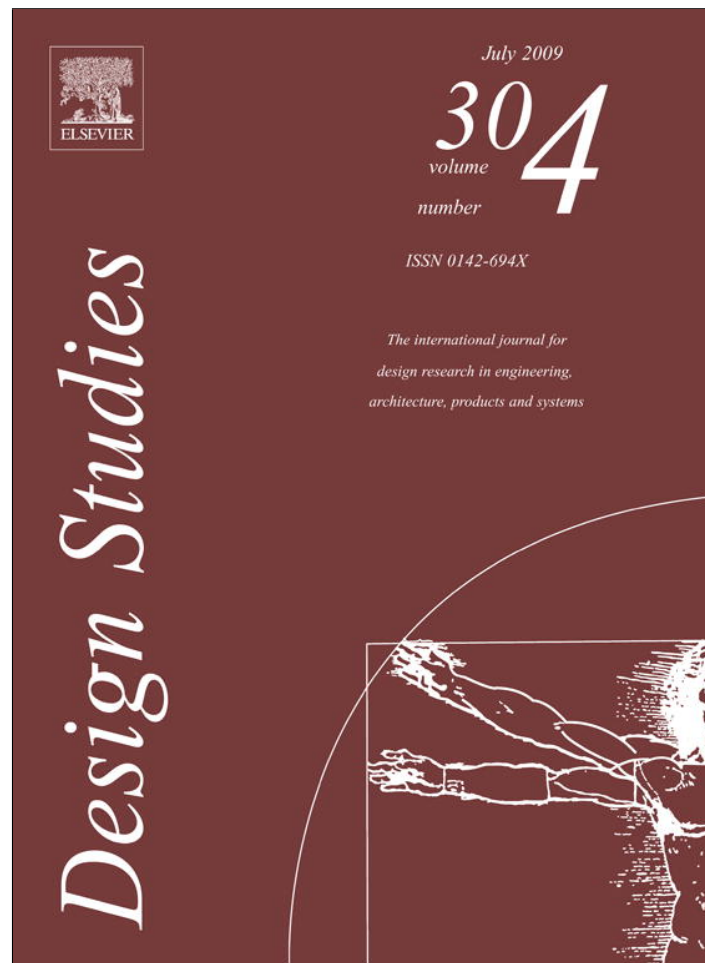


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Re/claiming the past—constructing Ojibwe identity in Minnesota homes

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Interviews with 13 Minnesota Ojibwe families in their homes shed light on how domestic spaces can support or suppress efforts to restore social, cultural, spiritual, and temporal continuity. Having lost their past to forced relocation, assimilation, and discriminatory policies, Ojibwe are employing visual and performative cultural expressions like the display of Native objects, craft making, spirituality, traditional foods and eating patterns, and strong family and community connections to re/claim what was lost and to construct their Ojibwe identity. With an understanding of how homes mediate continuity with the past, designers can create culturally sensitive housing solutions that support well-being.

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Both history and the present are rife with examples of cultural groups whose pasts have been lost. Studies of displacement and forced assimilation have long pointed to how detrimental these can be to cultural identity and in turn to mental, emotional, and physical well-being (Bammer, 1994; Adler, 1995; Papadopoulos et al., 2004)—in fact, the effects of losing one's cultural connections and sense of continuity, which describes a relationship to an environment over time and ideas about permanence, stability, and familiarity (Hayward, 1977), can carry forward through generations (Hadjiyanni, 2002). As a result, many studies have called for policies and programs that assist displaced people in re/claiming lost pasts and in re/invigorating cultural identity definitions (Shryock and Abraham, 2000).

Limited work though has been done to better understand the role of domestic spaces in re/claiming the past. Given the diverse American cultural landscape and the steady numbers in refugee and other displaced groups, understanding how minorities use the spaces they live in to create temporal continuity, one that nourishes connections between the past, present, and future, has both theoretical and practical implications for the design fields. Answers to questions such as: 'How do homes mediate the reconstruction of the past?', 'Which

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activities do they support and which do they suppress in the process?', and 'What are the implications of the dynamic among design, culture, and identity under conditions of displacement for how notions like home, gender, and community are constructed?' can inform conceptual and programmatic decisions surrounding housing design. Designers who are cognizant of how the built environment relates to culture and identity can create spaces that ease people's lives, meet diverse needs, and support varying ways of living, i.e. culturally sensitive housing (Hadjiyanni, 2005; Hadjiyanni and Robinson, 2005; Hadjiyanni, 2007). This paper's purpose is to explore the above questions and start a dialogue around culturally sensitive housing.

