

**POLICING THE BAFFIN REGION**

**Findings From the Baffin Region Crime and Justice Study\***

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**©February 1995**

\*This research was funded by research grant # 411-90-0014 from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The authors are solely responsible for the content within.

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## PREFACE

This report presents materials gathered from currently serving and retired members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who are, or have been, involved in policing in the Iqaluit Sub-Division, "G" Division (Northwest Territories). In preparing the report, the authors had access to a vast amount of information collected in interviews with police members. As such, it was necessary to be selective in the use of quoted materials. Every effort has been made to ensure that this document accurately reflects the views and opinions of the police officers who were interviewed. However, given the large number of members who contributed to the study, it was not possible to report the information provided by each individual member. The authors have attempted to draw out the major themes and to present materials in such a way as to reflect commonly shared perceptions of members. Obviously, in doing so, points made by individual officers may have been omitted.

The reader will note that no executive summary has been provided. It is the authors' view that document must be read in its entirety to fully appreciate the views of the 157 police members who were interviewed. Also, the recommendations provided are those which were offered by the members themselves. The significance of the observations reported in this project paper and the collective wisdom of the members who were interviewed should not be underestimated. Rather, they should be included in any discussions of policing in the Baffin Region and in deliberations regarding models for police service delivery in Nunavut.

This project was made possible by the cooperation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and by the participation of the police members who were interviewed. The researchers would like to specifically acknowledge the assistance and support of C/Superintendent B.G. Watt, Commanding Officer, "G" Division; Tonita Murray, Corporate Services, RCMP, Ottawa; S/Sgt. Jack Kruger and Cpl. Vern White, "G" Division; and all of the active and retired members who shared their experiences with the members of the project team.

## **POLICING THE BAFFIN REGION: FINDINGS FROM THE BAFFIN REGION CRIME AND JUSTICE STUDY**

### **THE BAFFIN REGION CRIME AND JUSTICE STUDY**

The Baffin Region Crime and Justice study was a multi-year (1990-1994) project carried out by a multi-disciplinary research team (including Inuit field researchers) in thirteen Baffin Region communities located in the Eastern Arctic of Canada's Northwest Territories. The communities are: Arctic Bay/Nanisivik, Broughton Island, Cape Dorset, Clyde River, Grise Fiord, Hall Beach, Igloolik, Iqaluit, Lake Harbour, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Resolute Bay, and Sanikiluaq (see Figure 1). The study was the first systematic inquiry into law and justice in the Eastern Arctic involving all of the communities in the Baffin Region.

The primary objective of the study was to gather information and provide analyses which will be of use to Inuit community leaders, hamlet council and political organizations in their efforts to improve the delivery of justice services, either through collaborative arrangements with federal and territorial justice agencies, or through the development of community-based and controlled justice programs and services. Materials from the study will also be made available to criminal justice policy makers and practitioners to assist them in the formulation of policy and programs in the Baffin Region. Every effort was made to accurately record the opinions and perspectives of individuals interviewed during the project.

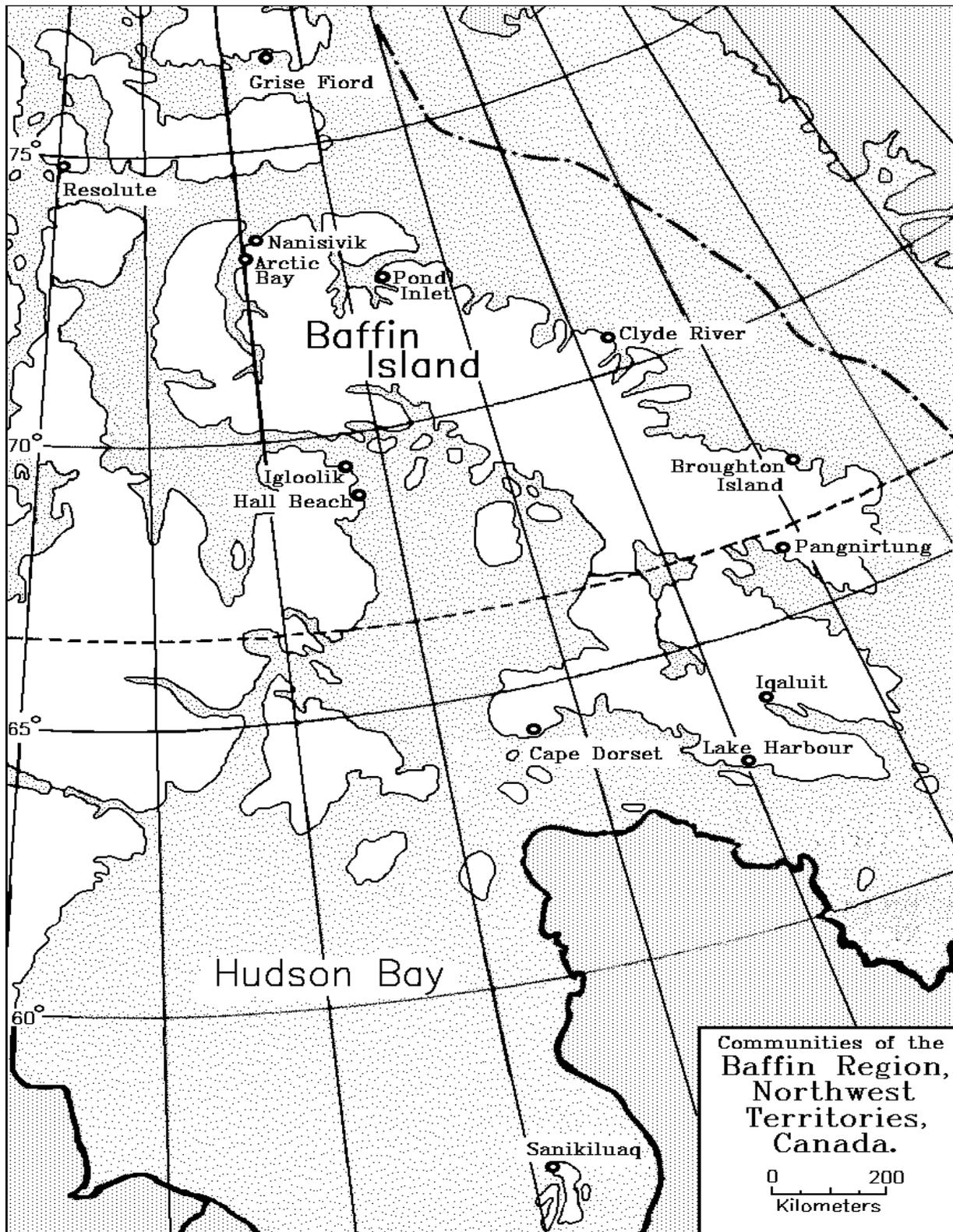
The project team conceptualized the study as an *information gathering exercise*, rather than as an evaluation of the effectiveness of the current arrangements for justice delivery. The project was not initiated at the request of any of the communities in the Baffin Region, nor was it carried out under the auspices of the federal or territorial government. Funding for the project was provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and a smaller grant from the Aboriginal Justice Directorate of the federal Department of Justice.

The project had the following general and specific research objectives:

#### **The General Research Objectives**

- to determine the rates and patterns of crime and "trouble" in Baffin Region communities; (**note:** "trouble" is a more inclusive concept than crime, and includes a variety of activities and behaviours, which, while not illegal, are nevertheless disruptive to individual, family, and community life. Examples of "trouble" include the abuse of solvents and inhalants by youth, and suicide.

Figure 1



- to record the perceptions of Inuit political and community leaders, community residents, and criminal justice practitioners and other "resource persons" in the

communities regarding the nature, extent, and causes of crime and "trouble". Resource persons include individuals — nurses, school teachers, social workers, business people and other non-justice personnel — who reside in the communities and have knowledge of community life;

- to determine the factors that distinguish "high" and "low" trouble communities, focusing in particular on the influence of various community attributes, e.g. whether the community is a relocated settlement; the availability of personal and community resources; the persistence of traditional lifeways;
- to solicit the views of criminal justice personnel and community residents regarding the current arrangements for delivery of justice services;
- to consider the potential for developing alternative, community-based justice programs and services;
- to identify the issues which will confront criminal justice agencies and Baffin Region communities in the coming years.

### **The Specific Research Objectives**

- **Crime and Trouble**

- to ascertain the extent and causes of specific types of crime and trouble, including violence against women and adolescent females and the involvement of Inuit youth in crime and trouble;
- to determine the role of alcohol in crime and trouble;
- to explore the variations in patterns of crime and trouble between communities.

- **The Delivery of Criminal Justice Services**

- to identify the factors which impact the delivery of justice services to Baffin Region communities;
- to examine the historical and contemporary role and experiences of RCMP members in the Baffin Region;
- to consider the delivery of court services, with particular reference to the sentencing practices of the circuit court;
- to examine the delivery of corrections services and the issues which surround the provision of services to convicted offenders.

- **The Development of Community-based Justice Services and Programs**

- to determine the extent to which communities have initiated community justice programs and services;
- to examine the role of elders in these initiatives;

- to document the experience of government-sponsored community programs and services such as Community Law Enforcement Groups;
- to consider the potential and the limitations of community based justice services and programs;
- to consider the interface between the criminal justice system and community-controlled justice programs and services.

A primary component of the project was a focus on the delivery of policing services to the Baffin Region and, more specifically, on a number of interrelated issues concerning the historical and contemporary role of the police in the thirteen communities. The individual and collective responses of the current and retired RCMP members who generously contributed their experiences, perspectives, and opinions on a wide range of issues related to crime, criminal justice, and policing in the Baffin Region comprise a major portion of the information gathered by the project team.

This material provides the basis for the present report, which has been prepared specifically for use by the RCMP. The current project provided a unique opportunity for members to detail their experiences in policing Baffin Region communities and their observations and opinions on a wide range of issues relating to the delivery of police services. The individual and collective responses and observations of the RCMP members interviewed for the project are an invaluable information source which can be utilized in discussions relating to recruitment, training, and the deployment of officers to the Baffin Region and to other remote northern communities, as well as in deliberations surrounding the development of a model for policing throughout the newly created territory of Nunavut.

It is hoped that these materials, in conjunction with the findings of the project presented in the larger report *Crime, Law and Justice in the Baffin Region, N.W.T.*, will assist the RCMP in meeting the challenges posed by policing in the Baffin Region. Until the 1960s, patrol reports were a valuable source of information about the activities of police members in the Baffin Region. With their discontinuation, however, the RCMP no longer has any mechanisms in place to record on a systematic basis the experiences of members who are posted to the Region. It is the intent of this report to fill that critical information gap and to serve as a conduit for members to convey to senior administration their perceptions and recommendations for improving the delivery of policing services.

## THE METHOD

The materials gathered during the study represent the most thorough analysis of policing ever undertaken in the Region and the first instance in which police members posted to the region have had an opportunity to discuss their experiences.

This report is based on information gathered in interviews with 157 active and retired RCMP members who currently or formerly policed in one or more of the thirteen Baffin Region communities (See Appendix A). Officers were identified via a parade list provided by RCMP Headquarters. The time frame covered by the members interviewed for the study is 1933 to the present. An attempt was made to have each community in the Baffin Region represented for each decade that the detachment has been operational. This selection procedure facilitated the collection of information relating to the historical and contemporary aspects of policing in the region.

A content analysis has been conducted on these materials and, within the space limitations, an attempt has been made to capture the more significant observations and experiences of the members. While no recommendations are made, the major issues surrounding policing in the Baffin Region, as identified by active and retired members, are discussed. To insure that the views of the members who were interviewed are conveyed as accurately as possible, extensive use is made of quoted materials. The identity of respondents has been kept confidential, as per the researchers agreement with the members who were interviewed.

Among the areas covered in the interview with members were the following:

- **Recruitment, Training and Deployment**
  - Motivations for Going North
  - Prior Knowledge and Training
  - Desirable Officer Qualities for Baffin Region Policing
- **Policing the Community**
  - Arrival and Getting Settled
  - Becoming Accepted
  - The Police Role in the Community
  - Inuit Special Constables and Constables
  - Stress on Officers and Families, Including Concerns About Personal and Family Safety
  - Transfers

- **Officer Perceptions of the Criminal Justice Process**
  - Perceptions of the Courts
  - Perceptions of Corrections
  - Perceptions of Local Justice Initiatives (**note:** the responses of members to this series of questions are contained in the larger report, *Crime, Law and Justice Among Inuit in the N.W.T.*)
- **Officer Assessments of Their Experiences and Recommendations**
  - The Impact on of Policing in the Baffin Region on the Officers Career
  - Recommendations for Recruitment
  - Training and Deployment

The interviews generated a wealth of information on the experience of RCMP members in the Baffin Region and provide valuable insights into the evolution of the role of the RCMP in the region as well as the problems that members confront in delivering police services. The findings also provide insights into the evolution of the role of the RCMP in the region; the training and deployment of officers; officer safety; and strategies for policing Baffin region communities. These materials will be of value in current and future discussions regarding arrangements for the delivery of policing services to the newly created territory of Nunavut.

As previously noted, the focus of this report is on the issues surrounding policing in the Baffin Region and the primary purpose of the report is to present the experiences and observations of RCMP members who have been involved in the policing Baffin communities for the past seventy years. Nevertheless, it is important to set the backdrop against which police services have been delivered to the region, both historically and in contemporary times. This will assist in understanding the contingencies which members have faced and continue to encounter when they are posted to the region.

## **THE BAFFIN REGION: A UNIQUE POLICING ENVIRONMENT**

The Baffin Region is perhaps the most distinct policing environment in Canada, affected by geography, demography, history, culture, and the dynamics of community life. There is little doubt that the delivery of policing services to the Baffin Region today occurs within a social, political, and community context which is significantly different than that described by members who were posted to the region even as recently as the 1960s. Prior to presenting the experiences of members, it is important to outline the demographic attributes of the Baffin Region as well as the general patterns of crime and trouble which exist in the thirteen communities.

**The Geography**

The Baffin Region is comprised of thirteen communities, ranging in population from 130 to 3,500. Only Cape Dorset, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, and Iqaluit have populations of over 1,000 residents. Similar to most of the other communities in the N.W.T., communities in the Baffin Region are accessible only by air, or, for a few weeks in late summer, by sea. This geographic isolation imposes unique conditions on members posted to the Baffin Region. The majority of the detachments are staffed by one or two members; backup support is often hours away, particularly when weather conditions prevent planes from landing in the community.

The isolation and lack of migration of Inuit between communities in the Baffin also have implications for addressing the needs of crime victims and managing offenders. Crime victims, particularly women and young girls who are often at high risk of being sexually abused and physically assaulted, are generally unwilling or unable to leave the community. This places a responsibility on officers to protect these persons. Convicted offenders are most often given community-based sentences by the circuit court, creating the possibility of reoffending and additional victimization.

**The Culture**

The geographic isolation of the Baffin Region and its residents meant that change was slow to come to the region. Until the 1950s, the vast majority of Inuit lived a nomadic hunting and gathering existence on the land. The changes brought about successive government policies, including moving Inuit from the land into settlements, had dramatic consequences for Inuit culture, families, and individuals. It is often said that the Inuit went from the Stone Age to the Space Age in the span of 40 years.

While westernization provided the Inuit with an increased material standard of living, it has also increased their dependency on services provided by "outside" government agencies. While the Inuit have traditionally been self-sufficient, communities now depend upon the federal and territorial governments for the provision of education, medical care, criminal justice and social services. Shamanism has been largely replaced by Christianity; eradicated, extended family groupings have given way to a focus on the nuclear family; modern schools have replaced the oral tradition of teaching the young; and, in many communities, the elders no longer play a central role in community life.

The most dramatic changes for the Inuit occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, when the Inuit were moved into permanent settlements. This undermined hunting and subsistence lifeways and altered the relations among Inuit. While the traditional subsistence culture was harsh and unforgiving, life in the settlements has been even more devastating to the Inuit. In

the words of one Baffin resident interviewed for the project: "The people have come from a very self-reliant existence into one that is a welfare state run by the government...a lot of people have lost their sense of purpose and sense of values and that has taken a drastic toll on families and on the community."

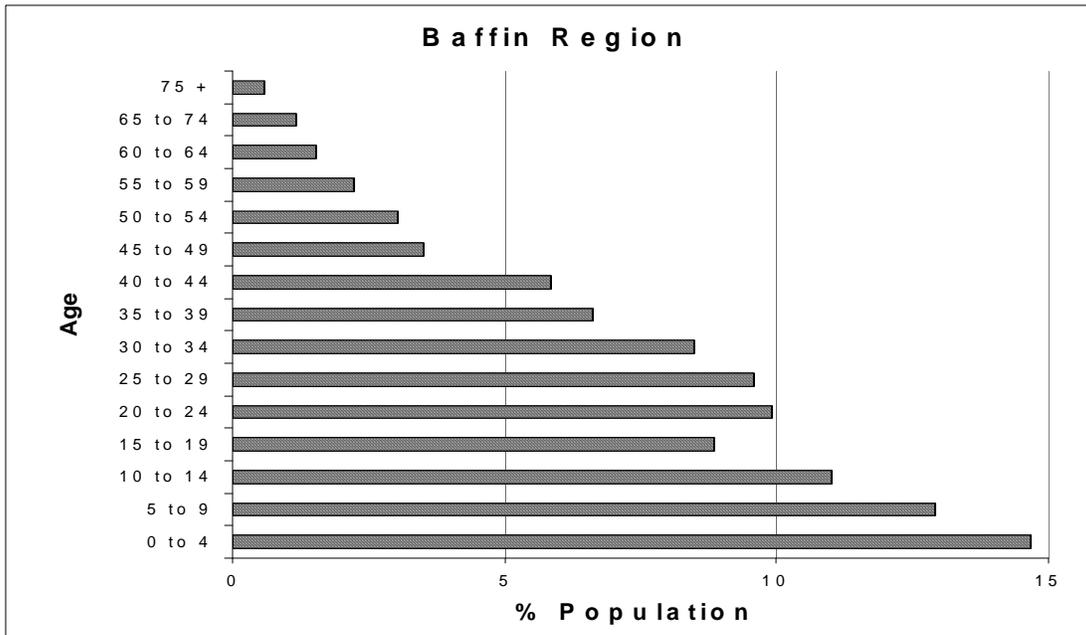
Another element has been the imposition of the Euro-Canadian system of law and justice on Inuit peoples. This has involved replacing the traditional Inuit systems of dispute resolution with an adversarial system of law and justice which is foreign to the Inuit. While the implications of this are explored in greater detail in the larger report, *Crime, Law and Justice Among Inuit in the N.W.T.*, suffice it to say that there are numerous problems surrounding the delivery of justice services to the Baffin Region today.

### **The Demographics**

The Inuit are confronted with many challenges, one of which is the fastest growing population of any group in the country, the lack of a viable economic base in many of the community and the dilemma of how to hold onto their culture and traditions while adjusting to the social, political, and economic changes which are occurring around them. One of the most dramatic demographic attributes is the large population of youths in the 10-19 age range. Currently, 47% of the residents in the Baffin Region are under the age of 19, compared to 28% of the population for the rest of Canada. As is seen in Figure 2a and 2b, the population of the Baffin Region is much younger than what is found in the rest of Canada. This rapid population growth, which is predicted to double by the year 2025, has put considerable pressures on housing, community services, and the economy. It may also play a major role in the nature and extent of crime and trouble which will confront police members in the communities.

