

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

AN

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROSPECTUS FOR AN

ANTHROPOLOGY OF PLANNING:

APPLICATIONS TO NATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BY

SALLY DAVIDSON

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ABSTRACT

This thesis was written with two overall objectives in mind:

1. to trace the historical development of native community planning in the province of Manitoba, in order to determine the issues and forces involved, the planning processes presently utilized and whether the situation has progressed to the point where the issues are being satisfactorily dealt with;
2. to illustrate how valuable extensive interdisciplinary co-operation between anthropology and planning can be by creating an 'anthropology of planning' --a prospectus which proposes ways in which creation of cultural understanding can be of use in facilitating communication between a planner and his native clients.

Research for this topic was difficult to compile, as there are few published sources which deal directly with native community planning. Data was collected through an intensive interdisciplinary literature review, personal interviews with several planners and government officials, and field observation in three northern Manitoba settlements.

The results of the research indicate that native community planning has not been successful in many respects. It is suggested here that a lack of understanding of native culture by Euro-Canadian planners is one of the major problems. It is further contended that use of anthropological data and techniques is the best means by which to create cultural understanding, thus improving communication between planner and client and resulting in more effective planning.

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Man must now embark on the difficult journey beyond culture, because the greatest separation feat of all is when one manages to gradually free oneself from the grip of unconscious culture (Hall, 1977: 240).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

Over the past several years development in the northern regions of Canada has greatly affected the lives of the several thousand native peoples living there. This development, accompanied by the gradual rise of social awareness by Canadians, has led to new interest in the north and its inhabitants, and one denouement of this situation has been the introduction of community development and planning programs for native communities. This thesis will examine these efforts with the following questions in mind:

1. How has this type of activity evolved in the province of Manitoba?
2. What are the problems and issues associated with planning for native communities?
3. Have the planning efforts to date been of value towards the alleviation of these issues?
4. How can these activities be improved so as to benefit the native peoples of the north?

There are several critical issues associated with life in the north. Many of these are perhaps particularly crucial to the native populations. These issues include: unemployment in all native settlements is extremely high; social problems such as alcoholism, gasoline sniffing and violence are common; health problems, which are prevalent, are often related to poor water supply and overcrowded living conditions; the winter climate is harsh and

most of the housing is not suitable to withstand it; prices for most goods are high; the heavy reliance on welfare, combined with all the other problems, has produced a high level of anomie and depression. While these issues, and others, are not totally related to planning, it is suggested here that many of the initial planning efforts carried out in Manitoba's northern native settlements served to aggravate an already problematical situation somewhat because they were not carried out in a manner compatible with the climate, the lifestyle of the people or the environment. One suggested reason for this, and a major issue around which this thesis will revolve, is the apparent lack of effective communication between all parties involved.

It should be noted at this point that although communication has been identified as that particular component of planning to be dealt with here, it is only one element of several which are integral to an overall planning process. Any planning exercise must incorporate certain basic elements-- among them goal identification, methodology, alternatives, strategy and implementation--and good communication between the parties involved is only one of these necessary components.* Several authors have supported the notion that good communication is a critical element of planning (i.e. Jantsch, 1975; Lash, 1976; Long (no date); Rettie, 1968; Saarinen, 1976). Saarinen (1976: 13) notes an important point with relevance to this thesis when he says that "we must learn to recognize the limitations communication systems impose" upon people. Lash (1976: 10) also stresses the importance

