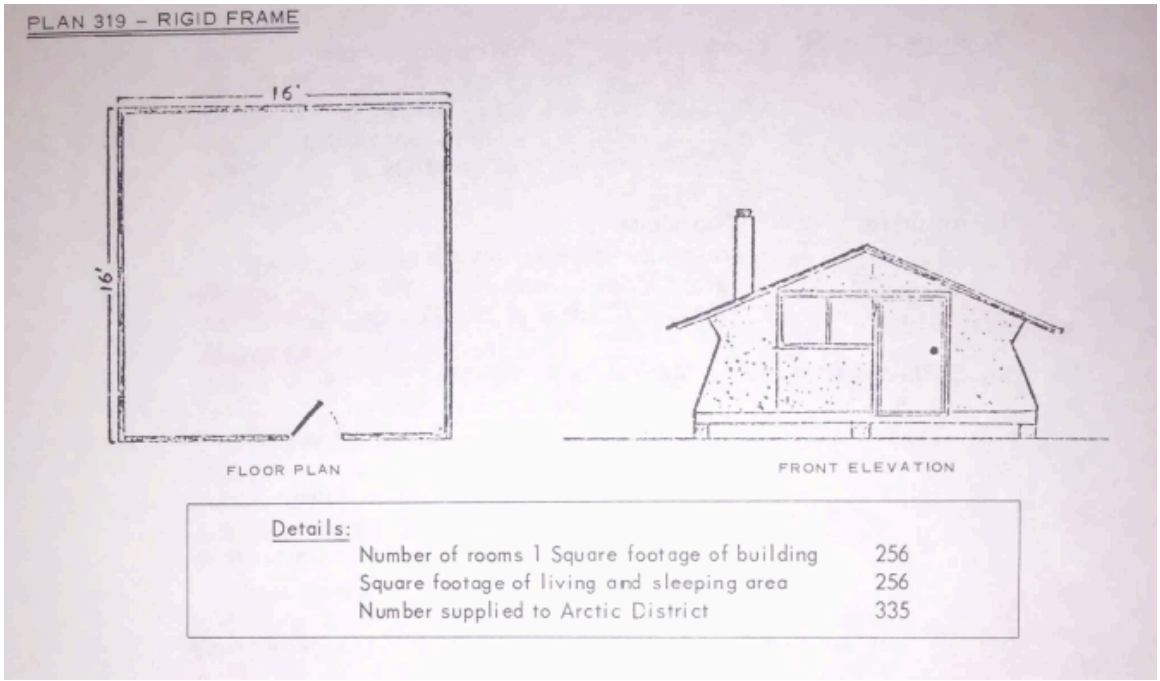

Figure 7. Plan for house form 319. Source: *Patterns of Housekeeping in Eskimo Settlements* (1960).

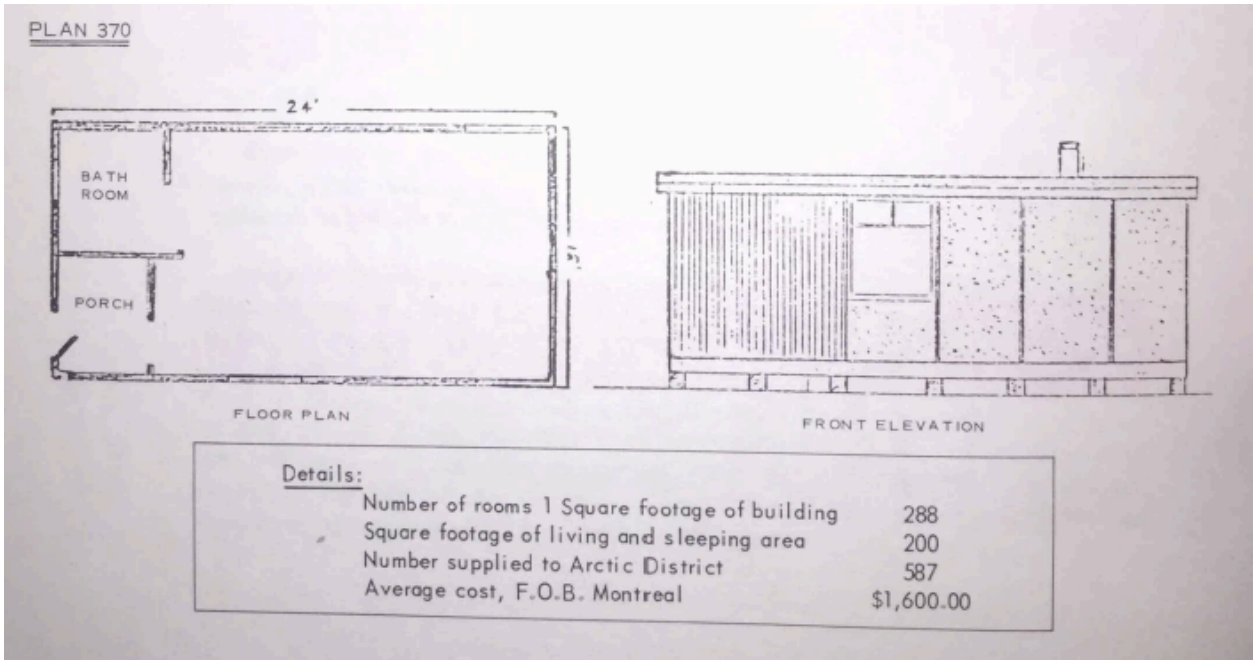

Figure 8. Plan for the *Illukallak* (also known as Plan 370). Source: *Patterns of Housekeeping in Eskimo Settlements* (1960).

