RCMP OFFICERS POSTED TO NUNAVUT COMMUNITIES: EXPLORING THE POLICING AND PRIVATE LIFE CHALLENGES OF QALLUNAAT POLICE IN INUIT NUNANGAT

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ABSTRACT

As a result of a signed agreement between the Government of Canada and Nunavut, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is contracted to police Nunavut hamlets. This iteration of contracts began when the Territory was formed in 1999 and involves the recruitment of Regular Members from across Canada. To better understand the experiences of these Members, this thesis project engages with the literature on rural and remote policing, and explores the uniqueness of policing in Nunavut (Ruddell & Jones, 2018). Inspired by informal Member comments about the "harsh reality" of these posts, this project investigates accounts of everyday policing in several hamlets.

Through a qualitative approach, specifically semi-structured interviews, and framed by Settler Colonialism theory and Bourdieu's theory on Habitus, this project applies "policing habitus" to understand the daily living and working conditions of police officers in Nunavut. The analysis shows that officers identify a number of obstacles in their "field" of work, including insufficient resources for the communities of Nunavut, a complex array of responsibilities and requests that fall outside of police duties and yet to them, the complexities of negotiating relationships in small hamlets, and the frustration of feeling as though they are a "band-aid" solution to deep and historical issues. The thesis concludes with a series of policy recommendations.

Keywords: *Nunavut, Officers, RCMP, Inuit, Rural Policing, Northern communities, Habitus, policing Habitus, field, Settler Colonialism, Colonization*

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

I, Sophie Hamel-Touchette, am a student at the University of Ottawa and have been an employee of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP] since 2018. I started my career at the RCMP after graduating from the University of Ottawa in Social Sciences with a major in Sociology and a major in Criminology. I was drawn to conducting this research when I started working in Occupational Health Services alongside divisional Psychologists and Health Officers. While this research is based on RCMP Regular Members posted in V-Division, it was conducted independently with the support and approval of the RCMP Ethics Committee Board and the University of Ottawa Ethics Board.

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Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has had a long-standing presence in Northern Canada and Northern Indigenous Communities of Canada since 1873. Over these years, the RCMP has interacted with the Indigenous communities in many ways, including, but not limited to, the management of legal documentation, the supervision of various aspects of the Fur Trade, their role in taking children to and keeping them at residential schools, and the discharge of their professional duties of policing the Indigenous communities (Grant, 2010). In 2012, the Government of Canada agreed with the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Northwest Territories to renew the RCMP's Policing Contract in both territories for another 20 years (Government of Northwest Territories, 2012; Government of Canada, 2012). Within the renewed contracts, agreements to address issues relating to "[…] governance, accountability, program sustainability, and cost containment" were negotiated with the territories (Government of Canada, 2012, para 5). However, specific issues and policy options aimed at addressing some of the challenges faced by police officers working in remote northern communities were absent in the contract's wording.

With little research conducted on this topic, some scholars suggest that officers working in northern communities in Canada often experience professional and personal dynamics because their responsibilities often extend beyond those of policing (in particular, those outlined in their training). Indeed, scholars further argue that police officers often have to undertake personal and administrative tasks, such as finding adequate health resources, housing, etc., due to staff shortages (Wakeling et al., 2001; Griffiths, 2019). As informal accounts of officers attest, the stress produced by these responsibilities raises concerns about the experiences of the officers and, relatedly, the unmet needs of the communities.

For this study, it is crucial to examine what the officers understand themselves to be accomplishing in their posts in Nunavut. To that point, this project explores the conditions under which officers describe themselves as succeeding as police. Furthermore, this study asks about a full range of actions and interventions, learning about those that fall outside of the official duties of an officer.

As described by the participants in this study, there is a discrepancy between the social and mental health needs of Nunavummiut and the capacity of police posted to this jurisdiction. Members of the RCMP in Nunavut consistently report the unavailability of essential services like addiction treatment centers, mental health professionals, social workers, and shelters for vulnerable groups such as youth, women, and others in crisis. Furthermore, the scarcity of paramedic services means that officers are called upon as first responders - which goes beyond the training for which they prepared as police.