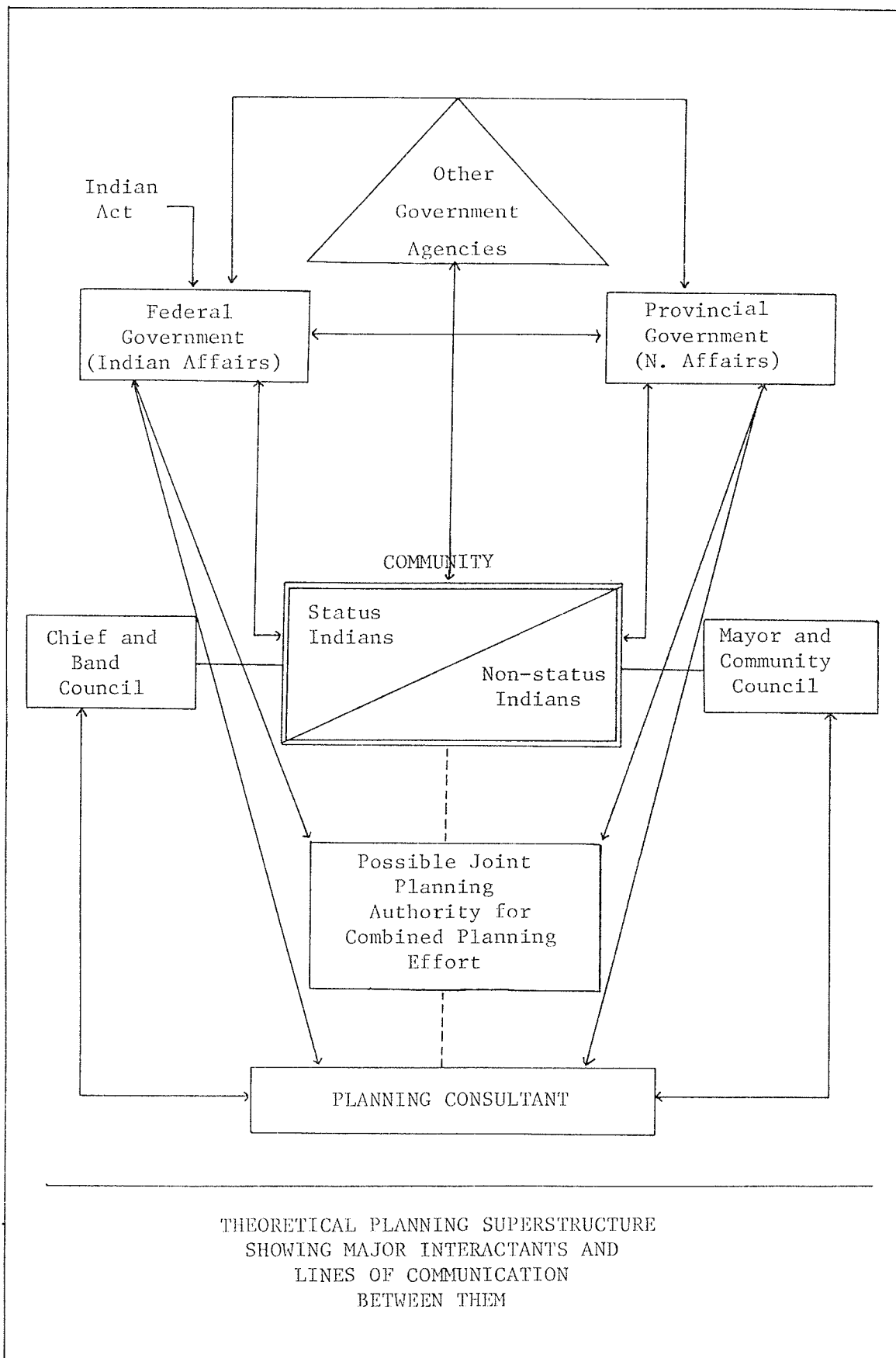
*Several sources are available which discuss the elements of planning. Among those reviewed by this author include: Catanese and Steiss, 1968; Driver, 1968; Friedmann, 1973; Gertler, 1972; Jantsch, 1975; Lash, 1976; Saarinen, 1976; Sarly, 1972).

of communication when he suggests that planning will have to "come to depend more on human relations in the process of arriving at decisions than it will on the planner's science and art of preparing plans." It is in this direction that the present thesis will proceed--the basic contention is that cultural understanding is necessary if the communication link between Euro-Canadian planners and native peoples is to be strengthened.

Communication problems seem to exist at virtually every level of interaction within the overall native community planning process. As can be noted in Figure I (page 4), there are several groups and individuals involved, each of whom may perceive a given situation in a different manner. This illustration shows many of the major interactants who may be tied in to the planning process--each arrow represents potential interaction between parties. It is not difficult to conceive of communication problems when one considers the vast range of participants and institutions involved. Diversity occurs not only in a functional and a structural sense, but also on a personal level and a jurisdictional level. The following examples indicate only a sample of some of the conflicts which frequently arise:

1. The federal and provincial government representatives sometimes clash over areas of jurisdiction;
2. There are often intra-settlement hostilities such as jealousies between status Indians (under federal jurisdiction) and non-status peoples (under provincial jurisdiction) over differential treatment;
3. There are language and cultural barriers between the natives and Euro-Canadians, which makes communication between the two groups very difficult;
4. There is often ethnocentricity on all sides, and this, coupled with a