Much of the theoretical framework behind culturally sensitive housing stems from anthropological discourses which position domestic spaces as cultural mediums both impacting and being impacted by culture and identity (Duncan, 1981; Low and Chambers, 1989; Low and Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003). In parallel, these discourses conceive of cultural identities as dynamic and fluid entities that are constituted by both *similarity* and *difference* and are affected by the 'ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall, 2000, p. 23). With the past being a 'foreign country' (Lowenthal, 1985), memory (Hadjiyanni, 2002), language (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), objects (Forty, 1999), as well as performative ceremonies and ritual acts that involve bodily practices (Connerton, 1989) are all means by which societies remember and teach about the past.

Many of these purposive acts of 'engendering social memory' take place in the home and therefore, under conditions of displacement and forced assimilation, homes accumulate additional dimensions of meaning, becoming sites of resistance from dominant mainstream values and ideals (Hooks, 1990; Shami, 2000). In the shelter of the home, behaviors like gathering with friends and family to share stories of the past, cooking traditional foods, dressing in a traditional manner, practicing one's religion, and decorating according to a preferred aesthetic all help to fortify the aspect of *difference* as it relates to identity (Hadjiyanni and Robinson, 2005; Hadjiyanni, 2007).

Such a conception of home adheres to the selective and appropriative nature of cultural change (Pilkington et al., 2002). According to this body of work, members of cultural groups actively choose *which* elements of their culture to change and *how* to change them. Choices though are often *bounded* (Hadjiyanni, 2007), partly due to the spatial constraints families encounter—instead of having the choice to appropriate or adapt their living environments to support their way of life, families often must choose between changing their behaviors to adapt to their spatial boundaries or doing nothing. Either scenario can be stressful, as the inability to practice cultural traditions can impact cultural *logic*, the glue that holds different cultural elements together (Fischer, 1999), leading to the loss of a culture and/or its related elements. Ellen Pader took this argument

further in her study of Mexicans living in the U.S. to pose that conflicting conceptual and spatial frameworks become a means by which the dominant society assimilates and controls subordinates (Pader, 1993).

Coming from a design perspective, this study is intrigued by the notion that temporal connections and understandings of home are much more complicated and difficult to untangle than those dictated by the present scholarship on home (Moore, 2000). The paper draws from the Ojibwe experience, a group that historically lost almost everything that has traditionally been associated with *home*, be that family, community, privacy, security, ownership, control, as well as a physical setting (Hayward, 1977), and is now struggling to reconstruct new sets of connections to establish a sense of belonging and define its identity. By looking at the process by which 13 Ojibwe community members re/claim the past, while adjusting to the present, and preparing for the future, the paper conceptualizes homes as trans-temporal spaces that produce new ways of constructing identity. The detrimental impacts that a lack of this understanding can have on well-being highlight the urgency for more research and education into how to work toward culturally sensitive housing that can ease the lives of marginalized groups by enabling them to foster social, cultural, spiritual, and temporal continuity.

1 Background: Minnesota's Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

With six tribal bands, the Ojibwe, also called Chippewa or Anishinaabe, are Minnesota's largest indigenous group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe has about 3665 enrolled members—2000 live on the Mille Lacs Reservation (located approximately 100 miles northwest of Minneapolis), over 800 live in the Twin Cities, and the remainder lives out-of-state (The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, 2007).

The experience of the Mille Lacs Ojibwe runs parallel to that of countless Native groups around the world, whose story cannot be told without speaking of cultural imperialism, brutality, dislocation, and extermination attempts that many have labeled 'genocidal.' Among the traumatic events that shaped how Ojibwe people relate to their past are their forceful displacement into reservations and boarding schools. Life on the Mille Lacs reservation, which was established with an 1855 treaty, three years before Minnesota became a state, went against Native ways: large, permanent reservation communities inhibited Ojibwe practices of moving camps in observance of hunting, wild ricing, and maple sugaring seasons (Densmore, 1979); surrounding areas were drained of natural resources, causing severe food shortages and poverty; and contact with Europeans amidst crowded and unsanitary conditions brought deadly diseases that led to the demise of much of the population (Kugel, 1998).