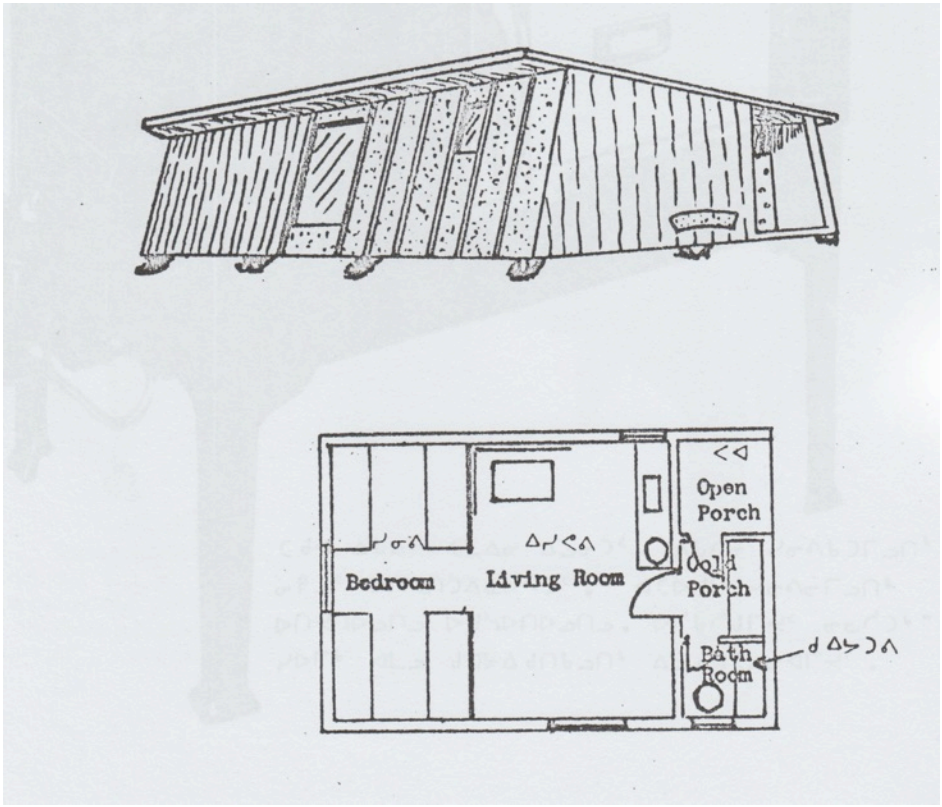

Figure 9. Plan for the *Angirraq*. Source: *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change* (1972).

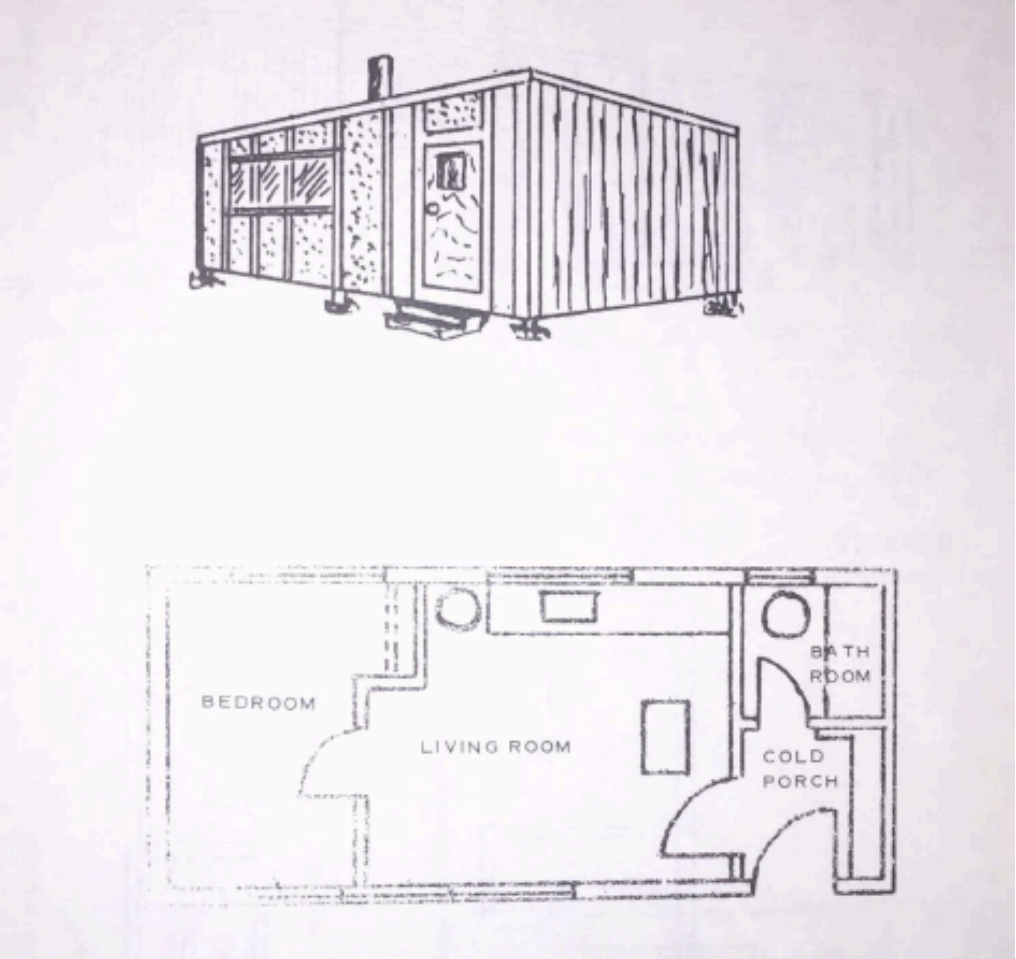

Figure 10. Plan for the *Tisi.* Source: *Patterns of Housekeeping in Eskimo Settlements* (1960).