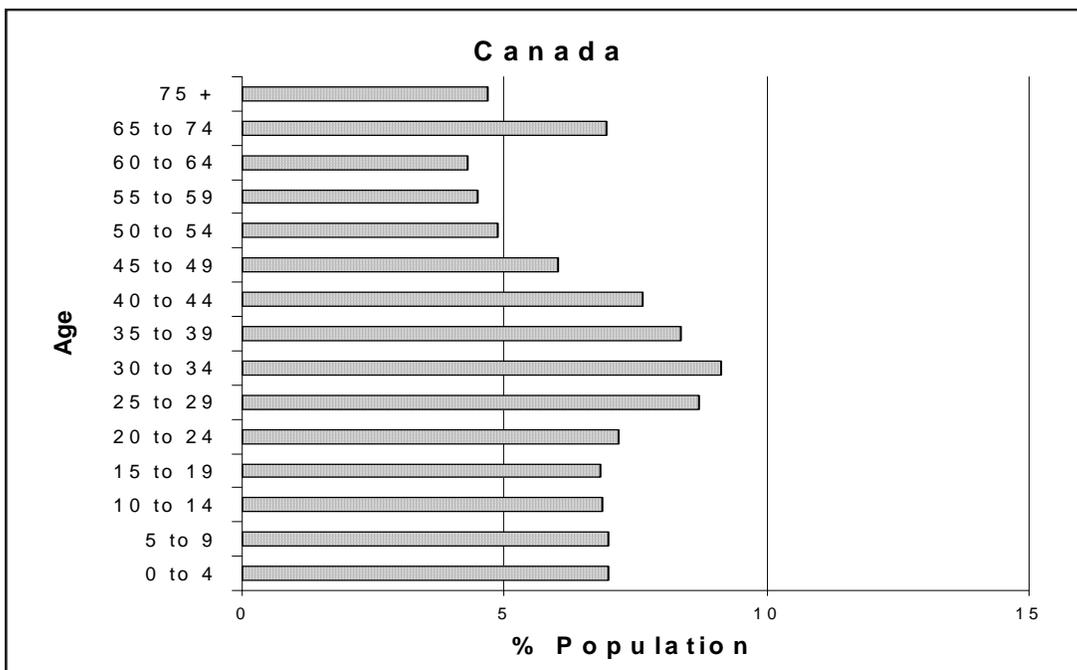
**Figure 2a**

**Baffin Region Population Pyramid, 1991.**



**Figure 2b**

**Canadian Population Pyramid, 1991**



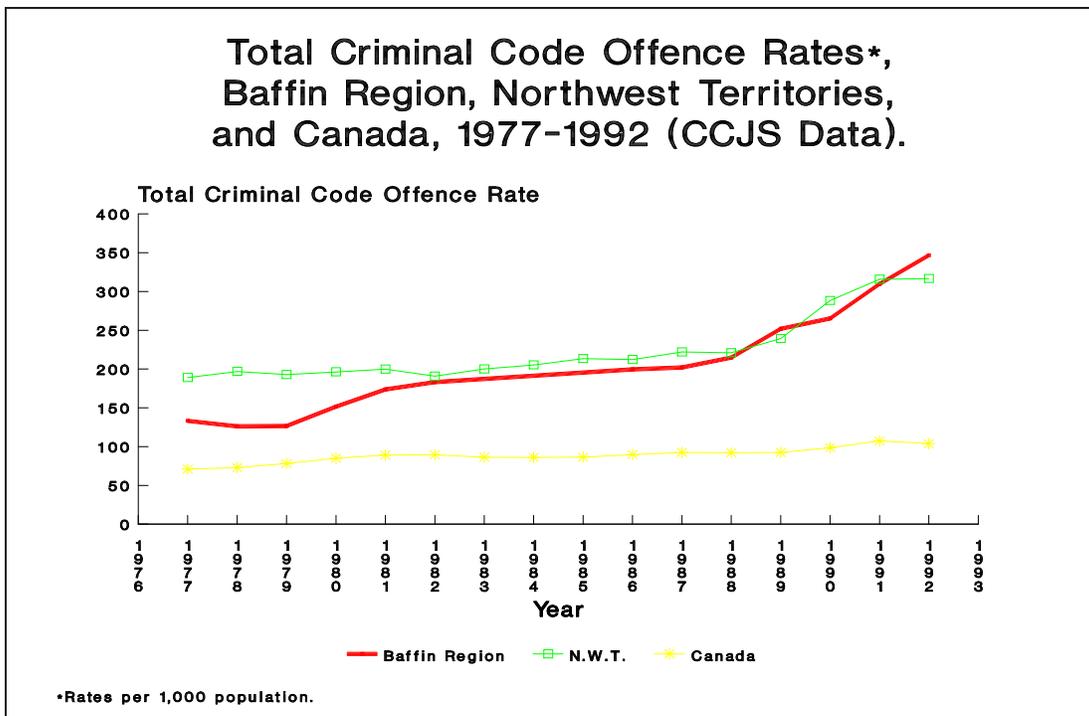
## CRIME AND TROUBLE IN THE BAFFIN REGION

An extensive analysis of the patterns of crime and trouble in Baffin Region communities is provided in the larger report *Crime, Law, and Justice Among Inuit in the N.W.T.* For purposes of the present discussion, several of the more significant findings related to crime and trouble are highlighted. These include materials gathered by the Aboriginal Peoples Survey in 1993.

Among the more significant attributes of crime and trouble in the Baffin Region are the following seven:

1. **The overall rates of *Criminal Code* offences in the Baffin Region are much higher than what is found, on average, in Canada.** Figure 3 indicates that the total Criminal Code offence rate in the Baffin Region has been consistently higher than the Canadian rate and, in recent years, has begun to exceed the rate for the N.W.T.

**Figure 3**

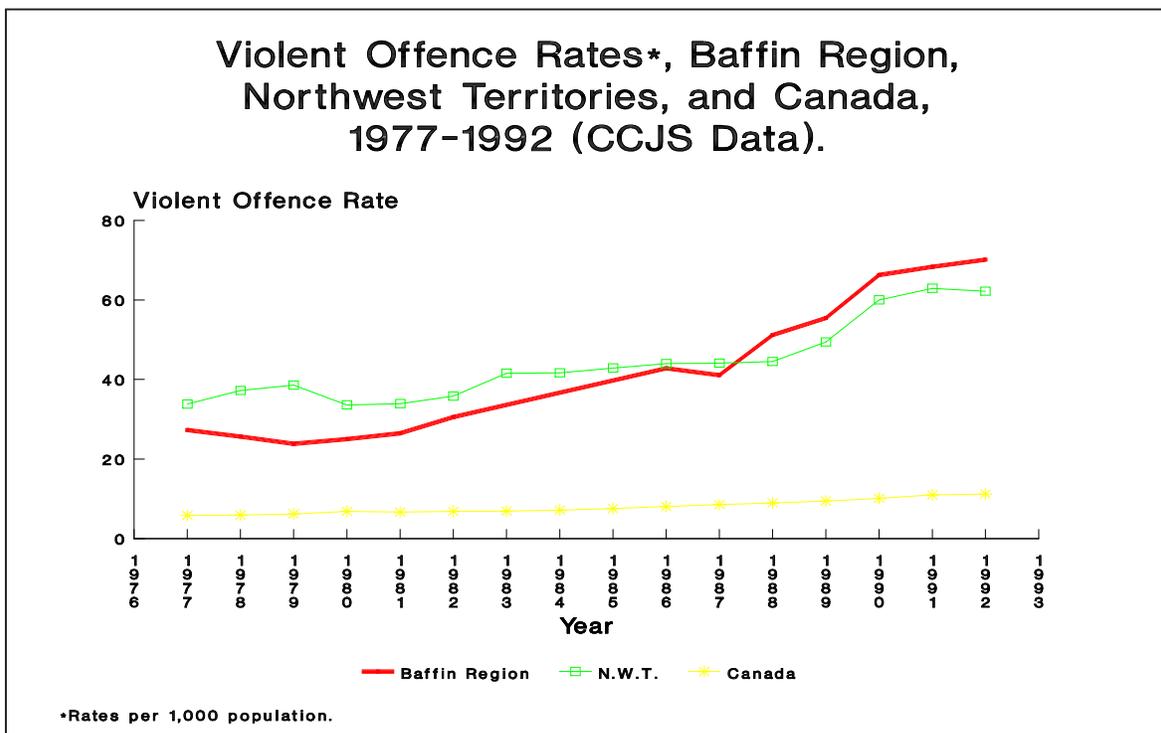


2. **The rates of violent crime in the Baffin Region are extremely high and continue to escalate.** As is seen in Figure 4, in 1992, the rate of violent offences reported to the police was more than 60 offences per 1,000 population, as compared to a rate of less than 10 per 1,000 population in Canada generally.

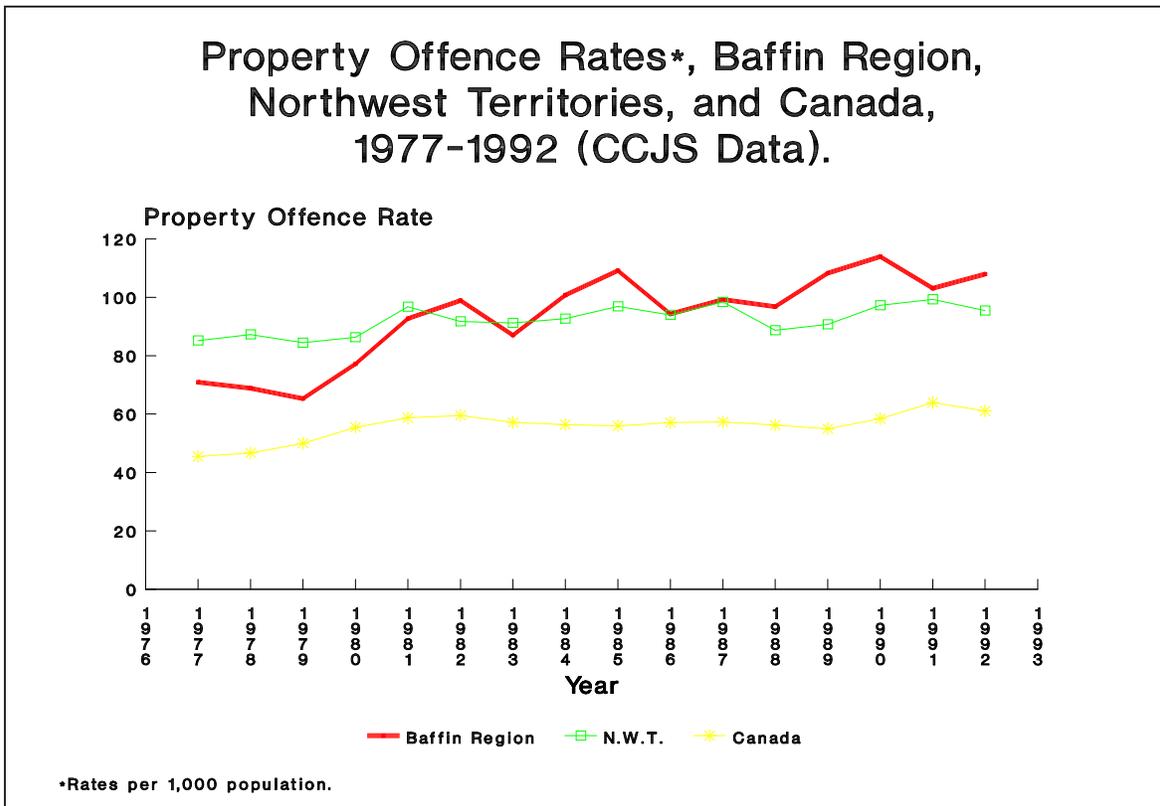
3. The rates of property offences in the Baffin Region are higher than the rates for the N.W.T. and for Canada. Figure 5 indicates that, while the rates of property crime have fluctuated in recent years, there has been a gradual increase in comparison to the rates for the N.W.T. and Canada which have remained fairly stable.

4. There is wide variation in the *Criminal Code* offence rate between Baffin Region communities. The total *Criminal Code* offence rate per 1,000 population in 1992 varied from 559 per 1,000 in the community of Iqaluit to 75 per 1,000 population in Grise Fiord. Similar variations are evident in the rates of violent crime per 1,000 population (see Figure 6) and the rates of property offences per 1,000 population (see Figure 7).

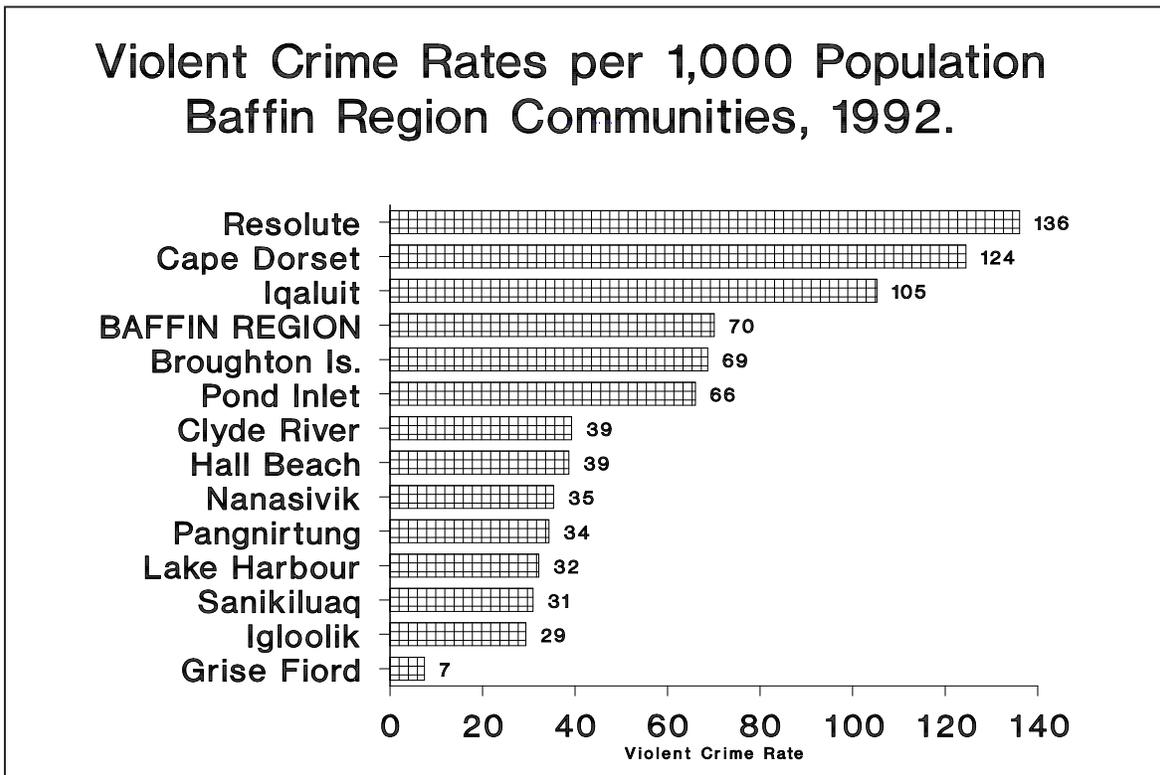
**Figure 4**



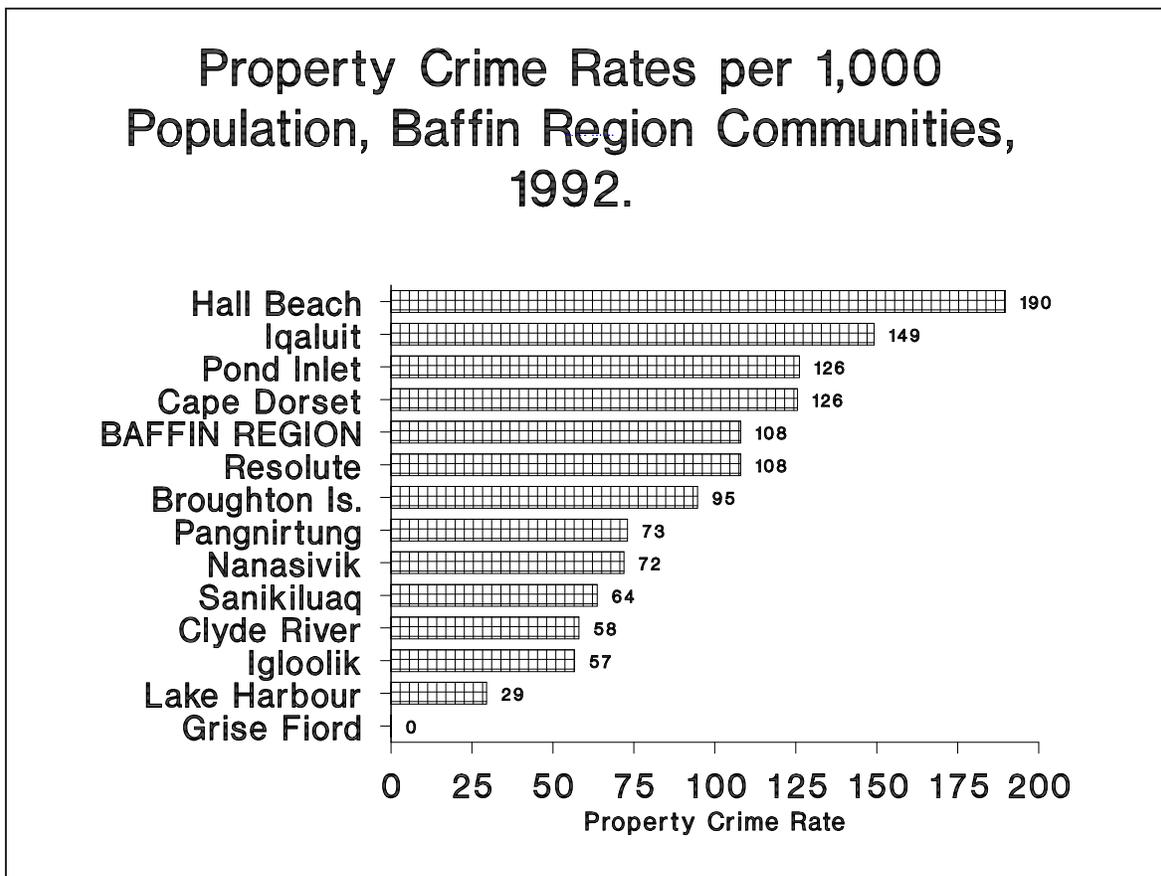
**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**