Exacerbating the disastrous effects of reservation life was the forceful disconnect of the youth from their families and the elders who were the transmitters

of Ojibwe cultural values (Johnston, 1990). Sent away to boarding schools, Native children were forced to cut their hair, wear European clothing, adopt English names, speak the English language, and be baptized Christians, abandoning those traditions that defined their Native identity (Child, 1998; Peers and Brown, 1999; Churchill, 2004).

The degradation of the Ojibwe peoples' cultural integrity continues today, with for example the use of Native references for sports mascots and product marketing (Whitt, 1999) and disputes involving land rights, the repatriation of sacred artifacts, and environmental management through hunting and fishing (LaDuke, 2005). For some, the frustration, anger, and grief have become internalized struggles manifesting as self-destructive behavior (Churchill, 2004). In Minnesota, Native Americans suffer premature death and violent injury at rates far exceeding those of non-Natives. Depression is pervasive and suicide rates among male youth ages 18–19 are six times higher than any demographic in the state. The alarming statistics continue with infant mortality, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease (Minnesota Department of Health, 2004).

Given that cultural dislocation is among the indicators that have been cited as explanations for these well-being disparities (Bliss, 2004; Minnesota Department of Health, 2004; Tomashek et al., 2006), research that deepens our understanding of Ojibwe efforts to re/claim their past is imperative. This study's uncovering of how domestic spaces relate to the construction of Ojibwe identity can broaden the types of responses to the problem of re/claiming the past: from architectural designs that contribute to Native people's well-being to knowledge that empowers Ojibwe leaders' and advocates' attempts to raise awareness about issues faced by the community and to develop programs that strengthen connections and nurture social, cultural, spiritual, and temporal continuity.

1.1 Ojibwe cultural foundations

Four cultural anchors have kept the Ojibwe cultural logic from dissipating under the pressures of assimilation and modernization: family and kinship relations (Peers and Brown, 1999), language (Peers and Brown, 1999), spirituality (Johnston, 1990), and the ethos of respect (Project Preserve, 1989; Boatman, 1992). Wigwams, traditional Ojibwe dwellings, supported the four cultural foundations (Kegg, 1993; Child, 1998) whereas as we will later see, contemporary housing structures often suppress families' ability to abide by the dictums of the past, creating stress in their lives.

Historically, Ojibwe bands were small, and were largely missing extended families, which typically encompassed a range of marital and kin relations and three generations—grandparents, parents, and children. Camps were seasonal and followed the food supply, so housing was temporary and/or

mobile (Peers and Brown, 1999). Wigwams, which consisted of a circular frame structure and were constructed of tree branches and covered with birch bark swaths, provided shelter for these extended families and served as the site of activities that helped transfer the culture to the next generations, like cooking, eating, craft making, and storytelling, which were generally done outdoors (Kegg, 1993; Child, 1998).

The Ojibwe language also clearly speaks to the Ojibwe peoples' strong collective identity. For example, a word for 'family' as blood relatives sharing co-residency does not exist. The closest synonym would be *oode*, signifying lodge or household, which is also the root word for village (*oodena*) and clan (*indoodem*) (Peers and Brown, 1999). Presently, the language loss endured due to the boarding school era is exacerbated by barriers like broken links with the traditional customs and activities to which the language is inextricably tied, many of which, like cooking, storytelling, and craft making, happen in the home.

Ojibwe collectivism extends to Ojibwe spirituality and the notion of respect, which posit all things—earth, animals, people, and spirits—as equal and as connected under one Creator (Boatman, 1992). Honoring these spiritual connections takes place via both public and private ceremonial rituals that often involve dancing, drumming, or singing (Project Preserve, 1989; Johnston, 1990; Boatman, 1992; Peers and Brown, 1999). Understanding how domestic spaces relate to the practice of traditions and the four cultural anchors can lead to the development of culturally sensitive housing designs that enrich the conceptual and programmatic translations of the interrelationship among design, culture, and identity under conditions of displacement.