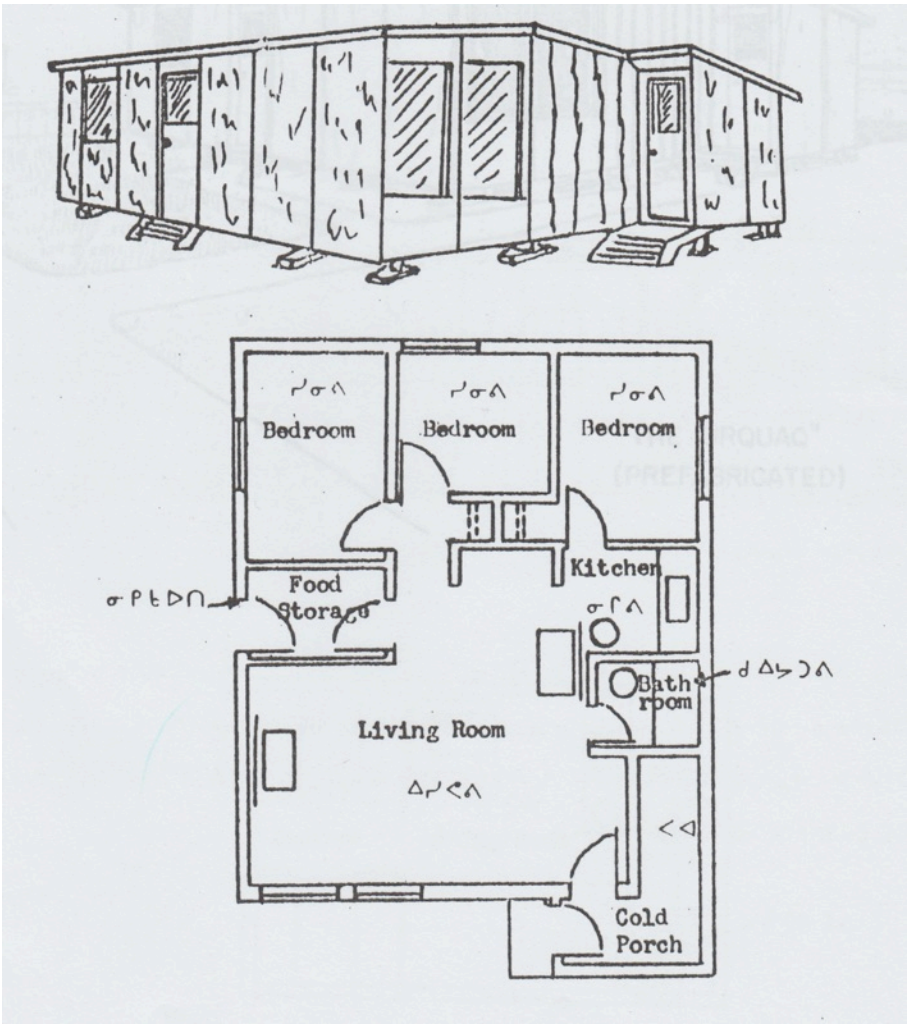

Figure 11. Plan for the *Urquaq*. Source: *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change* (1972).

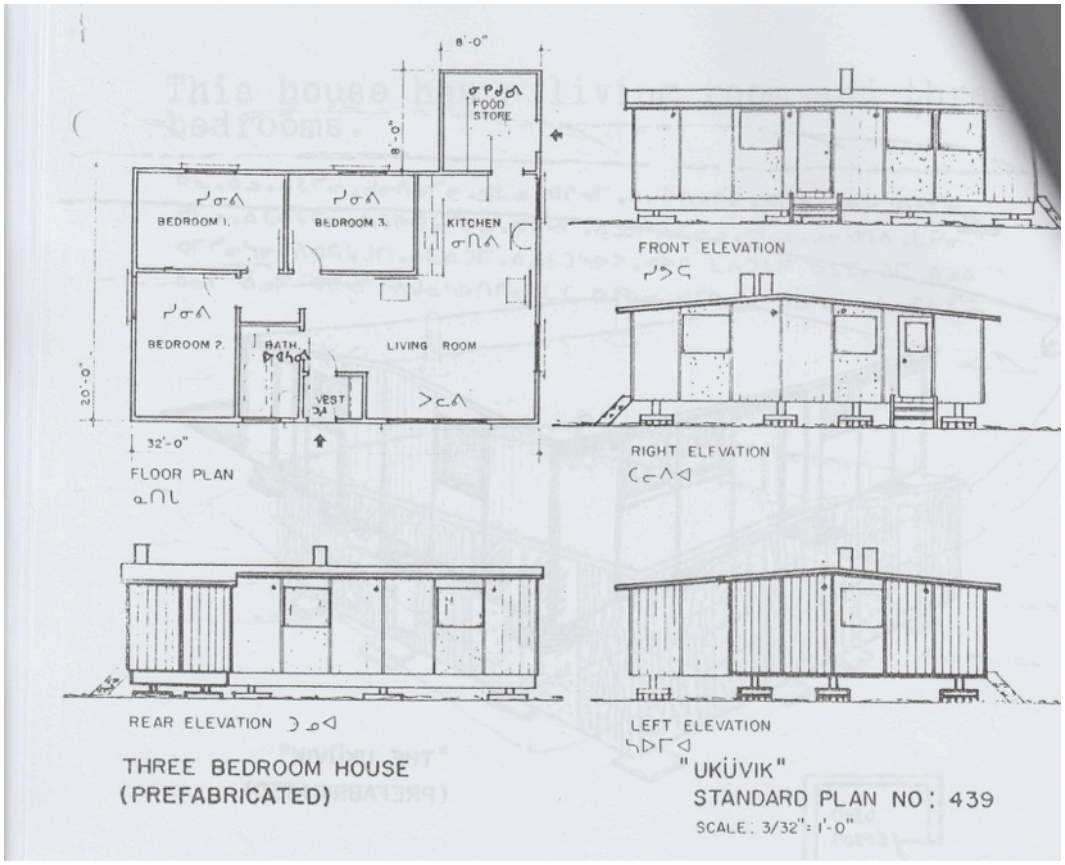

Figure 12. Plan for the *Ukuvik*. Source: *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change* (1972).