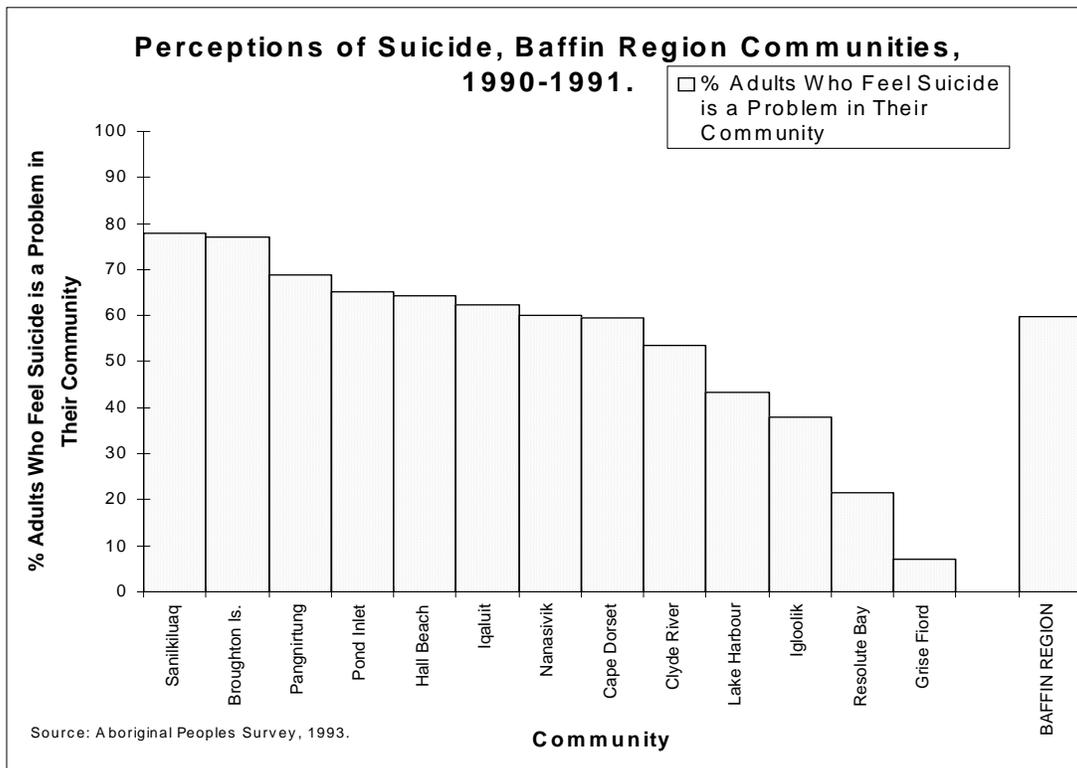


**Figure 7**

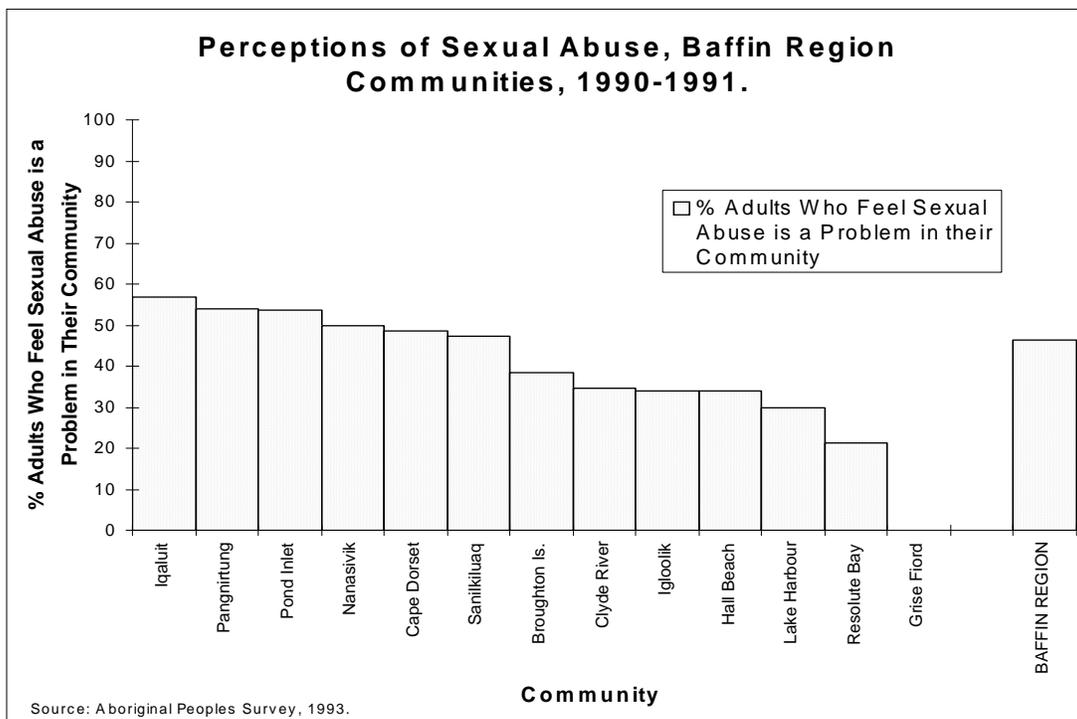


5. **There is wide variation between communities in the perceptions that residents have of "trouble" in their community.** Figure 8 indicates that while nearly 80% of the residents of Sanikiluaq perceived suicide to be a problem, only 7% of community residents in Grise Fiord held this perception. Similar variations in the perceptions of community residents are evident in relation to sexual abuse (Figure 9), family violence (Figure 10), drug abuse (Figure 11), and alcohol abuse (Figure 12).

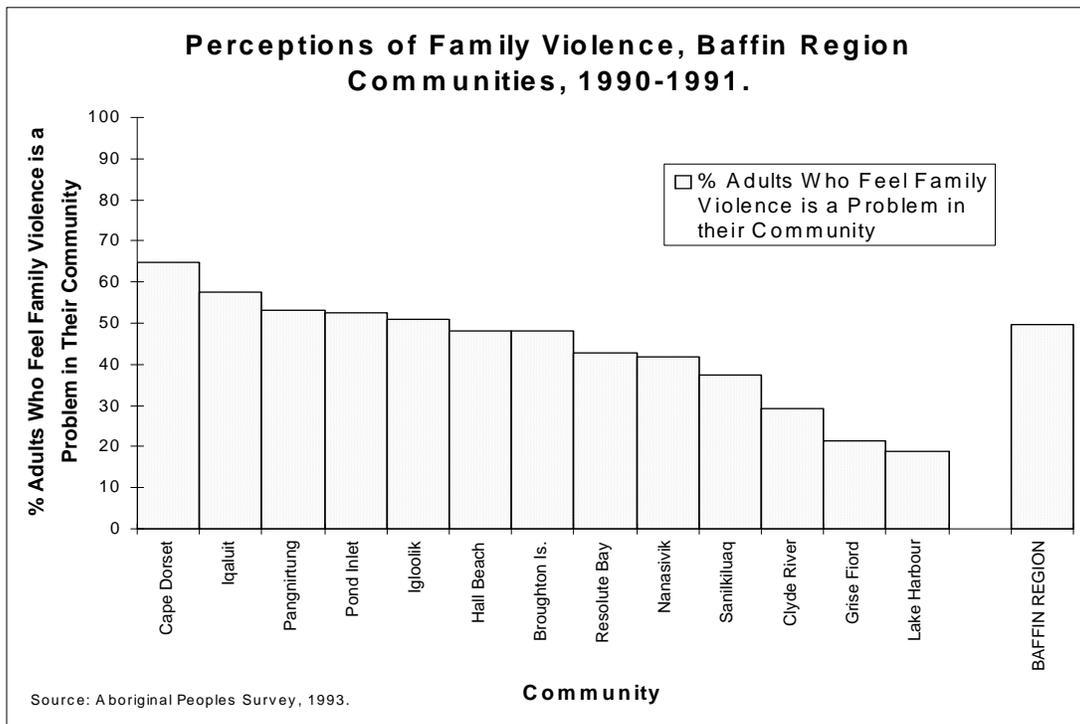
**Figure 8**



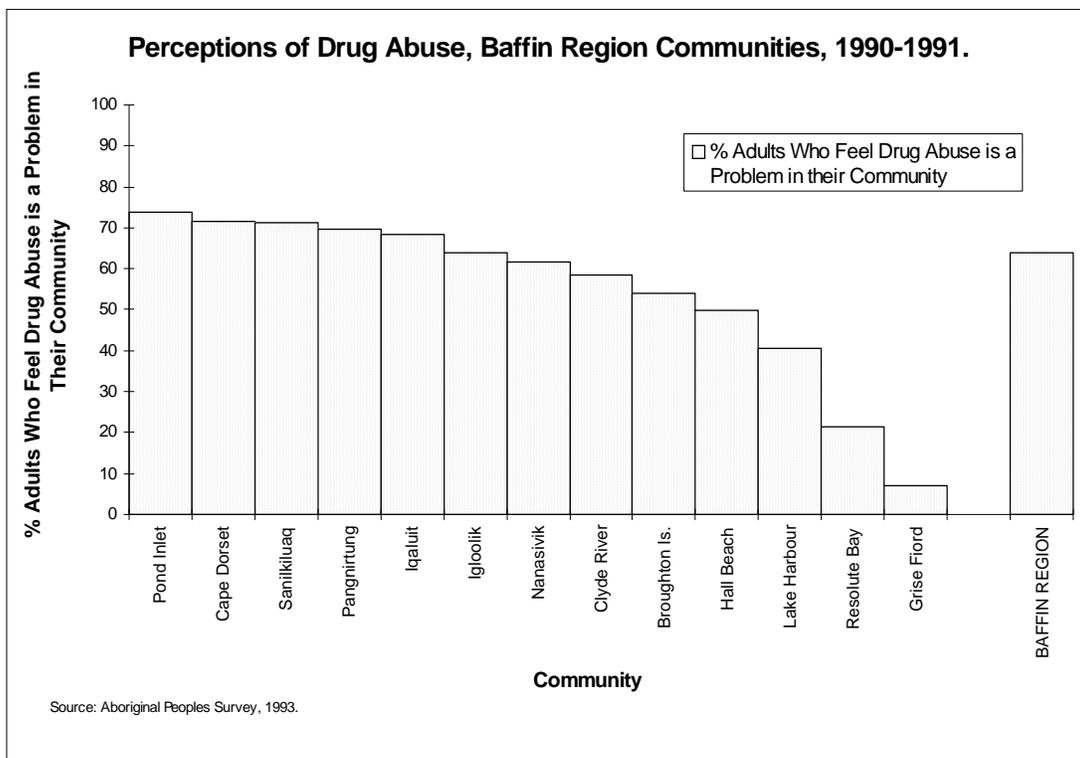
**Figure 9**



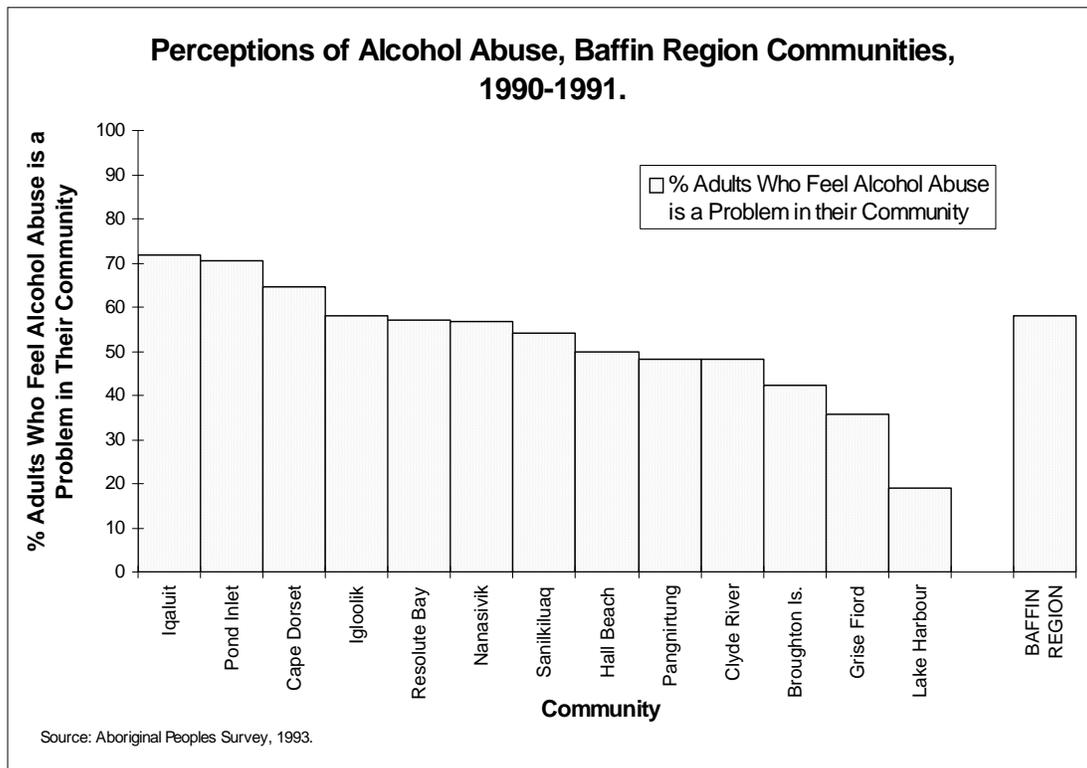
**Figure 10**



**Figure 11**



**Figure 12**

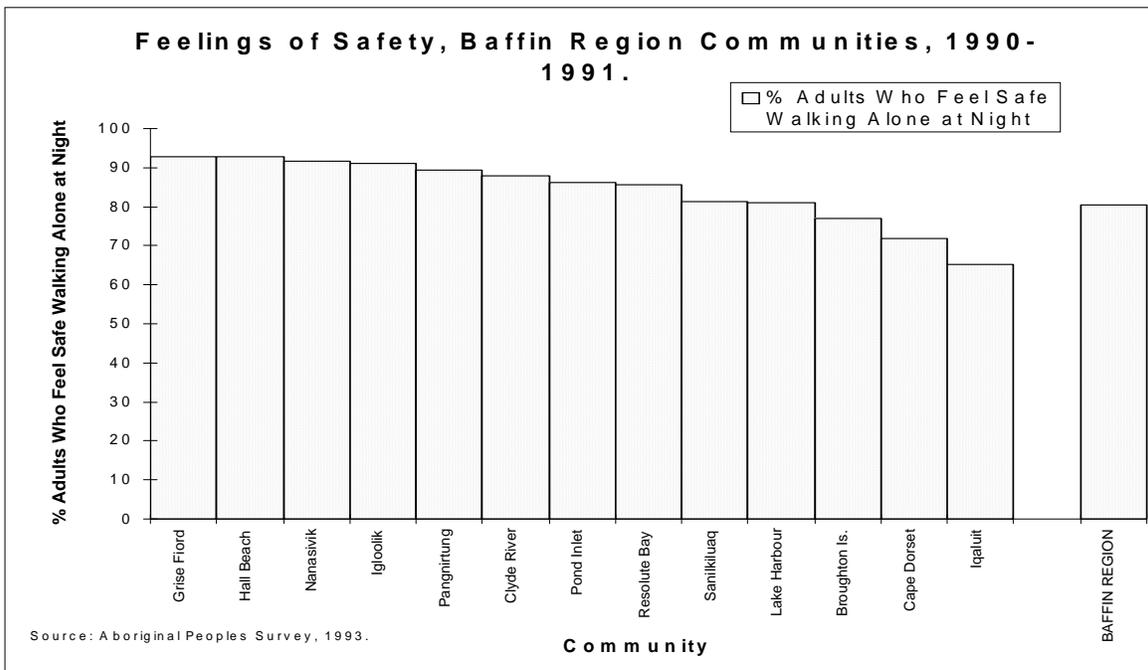


**6. Resident perceptions of personal safety vary across Baffin Region communities.**

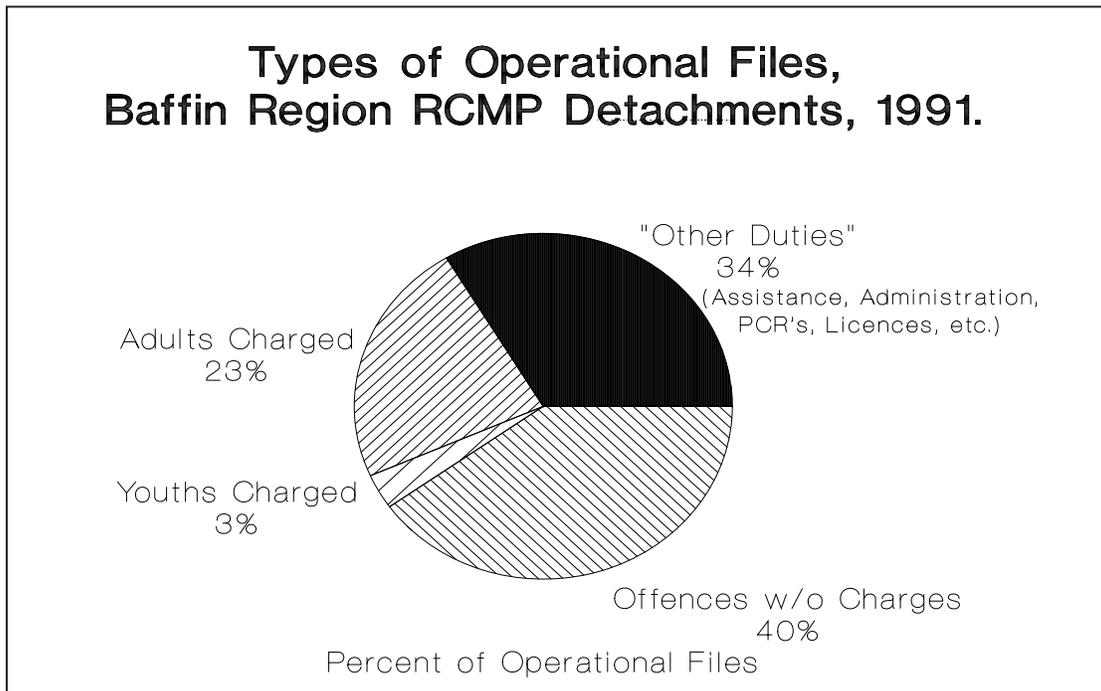
While nearly 93% of residents in Grise Fiord report feeling safe walking alone at night, this figure is considerably lower (65%) for the residents of Iqaluit (see Figure 13). Overall, the Inuit of the Baffin Region feel much safer walking alone in their community at night when compared with the average Canadian.

**7. In 1991, "other duties", which includes providing assistance, and administrative duties, and "offences without charges" comprised 74% of the operational files in Baffin Region RCMP detachments.** Figure 14 indicates that only a very small percentage of the Operational Files (26%) related to adults and youths charged.

**Figure 13**



**Figure 14**



Source: 1991 Operational Files, Iqaluit Sub-Division, RCMP.

### **Delinquency in Baffin Region Communities**

There is considerable variability across the thirteen communities in the Baffin Region in the nature and extent of officially reported delinquent behaviour. In 1991, as shown in Table 1, the charge rate for violent offences across Baffin communities ranged from 0 per 1,000 youth population to 36 per 1,000 youth population. Rates for property offences were much higher: although four communities had 0 charges for property offences (i.e. a rate of 0 per 1,000 population), the highest charge rate was 169 per 1,000 youth. Overall, in 1991, the charge rate for violent and property offences in the Baffin Region were 9 per 1,000 youths and 71 per 1,000 youths, respectively. The prevalence of charges for violent offences is roughly the same in the Baffin Region as it is nationally, although Baffin Region youth are more likely to be charged with property offences. Across Canada, comparable charge rates in 1991 were 9 per 1,000 youth population for violence offences and 47 per 1,000 youth population for property offences.

**Table 1**

***Number of Charges and Charge Rates, \* Baffin Region Youth, 1991.***

| Community            | Violent |      | Property |      | Total Criminal Code |      |
|----------------------|---------|------|----------|------|---------------------|------|
|                      | No.     | Rate | No.      | Rate | No.                 | Rate |
| Broughton Island     | 1       | 11   | 0        | 0    | 1                   | 11   |
| Cape Dorset          | 2       | 10   | 23       | 118  | 31                  | 158  |
| Clyde River          | 0       | 0    | 22       | 169  | 26                  | 200  |
| Grise Fiord          | 0       | 0    | 0        | 0    | 0                   | 0    |
| Hall Beach           | 0       | 0    | 11       | 88   | 13                  | 104  |
| Igloolik             | 0       | 0    | 13       | 53   | 17                  | 69   |
| Iqaluit              | 9       | 16   | 48       | 85   | 65                  | 115  |
| Lake Harbour         | 0       | 0    | 6        | 80   | 8                   | 106  |
| Nanisivik            | 6       | 36   | 11       | 66   | 22                  | 133  |
| Pangnirtung          | 0       | 0    | 7        | 27   | 7                   | 27   |
| Pond Inlet           | 2       | 10   | 20       | 95   | 22                  | 105  |
| Resolute             | 0       | 0    | 0        | 0    | 0                   | 0    |
| Sanikiluaq           | 0       | 0    | 0        | 0    | 3                   | 29   |
| Total, Baffin Region | 20      | 9    | 161      | 71   | 215                 | 95   |

\*Rates are standardized per 1,000 youths age 10 to 19.