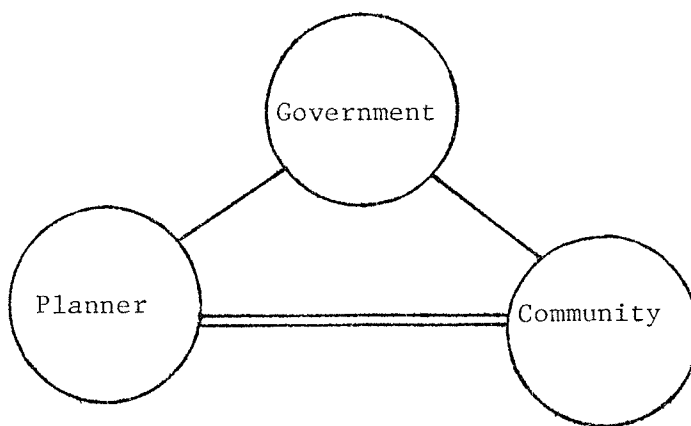
Figure 1: The Major Interactants in the Planning Process



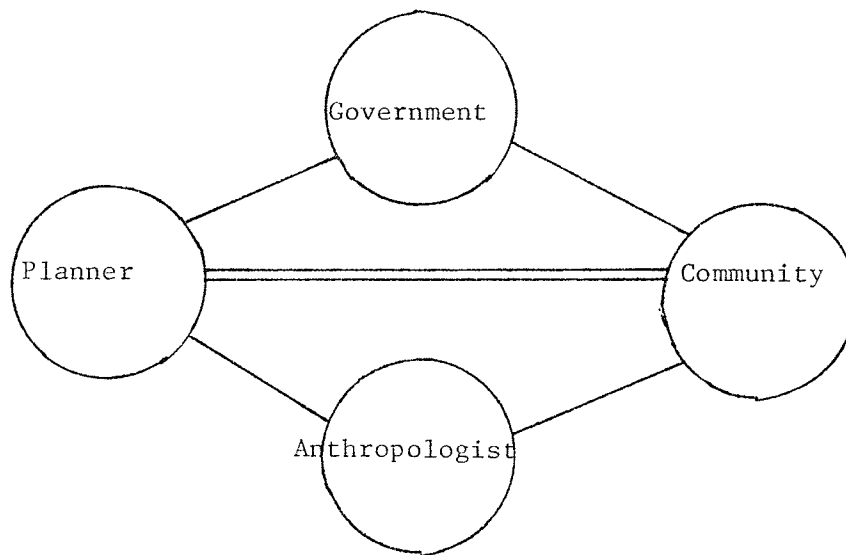
lack of knowledge and understanding all around, severely hinders communication.

B. Purpose and Objectives

Given the vast scope of the communication issues related to native community planning, this writer has chosen to examine only one of the links within the overall framework--the critical one between the planner and the native community--and to propose the creation of an additional communication link which will help to bridge the gap between the two by creating cultural understanding. Generally speaking, it can be noted that there are three major lines of communication important to any native community planning effort: those linking the government, the planning consultant and the community. This relationship may be diagrammed as follows:



The double line shows the bridge towards which this thesis will be directed. The major objective of this investigation is to build an additional communication link--one between the planner and the anthropologist--in order to demonstrate how the two fields can and must come together to form a new prospectus. This proposed interdisciplinary prospectus may be called an 'anthropology of planning,' and the new communication link may be diagrammed like this:



Ultimately, this thesis represents an attempt to both define and operationalize an 'anthropology of planning' prospectus, so that the findings can be put to use in an actual native community planning situation. This research will hopefully begin to build a communication link between the discipline of anthropology, with its traditional emphasis on the study of native peoples, and the pragmatic realities encountered by planners, in order to ultimately strengthen the critical link between planners and their native clients. The fundamental precept of the paper may be further clarified as follows: through anthropology, cultural understanding can be created; through cultural understanding, communication can be facilitated; with improved communication, more effective planning will result.

C. Methodology

Planning for native communities is a relatively recent activity and very little data is available in published form. To gather material for this thesis, it was necessary to employ several methodologies: 1) a comprehensive literature review; 2) field research in three native communities in northern Manitoba; 3) interviews with planners; 4) serendipity. Perhaps the last has proven to be the most fruitful; serendipity means an apparent

aptitude for making fortunate discoveries accidentally. In dealing with an amorphous topic such as the one at hand, data collected in this manner has been most helpful.

The extensive literature review does not follow any one discipline, but rather extends across broad boundaries into anthropology, environmental psychology, planning theory, legislation, general system theory and several other areas.