2 Methodology

The study relied on 13 focused in-depth interviews inside the homes of Ojibwe living in Minnesota, each lasting 2–3 h. Interviewees were heads of household over the age of 18 and were identified using the snowball sampling technique via contacts with community organizations and institutions. To include diverse perspectives, interviewees were pre-screened to solicit men and women of a range of ages, incomes, marital status, blood quantum, educational levels, and types of accommodation (rental/owned, apartment/single-family house, on/off the reservation) (Peroff and Wildcat, 2002).

Strengths of this methodology are: (a) the narratives are a forum for minority groups to express their perspective and relate how they use their homes and the meanings they hold; and (b) home interviews allow for a deeper understanding of how spaces are used through the documentation of house plans and furniture; photographs; and observations by the researchers. While the sample size is limited to 13, this study provides an in-depth qualitative analysis of the cultural issues facing Ojibwe families' use of the home. Even though the viewpoints expressed by the interviewees may not be representative of everyone

in their cultural group, the discussion is built on the premise that their experiences allow for a direct glimpse into the lives of Ojibwe people and the issues they face.

Information collected included demographics, descriptions of their current and preferred housing characteristics, activities that take place in their homes, elaborations on traditions they value and wish to pass down to their children, as well as reflections on what home means to them. Both closed and open-ended questions were used to allow for both quantitative and qualitative analyses, thus enriching the research (Zeisel, 1991; Babbie, 1995).

2.1 Sample description

The 13 interviewees included four men and nine women, with ages ranging from 36 to 68 years old. Their blood quantum also ranged from full-blooded Ojibwe to half-blooded. Seven were married—four with White spouses, the rest with Natives. Eight had children in the home, three caring for grandchildren. The number of children ranged from one to three. Household size ranged from two to six. In our sample, the six elders maintained their own living arrangements but three hosted and provided for other extended family members. Reflecting the health concerns prevalent among Native communities, half of the families we interviewed had someone facing obesity, diabetes, or other health issues, like asthma.

Interviewees also ranged in educational levels from some who had some high school to others who had completed graduate university education. Their household incomes ranged from less than \$20 000 (one family) to over \$100 000 (four families). With incomes supplemented by the tribal authority, a third of the families we interviewed had household incomes between \$40 000 and \$60 000.

In terms of residency, six families lived in the Twin Cities metro area, five on the Mille Lacs reservation, and two in the suburbs. All but one of the interviewees lived in a single-family house, with an average of three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

3 Findings—re/claiming the past in the home

Regardless of the differences among them, in terms of blood quantum, age, gender, educational level, marital situation, socio-economic status, and where they lived, our interviewees never failed to emphasize how important it is to the Ojibwe to retain their culture and traditions. All of them lamented what was lost of their past (be those cultural expressions like spirituality, language, dress, and food, as well as traditions like craft making) and purposively and actively tried to re/claim it in their own unique way, reciting their story through visual and performative acts like displaying Native objects, making crafts, observing spiritual customs, sharing traditional foods, and keeping

close connections to family and community members. The discussion that follows elaborates on how domestic spaces mediated their efforts to re/claim the past, adapt to the present, and prepare for the future, a future where some feared even more traditions will be lost.

From the outside, many of the homes we visited gave no hints as to their owners' cultural background (Figure 1), but upon entering, we could instantly sense *difference*. In some cases, like inside the small, one-story, inner-city house of a medicine man, we felt like we had just stepped back in time—the dark, sensual coolness of the interior spaces evoked the womb-like atmosphere of the traditional wigwam. Low electrical lighting levels and opaque window coverings that softened daylight accentuated the wigwam aesthetic (Figure 2).

A multiplicity of Native objects on display, everywhere from the walls, to the furniture, and floors added to the effect, acting as a powerful reminder of Ojibweness. In fact, when asked how their home shows this is the home of an Ojibwe, 10 out of the 13 interviewees mentioned the displayed items. As a 41-year-old mother of three living on the reservation said: 'Look around you. The stuff on display, the sage hanging by the door, the eagle feathers in the bedroom, the ceremonial drum in the other bedroom.' Others, like an Ojibwe man and his White wife, balanced their aesthetic differences by displaying Western-themed art in the home's formal living room on the main level and Native objects and prints in the informal family room, located in the home's basement.