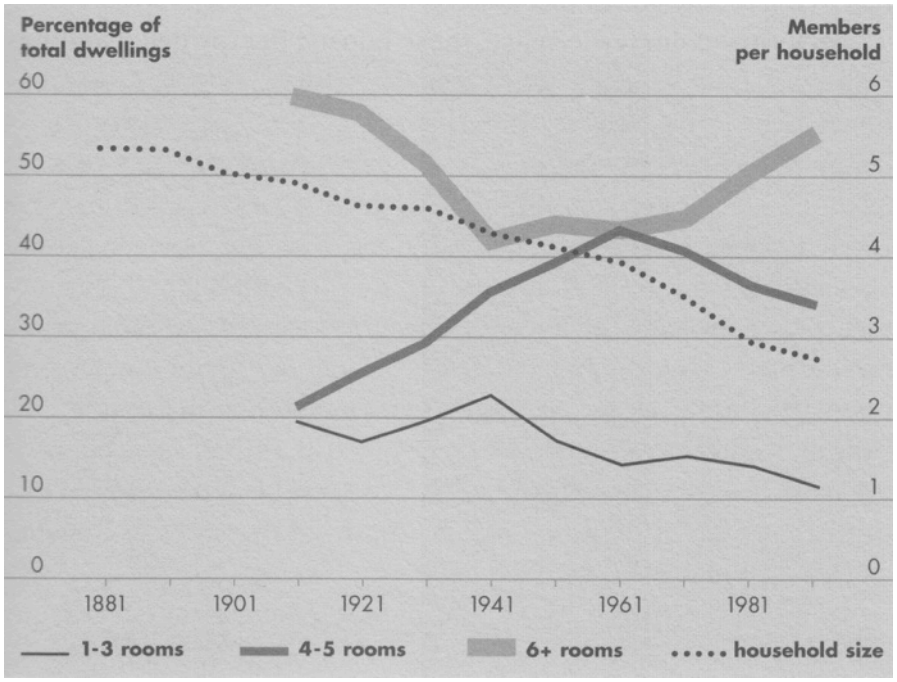

Figure 13. Members per household vs. room count. Source: *A History of Domestic Space: Privacy and the Canadian Home* (1999).

Figure 14. Evidence of frost and mould buildup in an Inuit home. Source: Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

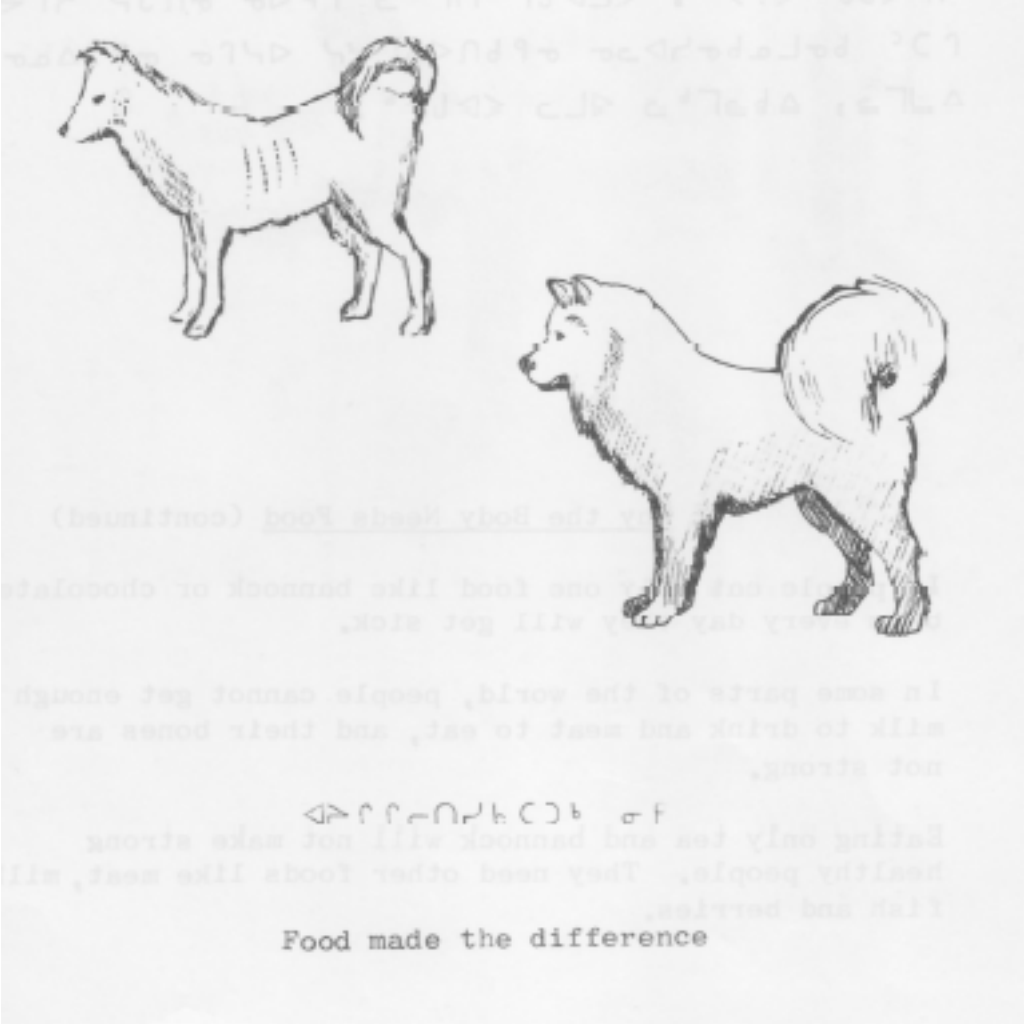

Figure 15. Illustration of an emaciated dog vs. a dog that has been given proper nutrition. Source: *Living in the New Houses* (1968).