The field research consisted of one-week surveys of each of three northern Manitoba communities--God's Lake Narrows, Norway House and Moose Lake. Each of these is presently in a different stage of development; Moose Lake was subdivided during the 1960's; God's Lake Narrows is presently involved in a comprehensive planning process; Norway House is a large and relatively diverse community (population approximately 3,500) which has experienced sporadic development and piecemeal planning and which is presently hoping to begin comprehensive planning. This fieldwork, even though it was not as intensive or lengthy as may have been ideally desirable, proved extremely valuable. Several problems associated with development and with the planning process were identified which could not have been discovered by any other means.

Interviews with several planners working in the area of native community planning provided much of the data for this study. These interviews were conducted on an iterative basis with the planning consultants hired by the Band and Community Councils and the government planners employed by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the provincial Department of Northern Affairs. The purpose of these interviews was to identify: those issues which the planners feel are of major concern,

how they respond to the issues in terms of their planning processes and what were their assessments and evaluations regarding the question 'Are the issues being dealt with, and why or why not?'

On the basis of a synthesis of the information derived from all of the above sources it is hoped that the author will be able to trace the evolution of the planning process, identify the major issues and elucidate upon ways in which anthropology can potentially contribute to the improvement of the situation.

D. Terms of Reference

Some of the key terms in this thesis may be ambiguous and therefore the following definitions are provided to clarify how they will be used here.

1. Anthropology--the study of man, including the sub-fields of archaeology, cultural anthropology, linguistics and physical anthropology.
2. Community--"an aggregate of people holding shared beliefs and values" (Friedmann, 1973: 6).
3. Culture--the distinct order of phenomena, namely those things and events that are dependent upon the exercise of a mental ability, particular to the human species, that has been termed 'symboling.' Culture is composed of material objects, acts, beliefs and attitudes that function in contexts characterized by symboling (White, 1964: 363).
4. Prospectus--a statement outlining the main features of a new field of endeavour.
5. Settlement--a contiguous living area consisting of an aggregate of dwellings, buildings and the physical elements related to the everyday lives of the people residing there. The difference between community and settlement can be expressed in an example: a native settlement, such as God's

Lake Narrows, actually consists of two distinct communities--the status and non-status--who reside in different sections of the settlement.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF NATIVE COMMUNITY

PLANNING IN MANITOBA

The purpose of this chapter is to compile data from a wide array of sources in order to trace some of the major events which have occurred over the past twenty years and affected the evolution of native community development and planning in Manitoba. The events and trends discussed are not exhaustive, but rather provide only a basic framework of the time period in question. Native community planning in the present (Stage IV--see Chapter IV) is not fully comprehensible unless viewed as the continually evolving product of those events which precluded its development.

A. First Stage: Community Development and Early Planning Efforts of the 1960's

There are several native settlements in Manitoba, ranging from those of the Sioux in the southwest, to those of the Saulteaux and Cree in central and northern areas, to the small populations of Chippewyan in the far north (see Figure II, page 11). Most of these are located on Indian reserves, the boundaries of which were established as a result of treaty land settlements made between Indian Bands/Tribes and the Government of Canada. Status Indians--those who fall under the aegis of the Indian Act (1876) and are thus recognized by the federal government--live on these reserves in communities of varying sizes. Very often these settlements will also include a population of non-status