Decorative objects varied greatly and included framed prints, dreamcatchers, dolls and birch bark baskets, as well as curtains, lamps, and wallpaper designs with Native motifs (Figure 3). However, the large number of objects displayed often took a toll on the house, making cleaning, dusting, and organizing



Figure 1 Exteriors say little about the owners' cultural background



Figure 2 Window coverings accentuate the wigwam aesthetic

difficult, cumbersome, and time consuming tasks, particularly for women who were the primary caretakers of the homes we visited (10 out of the 13).

Contributing to the crowding of objects is the custom of gift giving, a means by which the Ojibwe connect to one another and express respect and appreciation. Because of this added meaning, gifts cannot be re-gifted or thrown away, so they accumulate over time. As a man whose home was a veritable museum of Native crafts explained: 'The objects reveal the personal connections.' Displaying, caring, and storing their gifts though were arduous for many of our interviewees—one woman complained of how her basement was full of plastic storage boxes filled with blankets she had received during ceremonies.



Figure 3 Framed prints with Indian figures adorn the walls of a house



Figure 4 A craft room

Many of these material possessions were crafts, made either by the interviewees themselves or received as gifts, carrying additional special significance due to the effort and care involved in their making.

Seven of our 13 interviewees engaged in craft making, all women between the ages of 42 and 67, a sign which speaks to the instrumental role of women in reclaiming the past and in forging social memory (Tveskov, 2007). Their crafts ranged from traditional Ojibwe beadwork with flower motifs, miniature birch bark canoes, quilted blankets, and jingle dresses to contemporary picture frames. One elder explained how craft making was a cornerstone of her Ojibwe identity. Anxious about the younger generations' ability to relate to the past after the elders are gone she lamented: 'When the traditions are lost it is like a person who has no identity.'

Craft making took place virtually everywhere, from the bedrooms to the kitchens and living rooms as only one of the homes we visited boasted a dedicated craft room (Figure 4). Although our interviewees were creative in adapting their living conditions to support this valued tradition, almost all shared concerns for the lack of suitable storage space for supplies, work-in-progress (which due to its vulnerable nature should be stored away from heavily used areas of the home), and finished items. Our observations reinforced these concerns, as we witnessed living rooms overtaken by boxes of supplies and crafts; bedrooms with piles of fabric and ironing boards for quilting; beads and jewelry laid out on dining tables; and even a sewing machine on a kitchen table (Figure 5).

Additional concerns revolved around having space to comfortably work on large items like blankets exchanged or given as gifts at ceremonial dances, fostering social and spiritual connections. Said a woman: 'The blankets are queen



Figure 5 Jewelry making on a dining room table

size. At the office I have a long table [to lay them out], but here it is too crowded to do this. You have to do it on the floor. You want to make sure it is clean, and it is hard on the body and the knees.’ Access to proper lighting is also important, particularly for women engaged in projects like beading and sewing, which require intricate work on a small scale. One elder who made beaded jewelry explained how poor lighting caused strain and discomfort to her eyes, while lack of natural light altered the colors of her beads, hindering her ability to complete her work. South-facing windows and skylights would alleviate some of these problems, she said.

Sacred and precious items, many stored away to be protected and to ensure their passing down to future generations, were also instrumental in re/claiming the past. Examples included inherited beaded necklaces and moccasins, traditional drums, and eagle feathers and pricey/difficult to make dance regalia. A 55-year-old woman, living in a new home in the city, showed us a necklace hanging in her bedroom closet that she believes has great power and credits it for turning her life around (Figure 6). In her words: ‘The necklace ... has the circle of life and we believe in the circle of life. My brother’s house burned down. My mother gave the necklace to him and she told him: “You would know whom to give it to.”’ When his house burned, this survived and at the time, I was at a women’s shelter and he told me: “You should have it.”’