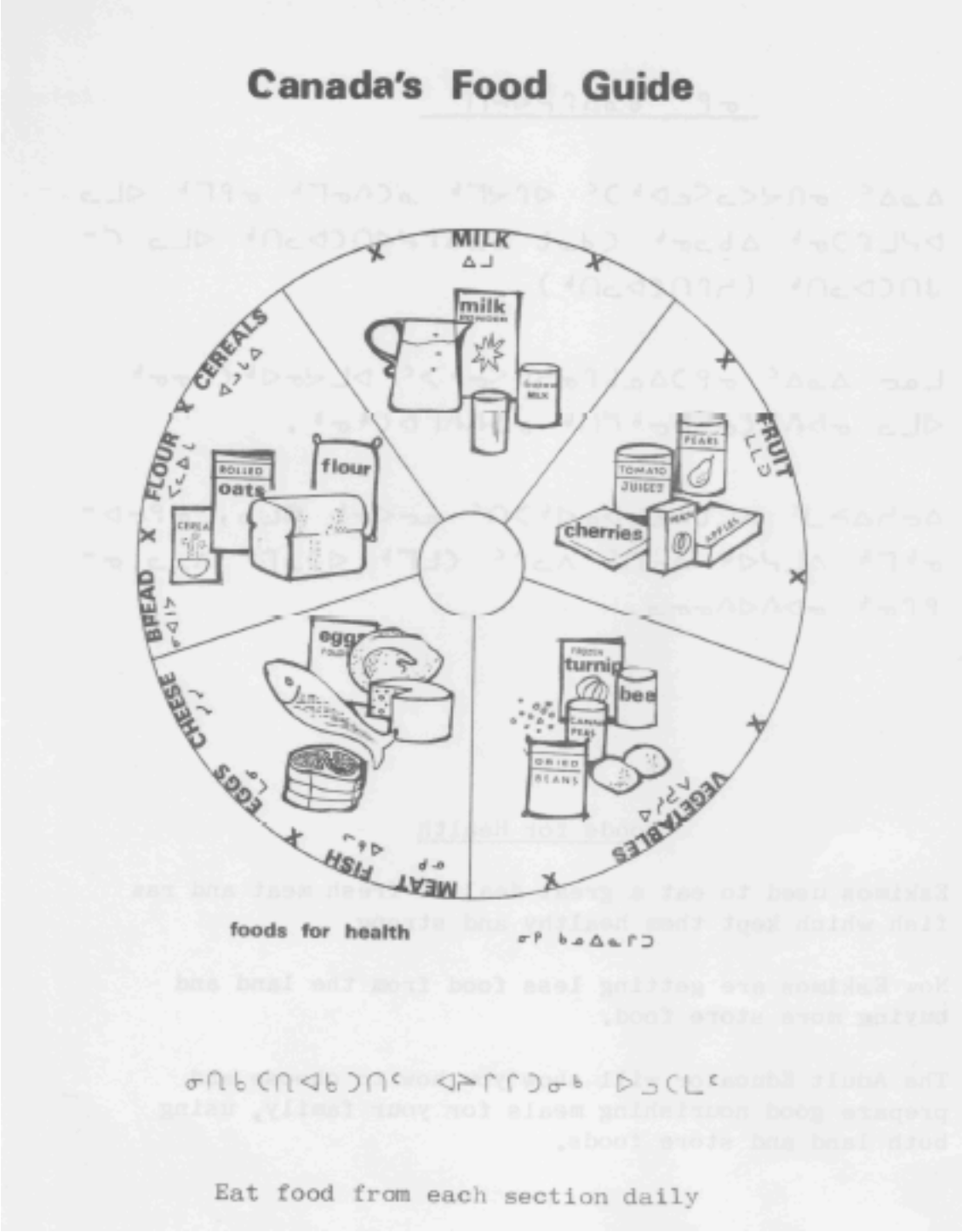

Figure 16. Canada's Food Guide, c. 1968. Source: *Living in the New Houses* (1968).

Figure 17. An illustration showing a woman shopping for food. Source: *Living in the New Houses* (1968).

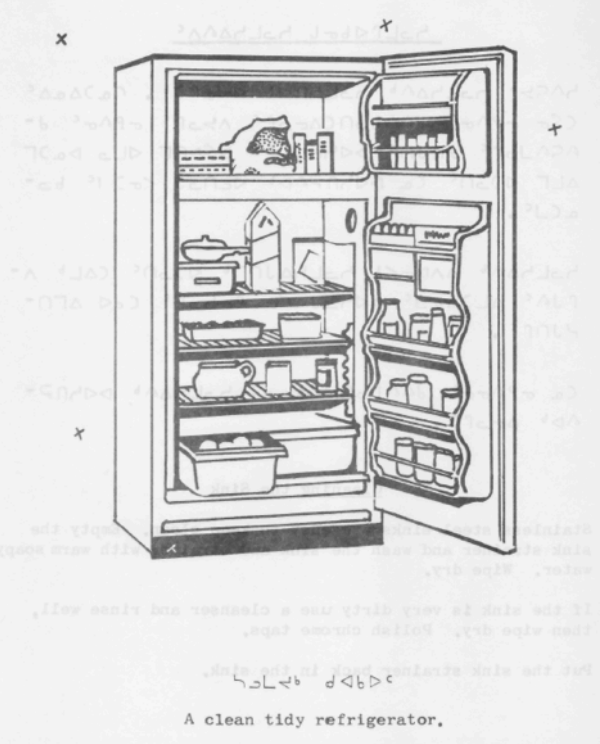

Figure 18. Illustration of the proper arrangement of a refrigerator. Source: *Care and Use of Household Equipment* (1967).

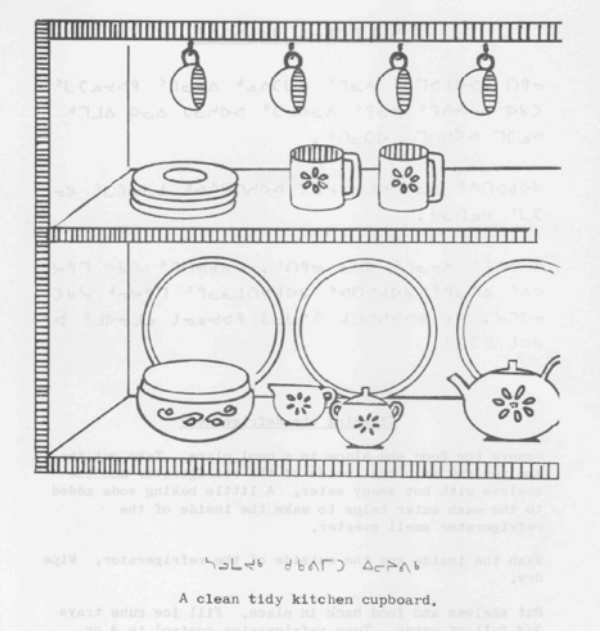

Figure 19. Illustration of the proper arrangement of dishware. Source: *Care and Use of Household Equipment* (1967).

Figure 20. Illustration about how to hang clothing to dry. Source: *Care and Use of Household Equipment* (1967).

Figure 21. A family dinner in which the parents, but particularly the father, is seated at the head of the table. Source: *Living in the New Houses* (1968).