Source: Canadian Centre For Justice Statistics.

## **POLICING THE BAFFIN: THE EARLY YEARS**

RCMP members sent to the Baffin Region during the years 1920 - 1960s were generally ill-prepared for the world they entered. As in more contemporary times, the culture, climate, and isolation of the Baffin Region presented the great challenges to members. At this time, the majority of Inuit in the region were living on the land, moving camps with the seasons and with the game which provided the basis of their subsistence on the land. There was little apparent need for law enforcement and this, combined with the harsh, foreign environment which members entered, largely determined their role and activities.

Among the attributes of early policing in the Baffin Region were the following five:

**A lack of "real" police work:** According to the accounts of members posted to the communities in the years prior to the late 1960s, there appeared to be relatively little crime among the Inuit. The majority of the members interviewed stated that, during their entire tour of duty in the Baffin, they never had occasion to arrest anyone. Other recollections of members provide insights into the role which members assumed:

"I walked in and my sergeant said, 'we don't wear guns here.'"

"I can't say that I ever acted as a police officer other than in respect to an incident involving a burn victim and a death."

The cultural differences between Euro-Canadian society and Inuit society meant that members often had to adjust their views on what, in the south, would be criminal behaviour. As one member noted, "There was very little in the way of crime in Pangnirtung. When things went missing, it was generally because someone had borrowed it. I had to change my way of thinking about missing things."

Other communities, however, including Cape Dorset, were exhibiting signs of trouble during the 1960s. This situation was attributed by members, at least in part, to the large sums of money which were generated by the sale of traditional carvings, one member posted recalling:

"Dorset already had an alcohol problem in 1968. It was 'drink till you drop.' There was a lot more money in Dorset. The carvings and craft business had been established, so there were a lot of dollars coming in. There were very few people living on the land. In contrast to Pangnirtung, the majority of people spoke English in Cape Dorset."

**The multi-faceted role of the police.** Police members carried out a number of duties in the communities, many of which were only peripherally related to policing and law enforcement. This is reflected in the recollections of members:

"Most of your work was social work. You might as well say that we were the colonial administrator. You did everything up there: first aid; welfare; medical; you did everything under the sun except be a policeman.

"What a policeman was, was a social worker with a gun."

"We did all sorts of things: we operated the post office, the operated the Sears Catalogue; they would come in and they'd open the catalogue and say, 'This is what I want. This right here.' They couldn't read so it ended up with me trying to figure out, 'Well, are you an extra-large? So, we had to size them as well. So, any errors in the order were certainly our fault."

**Inuit people living a traditional lifestyle:** As previously noted, RCMP members posted to the Baffin region from the 1920's and well into the 1950's found Inuit living a traditional lifestyle that was still largely intact. It was not until the Inuit moved into settlements during the 1950's that this began to break down. One member recalled:

"When I first went there, they were trading children to balance families. There was hunting and they were still living in camps. If you had too many girls and not enough boys to hunt for them, it was time to give a baby as a present of birth. You needed girls too. They were just as important because they cleaned the skins; got them ready for market. They did all the sewing of clothes and you couldn't go hunting unless you had proper clothes to look after you. So it was a very balanced situation."

A considerable portion of the member's time during these years was taken up making visits to the hunting and fishing camps of the Inuit who were living out on the land:

"Of the nine months I was there, probably six months of my time were spent travelling to the camps and the small communities; at the camps, they lived completely off the land; there were about twenty families in each of three small camps; they would make the trip a couple of times a year into the Hudson Bay for supplies; usually in the fall, before freezeup. Then a couple of trips while there was freezeup and then during the summer months. They were primitive camps, no electricity or anything like that. The people wore skin clothing and seal skin boots. Their housing was a combination of igloos and tents covered with snow."

"A trip for us to go out to the camps was a day that everything stopped. We arrived and everything would stop. We met with the elders in the camp and found out what was going on and if there were any problems. About every two or three weeks we came for a day or two visit. We overnighted and then went on to the next camp for a short visit there. We had 25 dogs and that's the way we travelled."

**Members were generally ill-prepared for living and working in the eastern Arctic and members relied heavily upon the Inuit for their survival:** There is considerable evidence that little attention was given by the senior RCMP management to preparing members for the harsh and foreign environment that they would encounter upon arrival in a Baffin Region community. Members were forced to rely heavily upon the Inuit and could not remain isolated and distant from the community. As one member recalled:

"There was nothing in the manual about how to use a dog sled. I learned from the Special Constable. He did all the travelling with me. Usually there were a couple of other Eskimo men from the community who wanted to go out and visit people and they would come along too. So usually there was a party of three or four. It was a rare occasion when we travelled by ourselves."

Another remembered: "There was nothing in the manual. It was all learned by trial and error. Looking back, I probably wouldn't have survived there because you had to rely on other people. You could not be an individualist there."

Another member described his dependency on the Inuit and how he relied on the people for assistance and survival, particularly while out on the land and in travelling to the outpost camps:

"If it was a nice clear day and I could see the coastline around me, I would say, 'Yes, I might have been able to get there.' Not if any weather came in. I would have no inkling whatsoever. When we left the settlement to go to this camp, I knew that's the way you went, but that's all I knew. I totally relied on him to take me there. He just had a sense of direction."

Another member commented: "I was taken through white-outs by Inuit, who had no compass, no map."

The following recollection also illustrates the dependency of members on the Inuit during these early years:

"We were out on the sea ice one night; he had the tent set up with snow to give a little form around the tent and to break the wind; in the morning, I asked Joannasie, 'Where's Pang. in relation to where we are now?' And he said, 'Over there.' With no hesitation. 'Right over there.'" And there's nothing. We're sitting in the middle of the God damned ocean with nothing but ice. All ice and snow. No markings. No anything. I relied on him 125%. I never questioned him. I remember a member telling me, 'Whatever he does, do the same thing. And don't question him.'"

Another member recounted an incident in which the Inuit Special Constable, pulling the member's snow machine, had taken him through a blinding whiteout, pulling the member's snow machine behind his: "I went along like a puppy dog. He ran the show. And it was the same thing when we got to the camps."

The materials on contemporary policing in the following section indicate that the roles of the police and the Inuit have become reversed over the past two decades: the Inuit are now heavily dependent upon the RCMP to manage not only crime and trouble in the communities, but relations among community residents as well. Despite this, the RCMP members still rely upon Inuit whenever they venture out on the land. Interviews with members also revealed that many RCMP members may be no more prepared for northern service than their counterparts who were sent into the Region during the early days.

**Relations between the police and the Inuit were amicable:** The lack of serious crime and trouble among groups of Inuit living on the land and the persistence of traditional lifeways contributed to the amicable relations which existed between the police and Inuit during these years. As one member stated:

"I never got the impression that they didn't want us there. I felt that I had a good relationship with the population. We were always meeting the elders and the young people and it was always a greeting which was favourable. I never, ever felt that I was shunned by anyone."

While most evidence collected in this research supported this view, it was also true that some Inuit elders indicated they respected the white administrators, including RCMP members, to a fault. They often never questioned what they were told to do. In fact some Inuit expressed resentment about "doing what they were told", especially those involved in the Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay relocation project in the 1950's. As noted by one Inuit elder:

"When I was young, Inuit people usually down low, white people really high, they think. White guy say something, you got to be following."

Nevertheless, researchers in this project were unable to determine the exact extent of this resentment and it would appear that it was not a pervasive sentiment in the Baffin.

In summary, members interviewed for the project who had been posted to the Baffin Region during the period 1920-1950 recalled experiences largely devoid of crime, trouble and conflict. The law enforcement demands on the police were few, if any and daily life was filled with largely symbolic and social visits to outpost camps and to "showing the flag." The ill-preparedness of members did not manifest itself in any difficulties in carrying out the policing mandate. The environment in which officers carried out their tasks made few demands on

them as police officers. This was to change, however, in the decades following the 1950's, as Inuit moved into settlements and began to lose their traditional lifeways.

The extent to which policing in the Baffin Region has changed is reflected in the comments of one member:

"When I leave the North, if somebody asks me what it's like up in the north and that they're interested in going, I'm not going to be telling them about the quiet lifestyle, looking after the sled dogs, painting the rocks, nice quiet communities. It doesn't exist anymore. I'll have to tell them about the hours and the days that are spent away from your family. The calls in the middle of the night that never stop day after day after day; the rising violence in the communities."

## **CONTEMPORARY POLICING IN THE BAFFIN REGION**

While the preceding materials provide insights into early policing in the Baffin Region, it is the contemporary role of the RCMP in the Baffin Region that is the primary focus of this report. The role and activities of the RCMP in the Baffin Region have changed dramatically over the past fifty years - from the early days of policing when members relied upon the Inuit for their survival -- to the present time, when the residents in many communities are heavily dependent upon the RCMP to intervene in and address a myriad of issues and problems. RCMP members today are policing in environments which, while still afflicted by a harsh climate and isolation, are nevertheless much more troubled than those encountered by members posted to the region in early counterparts. In addition, it is clear that Aboriginal policing throughout the north generally and, more specifically in the eastern Arctic, has become politicized in recent years.

Interviews with members involved in policing in the region during the period 1970-present followed a chronological track. The following subsections are used to present the materials that were gathered from members:

- Motivations for going North
- Desirable Officer Qualities for Northern Service
- Selection of Members for Policing in the Baffin Region
- Prior Knowledge and Training
- Recommendations for Preparing Officers for Deployment to the Baffin Region
- Arrival and Getting Settled in the Baffin Community
- Policing the Community
- The Police Role in Baffin Region Communities and the Role of Discretion
- Barriers to Effective Policing
- Inuit Dependency Upon The Police

- The Safety of Members and Their Families
- The Transfer Policy
- The Inuit Constables
- The Impact of Baffin Policing on the RCMP Member
- The Future of Policing the Baffin Region

The above categories represent the following major sections of this report.

### **Motivations For Going North**

The responses of the RCMP members interviewed for the project suggest that a member's motivations for applying for transfer to the Baffin Region are an important factor determining the extent to which officers are effective in providing policing services. These factors also effect the quality of the relationships which develop between the officer and community residents. Further, members who seek a northern posting for the "wrong reasons" or who are for some reason unsuited for northern policing, create problems for themselves, their families, and for community residents. In the words of one member "you want a member who wants to be here."

Among the sample of officers interviewed, six motivations for going North were consistently identified:

- **To affect subsequent transfers:** The Baffin Region has long been referred to as the "polar route to Nova Scotia", a reference to the fact that members, originally from the Maritimes, would seek postings in the eastern Arctic in order to increase the likelihood of being posted back to their home region. The northern posting, therefore, was only a small detour on a longer career path. Northern postings continue to be stepping stone for moving between divisions. As one member stated: "I always knew the North was by last resort for mobility. I realized fairly quickly that if you want to go anywhere outside of a division, you have got to specialize."
- **For the money:** The increased salary for northern service, the reduced income taxes for northern residence, and the ability to save money all combined to draw some members to the North.
- **For the adventure and the experience:** Many of the members interviewed by the project team stated that their primary motivation for going north was for the adventure and to see what was regarded as the "last frontier."
- **For promotion:** Historically, a posting in a small northern detachment provided members with an opportunity for rapid advancement. With the introduction of the new

promotion criteria, however, it appears that the "polar route to promotion" will be less travelled in the future.

- **To escape financial/personal problems:** Members have also gone north in an attempt to escape financial and/or personal problems in the south. One member cautioned that the Force should ensure that members who apply for a northern posting "have no ghosts in their closet. The file should be read and there should be no indications of problems."
- **The opportunity to work independently:** Officers view the north generally and the eastern arctic in particular as one of the few remaining areas where members can escape the highly bureaucratized nature of policing in larger detachments and work independently. As one member stated: "You get tired of municipal contracts where you go to work and get in your car and somebody tells you to go here and you go here and you can now do this and you can do that now...here you do everything. You're right in there in the beginning until the final report." And a member posted to a community in the mid-1970s recalled: "It is truly one of the places that I thought, at the time, that the one-man police concept still existed. There wasn't anybody else to call on."

Concern was expressed by many current and retired officers that members may go north for the wrong reasons and the consequences of this for the member, their family, and for the community and its residents were outlined. A senior officer with extensive northern policing experience described quite poignantly a situation which can develop when a member goes north for the wrong reasons: "Billy and Joanny who met and fell in love in high school; suddenly thrust into Broughton Island and they get their door kicked in three nights a week and she develops some malady and the next thing we're paying medical, early transfer out, and the cost is phenomenal." This officer felt that members who went north for monetary or promotional reasons were "selling their souls to the devil..."

It can certainly be assumed that the member involved in the following event, which occurred in Iqaluit in the mid-1980's, did not belong in the North:

"There was a fellow we were expecting for quite a while. We were running short of manpower and we were expecting this fellow from Toronto. The plane came in from Montreal to Frobisher Bay and he was at the top of the ramp looking down and he walked outside the door and looked around and said, 'I'm not staying here. This is a fucking hole.' He turned around and never even got off the plane. He just went right back in and sat down in his seat. He waited an hour and a half for the plane to go

back to Montreal and he was on it. We went to the plane to talk to him, but it was no use."

Of all the reasons to go north, many members indicated that promotion, money, obtaining subsequent transfers, and escaping from problems are, in themselves, insufficient and inappropriate reasons for northern service.

### **Desirable Officer Qualities For Northern Service**

Members were asked to identify, on the basis of their policing experiences in the Baffin Region, the personal qualities which officers transferred to the region should possess. A number of desirable attributes were identified:

- **Maturity and common sense:**

"You have got to have a sense of humour. You have got to be easy going. You can't let things bother you; you have to be capable of working alone and dealing with a certain amount of stress. You have to have common sense."

- **Absence of personal problems:**

As previously noted, it was the unanimous view among the officers interviewed that posted to the Baffin Region should be stable and well adjusted. Members noted that the majority of problems which arose involved alcohol abuse. The problems of excessive use of alcohol among members were recalled by members who were posted to Iqaluit during the early 1980s, one officer recalling that, "It got so bad that the wives of some of the members demanded that the bar be closed for a two hour period just so they'd come home for dinner." In this particular situation, officers who did not drink were marginalized by other members as well as the detachment commander.

- **Self-confidence and an ability to make decisions:**

"A person has to be fairly secure in himself because there is not a lot to do and if you're not a person that is comfortable reading and walking, and if you are a bar fly, then you're going to have problems. If you have a drinking problem, you're going to have problems because there is a lot of time to do that."

- **Tolerant, flexible, and innovative:**

"An ability to appreciate the political nature surrounding policing in the north today and the political issues which surround the administration of justice."

"A person who can adapt and understand that there is a difference between the white and Inuit cultures"

"If you go by the book and try to make it a perfect world, you would be sadly disappointed."

"You have to look at people who are adaptable. You don't need people with hang-ups. The conditions are hard enough to live under and you have to get along with the community. The most important thing is to be able to fit into the community and, if you can, help them better it, but not to change it. You are not there to impose yourself on them. You are not there to sell them, you are there to assist. What you are trying to do is set up a structure to help people carry on after you leave."

Officers must also be able to adapt their policing 'style' to the community context within which they are working. As one member noted, "I'm not doing police work here the same way I did in Tuk; and I didn't do police work in Cambridge Bay the same as I'm doing here."

- **Self-reliance and mechanical aptitude and ability:**

"You are forever fixing furnaces."

"I spent more than 50% of my time on maintenance. I knew nothing about furnaces when I first arrived. It was quite bizarre. They were always going and then the pumps would freeze and it would break. Things like that. There were no tradesmen you could call to come fix it. You had to fix it yourself."

- **Compassion and people skills:**

"You have to look for individuals that are willing to make allowances for other people who are obviously not the same as them.

"If you feel you are superior to these people you are in trouble. You don't want people with a superior attitude."

- **An ability to listen:**

"If you want to be a know-it-all, they will sit back and nod, and then ignore you. If you listen to them, they will listen to you, and have mutual sharing."

- **Seasoning as a police member with contract policing experience and, preferably, with Aboriginal policing experience:**

A number of officers stated that a minimum of five years of contract policing experience was required before a member should be considered for northern service. The importance of contract policing experience was noted by one officer:

"The officers that tend to have problems are the ones that have not done any contract uniform policing. If the officer hasn't done this, they haven't had the opportunity to deal with people and their minor problems. He or she is used to dealing with more serious

offences. If you have no contract experience prior to coming here, the job is doubly hard."

Several members who were interviewed, however, did not feel that previous Aboriginal policing experience was required, one officer stating: "There are lots of individuals out there that have Native policing backgrounds and contract policing backgrounds that I wouldn't hire for up here."

***Perceived Impact of Recruitment Guidelines:*** Concerns were expressed by several active and retired members that, under the new recruitment guidelines, many individuals who had the skills to be successful in northern policing may be excluded from the RCMP and that the Force was losing a valuable resource. Officers specifically mentioned persons from farming backgrounds and those without degrees from community colleges or universities were no longer being recruited into the force. In the words of one member, "Those people who were raised in a small town have a greater appreciation for knowing their neighbors, being a little bit more compassionate, being easy to talk to, and being "people smart." As one member noted:

"Those people who were raised in a small town have a greater appreciation for knowing their neighbors; being a bit more compassionate, being easy to talk to. Being educated is important too, but as long as they're street smart or people smart so they can understand the people."

This view is substantiated in the recollection of a member posted to Resolute Bay in the mid-1970s:

"I can remember going out on a fishing trip with a group of Inuit from Frobisher Bay in the winter time. We went out fishing, cutting holes in the ice. The kid I was with was from Newfoundland; he was a fisherman. I can remember him breaking the ice with these guys -- pardon the pun -- by showing them how to tie a new knot on their jig. This was a small thing that made all the difference in the world."

The concern that police candidates who would perform exceptionally well in remote and northern communities are being excluded by the current standards for recruitment are evident in the observations of one member:

"We have a major thrust in the Mounted police these days to hire qualified people and qualifications mean today an abundance of post-secondary education. But...the young people that we are getting from university have two things in mind when they come in: they have a real desire to get ahead, which can be a good thing, but it will sometimes preclude them from wanting to go out and do the kind of work we are talking about. Secondly, their education will sometimes act as a barrier, a fence, if they have a series

of notions that they have derived, improperly, from a formal education, and then they're taken and put into an area where that no longer applies, but they still try to operate with those parameters.. We're going to miss the boat, because we are going to miss that kid from small town Saskatchewan who spent 8 summers working on a farm in his community and never did go to university but knows how to deal with people."

Regarding the increasing emphasis on education levels, another member observed:

"I don't think that education would make a difference. I was prepared for this...I spent a lot of time in isolation working on my grandfathers farm and whatnot. So, being alone and working by myself, I had no problems. It was very difficult when you had a fellow come up from Vancouver where you are used to having backup...these guys had a very hard time adjusting and they were very difficult to work with."