Other sacred objects are employed in spiritual ceremonies, which take place both in the privacy of one’s home and in public spaces. Eagle feathers for example are used almost daily for the domestic spiritual purification ritual of smudging. This practice involves the burning of sage or sweetgrass in a shell and wafting the smoke over oneself or around the home with a feather to



Figure 6 A sacred necklace

cleanse and ward off negativity and evil spirits (Figure 7). To a mother of three, the eagle feathers were also a vehicle through which to instill to her eight-and-a-half year-old daughter the value of her heritage. When asked to see her most prized possessions, she went upstairs and brought out a 35-year-old eagle feather and set of moccasins and explained their meaning to us (Figure 8):



Figure 7 The shell used to burn sage for the cleansing ritual



Figure 8 Sacred eagle feathers and moccasins

‘My daughter dances with the eagle feather. She uses it to cool herself off. It is sacred. I got it from my father-in-law. There are dances every weekend almost Some children start to dance at one or two. Mine started when she was eight years old and she has been to two dances already!’

Homes are also the sites of ceremonies, like the naming ceremony. As many Ojibwe were forced to adopt English names, some are now actively trying to re/claim their past through the ceremonial adoption of Ojibwe names. As explained by a 58-year-old female elder:

‘A lot [of people] do not even have an Indian name. When the Whites tried to kill the Indian culture, they stopped all that stuff. They put people in boarding schools, they cut their hair, did not allow them to speak the language. This was in the ’60s and ’70s, and no ceremonies were done either.’

She then went on to elaborate on the intertwining of cultural traditions and how spirituality is tied to naming:

‘It is important to have an Indian name. The spirit world does not know me by my White name. I need an Ojibwe name. It is hard to speak to the spirit world if they do not know you. During the naming ceremony they tell you: ‘How come [you] have such a name?’ No name was given to me. I felt so disconnected. So the medicine man gave me a name, I just got my ceremony five years ago. My name is Neegahboweqway. It means woman.’

In-home ceremonies and other social gatherings that nourish community connections have spatial implications due to the number of people invited (close to 30) and because they are often accompanied by food, another means through which the Ojibwe re/claim their past. Wild rice was a staple of the traditional diet and continues to be a popular food that many of our interviewees tried to cook weekly. As they related to us however, finding

traditional Ojibwe foods like fresh fish and game is difficult and some are considered unsafe for frequent eating due to contamination.

Additional constraints were imposed due to small and inadequate cooking areas. As in most of the homes we visited women prepared food (9 out of 13), lack of accessible storage and counter space limited the women's ability to cook (Figure 9), which partly explains the health concerns associated with the Ojibwe as the families we interviewed often resorted to eating frozen and boxed convenience foods. Traditional food consumption patterns, which imply eating whenever one is hungry, added to the problem—research shows that family meals shared around a table are noted for promoting both healthier eating habits and relationships (Doherty and Carlson, 2002). Instead, in our interviews, we observed dining areas that were too small to accommodate the whole family at once (Figure 10), with members eating out of tray tables in the living room and at disparate times.

Lastly, our interviewees' sense of Ojibweness is best illustrated through their close-knit relations. As explained by a 58-year-old Ojibwe woman living with her Mexican boyfriend and his four brothers in a 3-bedroom house:



Figure 9 Small kitchens hinder healthy cooking habits



Figure 10 The eating area for a family of six

‘One thing you will find is that Indian people live with lots of other people. They used to say that if you traveled, you should leave your door open for other travelers to stop by. And not only that, leave food for them too! My friends tell me: ‘Why do you live with so many people? They will ruin your house.’ Houses are just material things, they don’t matter! When you die, you can’t take it with you! [I know] a woman here [who] has 21 people in her house!’