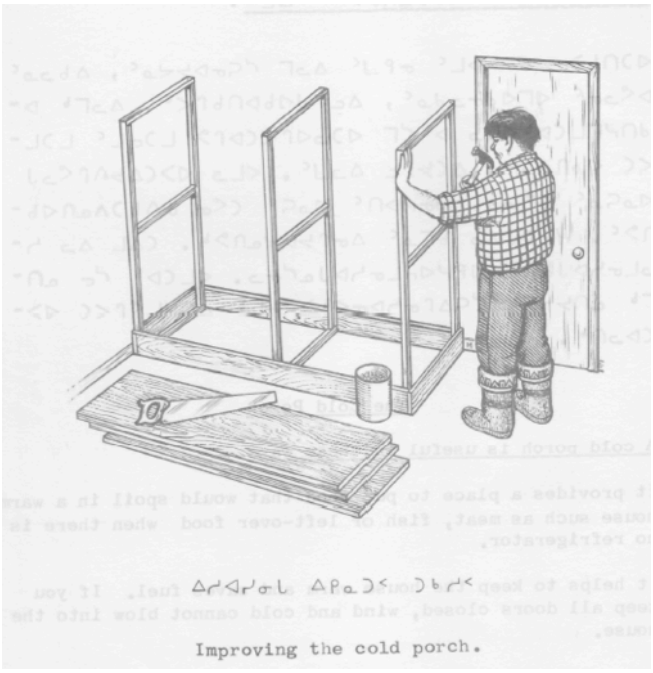

Figure 22. A father improving the cold porch of his home. Source: *Living in the New Houses* (1968).

Figure 23. An illustration showing the hazards of smoking in bed. Source: *Safety in the Houses* (1967).

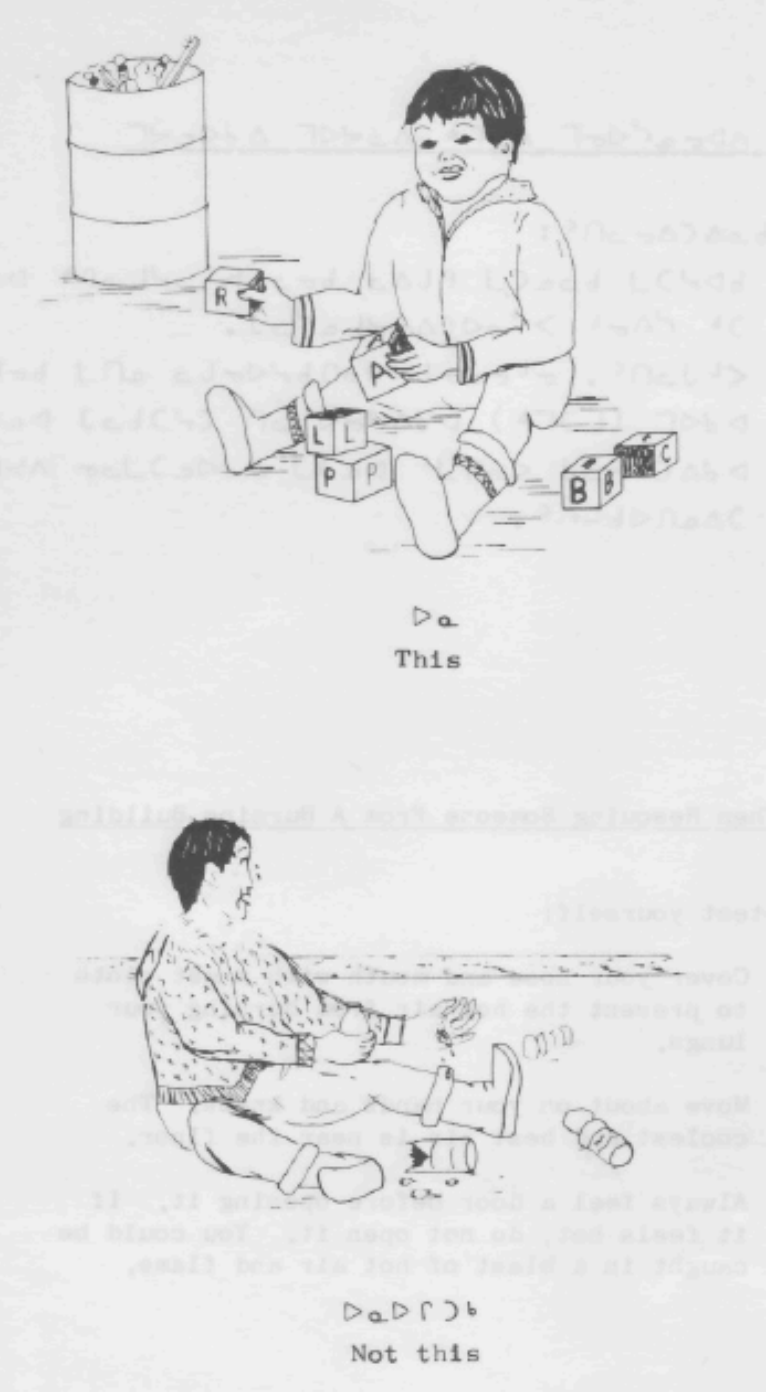

Figure 24. An illustration showing examples of toys for children to play with vs. the dangers of playing with garbage. Source: *Safety in the Houses* (1967).

Figure 25. Itee Pootoogook, *Window,* 2009. Coloured pencil & Ink on paper, 22 x 30 inches. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts.

Figure 26. Itee Pootoogook, *Bright Light Coming Through the Window,* 2009. Coloured pencil & Ink on paper. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts.