### **Selection Of Members For Policing In The Baffin Region**

*"I walked into work one day in Burnaby and I had been transferred to Frobisher Bay. I didn't even have an idea of where Frobisher Bay was. I had to go to the library and look at a map."*

*"My first reaction was, 'Where in the Hell is Cape Dorset?'"*

Few of the members interviewed for the project had any prior knowledge or training that would prepare them for policing in the Baffin. While there is a selection and orientation process in place for officers who have applied to be posted to the Baffin Region, it is not applied on a uniform basis. In some divisions, extensive interviews and testing are completed on the member and the member's spouse, while in others, the orientation process may consist of little more than a telephone conversation with the member in the detachment. As one senior supervisor observed: "Divisions take different approaches: some do extensive testing; others just give you a plane ticket." Another member recalled:

"They are supposed to do a suitability interview on all prospective candidates that come into the North. My suitability interview consisted of a two minute phone call with some guy in Vancouver who basically said "Does your wife know you are going?" 'Yes.' 'Does she want to go?' 'Yes.' 'O.K., well everything should be fine.'"

The difficulties which surround the process by which members are selected for posting to the Baffin Region are illustrated in the following personal experiences:

"Staffing was in its usual turmoil, as everybody has come to expect. Little or no information and very poor direction. I got a call from a guy in Yellowknife who said, 'you are coming to the north, eh?' and I said, 'Am I really? Well that's good. That is

nice to hear.' The guy says, 'Give me a call in a couple of weeks and we will tell you exactly where you are going'. Sure enough, a couple of weeks later they called from Yellowknife and told me I was going to Broughton Island."

"I had spent my entire career — 3 years — in Burnaby; they asked me whether I had any experience with small motors and outboards and I didn't have a whole lot of experience with those things either. At the end of the interview, I left with the impression that I didn't make the grade. It was a few months later I walked into the office and found out I had been transferred.

"I was given a tour of the headquarters section in Yellowknife. They took me into the staffing personnel office and I met him and he said as I was leaving, "Oh, by the way, when you're finished your tour come on back in and have a coffee. I want to talk to you.' And that's how it was - just a fluke that I ended up in Cape Dorset."

Specific criticisms were directed toward the screening process, including the observations of one senior officer:

"The screening process is lacking. What people are subjected to down south are people in staffing who haven't got a clue of what life's like in the north. They base it on somebody they used to know that was stationed in Loon Lake, Manitoba and by God, it's terrible. They were up here twenty years ago. It's not like that any more. They need to have people in the North making selection decisions."

This observation was validated by the experience of one member: "The person who interviewed me had never been to the North himself, so it's tough for him to try and visualize whether or not I would be a good candidate to live in Cape Dorset if he had never even been there himself."

Specific concerns were expressed by several members about the practice of transferring officer directly from non-contract policing positions, such as undercover drug work, to Baffin communities. As one member stated: "I never did figure out what working ten years in drugs and coming north had in common." Another member recalled: "We had a Corporal in one of the communities up here, thrown in from the Lower Mainland where he was in Audit and he was put in charge of a detachment in a real tough community. And he blew it, he really did." A number of the officers interviewed for the project had never done uniform contract policing prior to going North and many had previously been assigned to undercover drug enforcement positions in urban areas. One member recalled:

"I was running wire tap operations. Travelling, working eighteen hours a day and then a circular came by about positions available in the north. I called up my girlfriend and asked her what she thought about going North. I got a call from Baffin a very short

time after that saying my name had been put on the list. They said 'If you want to come go to the North, you can go to the North.'

This situation also appears to occur in other regions of the N.W.T., one member observing: "I've seen other Corporals in the Western Arctic thrown in from Security Service in Ottawa and they didn't even know how to run a detachment, let alone run a community."

There is the perception among many members that a near exclusive focus on fiscal concerns has contributed to the difficulties which surround the selection process:

"Dollars is the bottom line. They are looking for someone to go to Cape Dorset and so Ottawa is saying 'we aren't going to spend any more money' so they go and find a Corporal somewhere in the country who wants to go north. They go out searching for a Corporal and they might find one. He might be in Montreal Commercial Crime section who is tired of living in Montreal and tired of Commercial Crime section. Never done a days work in uniform in his entire life. And he is sent to Cape Dorset. That happens a lot. A lot more than they care to say. And generally, but not always, that causes problems."

Suggestions for improving the selection process were offered by several members, including a senior supervisor in the Region. Noting that "the majority of the troops are excellent", this member proposed sending the four NCOs from "G" Division down to "meet, greet, talk and understand why those on the draft to come up want to come; meet these people and weed them out..." This officer offered a somewhat critical assessment of the manner in which members were recruited for northern service: "I'd be lying if I said they (RCMP members) were better prepared these days. You parachute an individual right out of downtown Montreal or Winnipeg and put them into downtown Lake Harbour. Our organization will never change."

### **Prior Knowledge And Training Of Members Sent To The Baffin Region**

*"I didn't have a clue what an Eskimo looked like. I just went in and learned from whoever was there."*

Members posted to Baffin Region communities are often provided with little specific information and no formal orientation to the region. In the words of one member:

"Basically, you go in blind. I came straight here (to the community). Didn't have a clue. I didn't even know \_\_\_\_\_ was my boss. It's like G Division staffing phones you up and you talk to the Sergeant in charge of staffing. He said, 'This is where you are going. We'll send you some papers down and fill them out and send them in.' So I got

a bunch of papers, filled them out, sent them in, bought my plane ticket, and got on the plane. That was it. They don't really prepare you."

There was general agreement among the members that the cross-cultural training which officers receive at Depot and after Depot was of limited use. There is little, if any, reference to Inuit in the training course in Regina, which focuses on Native Indians.

The inadequacy of the materials included in the relocation package was also noted by many of the members interviewed for the project:

"They send you a relocation package. To move your personal effects. But they don't really send you anything to prepare you for the North. For Resolute, especially, they should have sent a package saying 'You're going to be living in a very small room. You've got no stove. You've got nothing. So bring this or that. Bring long underwear and bring some warm socks.' All of a sudden, you're up here and 'shit!' 'I should have brought that, I should have brought this.' And nothing about how to deal with the people here, so you follow whoever is here."

A primary source of information for officers who are posted to the Baffin are members who have previously served in the Region. This word-of-mouth phenomenon, however, is felt to be insufficient and often the source of mis-information. One member who was interviewed was fortunate enough to have received a narrated video, of the community to which he was being posted, from a member already in the community. Another member, sent to the Baffin Region in 1992, however, was shown a film which he estimates was made "in 1945, right after World War II."

Officers were particularly concerned that members should receive instruction on the various nuances of Inuit culture which, they felt, would make them more effective in policing the communities:

"There are different things that happen that, if you had a bit of prior insight into, it would have made things easier. Like, who do you talk to when you go into a household. Now, one person taught me that you pick the oldest person and go and talk to him. You never deal with the subject matter right away. You talk about the weather, about everything for five or ten minutes, sort of a preamble. Then you tell them why you are there and generally they've already figured that out."

A member posted to the region in 1992, admitting that he was "just kind of fumbling to learn how they do things," identified additional elements of Inuit culture that officers should be made aware of prior to being sent into the Baffin:

"...things like you need to speak slowly, because many of the people in the community don't understand English very well...I know that you don't ask them too many questions, because they apparently don't like to answer too many questions. The more questions you ask, the more uneasy they seem to get."

Members of the research team had occasion to speak with participants of one of the first RCMP sponsored cultural awareness courses in Iqaluit. Response to this new initiative was very favorable and participation by community residents was seen as a positive step.

### **Arrival And Being Accepted In The Community**

*"It feels like I've stepped into a new world. You don't know what to expect. It's like walking into the community and I've got to talk to these guys about something that happened in the hamlet. How do I talk to them? How do I deal with them? Do I deal by the book?"* (newly arrived member in Baffin community with five years previous experience working traffic in an urban detachment.)

One objective in conducting interviews with active and retired members was to record their personal experiences in arriving and settling into the communities to which they had been posted. These accounts provide valuable (and often humorous) insights into the situations which members encountered when they arrived in the Baffin Region and further highlight the need for a pre-deployment training and orientation course.

The initial impressions of members arriving in the North, which ranged from fascination with the beauty and solitude of the land to feelings of being overwhelmed by the realization that they are in a distant and foreign land, provide valuable insights into the human dimension of policing. Members often found themselves arriving in communities only to be greeted by a departing member at the airport:

**Arrival in Iqaluit:** "I remember getting off the plane and standing on the airstrip. There was still ice on the bay. The plane took off. There wasn't a lot of people who got off - about six of us. The other five disappeared. I was standing there on the airstrip when the plane took off and then, as the sound of the plane disappeared, I remember thinking to myself, standing there in my Vancouver street clothes and looking at the ice on the he Bay n the summer time, thinking 'Whoa, I've really done it this time.'"

**Arrival in Sanikiluaq:** "The constable was supposed to stay there for ten days to orient men to the detachment and the community and so on. I landed the police plane; he approaches me and says he got a call from his wife and his mother-in-law is very sick and he has got to leave on that plane. So they unloaded us and loaded our personal belongings into a truck. He gave me the keys to the detachment and showed me where it was and he left. So, for three months, I was all alone in that community."

**Arrival in Broughton Island:** "When I got dropped into Broughton Island, it was like a 20 minute turnover. Here are the keys; sign this, and away you go."

**Arrival in Resolute Bay:** "On the flight up to Resolute Bay, I was the only passenger on the plane. I arrived in Resolute Bay and it was dark. It must have been the middle of the night. I was going down the middle of the ramp and the fellow that I was replacing was coming up the stairs. And he said, 'Here are the keys. The truck is over there. See ya.' So I went around, collected my trunks, found out where I lived, where the police office was. And there I was."

The process by which members become accepted by the community and establish relationships with community members is one of the most crucial aspects of policing in the Baffin Region. The following experiences indicate that officers come under close scrutiny by the community and live in a "glass bowl":

"There were times when nobody would talk to me, but I was quite scared about the whole thing. It was quite an experience to have no one in town talk to you. It's like you are invisible. It's o.k. for a day or two, but when it goes on for two months - if it wasn't for the nurse and the school teacher and those people, I'd probably had a lot of difficulty."

Officers also reported that they had been "tested" by community residents upon arrival in the community: "When you are new, you are going to be tested. People want to see how far they can push you. It is all going to come at once. It is going to happen."

**THE CASE OF THE CN MUG, PANGNIRTUNG, 1960s:**

**My first trip to the outpost camps out of Pang was probably two weeks after I arrived there. I made the trip out to the camps with the Corporal and the Special. The three of us went, like an introduction for me. There were three women and three men, Eskimos, in one big igloo and we went in and had tea and a piece of cake and jam. We just sat down and we talked. There was this enormous Eskimo woman with a new CN tin cup, a mug. I was watching her and not paying attention what was going on. She boils the water and gets the water all hot. She was making tea for us. She hawked up this greenie into that mug and she rubbed it all around the cup and she put the tea in it and she gave it to me. And everybody was watching. Now, what am I going to do? And I was going to say that I don't want it? I said to myself, "No, I'm going to take it if it kills me." I drank it back and I never let on that it bothered me at all. I just drank it right back in about two gulps and I gave the cup back to her again. She took the cup and she washed the cup all out, polished clean and then refilled it for me. I never had any problems at that particular camp."**

Another member, posted to Cape Dorset in the mid-1980s, recalled: "It took about a year to be accepted into the community and to become aware of what the community was all about; how things worked and what people expected."

Other observations on becoming accepted were offered by members posted in Baffin detachments in 1992:

"You can tell right off the bat whether you're going to be accepted. Within the first couple of months, anyway, you can tell whether people are receptive to you and the way you do your work. Once they decide that you're an o.k. guy and you're treating them decent, that you are going to do your work, you're usually accepted."

"And I knew when all of a sudden I was kind of part of the community. I was in the Hudson Bay Store talking to the kids that were working in there, and all of a sudden I had a tap on my shoulder and I turned to look and there was nobody there, and I turned to look the other way and there was nobody there. And I looked down behind me and there as a fellow kneeled down behind me and the whole store broke into laughter and at that point I said, 'Now, I belong.'"

Officers were often able to reduce the time frame required for them to be accepted:"

"I was a mechanic before I joined the Force; so I made sure I took all of my equipment to fix skidoos because everybody had skidoos; I took all of my equipment to fix outboard motors, because everybody had outboard motors. I also had taken an oil-fired furnace course, so I could fix those too. Even if a guy hates you, if you can fix something for him in five minutes that would take him two days to fix, he's got to respect you."

To establish contact with the residents requires that officers adapt to the culture and the community context which they have entered, contexts which are often appreciably different from those in which he or she has previously been posted. A senior officer noted: "You've got to live and assimilate into a community to understand their side of the coin. It has not been that long since these people have lived in mud huts and snow houses and you've got to take that into consideration." In the words of another member: "The police work was secondary to all that learning that was going on. You have to get to know the people; get to know how they live and how they reacted to white man's law."

The following experience, related by a member who was posted to the region in the late 1970's, highlights the challenges that may confront the newly-arrived officer:

**The first day I arrived, a boy of about 17 or 18 came to my door; it was about 8 o'clock at night. And I had boxes everywhere and I was still trying to sort out things; it wasn't a detachment at this point. It was a little shack about the size of this room that was the office, the residence, everything. And I was trying to manoeuvre around these boxes and get out what was important and put away what could wait until the detachment was finished being built. And a knock comes to the door and there is a young lad standing out on the doorstep with a shotgun in his hand. And my immediate reaction was to get my hand on the shotgun and pull him and the gun into the building and find out why he was there with a shotgun. He wasn't there to threaten**

me or anything. He was bringing me the shotgun, but I didn't know that at the time. He didn't speak very good English and, in fact, a lot of the people in the community couldn't speak English, or didn't speak English, so there was a bit of a problem there. He was telling me that he was bringing me the shotgun because he had caught his sister trying to kill herself. And, I said, 'Where is your sister?' He said, 'she's right there.'

And, sure enough, I looked around the corner of the house and she was standing there. And she was quite a bit older. I motioned to her to come in and she could speak English quite well. She had spent a number of years in Ottawa, going to school and working. And she was upset and crying and I asked her if it was true and she said, 'yes.' I checked the gun and, sure enough, there was a live shell in the chamber and there were two marks in the primer, so obviously the firing pin had hit twice, but for some reason, the gun hadn't gone off. It was a very rusty old gun and the shells were rusty. In any event, I brought them in and I asked her what had brought this on. And she wouldn't say, but her brother offered that it was because she was supposed to get married to somebody that she did not want to marry.

So I had a little difficulty with this. So, I said, "What do you mean, you're engaged to somebody." She said, 'well, sort of.' And I said, "well, just break off the engagement. What's the problem?" And she said, "Well, you don't understand." And, that's right. I didn't. What I eventually got out of her is that she had been promised in marriage as a young girl to a fellow who was out of the settlement at the time, out taking a pilot's course or something. When he came back from his pilot's course, that is when it was going to happen. She was going to get married. Well, she had another boyfriend and she was not about to get married to this guy. She thought she could not talk any sense into her father. She said, "I can't take it here; I hate it here; I just want out." And suicide was her option. And I said, "First of all, you don't have to marry someone you don't want to. Your father can't arrange a marriage for you. Not in 1977. This doesn't happen." I said, "How old are you?" She was 23.

I couldn't believe it. Here was a girl that spoke reasonably good English; obviously had a good education; but for her, there was no way out. I said, "Look, the solution is to leave the community; to escape from your father. I'll pick you up tomorrow morning and take you out to the airport. There's a plane due in a 7:30 and I'll put you on the plane. Do you have enough money for a ticket? Yes, she said. She was going to stay with friends or relatives in Great Whale River.

So, fine, I figured. Wrote up my report and the next morning, I went and picked her up and took her out to the airport. At the airport, the airport manager, who was related to her, would not sell her a ticket. And I said to him, "Look, you've got to." Now, I don't know anybody in town; I'd just arrived the previous afternoon. "No", he says. "You just stay out of this. This is none of your business. Keep your nose out of our culture. You don't know what you are getting yourself into." And, I said, "Well, look, as far as I'm concerned, if she wants to leave, she has a right to leave;" I was thinking that her individual rights were more important than tradition. And, he wouldn't sell her the ticket. So, I said, "Fine, I'm putting her on the plane and the pilot will take her out of here. We'll sort this out later."

All of a sudden people started arriving at the airport. The whole town showed up. There were about 200 people out at the airport. And we're waiting and waiting for the plane to come. Her father comes out. Now I didn't realize this, but her father is a very powerful person in the community. He was considered a shaman. He arrived and I don't know how old he would have been. He looked like one of the old timers in the community. He came in and started screaming at his daughter in Inuktitut, pointing at me and screaming. And then he went over to her and he grabbed her by the hair. She had quite long hair and he starts yanking her hair, pulling her towards the door. And she's screaming and crying. She's looking right at me and saying "help me, help me."

So, what do I do. In a split second decision, I waded in between the two of them and got them separated. And then I scurried her out and put her in the back seat of the police truck and locked the doors. This guy came out and he went up one side

of me and down the other. I didn't understand a word of what he was saying. Then we can hear the airplane coming. Meanwhile, the crowd is starting to pour out in front of the airport building. The plane - you can see it way off in the distance. Just a speck. The father starts doing a little dance, waving his arms, and it's almost like a chant. The next thing you know the plane comes in and its getting lower - it gets down to a couple of hundred feet off the runway and all of a sudden, one wing comes up and it gets blown off the runway. And it takes off again and circles one more time and comes in and can't land. So Lucas, the airport manager, comes out and announces that the plane is not going to land because all of a sudden a wind has come up and it can't land. Well the people were "oooooh".

Then, out of no where, a husky comes from behind the building. Now, there's no loose dogs in the community. But there is this sled dog that was loose and it came up and peed on all four tires of the truck; went around the truck. And everybody is going "Oooooh" - like this was really cool. And the head man gets on his 3 wheeler and heads down the road; leaves ahead of everybody with the dog trotting after him.

I take her down to the community. I'm lost in this community. I don't know anybody. Most of the people don't speak English and I'm starting to realize that. I went to the Bay manager because he was married to an Inuit woman and I asked whether it was possible that she could translate for me. His wife was from Pond Inlet and was fairly new in the community and didn't know all of the different dialects; but she could still communicate. I felt I had to get a hold of the father and sit down and have a rational conversation with him, because things were not good.

In the mean time, I've got this girl; she won't let go of my shirttails. She's terrified of everybody now; not just her father. I finally get a hold of the father and made arrangements to meet. We meet and talk. In this talk, he rants and raves about how I was the devil and I had come to annihilate his race and that he would have to get rid of me. Of course, this woman is very uncomfortable doing the translation. And, I asked what he meant by "get rid of." He did something with his hands that she said was local and she did not understand. So, then she asked if he meant to do me harm. And, he said that within six months, I'd be dead. He'd put a curse on me out at the airport and within 6 months I'd be dead. That I wasn't going to survive if I did not leave. He wouldn't see my point of view and he still insisted that his daughter was going to marry this other fellow because it had been arranged for years. He left and the girl stayed with the Bay manager and his wife that night.

The next morning, I took her out to the airport. About 40 or 50 people showed up, the plane landed, she got on, and away she went. She never did marry this fellow. She eventually came back before I left the settlement to live, made amends with her father, and she didn't have to marry this guy. But, after that incident, I went through a period of 3 months where no one would talk to me. Nobody would talk to me except a few of the white folks. It was quite a feeling. I would go into the Bay store to buy some groceries or something. The Inuit people are by and large very jovial and they are always smiling and chatting amongst themselves in the store. I would walk in and it was as if someone had turned off the lights. They were scared because they would not look at me; they wouldn't talk to me; they got very stone faced.