In the absence of other essential support services, the participants in this study report "making do". As a stop-gap for a more specialized range of services, officers describe themselves as a "band-aid solution" when they are called upon, particularly in crisis situations that are not policing-related (such as a mental health crisis).

In addition to reporting a concern about filling in as a band-aid solution, participants in this study reflected on the need for RCMP Members to understand the cultural and historical context of the communities they serve. Many officers arrive in Nunavut with little or no knowledge of Inuit culture, history, or the unique challenges that Nunavummiut face. As mentioned by Retired Regular Member Sgt. George Couchie "[e]ach community has its own unique history, culture, traditions and challenges and the training should reflect that. The cookie-cutter, one-size-fits-all approach simply doesn't work" (RCMP, 2017, para 13). When there is lack of cultural competency it contributes to tensions between the RCMP and the community, rooted in a long-standing history of colonialism and mistrust.

Effective training should include in-depth instruction on Inuit traditions, the impact of historical events such as residential schools, and the ways these events continue to affect relationships between Inuit and the RCMP. Comprehensive preparation for a posting in Nunavut, as reported by the participants, thus includes learning how to build relationships with elders and other community leaders[1]. Within these relationships, I argue, are lines of communication that inform community policing and effective community interventions that go beyond policing.

From the perspective of the officers, remote policing in Nunavut presents significant challenges, particularly if they do not feel that they can join as a social participant in a community. An absence of shared common interests, of a sense of affinity, and thus the absence of a friendship network seems to lead to a sense of isolation, both for the officers themselves and for the community from the officers.

To that point, the participants in this research report feeling as though they are in a fish bowl – that policing in small hamlet detachments makes it difficult for the RCMP to separate their professional and personal identities as they are always recognizable. I thus observe the paradoxical position in which the officers find themselves – that as officers, they need to get to know people on a deeper level, and as humans, they need deeper connections as well, but how do they reconcile the professional and the personal needs that may lead to personal and professional tensions? In this paper, I explore these questions and argue that building relationships and trust facilitates effective policing. I also recognize that this comes with some challenges.

Upon commencing my tenure with the RCMP, I identified a recurring issue within the Occupational Health section: a notable staff shortage in the V-Division. This observation was consistently accompanied by remarks from colleagues highlighting the unique challenges of working in the North. This

[1] And not rely on, as reported by the Public Service Safety (2024), training methods that are limited to e-learning modules or booklets.

phenomenon sparked my interest in investigating the underlying causes and specific challenges referenced by my peers. Whether Regular Members were absent due to medical reasons or failing to complete their obligatory 2-3-year deployments, my curiosity was piqued, prompting a deeper exploration.

This research thus addresses two primary questions: *What are the living and working challenges/dynamics conditions for officers posted to the Qikiqtaaluk, Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions, such as in Iqaluit and other small communities, and what can we learn from those descriptions for policing?*

The initial part of the research question focuses on understanding the ongoing dynamics and challenges that police officers encounter on both personal and professional levels. This encompasses inquiries about their support systems, policing responsibilities, leisure activities, training, and organizational structures, all framed to illuminate these dynamics. Throughout this thesis, I describe "dynamics" instead of "problems" in an effort to present a more balanced, less judgmental tone and to avoid suggesting that work and social interactions in Nunavut are inherently problematic. This research expands on the expectations placed on Regular Members from both organizational and community perspectives. Given that this research is conducted on operational police officers, the purpose of the study is also to understand the objectives and goals of police officers in the northern communities, their roles, duties and activities in relation to the policing contract. This research addresses these issues and explores more broadly what some police officers have shared about their experiences while working in Inuit communities.