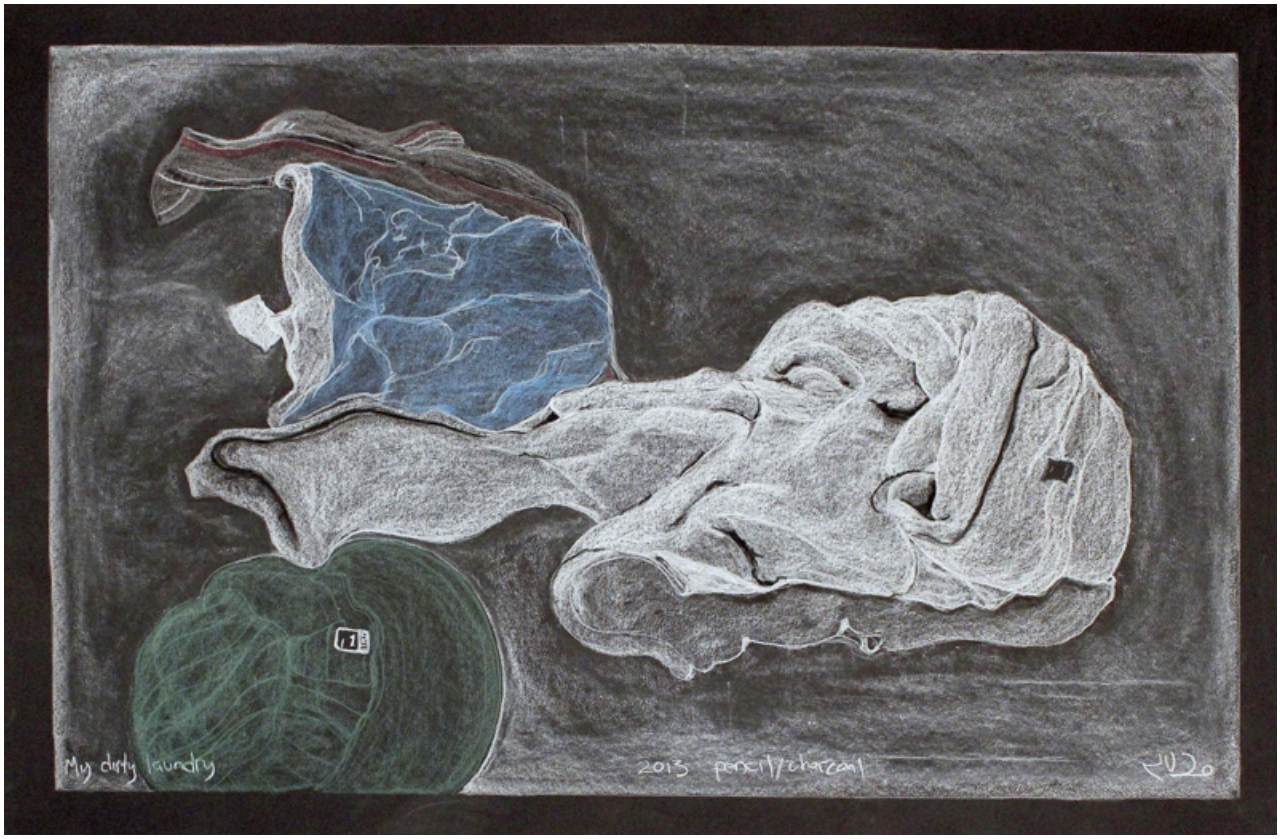

Figure 27. Jutai Toonoo, *My Dirty Laundry,* 2013. Charcoal & Coloured Pencil on paper, 33 x 40 inches. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts.

Figure 28. Oolooreak Etungat, *Three Decades Plus & Later! My Father Carving and Myself Drawing,* 2012. Pentel Pen, Graphite & Coloured Pencil on paper, 26 x 20 inches. Inuit Gallery of Vancouver.

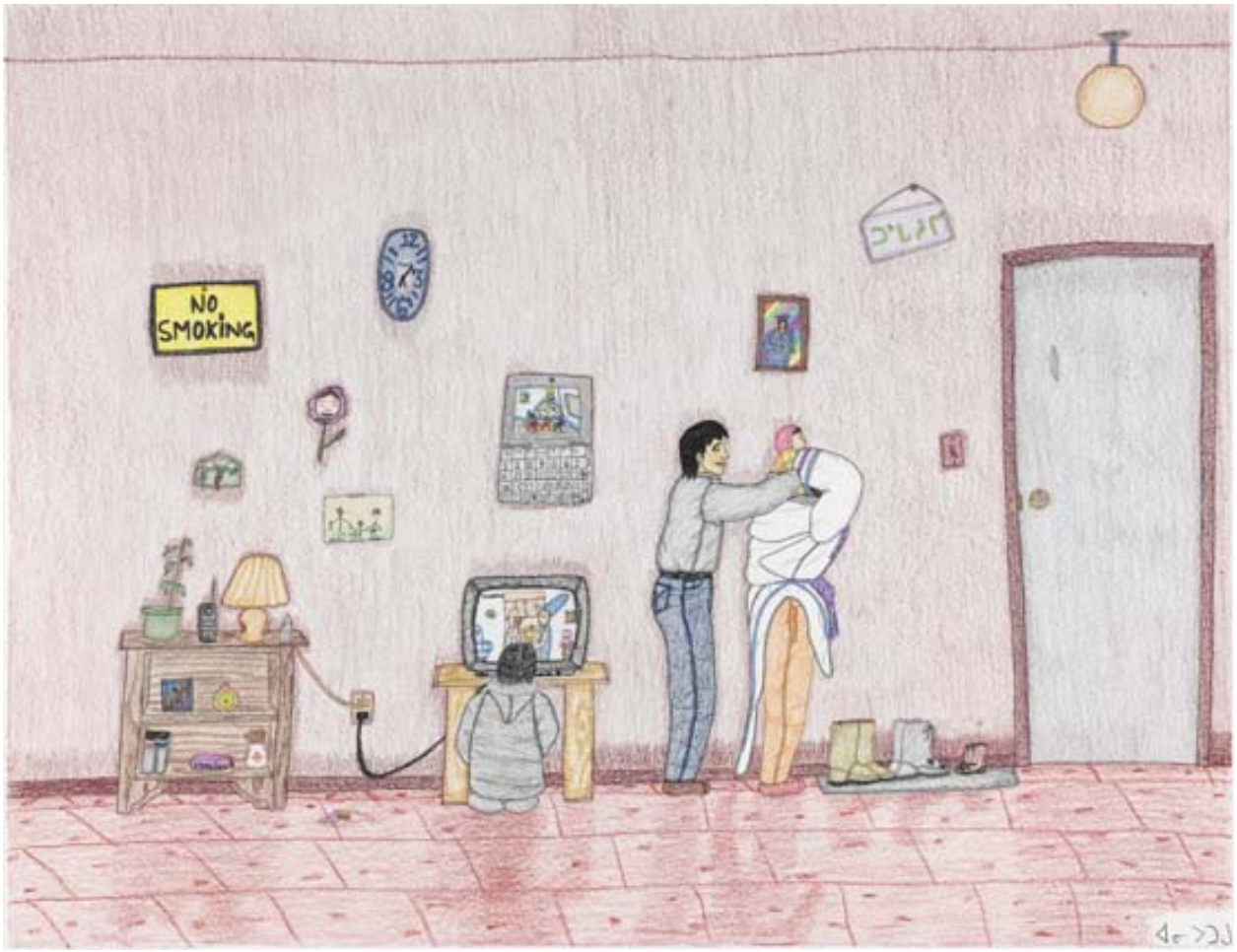

Figure 29. Annie Pootoogook, *Watching the Simpsons,* 2006. Felt marker & Coloured Pencil on paper. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts.