Four of the 13 interviewees were hosting someone at the time of the interview—either their own adult children, stepchildren, or grandchildren or other extended family members (Figure 11). Even though this consists of only one-third of the families we interviewed, all our interviewees noted the need to have their homes open to family and friends and that is why

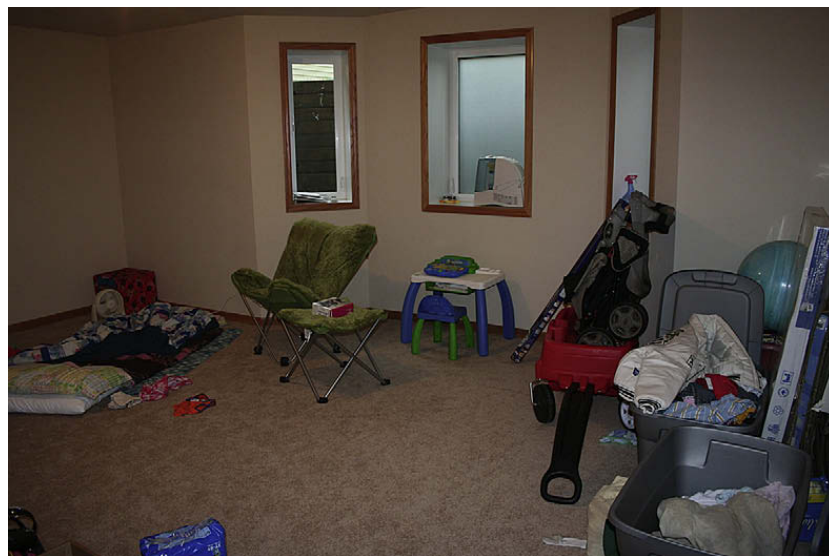


Figure 11 Basement space is used by elders to host a daughter and her two children

most of them (9 out of 13) preferred to have additional sleeping and hygiene spaces. Hosts cared for others anywhere from a few days to as long as needed—like this grandmother who explained: ‘I have to support my son and grandkids, we [her now-deceased husband and herself] have adopted them. Their father died and the mother left, they have fetal alcohol syndrome, their mother was drinking when she was pregnant. They get my husband’s social security so even as a dead person, he is still taking care of them. They all give me rent, \$100/month.’ Maintaining these close family connections was so important to our interviewees that many were willing to endure living in crowded conditions.

4 Discussion

The paper’s purpose is to explore how domestic spaces relate to the process of re/claiming the past and re/instituting cultural identity definitions. In parallel, the paper investigates which activities are supported and which are suppressed and the implications of the dynamic among design, culture, and identity under conditions of displacement for how notions like home, gender, and community are constructed. Through the Ojibwe example, a cultural group struggling to re/claim a past lost to displacement and forced assimilation, the study has both conceptual and programmatic implications for the creation of culturally sensitive designs.

On a theoretical and conceptual level, homes are positioned as trans-temporal spaces that produce new ways of constructing identity by impacting how connections between the past, present, and future are formed. The houses of the families we interviewed mediate the reconstruction of the past by either supporting or suppressing domestic practices, like the display of Native objects, craft making, spiritual ceremony participation, community gatherings, traditional foods and eating patterns, as well as hosting and caring for extended family members.

Also fascinating are our interviewees’ attempts to navigate between traditional and modern ways of life or the past and the future—for example, televisions, DVD collections, billiard tables, children’s toys, and electronic instruments are competing with Native objects for space in the homes we visited while both modern and traditional materials and techniques are used for craft making. In some cases though, disparate values like the Ojibwe respect for restraint and the consumerism prevalent in American society are clashing. An interviewee explained the need for more storage in her bedroom by saying: ‘I gave away clothes and shoes but I still have too much! We were so poor that we now go to a thrift store and buy crap, stuff we don’t need just to have things. We didn’t have much when we were young, it is not because we are materialistic. If someone says “Oh, I like this!”, you take it and give it to them! I gave away my earrings that way!’

Re/claiming the past is thereby a self-guided re/interpretation that takes back what was lost in ways that have meaning today and in the future. Although activities related to re/claiming the past also take place in the public realm, through pow-pows, schools, and museums/cultural centers and their related programs and exhibits (Simonelli, 2003), they are often supported by others that occur in the privacy of one's home, like the making of blankets to be given as gifts at ceremonies. The underlying public/private connections embedded in re/claiming the past reveal their importance in strengthening the Ojibwe cultural logic.