This went on for about three months; finally I ended up leaving to go back to YK for court. I was gone for about 3 weeks. When I came back, whenever I would see someone, I would smile and say "Hello"; slowly people started to respond. Eventually, the father of the girl began responding. I had a couple of skidoos that I wanted to sell for Crown asset and he was the only one that put in a bid for them. I think he felt that I was doing him a favour and trying to win him over; no one put in a bid for the second skidoo, so I gave him both for the one bid.

And from that day on, he was civil to me. And, in fact, when I got transferred from the Belcher Islands, the day I was leaving we were loading up the Twin Otter at the airport. he came up to me. He has this package all wrapped up and he gave it to me. And his daughter, the one who had been involved in the incident, translated for him. And he said this was a present for me, but not to open it until I got to Rankin

Inlet. When I got to Rankin Inlet, I opened it and it was two carvings. Very beautiful carvings. I've still got them. One is a carving of a local citizen who lived there. He was deformed from birth and had a very crooked face and walked bent up. He couldn't talk. He always had a leather pouch and he always carried a dull old axe in one arm and a pipe in the other. I never ever saw him smoke the pipe - he couldn't use his arms. One of the carvings in a perfect likeness of him. The other is a perfect likeness of the father, but it's much bigger. And it looks like he has a monkey in his hand; you can see him leaning and pulling this monkey; he's got a big club in one hand and he's leaning away. These are strange, beautiful carvings.

In Rankin Inlet, a school teacher had me take the carvings to a local shaman to see what he thought of them. So I did and he looked at them and said, "Where did you get these carvings?" And I told him they were a gift when I left. He says that the carving of the deformed man was a carving of a man possessed by the devil and the other carving was a hunter or powerful figure in the community, who is taking an evil spirit out of the community; the monkey was the evil spirit.

### **Policing The Community**

Given the small size of communities in the North, the role of the police assumes even more significance than in urban areas. Policing in the Baffin Region is "high visibility - high consequence" policing: high visibility in the sense that members are operating in small detachments in communities which are generally under 500 residents. And high consequence in the sense that the dynamics which develop between the member and the community have a significant impact on the member, his or her family, community residents, crime victims, and offenders.

Policing in the Baffin Region is also "high demand-high expectation" policing: high demand on the resourcefulness and creativity of the officers and high expectations by community residents who have become heavily dependent upon the police to intervene and resolve not only criminal offences, but interpersonal disputes and disagreements as well.

Generally, the relationships between police members and community residents can be characterized as positive. In the words of an Inuit Special Constable, "I think that most of the Inuit people respect the police very much. There is a general respect for the police." Historically, the Inuit have evidenced considerable deference to the police and, as previously noted, gave considerable assistance to members sent to the region in the early years.

In several of the communities, however, members perceived that police-community relations were less than positive, an officer in one community in 1992 observing: "...here, we don't really associate with the locals because we are not welcome. ..we are more tolerated. We're wanted and we're required but other than that the attitude is 'Leave us alone. Don't bother us.'"

There may also be a reluctance on the part of citizens to be seen as being too friendly to the police, one officer recalling:

" I actually tried to do a bit of visiting. In this community, I know they are hostile. I just kept going there for tea or a straight visit. They didn't want me there because people would think they were squealing on somebody else because I kept going to see them. They didn't want me to be seen around with them. After the second visit, they said 'Why are you coming here? Maybe you shouldn't come here. Maybe people think I'm talking about them.'" They just didn't want us visiting. Not in uniform, anyhow."

Conflict also occurred between the police and community residents when alcohol was involved. In such situations, there was often considerable hostility directed toward officers. One member, posted to the region in 1992, commented on the hostility which was expressed toward the police, most often when residents were intoxicated:

"When they're sober, they like to have their 80 horsepower on their brand new aluminum boat and they've got their high powered rifle with a 30 round clip and they've got their radio. It makes their life easier and they will utilize it. When they get drunk it's 'Fuck you white man.' 'You've fucked my life, you've fucked my culture, you've fucked my people' and they're thinking that way."

It should be noted that the specific experiences of members with community residents and the nature of police-community relations will depend upon a variety of factors, including the personality and policing style of the member, the nature and extent of crime and trouble in the community, and community residents themselves. As well, police-Inuit relations out on the land may assume a different tenor than in the settlement:

"Out on the land hunting walrus, I got snow bound at an outpost camp for three days. The people were really friendly to me. They were really nice. But if you saw them in town, they're really shy of you. You were now a policeman. They weren't overly friendly."

A significant contributor to the maintenance of positive police-resident relations is the continued dependency of members on Inuit outside of the settlement. Officers stated that they would rarely venture out of the community without being accompanied by an Inuit member or by a community resident. Even in contemporary times, police members rely on Inuit for their survival out on the land, as illustrated by the experience of one member who served in the region in the late 1970s:

"I remember going seal hunting with three guys and we were only supposed to be gone a day. We ended up getting lost and we didn't have any food. We killed three seals and they cut them open, took the liver out and it froze. It was 45 below or something like that. They chopped it into chunks. They had the stove going and there were boiling a a big pot of water. We were huddled behind a wall that they had made

out of snow. This guy hands me this lump of seal liver. It's frozen by now or just about and I said, "What is this for?" And he says, "It's so you don't freeze to death. You have to eat that." And I said, "OK". So I went over and the water was just starting to boil and I was going to throw it in the pot of water and boil it; thinking boiled liver was better than nothing. And this guy looked at me and said "Don't do that. You're going to make us all real mad. That's for tea." So I said, "How the Hell am I going to cook the liver?" And, he says, "you don't cook it. And if you don't eat it, you probably won't make it home. The only way to keep warm is to eat the raw seal liver, because it gives you everything you need." So I cut it up into pieces and started swallowing them like pills. By the time I finished it, I was chewing it and enjoying it. This raw seal liver. And feeling warm. Very quickly. Within 20 minutes, I was comfortable again."

Given the high-visibility-high consequence nature of policing, the actions of an individual officer may have a significant impact on police-community relations and on the attitudes which residents hold toward the police. One officer commented:

"I found that the more you went out on the land with them, the less problems you had within the community. It just seemed that I literally became their policeman...I was there when they needed me and the rest of the time I was there doing stuff that they were doing. They all came in from the camps to say 'goodbye to us.'"

Throughout the interviews, specific police members were identified who were highly respected by both communities and officers for their abilities to police effectively in the Baffin Region. This highlights further the need for careful attention to the selection of members for Baffin region policing and the importance of providing these officers with an orientation course prior to their deployment. While individual members will still have to "find their way" and develop their own policing style for the community to which they are posted, these tasks will be made far easier when they are equipped with information on the culture and the community prior to arrival.

Numerous instances in which difficult or awkward situations developed because of differences between Euro-Canadian and Inuit cultural practices were related by members, including an occasion where a member's wife put up jack-o-lanterns, witches and cats on the windows around Halloween and several women from the community told her to take them down because they would attract "evil spirits." Other, more serious situations arose out on the land, as evidenced by the following recollection of a member posted to Resolute Bay in the 1970s:

"I went out on a hunting trip with Tony - an Inuit from the community, the Hudson's Bay manager, and my partner, to a place called Little Cornwallis Island. We were going

hunting for Perry caribou and it was right at the coldest time of the year. It was the end of November and we only had 20 minutes of twilight a day. And the day that we chose to leave, the temperature dropped from 25 below zero to 50 below in less than 12 hours. Our trip was about 100 miles one way and we had a terrible time with the carburetors on our skidoos freezing up. The Inuit have an innate ability with mechanical things. It always amazed us. At 50 below zero, he'd stop the skidoo, and he'd take off the carburetor and disassemble it, clear the ice out and put it back on. Ten miles down the trail, the same thing all over again. Now, we were towing the sleds with all of our gas supplies and, because of the temperature change, some of the gas cans were just bought that day at the Hudson's Bay. They split open on the bottom and we lost all of our gas. We'd lost over half of our gas supply. We ended up having to leave 2 of our skidoos abandoned and to go back and get them later in the year. Tony was doing this - about the fifth time - and I'm watching. We couldn't even take our gloves off at that temperature and he's working with bare hands on this metal object. And, I said, 'Tony, do you have any idea what's causing this?' And he says, 'It's the antifreeze you're putting in.' We had been putting this in a lot. And we said, 'Why didn't you tell us?' And, he said, 'You seemed to want to do it.' Now, that really sums up their attitude, particularly the older Inuit. If you were predetermined on a course, and it was your wish, they would not stand in the way of that. That was up to you. And, here was this guy paying for our stupidity, but he wouldn't interfere."

While often perplexed by the culture and traditions of the Inuit, police members were and continue to be impressed by the skills of the Inuit on the land, their mechanical abilities, and their success in adapting to the harsh conditions in the Baffin. A member who served in Iqaluit in the early 1970s told us this:

"I had the utmost respect for their skills; These guys would go out with nothing. They'd go out with a little bit of a wrench and I've seen them run skidoos with the belt from their pants as a drive belt; and the thing would chirp wrong or cough or something and they'd just stop and they'd have it all apart. It would be 20 below zero and they'd be sitting there with it all apart and blowing bits of water out of the gas line and everything else with their bare hands. And this guy has learned everything about skidoos by doing it. He's had no formal training; he hasn't gone to skidoo school. And, you're thinking, 'We're in a lot of trouble if that doesn't work.' I never saw them fail. Not a bloody one. Extremely mechanical."

It is unlikely that officers who do only one "tour of duty" in the Baffin Region will gain more than a superficial understanding of Inuit culture and the community in which he/she was posted. Even among Baffin police veterans, there is an acknowledgment that the land,

culture and the people were often beyond grasp, one member admitting: The general view among the members was that it was virtually impossible to become intimately familiar with all facets of community life, one officer stating: "I think the Inuit communities are like the layers of an onion and I'm not sure unless you're there for a long, long time, whether a white man can ever get to the core of it."

### **The Police Role In Baffin Region Communities and the Role of Discretion**

Despite the changes which have occurred in the Baffin Region over the past two decades, including increases in the rates of crime and trouble in many communities, contemporary police officers continue to perform a multi-faceted role:

"Our mandate is to do just about anything that needs doing in the town and that includes everybody else's job. I've done everything - filling out income tax returns, being involved in funerals or hunting with the elders, or fixing the hamlet truck or doing plumbing repairs at the teachers houses. It just goes on and on and on. It's part-time policeman, part-time maintenance man..."

Members are also on call 24 hours a day, a radical departure from the policing schedule in larger communities in the south: "When I was in Coquitlam, I was only a police officer when I was on shift. In or out of uniform; here, you only have one life, one identity. There is never a hanging up of the hat." Officers in the Baffin Region are involved in a case from its initial stages to the court stage.

Earlier, it was revealed that there is considerable variation in the nature and extent of crime and trouble between Baffin Region communities. This, in turn, has a significant impact on the demands which are made upon police officers in the thirteen communities. While many of the communities are relatively "untroubled", others are afflicted by high rates of alcohol abuse, violence, and domestic assaults. In several of the communities, particularly Iqaluit, the members are required to adopt a more crime control, law enforcement style of policing. As one officer observed: "The members in the settlements were there as part of the community, while the guys in Frobisher were there as policemen." This generally means that the use of officer discretion was tied in to community values. Because officers were so visible in a small and remote communities, the use of officer discretion took on an extremely important role.

Given the small size of the communities, the lack of mobility between the settlements, and the honesty of Inuit, it is generally not difficult for members to solve the offences which are brought to their attention. This is illustrated by the scenario recalled by one member posted to Sanikiluaq in the mid-1980s:

"There was a big container with a padlock on it, with the acetylene container that they used for welding. The Hamlet manager discovered the lock broken and called to report a B & E. I went over in the morning and it was 40 below in February and around the valve of this container was a bunch of blood, skin, and saliva. What the guy was doing was putting his lips around it and inhaling it, but his lips were freezing to the tanks. It wasn't hard to solve the crime. I just started knocking on doors and found the guy who was missing half of his lips and that was it."

Without the infrastructure of a large policing organization in the community and in the absence of supporting agencies, police members in Baffin Region detachments are required to tend to a wide variety of administrative and maintenance types of duties, including, for one officer at the Resolute Bay detachment, handling a European who arrived one day to ride a motorbike to the North Pole!

As previously noted, a primary requirement for successful policing in the Baffin Region is that the officer be adaptable and flexible. This extends to the manner in which the provisions of the law are enforced and how individual officers exercise their discretion. In the words of a senior officer, "The fast pace, white-collared crime fighter that arrives on the scene is outgunned, out manned and out knowledgeable until he slows down and gets down to the pace of the people he's dealing with and makes an effort to understand them." This reinforces the importance of prior knowledge and training, and an ability to listen to residents. As one member stated about using less discretion in some cases:

"When I arrived in \_\_\_\_\_ and I put some guys in jail, I went to see the parents. While the kids were in jail I went to see the parents to see what they think about sending their kid to Iqaluit. I would say 99% of the parents will say, 'yes, it's time for them to go to Iqaluit', because they don't want to listen to them....What I learned I think Inuit are really proud of themselves, most of the, especially the old people. And they like to be concerned when kids are involved. We have some families down south, the average white family, let's say in downtown Montreal, they don't care about their kids. The kids fifteen...you're on your own now. But up here, they like to be asked if the kid should go to jail."

The close-knit nature of the communities, their small size, and their remoteness mean that the decisions of members are "high consequence". Members must adapt their policing style to the needs and requirements of the community and be sensitive to a host of factors that are less relevant in more urban areas of the country. As one member pointed out:

"You had to be a diplomat first before you had to be a policeman. The books are there, but you had to put your own interpretation to those books and those laws. If a

community as a whole saw no need to wear the life jackets or the community saw no need to wear a helmet, then you left it at that. I'm not saying you bent the rules, but you adapted them to the community and made things for the betterment of the community."

The importance of an officers discretion was echoed by the majority of the officers interviewed for the project, including one who observed:

"If we were to come here and for every call that you got, you threw someone in jail, you would get very little respect from the people in the community. You have got to use a lot of discretion, even though some people may be upset because I am not throwing the person in jail. Jail is not the answer to everything. Sometimes things can be dealt with without charging. It is different in a big city where you might never see that person again. Here you could be playing ball with or against them and every time you go into the Hamlet, you are going to be bumping into them. You are going to be dealing with the person if not on a daily basis, then on a weekly basis. A lot of the minor offences can be solved by discretion."

Another member recounted how more "informal" techniques of crime control were often used:

"There was a lot of discretion. There were occasionally people who we just told to get on the plane and get out of town. We couldn't really convict them or we could have but it wasn't really worth our time and effort. But they were causing problems and the community wanted them out. In one case, this fellow was beating up a woman he was living with. The brother and father knew about it and they were very upset. The Inuit Special told me that people were getting upset about this guy. But we couldn't get the grounds to arrest. Finally, I picked him up on something very minor and I told him 'You're not wanted in town anymore. The plane is leaving at 3:00. You should be on it.' And he left."

Developing a policing style which is suitable for the community, ensuring the proper exercise of discretion, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the police and the law is a very difficult balancing act for members. One officer noted that "we look at everything from our values and our perspective. They're a different culture and they look at things differently. Amazingly differently. It's extremely hard to get inside their heads, their logic."

Resolving disputes was often made more difficult by the fact that members are often uncertain as to the specific causes of an altercation, an officer recalling:

"When liquor was involved, old feuds, old hard feelings could come to the surface. Things would simmer down and be quite normal between people, but when the liquor came out, they would remember old insults. Occasionally the people would talk to you and you would find out that the reason for a fight or an altercation between two people was something that was said four or five years ago."

The personal "style" of the police officer(s) in small detachments and the relations that exist between the police and the community will have a significant impact on the rates of arrest and charging, as well as on the success of any community-based initiatives designed to prevent or reduce crime. Furthermore, the lack of an orientation program for officers being posted to the Baffin region means that each member must determine, often by trial and error, what is the most effective way to police the community.

To be effective, police officers are required to adapt their role to fit the needs of the community in which they are policing, while at the same time carrying out their mandate to enforce the provisions of the *Criminal Code*. This is particularly true for offences of a less serious nature:

"You tend to get fired up about a little project and wanting everybody to carry life preservers on their boat; you'd go and storm and scream and threaten to write tickets. And a couple of them would go and buy preservers. It's ridiculous because if you fall into the water up there, you're dead in three minutes. So why should anybody want a life jacket?"

A senior supervisor in the region noted that it is often necessary for officers to modify their traditional crime control, law enforcement orientation:

"A lot of the problems that troops have when they first get here is....that they are very enforcement oriented. You've got to suck back, reload. Because what's a theft down there may not be a theft up here. And the sooner you learn that lesson, the quicker you are having a better time in the settlement."

One member, recently departed from the Baffin, outlined the approach he took to policing in the community to which he had been posted.

"My attitude when I went in there was to be involved in the community. I met regularly with the council, and, informally, even more often. Formally, I would sit down with the council and tell them I was there to serve the community. As it went on, they became more active. They would phone up and tell me they were concerned about various things, such as the speed of three-wheelers driving around the community."

Members in all of the communities provide monthly reports to the Hamlet councils which detail police activities during the previous month.

Police members offered extensive observations on the strategies that they utilized to effectively police the communities to which they were posted. Many of the officers who were interviewed felt that it was imperative that members have a clear idea of their mandate and of the specific parameters of their role in the communities:

"These people don't expect us to be them. They don't expect us to become Inuit people, nor do I expect them to become or think like a person of European descent. They don't expect assimilation. They don't really want you coming into their homes and sitting down and watching their TVs or BSing with them. They will extend the courtesy, just like any other community or culture and they are fine. The niceties of 'Hello. How are you?'. At the same time, I respect the people and I treat them good and they treat me good."

However, this contrasted with the comments made by an Inuit RCMP member about white constables:

"Like the white guy in town...this year is really quiet because he is really involved with the people...like community center. He's on the recreation committee too...I think some members are not close to the people sometimes. The people don't like it that way. You got to be freindly, you got to visit."

The following are illustrative of the various approaches which officers employed:

"I found out that the elders is where it's at. It's not the young ones with the big mouth, the politicians. When I was transferred to Resolute Bay, the first thing I did when I got there, after I found out where the office was, I went door to door in the village and introduced myself to the elders. I had more tea than I could shake a stick at. That really shook the town."

- "I'd go around fixing people's snowmachines, outboard motors; I had boat days. I would announce on the radio in the Spring that I would take their boat down to the water; I also took them up when winter came."

- "My philosophy was to try and deal with problems through the local justice committee or the alcohol committee, rather than through the court system. When they looked after problems, they got results."

Each member posted to the Baffin adopted a strategy of policing which they were most comfortable with. Members acknowledged that, even among officers in the same detachment, there were often differences in policing styles, the extent to which they

accommodated the expectations of the community; their interest in participating in extra-curricular activities such as sports with youth, and their interest in and support for local justice initiatives. This is evident in the remarks of two members assigned to the same 2-officer detachment, albeit at different time periods. One member, who was extensively involved in the community, to the extent of assisting residents in completing their income tax forms and sitting as a member of the Co-op board, stated:- " Any policeman who says that he is not a social worker is not a realist because they go hand in hand." Another member, posted to the community during the two-year period prior to this officer, expressed a different view of the role of the police:

"I didn't avoid the community, but I didn't try to go out and start a cub pack or do all these sorts of things. Always keeping in mind that we should let the community do those things because when you are gone, they will go on like they were anyhow. I realized I was an observer in the community. I was never going to become an integral part of it and the best thing was to get there and fly the flag and protect and let the community carry on its own without trying to change or alter it."