The second part of the research question aims to discern how these challenges and dynamics influence early departures or extensions of service. These questions explore the adaptations and integrations required in the new environment and how these might conflict with pre-existing habits or present daily challenges. Additional questions seek to uncover any unique aspects of policing in Nunavut

communities compared to other regions in Canada, based on officers' experiences. The overarching goal is to carefully identify, articulate, and analyze the findings and recommendations arising from this research work to improve and strengthen the work dynamics of the police officers and their relationships with their host, Nunavummiut. I note that this project presumes a fundamental principle that a police force is necessary for efficient and effective law and order in any society. Understanding that police training in Canada, as in many parts of the world, follows strict paramilitary principles, deliberate attention needs to be paid to areas of tension that may arise in the interactions and relationships between police officers with paramilitary training backgrounds while policing Inuit communities in the Inuit Nunangat (homeland) of Canada.

1.2 Terminology

For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to define and clarify certain terms used in this project. I use "Northern Communities" and *Inuit Nunangat interchangeably to* refer to the four land claim regions of Nunavut: the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (northern Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (northern Labrador). These four regions represent 35% of Canada's land mass and 50% of its coastline (The Royal Canadian Geographical Society [RCGS], 2018). Most of the 65,000 Inuit in Canada live in the Inuit Nunangat (RCGS, 2018). Additionally, this paper adopts the frame of reference frequently used by those who live in Nunavut, whereas "the south" is any place south of Nunavut, but mostly refers to major Canadian cities such as Ottawa or Toronto, for example.

As stated above, this project focuses on the largest northernmost territory of Canada – Nunavut (*Refer to Appendix B – Figure 2*), and within that mostly the *Qikiqtaaluk region* - which is located at the easternmost administrative region of Nunavut, and the *Kivalliq region* which is located in Western Nunavut (RCGS, 2018). The Qikiqtaaluk region encompasses 13 communities, while the Kivalliq

region includes 7 (*Refer to Appendix B – Figure 3*). In total, this research work covers the experiences of police officers from 14 communities.

The Qikiqtaaluk and Kivalliq Region are also referred to in this thesis as V-Division *(Refer to Appendix B – Figure 4)*. The V-Division is a term used by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to encompass 25 detachments, including those in Iqaluit. A minimum of 2-7 Regular Members are posted in each community, except Iqaluit, where there are about 28 Regular Members on rotational basis (*Refer to Appendix B – Figure 3*). The RCMP uses *Regular Members, Mounties* or *members* to refer to their member police officers**,** and these will be employed in this thesis.

In the literature, many authors have addressed *Indigenous People or Indigenous Communities* using other words such as *Aboriginal, Inuit, Indians,* and *Native people*. Please note that in this thesis, the term Indigenous communities will be employed, as it refers to people classified as Indigenous under International Law in the document *"Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*" (Library and Archives Canada, 2012). For citations or paraphrasing of other authors, the terms chosen by scholars will remain as they have used them.

The word *Nunavummiut* is defined as the people of Nunavut, including Inuit and non-Inuit (Lévesque, 2014). This thesis will also employ the terms Nunavummiut and Inuit when referring to those from Nunavut. Finally, *Qallunaat* is a person who is not Inuit (frequently, but not exclusively, of European descent); it can also be considered a group of people.

1.3 Key Factors

This research brings to literature the following questions: broadly, are police officers who are deployed to rural and remote communities in the Northern Territories (including Inuit Nunaat) adequately prepared for the terms and conditions of everyday life and everyday policing?

Research, journalism, and pop culture highlight the unique living and working conditions in Inuit Nunaat, characterized by unpredictable cold weather, robust cultural practices through art and music, and spiritual beliefs (RCGS, 2018). Another area of research will pertain to the level of preparedness exhibited by police officers when deployed in their respective communities, as determined by their alignment with the organizational standards in their policing identity formation and training.

For those unfamiliar with the beauty of the territory of Nunavut, its history, cultures and beliefs there may be surprises. For example, Lithopoulos and Ruddell (2013), in their text on Aboriginal policing in rural Canada, identified several challenges. One of the problems identified is that there is a lack of understanding of, and sensitivity to, Aboriginal cultures by non-aboriginal police officers (Lithopoulos & Ruddell, 2013).