Figure 30. Annie Pootoogook, *Three Men Carving a Seal, Three Women Cleaning,* 2006. Pen & Coloured Pencil on paper, 20 x 26 inches. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts.

Bibliography

Archival Sources

Arthur Laing Fonds. N-1979-092. Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Correspondence, Eskimo Welfare Records. RG 7. Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg.

DIAND Fonds. G-1985-001. Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Northern Administration Branch Fonds. G-1979-003. Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Northern Affairs Branch Program Records. RG 85. National Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

Robert J. Orange Fonds. N-1990-021. Archives of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre.

Books

Aronsen, Lawrence and Martin Kitchen. *The Origins of the Cold War in Comparative Perspective.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988.

Atha, Christine. "Dirt and Disorder: Taste and Anxiety in the Homes of the British Working Class." In *Atomic Dwellings: Anxiety, Domesticity, and Postwar Architecture.* Edited by Robin Schuldenfrei, 207-226. New York: Routledge, 2012.

Benevisti, Eyal. *The International Law of Occupation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Caldwell, Nathaniel French. *Arctic Leverage: Canadian Sovereignty and Security*. New York: Praeger, 1990.

Coates, Ken P. et al, eds. *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North*. Markham: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008.

Cowan, Susan, ed. *We Don't Live in Snow Houses Now: Reflections of Arctic Bay*. Translated by Rhoda Innuksuk, Maudie Qitsualik and Lucy Marquand. Ottawa: Canadian Arctic Producers, 1976.

Damas, David. *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.

Donnels O'Malley, Lurana. "Catherine the Great's 'Rage aux Proverbes'." In *Eighteenth Century Russia: Papers from the VII International Conference of the Study Group on Eighteenth-Century Russia, Wittenburg 2004*. Edited by Roger Bartlett and Gabriella Lehmann-Carli, 91-101. Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 2007.

Duffy, R. Quinn. *The Road to Nunavut: The Progress of the Eastern Arctic Inuit Since the Second World War*. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988.

Grant, Shelagh D. *Polar Imperative: A History of Arctic Sovereignty in North America*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2010.

Haddow, Robert H. *Pavilions of Plenty. Exhibiting American Culture Abroad in the 1950s*. Washington, D.C. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

Marcus, Alan. "The Place With No Dawn: A Town's Evolution and Erskine's Arctic Utopia." In *Architecture and the Canadian Fabric*. Edited by Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, 283-310. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011.

Mauss, Marcel and Beuchat, Henri. *Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo: A Study in Social Morphology*. London/Boston: Routledge, 1979.

Scott, James C. *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

---, John Tehranian, and Jeremy Mathias. "Government Surnames and Legal Identities." In *National Identification Systems: Essays in Opposition*. Edited by Carl Watner and Wendy McElroy, 11-54. Jefferson: McFarland, 2004.

Sibley, David. *Geographies of Exclusion: Society and Difference in the West*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Ward, Peter. *A History of Domestic Space: Privacy and the Canadian Home*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999.

Wishart, Robert P. "Building a Home for Circumpolar Architecture, an Introduction." In *About the Hearth: Perspectives on the Home, Hearth and Household in the Circumpolar North*. Edited by David G. Anderson, Robert P. Wishart, and Virginie Vaté, 1-10. New York: Berghahn, 2013.

Dictionaries

Merriam Webster. "Potemkin Village." Accessed July 20, 2015. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/potemkin%20village.

Government Documents

Battle, Ken and Sherri Torriman. *Poverty and Prosperity in Nunavut*. Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2013.

Bonesteel, Sarah. *Canada's Relationship with the Inuit: A History of Policy and Program Development*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2006.

Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. *Eskimo Rental Housing Program: General Information Second Interim Report.* Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. 1967.

Hellyer, Hon. Paul and Hon. Lucien Cardin. *White Paper on Defence.* Ottawa: Department of National Defence. March 1964.

Needham, G.H.. *Living in New Houses*. Ottawa: DIAND, 1968.

---. *Rent for Houses.* Ottawa: DIAND, 1968.

Thomas, D.K. and C.T. Thompson. *Eskimo Housing as Planned Culture Change*. Ottawa: Information Canada, 1972.

Thompson, Charles Thomas. *Patterns of Housekeeping in Two Eskimo Settlements.* Ottawa: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1969.

Journal Articles

Centers, Richard, Bertram H. Raven, and Aroldo Rodriguez. "Conjugal Power Structure: A Re-Examination." *American Sociological Review* 36 (Apr. 1971): 264-278.

Davies, Lorraine and Patricia Jane Carrier, "The Importance of Power Relations for the Division of Household Labour." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 24 (1999): 35-51.

Dawson, Peter C. "Seeing Like an Inuit Family: The Relationship Between House Form and Culture in Canada." *Études/Inuit/Studies* 30 (2006): 113-135.

Lauster, Nathanel and Frank Tester. "Culture as a Problem in Linking Material Inequality to Health: On Residential Overcrowding in the Arctic," *Health & Place* 16 (2010): 523-530.

Robson, Robert. "Housing in the Northwest Territories: The Post-War Vision." *Urban History Review vol. XXIV*, 1 (October 1995): 3-20.

Suri, Jeremy. "The Cold War, Decolonization, and Global Social Awakenings: Historical Intersections." *Cold War History* 6 (August 2006): 353-363.

Williamson, Laakkuluk Jessen. "Inuit gender parity and why it was not accepted in the Nunavut legislature." *Études/Inuit/Studies* 30 (2006): 51-68.

Legal Documents

Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Aug. 12, 1949, 6 U.S.T. 3316, 75 U.N.T.S. 135.

Re: Eskimos [1939]. S.C.R. 104. http://caid.ca/EskDec1939.pdf.

Newspaper & Magazine Articles

Author unknown. "Arctic Sovereignty: Canada Ownership of Polar Islands Tacitly Recognized." *Montreal Star*. August 8, 1958.

Phillips, Robert A.J.. "Slum Dwellers of the Wide Open Spaces," *Weekend Magazine* 15 (1959): 20-25.

Silcove, Basil. "Eskimos Find Plastic Igloos Better than Snow Houses." *The Age*. September 9, 1960.

Websites

Assu, Sonny. "The Happiest Future." Accessed July 23, 2015. http://sonnyassu.com/pages/the-happiest-future.