Our interviewees' spatial reality however, often presents difficulties that challenge their ability to form social, cultural, spiritual, and temporal connections in the home. Customs such as gift giving push the limits of home storage and display areas, making cleaning cumbersome; craft making in poorly lit spaces burdens the bodies of elders; cooking and eating in tight kitchen spaces contributes to unhealthy food choices that exacerbate health issues; and caring for grown children and grandchildren often leads to over-crowded conditions. The gender implications of these stressors resurfaced in our sample, as women are the craft makers, cooks, and home caretakers. As bearers of cultural memory they engage in practices that become the visual manifestation of the culture but do so in conditions that make it challenging.

The experience of our 13 interviewees exemplifies the problems encountered under conditions of displacement when practices such as displaying objects take on additional dimensions of meaning of home that relate to fostering connections with an 'imagined community' (Barth, 1969). Extending beyond the Mille Lacs Ojibwe, the imagined communities of some of our interviewees encompass all Native people (a Pan-Indian identity) as well as other minority and disenfranchised groups. Evidence of these connections ranges from interviewees cherishing the art of Southwest Native groups to an interviewee accepting to speak only to one of the two authors, who happens to be an immigrant.

The design implications of these findings for culturally sensitive designs, designs that support the needs of varying cultural groups, include broadening how words are defined and how activities are conceived—for example, conceiving walls as 'a material layer enclosing space' (www.w-m.com) is too narrow a definition. Instead, seeing walls as mediums by which social, spiritual, cultural, and temporal connections are fostered can translate into conceptual and programmatic responses like opening walls up to speak to connections and accentuating their use as display areas.

Designers must also recognize the multiplicity of identities embedded within a cultural group—there are many ways to be an Ojibwe and our interviewees construct that aspect of their identity through a variety of ways and degrees.

Typical architectural responses to cultural identity are however, often limited to the replication of architectural elements, such as roofs, columns, and decorative features from that group's past or place of origin, i.e. China towns. These approaches fail to account for the complex, multi-dimensional, and dynamic facets of cultural identity definition, perpetuating stereotypes of what belonging to a specific group entails (Mazumdar et al., 2000). Operating within a theoretical framework that blends anthropological and design discourses, designers can conceive spaces that can be manipulated by users, i.e. interiors that lend themselves to adaptation and appropriation in ways that mediate both traditional and modern practices.

Culturally sensitive design solutions to the problem of supporting the Ojibwe peoples' efforts to re/claim their past include on the conceptual level, incorporating both circular (wigwam) and rectangular shapes (mainstream) that speak to cultural integration and interaction. On the programmatic level, solutions meet contemporary standards and mass-market housing aspirations, helping retain the house's re-sale value, even as they aid Ojibwe efforts to re/claim what was lost. These include accounting for secure and functional craft making spaces; flexible sleeping areas for extended family and guests; cooking areas that enable the preparation of healthy meals while interacting with family members; dining areas that support shared eating and connect to the past through for example, the Ojibwe flower motif and the circular shape; comfortable social areas that accommodate all family members and encourage storytelling; and storage and display space for artifacts that foster connections to both the Ojibwe and modern worlds. Design considerations should be sensitive to elders, such as limiting the need to climb stairs to access bedrooms, bathrooms, and craft spaces. At the same time, as obesity and diabetes are prevalent among this population, homes must be easy to navigate and take care of.

Sharing the lessons drawn from these findings with the general public, policy makers, and members of the cultural group studied is another instrumental aspect of the process by which to work toward culturally sensitive housing. An example of an outreach effort is that students in the first author's interior design studio classes use the findings to develop culturally sensitive housing designs which are then exhibited yearly as part of the 'Building Ties' exhibit at a local museum to start a dialogue around cultural differences in housing needs. The Mille Lacs Indian Museum and the American Indian Cultural Center also hosted the exhibit along with community gatherings that challenged the Ojibwe people to critically explore how housing can instigate the changes needed to preserve their heritage.

In closing, as research on the interrelationship among design, culture, and identity under conditions of displacement is limited, further studies can examine how other displaced cultural groups construct identity in the home. Socially responsible educators and designers can also investigate more closely

the different roles they can play in partaking in current debates on social justice—from devising pedagogies that teach culture to students of design to planning for policies that cater to diverse ways of living and working alongside minority groups to give a voice to their needs and concerns, becoming facilitators of collaborative processes that empower those living on the margins. Beginning a conversation around culturally sensitive housing design is a start.

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