Many of the officers who were interviewed felt that it was important to have realistic expectations of what could be accomplished in a two-year tour of duty and cautioned against attempting to change life in the communities:

"We got some valuable advice from the member who was in there before us. He said, 'You'll go into the community and people will be very friendly, if you're reasonable. When you get an idea you want something done in a certain way, they'll all bend and they'll make allowances for you and when you want to change something, they'll do it. But the fabric is very strong. The minute you are gone on that plane, things will go right back to the way they've always been. While it may appear that you're making these great changes and enhancing their life and doing these wonderful things for them, the day you leave, things will just go back the way they've always been. You will never really make that change a permanent change to the society.' Keeping that in mind really helped."

### **Barriers To Effective Policing**

The first type of barrier to effective policing deals with the kind of officers posted to the communities. This is why an ability to listen and prior knowledge of the area and culture were identified as key factors for screening northern service members. One member recently appointed to a Baffin community told research team members that on no condition did he intend on involving himself with youth initiatives such as youth activities, Boy Scouts, or sports (**this officer was transferred out of this community within the year**).

Other barriers involve the implementation of highly specific centralized policies such as community consultative groups. In the Baffin region these groups were called CLEGS (community consultative law enforcement groups). Although directed by policy a few years prior to the research teams interviews in the Baffin, CLEGS were not successfully operated in any of the Baffin communities. Attempts had been made to establish CLEGS, but with so many different committees already in operation in these communities, it was difficult to establish another. Further, honorariums were offered to committee members and when residents discovered no honorariums were available for CLEGS, members were unable to convince local residents to participate.

However, most members had established significant outreach capacities in their communities through other committees, at hamlet meetings, or through other informal means. One officer, for example, was observed by a team member visiting other community service providers each day, including Nurses, Hamlet council members, elders, and teachers. If RCMP policy had directed that informal community outreach be developed in each community, rather than through a formal CLEG, Baffin officers would have had little trouble responding to policy. Indeed, most already had developed that capacity. It is difficult to operate in remote Baffin communities without this function. But some officers did feel constrained to establish a CLEG due to organizational policy, and spending time attempting to establish a force directed CLEG operated as a barrier to other activities.

In carrying out their role, police members are hindered by a number of other barriers, including language, cultural differences between Euro-Canadians and Inuit, the dependency of Inuit on the police, a reluctance of Inuit to involve police officers in many serious issues which arise in the community, and the difficulties which are often experienced by the police officer's spouse and children in adjusting to life in a remote settlement.

**Language:** One of the unique attributes of policing in the Baffin Region is that a portion of the population being policed does not speak/understand the English language. Members interviewed for the project were divided as to whether they felt that officers posted to the Baffin Region should have at least some language skills in Inuktitut: generally members who had served in the Baffin prior to the 1970s felt that it was necessary for members to speak the language, while those serving in the region since that time felt that it was not required in order to be effective in the delivery of policing services."

Most of the constables interviewed stated that, while it was often frustrating, they did not have any major difficulties with the language issue and, in those instances in which community residents, particularly elder residents, did not speak English, persons to interpret were always readily available. The Inuit Constables were seen as a valuable resource in assisting non-Inuit members in situations where residents did not speak English.

Many of the officers interviewed reported that they often experienced difficulties with cultural issues. One member recalled the difficulty of adjusting to Inuit ways of social interaction:

"There was a lot of people coming to the house just to visit. A lot of the older people would come and they couldn't speak English. They couldn't speak English but they would come and spend two hours and just sit there and they would have tea or coffee. There were no conversations. You would make little grunts and gestures. But they just sat there and had their tea and after an hour or two they would just thank you and get up and leave. We are uncomfortable with dead spaces. We always feel we have to fill the void, but they don't."

Another member described how he learned to adapt to the tendency of Inuit not to speak often, even when they came to the member's house for tea:

"Being a white person, you have to talk. You can't just sit and have tea. And my wife found it very stressful at the beginning because she felt she had to keep the conversation going. I found the same way travelling on the trail. I tended at the beginning to talk all the time but after a while you don't talk. You sit there. I don't know what they are thinking about but you just let your mind wander and do your own thing."

The cultural practices surrounding death were frequently mentioned by members as a source of difficulty. One officer recalled an incident where an Inuk male hung himself in the jail and what happened when he took another community resident, who was not originally from the community, with him to notify the family:

"They were offended. They didn't refer to a deceased person by name. When the guy's body came back after the autopsy, we were stranding in the airport and it was nearly Christmas time and one of the girls was there. I asked her, 'Are you waiting for a parcel or something coming in for Christmas?' 'No', she said, 'I'm waiting for the box.' I didn't know what she was talking about. I thought she was talking out a box of Christmas gifts. I said something to her and she gave me a strange look. I later found out that 'the box' was the body coming back. That's how they referred to it, as 'the box.' They never referred to the deceased by name."

Another member described a situation which arose in a 'notification of death' case:

"There was a death and when we notified the parents of the death, we took along the local minister; and we were talking to a person afterward and they said that's not how they do it. They had a group called informers and you would get a hold of the informers - they were a group in the community - and they would meet and go and tell

the family as a whole about the death and they would also notify any next of kin outside of town and then when everybody was notified they would come back and tell you. We had been there over a year and didn't know this group existed."

**Inuit Dependency Upon The Police:** There is the widespread perception among members that Inuit have become overdependent upon outside government and agencies - the police in particular - to respond to and solve a wide range of community and interpersonal difficulties. This dependency extends beyond the expectation that the police will respond to situations of crime and trouble to a reliance upon the officers to intervene in situations involving disagreements and disputes between residents and to become involved in other situations which, in other regions of the country, would be seen as minor and of a non-police nature. Concurrent with this is the view, shared by many officers, that community residents must become more accountable for their behaviour.

The dependency on the police extends to the most basic of social interactions and disagreements in the community, as illustrated by the following scenerios described by members serving in the region in 1992:

"I got a complaint the other day here. A guy took this other guys axe to do some carving and he wanted it back. "Where is it?" "Well, it's over there." "Well, go get it." "No, you go get it." They don't want to cause any waves. They want some outsider doing it. That's why they like us."

"If they had a party and if they got mad at one person, they wanted us to throw the guy out of the party; instead of saying 'It's time for you to leave' - they would never do that. They'd call us up and tell us to come down and say 'He's drunk; we don't want him here.'"

This dependency has been exacerbated by at least two factors: 1) the absence of informal mechanisms for conflict resolution in the settlement, as opposed to the techniques of social control which were utilized when the Inuit were involved in a land-based hunting and subsistence lifestyle; and, 2) Inuit cultural proscriptions against directly confronting or criticizing others.

Inuit were perceived by police members to be very much "of the moment" - to want officers to intervene on a "here and now" basis, rather than to engage in long term problem solving. Events of the previous day were viewed as history and of little or no consequence. This "of the moment" perspective often determined the types of demands made upon the police in the settlement, one member recalling:

"They didn't hesitate to call us if they had a problem. These were more immediate problems, rather than long term: 'This is happening right now. I want it to end. Call the police and have it done.'"

In the words of one member serving in the Baffin in 1992:

"We're glorified baby-sitters. Their view is 'If I've got a problem, I want you to be there. If I don't have a problem, don't bother me. But when I call, you be there right now. No, I don't want any charges. I just want to get rid of my problem. Throw him in jail for the night. I don't want to charge anybody and cause any hard feelings. I don't care if I got assaulted or my window smashed.'

A decision which members must often make is whether to respond to such requests: by responding, the officers re-enforce the dependency of residents on the police; this, in turn mitigates against the residents developing mechanisms to resolve disputes on their own. On the other hand, the failure to respond may result in criticisms that the police are not delivering adequate services to the community.

There is also the perception that this dependency presents a major obstacle to the communities becoming proactive in the development of community-based justice services and programs which might be more effective in addressing crime and trouble, one member commenting:

"You end up taking on a lot of problems that you shouldn't be taking on and you end up putting your own flavour on what's right and wrong in the community. The answer isn't the RCMP solving all of the woes in the community; it's the community solving the community's woes."

**Community Silence:** Resident dependency on the police, however, generally does not extend to problem solving or to the resolution of many serious disputes and difficulties which arise in the community. As one officer noted:

"They didn't want us to be involved in their day-to-day problem solving. They didn't want to involve us as marriage counsellors or problem solvers. They had their own way of dealing with things."

Crime victims and witnesses may remain silent and are often uncooperative with police members who attempt to investigate complaints or suspicious circumstances. As one member observed:

"I'd get called in the middle of the night by a complainant. They wouldn't want to tell you who they were, where they were, or what the complaint was. You try to satisfy the

community. You go out and look for this complainant. You are running in circles and I'm sure they were standing in the windows, watching me and laughing."

Another member stated: "You'd go to speak to a witness and they wouldn't want to talk. You knew that they had seen the thing take place, but it wasn't their business."

There was also a widespread perception among members that residents in many communities were not interested in addressing issues of crime and trouble, one officer commenting: "They just don't want a long term solution. They don't want to know what causes the problem." All of these factors contribute to the stress and frustration levels of officers, which is reflected in the comments of one officer posted in a community in 1989-1991:

"There were days when I would think, "when is my plane coming. I want out of here. This is crazy." I'd go home and say to my wife, "Am I the only one that really cares about the vandalism?" I'd go and I'd see a door busted up and it would be busted up again, and again, and again. My wife was the SAO in town. At times, it seemed like we were the only ones that were worried about it."

It is also clear, however, that certain groups of community residents - those who are most vulnerable to being victimized in the communities - are heavily dependent upon the police for protection. Women, young girls, and the elderly are, in many of the communities, extremely vulnerable to being victimized and, on more than one occasion, community residents confided in the researchers that the RCMP member(s) in the community were the sole factor preventing their victimization at the hands of other community residents. Crime victims, however, often remain silent, fearing reprisals from the offender, his or her family, or their own family. There is a hesitancy among Inuit to involve the police in what are perceived to be personal and private matters, including instances of sexual assault, spousal abuse, and child neglect.

**The Police Family:** The spouses and children of members may also experience considerable difficulties in adjusting to the isolation, culture and community dynamics of the Baffin region. One member recalled:

"It took us a year to really feel part of the community. In the second year, we really were starting to feel like we were accepted. It takes time. It's really hard. My family was probably out for four to six months of the two years I was there."

This, in turn, may significantly impact the member's performance. In the words of one member:

"Some of the members I thought would have the easiest time in the north had the most difficult time because the wife just did not like it. And that made it miserable for everybody: for them, the kids, for the member. If you are thinking about ways to get out of a place, it doesn't do much for your sense of community or your involvement with the community. The wives either liked it or they didn't. There was no middle ground there."

The importance of making every effort to determine whether the spouse of a member will be able to adapt to the conditions in the Baffin *prior to* the officer being deployed there are illustrated in the following by a senior police member in the region:

"I probably spend more time in the course of a day making sure the wives are happy up here in terms of resupply, housing, stuff like that. If your wife is not happy, pack up and leave. Because you haven't got nobody else to talk to and if your relationship was a little tense before you came up, it isn't going to get any better...If you have no communication with your wife down south, what the Hell are you going to do looking at her for twelve months of the year up here? It's a very big problem up here."

Responses by members suggest that many spouses have a limited range of possible activities in the communities, generally have a limited circle of non-Inuit friends, and are not involved in community life to any great extent. The response of one member posted to the region in 1992 is typical:

"She is confined to home really, although she does go out in the evening, to the hotel for a meeting or to the transport staff house...considering that we have winter here for about 10 months of the year it is not like you can get out and get around a whole lot, but she gets out as often as she can. She has met some of the local people and she knows who most of the local people are, but she doesn't have daily contact with them."

There were instances related by members in which spouses were able to participate more fully in community life, often because of their job, one member recalling: "My wife worked for the Bay Store as a store clerk. She did the books plus bought the furs and the carvings. So she got to know the people very well. She did a lot of socializing with the women." Another member recounted: "My wife fit very well into the community and got to know the people on a personal level." The specific experiences of spouses seemed to depend to a great extent on their personality and the nature of the community in which they lived.

Even in those communities in which the spouse was able to become involved in community life, there were distinct limits. One member, who appeared to be extremely well liked by community residents, commented that his spouse was generally excluded from

community life: "My wife is not into a lot of the different committees. I don't think she would be allowed. I don't think they would ever elect her to a committee." In many communities, the absence of facilities and programs limits the extent to which spouses can become involved, one member noting: "It is a hard community to get involved in. They don't have a lot of recreational programs or facilities like that for the younger kids that she could help organize."

The general view of members is that it is difficult to keep their children in the North much past the age of 3 or 4 or, at the latest, the primary school grades. Many do home study, as the Inuit are taught in Inuktitut the first three years of school. There was a unanimous view that, if they remained in the north, the children would be behind when they returned to schools in the south.

### **The Safety Of Members And Their Families**

The safety of members and their families in the Baffin Region was one of the most pronounced issues identified by officers interviewed for the study. In actuality, safety concerns are evident in the comments and observations of officers who served in the region from the 1970s onward and were a result of the increasing levels of violence in the communities. There appears to be a changing attitude among members about going North, one member stating flatly that "My personal opinion is that at some point in the future, the RCMP is going to be hard pressed to find people to come North." This increased concern with safety has been precipitated by events which appear to be occurring with increasing frequency: violence directed towards members, the escalation of the incidence of domestic assault and spousal assault which place members at risk; and school yard attacks on the children of members, including an incident in 1993 involving an attempt by Inuit children to set the hair of a child of an RCMP member on fire.

Specific criticisms were directed by members toward the Force for failing to ensure proper staffing levels by providing relief officers which decreased the margin of safety for members and their families. The Force was criticized for failing to provide backup for members, several of the officers interviewed in the Baffin Region in 1992 indicating that their detachments were short-staffed up to 50% of time. This often resulted in one member being left to police entire communities, with only the assistance of community residents. Some members felt that establishing good relations with the residents in the community would satisfy many safety concerns, but this depended upon the extent of trouble in a community, officer experience, the extent of isolation, the officer's personality, and a host of other factors. Clearly, establishing good relations within the community was not perceived to be enough to ensure the safety of all members.

There appears to be an emerging consensus among members, past and present, that the chronic shortage of members at the detachment and the failure of the Force to provide relief officers has appreciably reduced the margin of safety for members and their families. As one member noted, "It's not a comfortable feeling knowing that you don't have any backup." Considerable frustration was expressed about the failure of the Force to ensure that relief officers were provided to maintain authorized staffing levels in the detachments. This is reflected in the comments of one member:

"They're supposed to send relief in. But, they have told us that, because of money, they won't do it. You're on your own. They say, 'If you get into trouble, call us...' It's typical RCMP. They want the same quality job that's always been done. They want more work for less money and it just doesn't make sense."

Another officer, in discussing his experience in a remote, one-officer detachment in the early 1990's observed:

There were times when there would be drinking or drugs involved and there would be a two day party and someone would be getting beat up...things would have been a little more comfortable on my part had there been a second fellow there for back up...They know when you are sleeping and when you are not and what your limits are and what they can get away with...There are a lot of fellows [potential offenders] who aren't above taking advantage of the situation."

One member had contacted a lawyer regarding possible legal action that could be taken against the RCMP should he be injured while serving alone in a community: "If I get hurt, I am suing them. It's not out of malice. It's out of protection for my wife."

### **The Transfer Policy**

Considerable discussion has surrounded the implications of the traditional "two year rule" transfer policy and whether it functions to impede the effective delivery of policing services to the Baffin Region. While the numbers of transfers between detachments in the provinces have slowed in recent years, positions in Baffin Region communities are viewed as being of limited duration and members can be expected to be moved after two or, at the most, three years. The transfer policy raises particular concerns in small remote communities where, due to cultural differences, relations between the officers and the community may develop slowly. This is due at least in part to the realization among community residents that the members will only be in the community for a relatively short period of time. Police presence thus becomes an unending series of new faces, soon to be replaced by others.

Given the lack of prior knowledge among members posted to Baffin communities, it may take months before the member becomes adjusted to his/her environment and to the community. The length of time required before the new officer is able to establish 'contact' with community residents and establish a working relationship with the community is also due to particular cultural traits of the Inuit, who are generally quite shy and hesitant to initiate conversations and contact with outsiders. As one member commented: "It is difficult, because the Inuit are not outgoing. They know you are going to leave in two years and be replaced. It takes six months just to begin speaking with them."

New members are entering for a very short period of time another culture and communities which have very well established power hierarchies and patterns of social interaction. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that in the span of two or three years, that officers will become intimately familiar with all of the complexities of community life; however, this should not mitigate against the development of a pre-deployment orientation/training course.

An attempt was made by the project team to record the perceptions of members toward the "two year rule." Among the current and retired members who were interviewed, there was general support for the current transfer policy. Firstly, the policy prevents members and their families from becoming "bushed":

"I think it's good. People are there because they want to be there and it's a good place to hide. We were getting ready to leave the community for the last time and we were sitting at our kitchen table and the pilot was there and my wife was crying. We knew we were bushed; you're bushed when you look out the window and say what a nice place it is. The outside world could disappear; you're totally wrapped up in your own little community and you didn't care and you become quiet."

Another member described how members may become too isolated in remote communities:

"When you live up there for a while, even when we left after three years, it becomes hard to leave because everything is provided for you. Your housing, it comes off your paycheck and you don't even see it; there's no taxes to pay; there's no hydro bill to pay or no water bill to pay....It's pretty hard when it's time to leave, you go 'Boy, jeez, it's kind of scary down there'...We had members after two or three years, some of them wouldn't even go out on their holidays."

Many officers lost touch with the outside world during their time in the Baffin region and experienced difficulties in readjusting to life in the 'south':

"I had no idea what was going on. I was scared to death when I went out on holidays because I didn't know how much money I had. They deposited my checks in the bank

and I got my supplies from the Bay and they took it directly out of my pay. I'd been away from fresh fruits and vegetables for so long that the first thing I did was to go to the grocery store and bought a big bag of fruit."

It was also felt that, after two years, the relationship between the officer and the community might begin to deteriorate:

"It only takes a certain amount of time to get to know everybody. You have got a good idea of who is doing the crimes. By the end of two years, the people are looking for someone new as well - that you are not picking on certain people. Things get personal after a while and you don't want it to get to that stage. You want to keep in on a professional level and a respectful level."

Transfers are also viewed as a welcome release from the high stress policing environments in which many members posted to the Baffin Region work and as a necessity if officer burnout is to be avoided:

"When you first arrive at a new post, there is a certain amount of new energy and new interest that comes with that transfer. And it's usually very positive energy. The communities benefit tremendously from that. However, after a couple of years of chasing the same bad guys around, getting called out a hundred times in the middle of the night, not being able to find prisoners, being left by yourself in communities for extended periods of time, having to deal with shrinking budgets, the replacement of equipment coming very slowly, and all of the other irritating factors that come along with settlement policing, two years is a pretty long time. And then you bottom out. It's time to leave."

The transfer policy was also credited with assisting members to continue operating at their maximum effectiveness — referred to by several officers as the FIIL [fuck it I'm leaving] syndrome:

"I don't think they would benefit by making members stay longer than they already make them stay...After two years of policing in a place like Iqaluit, you are to the point at saying 'we will get a quick fix. We will throw them in jail and sober them up and wait for it to happen again and then do the same thing again...When you are in a small community, you get bored and want to move on. When you are in a busy community like this and you see the same faces and the same offences, after awhile you start looking to cut corners and trying to fix the problem now."