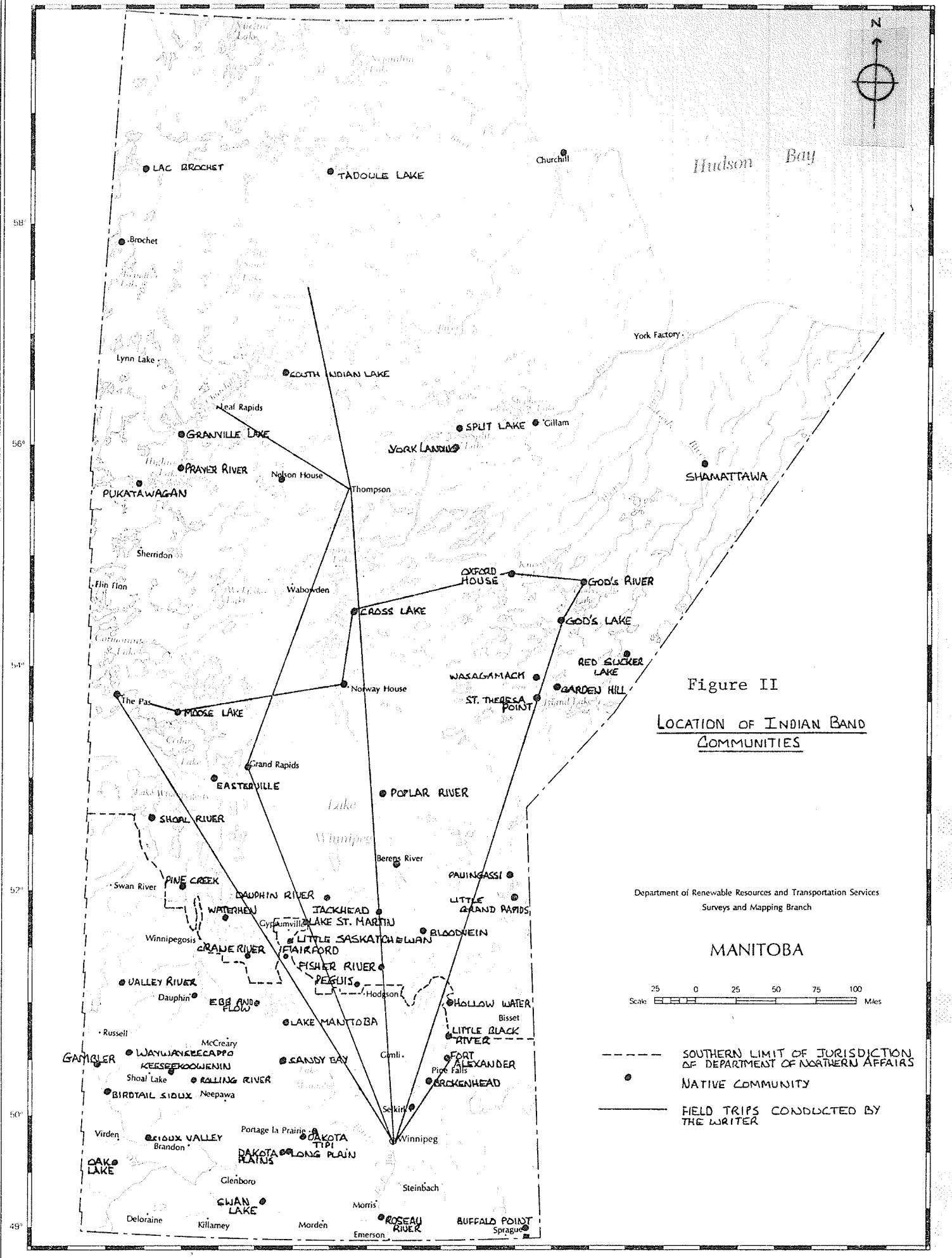
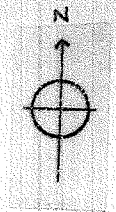
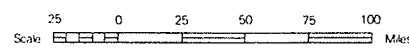


Figure II
LOCATION OF INDIAN BAND COMMUNITIES

Department of Renewable Resources and Transportation Services
Surveys and Mapping Branch

MANITOBA



- SOUTHERN LIMIT OF JURISDICTION OF DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AFFAIRS
- NATIVE COMMUNITY
- FIELD TRIPS CONDUCTED BY THE WRITER

natives (Métis, enfranchised Indians); these people do not live on reserve land unless granted permission to do so by the Band, but rather on adjacent non-reserve property under the auspices of the provincial government. There are also native communities not associated with reserves, such as Manigotagan (a Metis settlement) and South Indian Lake (a group of status Indians who moved away from a reserve). Virtually all native communities include a small population of Euro-Canadians, most of whom are transient and are engaged in civil service, church work, merchandising or teaching.

Most of the native communities in Canada were paid relatively little attention by the governments, the media and the general public during the years preceding the late 1950's. In the ensuing twenty years this situation has changed a great deal. One of the factors leading to this changed attitude was the opening of several new northern industrial towns beginning in the 1930's and 1940's. For instance, mining was initiated at Flin Flon in 1930, and later in Snow Lake (1949), Lynn Lake (1953) and Thompson (1960). The Pas grew as a regional trade center and has lately become a major center for forestry. Churchill expanded through governmental activities and research functions. Gillam and other towns have expanded through hydro development. As the vast potential of the north came to be realized, and development proceeded at an ever-increasing rate, the indigenous native population came into closer contact with the industrialized world of southern Canada. By the mid-1950's, Indian and Metis groups, because of their increasing exposure to the Euro-Canadian lifestyle, had begun to put pressure on the government for better housing. In 1956 the Manitoba legislature passed a