Many officers, however, expressed concern that moving members every two or three years undermined the relationships which had been established with community residents. One member noted:

"For the communities, its a real hardship because it takes a year to get to trust you. To know who you are, to know that you can be trusted, to know that they can come to you with their problems. The second year, you develop a very paternal relationship with the community and they start to rely heavily upon you as a person and as a police officer. And then, you're gone. And in comes new people and the process starts all over again."

Many of the officers related instances in which community residents, not otherwise prone to outward expressions of emotion, were upset when they learned the member was leaving the community. However, despite these concerns, members were generally opposed to extending the posting of members in a community beyond two, or at maximum, three years.

### **The Inuit Constables**

Inuit have been involved in policing in Baffin Region communities for many years, first as Special Constables and more recently as regular members. Historically, the Force has had difficulty recruiting and retaining Inuit members. With the creation of Nunavut, there will be extensive discussions as to how to increase the number of Inuit constables. The experiences of members posted to Baffin detachments with Inuit constables and their perceptions of the issues involved in deploying Inuit members provide key insights into this most important area of Baffin Region policing.

**Inuit Special Constables:** The experiences of members with the Inuit Special Constables appear to have been mixed, which is to be expected given the differences among members themselves in how they adapted to and policed the communities, as well as the differences among individual Inuit Specials. Many members spoke highly of the Specials with whom they worked:

"I would depend upon him for my life and have. We were faced with a charging polar bear once and he killed it without a blink. Now, that was not an easy thing for him to do. He had no intention of wanting to kill that bear, but it was a "have to" situation. He and I had to interview one of the bad guys in one of the communities; and he just verbally took him to pieces. One phrase that came out was 'You keep this up and your kids are going to think you have the brains of a dog.' And it just stopped him in his tracks. He was always prepared to interject on that level or the physical level, to do his job. He would be as good as any police officer anywhere, at any time, in the way they carried out their duties."

"The Inuit Special that I had to live with, that I was hunting with...you have to trust these guys explicitly, because you are putting your life in their hands. One accident at 45 below; if he can't make an igloo, you are dead in the water....He was the guy you

could trust. He would whip up these igloos and we would sort of watch with amazement."

Among the other positive assessments of the Inuit Specials included statements such as "He was the guy you could trust," "I would trust him as a backup, no question," and "Members could not function without them.", and "He's ten times more effective than we have ever been."

Other members, however, offered less positive assessments of their experiences with the Inuit Specials, recalling that the Specials with whom they worked were not reliable and that they were incapable of running a detachment. Many of the Inuit Special Constables appear to have experienced difficulties in carrying out policing tasks, particularly in situations involving arrests and in domestic disputes. One member, posted to the Baffin in 1985-87, responded to the question as to whether the Special constable would take the lead in arresting people or in intervening in disputes, as follows:

"No, he didn't actually. He would help us to translate what was happening, but he was a bit shy...on several occasions where there was an arrest, where there was a fight or struggle involved, he got a lot of abuse in Inuktitut, and he would tell me later what they would say and why....I would arrest a kid out of a house and he would tell the parents what we were doing in Inuktitut. That's what he was good at. He wouldn't go in and do the arrest."

**Inuit Regular Members:** The experiences which non-Inuit regular members had with Inuit constables were, as with the Inuit Special Constables, mixed. Again, the personality and policing styles of the Inuit and non-Inuit members were most likely the primary determinants of the relationships which developed:

"There are some that I have worked with that have done excellent policing and there are others that I have worked with that have been terrible. Not only Inuit, but White officers as well. The ones that are excellent policemen respect the community and are respected by other members that they work with. The ones that are the crappy policemen are not well respected in the community and are not well respected by the members that they work with."

Many of the Inuit constables have been successful in establishing positive relationships with community residents, as evidenced the following incident recounted by a non-Inuit member:

"People will phone in and ask for (the Inuit constable). "No, they are off, can I help you?" They say they will call back later and that it is fine. Then, two days later, they call the Inuit constable to say that their kid is missing. It happened all of the time."

Concerns were expressed by many members about the pressures which Inuit Constables encounter in carrying out their duties, a senior officer in the region noting:

"They can accept me because I'm white. I come from another culture. They've always been exposed to the policeman whose been white. They can accept me for what I am. I'm only here for two years and I'll do the best I can and then I'm out. But, an Inuk, he is lower than I am, even if he is from another community."

Concerns were expressed by members about the difficulties encountered by Inuit constables who were posted to their home communities, particularly early in their policing careers. However, as the comments of one member, serving in the Baffin region in 1992 indicate, Inuit constables are often reluctant to leave their home communities, even to police another community in the Baffin:

"They don't want to police their own town but they didn't want to move away. These guys, they know their community. They know this place. Blindfolded, they can take you to the edge of the ice. By the feel of the snow, they know when we're getting close to the edge. They know all the mountains; they know the good hunting spots. They know the area. Take them and put them in Igloolik where it's like the Saskatchewan of the North - flat - they're lost."

The comments of one member who had served in the Baffin in the late 1980's, illustrate the respective roles that the Inuit and non-Inuit members often play:

"I remember getting frustrated out on the land because I couldn't lash my sled the right way and it would come apart. I got mad one day and he just looked at me and said, 'Boss, you know what it is like when I type in the office and I can't type it right. You don't get mad or upset. I am not going to get mad or upset because you can't tie it...Let's tie it and get going.' Out on the land, he called the shots. In town, they could do their job, but I was the boss."

### **Impact Of Baffin Service On Officers' Careers**

Members were asked to reflect on their experiences in the Baffin in the context of their overall career in the RCMP. Almost without exception, officers interviewed for this study viewed their time in the north as the most challenging and satisfying of their entire service. In particular, members felt that their experience in the Baffin region had a significant impact on them personally and professionally, one member stating: "I'm a different person. My approach to everything is changed from living there. Both my wife and I have a totally different outlook on everything, not just one or two things. Everything. Life."

There was less unanimity, however, as to whether the police had been able to effect much in the way of change in the communities, including a reduction in the levels of crime and trouble. This pessimism is reflected in the comments of one officer prior to his departure from the region in 1992:

There's been a lot of blood, sweat and tears left behind by members who have went there and gotten burned out and left. And the only thing is that they really haven't made a big difference in the community. There hasn't been a reduction in crime. There haven't been less people going to jail. There hasn't been a reduction in the amount of sexual abuse reported. What we're seeing is increased violence, increased people going to jail, more charges before the courts, and a mushrooming population that comes with a swelling population of young people who have got no hope for what's going to happen to them tomorrow."

Nevertheless, policing in the Baffin was viewed as challenging and rewarding and gave officers skills that they were able to use after departing from the region. Members posted to the North maintain a strong affinity for their experience and close bonds with the persons they worked with and met.

The project team was impressed by the clarity of the memories which members — many of whom had been in the Baffin Region up to a decade or more ago — retained and the intensity of their experiences and impressions. There is little doubt that policing in the Baffin Region remains a challenging and a once-in-a-lifetime experience for officers.

### **The Future Of Policing In The Baffin Region**

Discussions on new models for the delivery of justice services to Nunavut will include consideration of new arrangements for policing. Three possible options include a) maintaining the current arrangements for policing, which include rotating members into the communities for 2-3 year postings, while attempting to recruit additional Inuit members; 2) creating an all-Inuit police force within the RCMP which would be deployed to Baffin Region communities and other settlements throughout Nunavut; or 3) creation of an autonomous Inuit police force, independent of the RCMP. These and other options will be considered by a myriad of organizational and inter-agency committees as well as the new Nunavut government in the coming months.

While this report is focusing specifically on the policing experiences of active and retired RCMP members in the Baffin region, it is important to note that there did **not** emerge in these interviews or in the interviews which were conducted with residents of Baffin Region communities a preference for developing an autonomous Inuit police force for the region. In addition, there was a general consensus among the members who were interviewed that the

Inuit were "not ready" to assume full responsibility for police services in the region, whether as part of the RCMP or autonomously. As a senior RCMP supervisor stated:

"They're not ready for it. They couldn't handle it. You're setting them up for failure. Give them credit where credit is due, but don't throw them to the wolves."

This view was echoed by another member with extensive northern policing experience:

"There are a few Inuit Constables that could take over and run things. Part of the problem is that they are still running on Inuit time. This might work great in the community but the force is going to say, 'Where's your program plan. Where's your this and where's your that? Where is your month end return?' The force would have to change a lot of its policies."

Many of the members expressed concerns that the RCMP would be forced by political pressures to support the development of an all-Inuit police force in the Baffin Region as part of the arrangements for policing Nunavut. In addition, there were concerns that, in response to increasing political pressures, the number of Inuit members was being increased without due attention to the qualifications and attributes of the new Inuit recruits. One member cautioned: "Don't run out and the first guy that can speak English and walks through the detachment, grab him. That's what they have been doing." It should be noted that the RCMP generally has had a difficult time recruiting and retaining Inuit members.

All of the Inuit regular members serving in the Baffin Region were interviewed during the course of the project. Most Inuit regulars expressed an interest in being a member of an autonomous Inuit police force separate from the RCMP. In fact, many of the Inuit members specifically mentioned the RCMP as the reason why they became police officers. As one officer commented: "I have a couple of cousins who are Mounties and I always looked up to them. They were my role models."

There was general support among the members who were interviewed for the increased involvement of Inuit in policing, not necessarily to replace the RCMP, but to police in collaboration with non-Inuit members. In the words of one Inuit Constable:

"The people don't want to lose the white police officers. I would rather see one Inuit constable and one white constable. I do not want to see two Inuit constables. I would not be comfortable working with an Inuit person. Only a small number of people in the community would like to see the white people gone."

And, a non-Inuit member posted to the region in 1992 stated:

"A lot would be lost if the RCMP moved out. The local people are looking for a little outside perspective. You are looked upon as an independent voice on whatever might

happen to come to mind. It is something that has worked well in the past and with the development of the community here and I would like to see it continue."

These findings, in conjunction with the absence of a widespread preference among the residents of the Baffin Region for an autonomous Inuit police force, suggest that careful consideration should be given to any alternative plans for the delivery of policing services to the Baffin Region. In any event, most findings in this research would not support an independent Inuit police service at the present time.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This report has presented materials gathered in interviews with over 150 RCMP members who have, at some point in their careers, policed in the Baffin Region. The responses of the members provide keen insights into the dynamics of policing in the Baffin and their comments and observations are instructive for any discussions regarding the ways in which the delivery of policing services to the region can be improved. As well, the individual and collective experiences of the members can inform the deliberations which will surround the development of models for policing in the new territory of Nunavut. Whatever specific model of policing is selected for the new territory, there is little doubt that police services will continue to be the cornerstone of justice service delivery.

For now, assuming that the RCMP will continue to provide police services to the Baffin Region, there was a series of recommendations presented by the members and ultimately supported by the findings of this research:

### **Member Recommendations**

The officers interviewed by the research team offered a number of recommendations for improving the preparation of members being posted to the Baffin Region. These included:

- The selection of members for service in the Baffin Region should be carried out by members who have extensive experience in policing northern and remote communities, preferably in the Baffin Region.
- The screening and interview process for selecting officers to serve in the Baffin Region should be operationally standardized across all RCMP divisions.
- Members who have been selected for posting in the Baffin Region should be provided with a resource package containing information on the region, its history, culture, as well as about the specific community itself.

- The cultural awareness training course instituted in Iqaluit should be continued, and every effort should be made to have all Baffin constables and their spouses attend. When possible, this training course should be given to members prior to their posting in the Baffin Region communities.
- The RCMP should produce a series of video tapes, to be provided to members selected for northern duty, which provide an introduction to the Baffin Region and include information provided by members recently posted to the region. These materials should be updated on a regular basis. A further suggestion has been made that interactive video conferences should be held between incoming members and current Iqaluit Sub-Division personnel.
- The RCMP should avoid situations where both members of a two-officer detachment are transferring out the same year. There should be a year overlap with the new member coming in.
- Given the concerns for officer safety and the impact of working in a remote, isolated community, extra attention should be paid to the Employee Assistance Program. A perception of a lack of confidentiality about the program held by members might be alleviated by a full-time position for the Eastern Arctic.
- Many Inuit RCMP members indicated that they preferred not to spend lengthy time policing their own communities, and this research confirmed that Inuit members were a great asset in each detachment, members thought that representatives from the region should cooperate to formulate a means to rotate Inuit constables throughout communities. The purpose of such an initiative would be to expose each of the Baffin communities to an Inuit constable every few years.
- Rather than the centralized community policing programs or directives which are imposed from above, many members felt that supporting the general principles of decentralized community outreach is much more important. As such, officers should be encouraged to continue their informal meetings with community leaders. They should also be encouraged to become involved in any of the many committees (for example, the alcohol control committees or the youth justice committees) which are trying to come to grips with contributors to trouble in the community.

After four years of research about and with the members of the RCMP who have policed the Baffin Region, the Baffin Region Crime and Justice Study research team is convinced that these members have particularly keen insights into the provision of police services in this remote and isolated environment. From a time when communication was by

the word of mouth of members traveling by dog team, to the current period when the latest message appears on the detachment fax machine, it has always been the job of the individual officer in the field to devise personal strategies to adapt to the unique policing environment of the Eastern Arctic. It is these personalized strategies that seem to best coincide with the contemporary philosophy of community policing. It is precisely this wealth of knowledge that is necessary for devising a new police service model for the Territory of Nunavut.

## **APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES**

**Interview Schedule For RCMP Members Currently Serving In The Baffin**

**Interview Schedule For RCMP Members Previously Serving In The Baffin**

**Interview Schedule for RCMP Members Currently Serving in the Baffin**

**1. Personal**

- 1.1 What is your name?
- 1.2 When were you born?
- 1.3 Where did you grow up?
- 1.4 What was your education when you joined?
- 1.5 When did you join the RCMP?
- 1.6 How old were you?
- 1.7 Where have you been stationed and for how long?
- 1.8 Where have you served in the North?
- 1.9 What were the years of your service in the North?
- 1.10 Was a Northern assignment your choice?
- 1.11 If so, why?
- 1.12 Could you speak Inuktitut?
- 1.13 If yes, did you speak any before you arrived?
- 1.14 Did the RCMP provide any language training?
- 1.15 Have you learned any of the Inuktitut language since you have arrived?
- 1.16 How did you learn the language?
- 1.17 Is it necessary for you to use an interpreter for normal police work?
- 1.18 What kinds of problems have arisen as a result?
- 1.19 Has the RCMP provided any cross-cultural training for living in an Inuit community? (e.g., family customs, lifestyles, importance of hunting/gathering).
- 1.20 Has there been any on-going support by the RCMP provided to deal with cross-cultural issues? (e.g., available information about cultural taboos).
- 1.21 Do you think officers should be selected to work in the North?
- 1.22 If so, what criteria should be used?
- 1.23 Has your experience in the Baffin influenced your career?
- 1.24 Has the reality of transfers, organizational factors (e.g., work space, available transportation, quotas) influenced how you police?

**2. Family and Community**

- 2.1 What was your marital status? Do you have children?
- 2.2 How does your family feel about going to and living in the Baffin?

- 2.3 Describe the relationship your family has with the community (e.g., participate in community activities inclusion/exclusion). Do you feel welcomed?

### **3. Police Work**

- 3.1 Were you provided with a job description for the North?
- 3.2 If no, what did you expect your job to be in the North?
- 3.3 How does the reality of working in the North meet your expectations?
- 3.4 What responsibilities do you take on that did not fall within your expectations?
- 3.5 Are there responsibilities that were particular to the North?
- 3.6 If you have worked in more than one Northern community, are there differences in your responsibilities.
- 3.7 Have your responsibilities changed during your appointment in the North?
- 3.8 If so, how and why?
- 3.9 Describe your daily activities?
- 3.10 Are there any routine or emergency duties (e.g., food and mail deliveries, evacuations) that are part of your job?

### **4. Types of Trouble**

We would like to know about the kinds of cases you deal with. What can you tell us about the following?

- 4.1 Fighting
- 4.2 Spousal Assault
- 4.3 Sexual Assault
- 4.4 Child Sexual Abuse
- 4.5 Verbal or Physical Threats
- 4.6 Child Neglect
- 4.7 Break and Enter
- 4.8 Mischief and Vandalism
- 4.9 Drug Dealing and Drug Abuse
- 4.10 Bootlegging
- 4.11 Making and Selling of Home Brew
- 4.12 Alcohol Abuse
- 4.13 Substance and Solvent Abuse
- 4.14 Other Criminal Code Offences (i.e., Robbery, Weapons, Homicide)

- 4.15 Other Problems, Non-Criminal (e.g., Over-Hunting, Not Sharing Food, Gossiping)

**Responses to Question 4**

To each of the above in question 4, ask the following:

- 4.16 How frequently are you called to investigate \_\_\_\_\_?
- 4.17 What do you normally do about this?
- 4.18 Do you think \_\_\_\_\_ is occurring that you are not called in to investigate?
- 4.19 If yes, then how frequently?
- 4.20 Does the community have it's own ways of dealing with this problem (e.g., elders, hamlet council, family pressure, back to the land programs, a dry/wet community policy)
- 4.21 If yes, what were they?
- 4.22 Is nothing done? (if so, why?)
- 4.23 Is there a procedure for dealing with this problem (e.g., refer to nurse/social worker for therapy, youth justice committees, alternative sentencing measures)

**5. Contributors to Trouble**

How much does the following contribute to trouble in each of the communities?

**Economic**

- 5.1 Problems of a Hunting and Fishing Economy (e.g., Game Laws, Difficulty Making a Living)
- 5.2 Availability of Housing
- 5.3 Availability of Employment

**Social/Cultural**

- 5.4 Pressures on Inuit Values and Lifestyles
- 5.5 New Technologies (e.g., Television, Telephones, Skidoos, Air Travel)
- 5.6 Residential Schools
- 5.7 Availability of Education
- 5.8 Jealousy and Family Feuds
- 5.9 Availability of Alcohol

**Demographic and Environmental Issues**

- 5.10 Relocation of Communities

- 5.11 Age Distribution
- 5.12 Pollution
- 5.13 Scarcity of Game and Fish
- 5.14 Impact of the Environmental Movement

**6. Criminal Justice System Initiatives and Responses**

- 6.1 Is there a person or committee who liaised between the community and the police?
- 6.2 Are any Inuit people involved in delivering justice services (e.g., Inuit special constable program, Justice of the Peace, youth justice committee)?
- 6.3 Are the elders in the communities given a voice and role in the administration of justice?
- 6.4 What has been the impact of the Young Offenders Act upon the administration of youth justice in the Baffin Region communities?
- 6.5 What crime prevention activities are you involved with?
- 6.6 Are there sufficient resources provided for crime prevention work in the community?
- 6.7 Are the concerns and needs of the victims of criminal acts met by the criminal justice system in the Baffin Region?
- 6.8 How often does the court come to the community?
- 6.9 Does the court play a useful role in administering justice in the community?
- 6.10 How does the court perform in the community? Do you think that the court does what the community wants it to do (e.g., lenient/too severe sentences)?
- 6.11 If not, what is the court doing that the community doesn't like?
- 6.12 If so, what is the court doing that the community approves of?
- 6.13 What changes would you make to improve the justice system serving the citizens of the Baffin Region?

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- 6.9 Did the court play a useful role in administering justice in the community?
- 6.10 How did the court perform in the community? Do you think that the court did what the community wanted it to do (e.g., lenient/too severe sentences)?
- 6.11 If not, what was the court doing that the community didn't like?
- 6.12 If so, what was the court doing that the community approved?
- 6.13 What changes do you think would have improved the justice system when you were in the North?