Also, the literature shows that police officers are often not ready for the challenges that they encounter when they arrive to an unfamiliar environment (Carleton et al., 2018). The study by Carleton et al (2018) mentions that the RCMP, compared to other municipal police, may be deployed alone and are the ones sent to rural areas with limited access to structural and social support. Lamirande (2020) reports on details from the House of Commons Public Safety Committee on racism and policing that RCMP officers do not understand Indigenous cultures or their languages. This, according to Lamirande (2020) report, makes it difficult to build a trusting relationship between the Nunavut Inuit and the RCMP Regular Members. Further, Rohner (2020b) notes that the language barrier between Inuit and the RCMP officers who work in Nunavut are a major issue, especially since officers must deliver, at times, life-altering and traumatic information and cannot communicate the message appropriately.

Other research demonstrates that officers are exposed to traumatic calls and difficult encounters on a daily basis, with virtually no access to mental health services (Carleton et al., 2018; Cohen, 2020). Consequently, Police officers become more susceptible to developing operational stress injuries,

especially if the isolation of the work post means that they do not have access to mental health resources (Carleton et al., 2018). An argument, therefore, is that the retention of officers for a full mandate is comprised by these challenges (Griffiths, 2019).

Chapter 2 -LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 History

a) Sovereignty in Nunavut

Many Canadians believe, bolstered by primary and secondary education content, that when the European settlers arrived in Canada, the land was "empty" and available to be claimed (Comack, 2012). As Neizen (2017) argues, the settlers were "indifferent" (and thus violence and other forms of mal-treatment were inconsequential) toward the people already there. When they did pay attention it was to advance the idea that the Indigenous population required European "civilization" (Comack, 2012). On the subject of Arctic claims, Grant (2010) says:

> […] the history of Arctic sovereignty is *terra nullius*, meaning uninhabited or "nobody's lands". At the time of the discovery, Europeans referred to the lands of the New World as *terra nullius* in spite of sizable aboriginal populations, based on the argument that Indigenous peoples were uncivilized because they were pagans and without a structured form of government, thus could not be considered rightful owners of their lands. (p.14)

This notion that the land was empty, an idea that was uninterrupted by the actual presence of people (because the Europeans deemed them to be "uncivilized") therefore "justified" the appropriation of Indigenous lands (Grant, 2010, p.15).

Describing the Northern context, Loukacheva (2012) writes that, historically, sovereignty in the Arctic region was mainly a matter of community-based self-governance and cooperative decision-making that enhanced relations. All extended family networks and nations practised forms of government with rules, norms, and mores (Grant, 2010), although records suggest that Inuit groups did not practice governance through politics (Spitzer, 2020). For example, Inuit place value on the freedom to develop

their *Ihuma* (McGrath, 2006, p. 48), that they not express anger and frustration, that they laugh off any feelings of anger and frustration, and hold serenity and self-control in high regard (McGrath, 2006). For those who did not conform, Inuit employed their own laws and customary practices for maintaining conformity within the community by relying on self-regulation and various social control mechanisms like gossip, shaming, and social ostracism to address problematic behaviour (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020; Sinclair & Hamilton, 1991). Respected elders within the community assumed the role of adjudicators, determining appropriate forms of punishment. As McGrath notes, “this had always been how Inuit managed the unconventional, the eccentric and the mentally ill, and it remained so until missionaries stamped out shamanism in the late nineteenth century” (2006, p.49).

When the Government of Canada sent a police force to territories that were self-governed, it was a process of assimilation, of colonization, and a marked contribution to a long-standing important history between the RCMP and Inuit communities. Aspects of these ‘histories’ are ongoing, whereas elements of colonialism are a living phenomenon…

> [a]nd without the understanding of past impacts on the present, today’s place of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian Society cannot be understood without a well-developed historical knowledge of colonialism and the present-day trajectories of those old relationships (Monture, 2007, p.207).

b) History of RCMP

The RCMP's long standing role in Canada has transpired over centuries. Recently celebrating its 150th anniversary of working across the country, it is important to acknowledge how the RCMP is implicated in Canada’s most difficult and dark moments – especially in relation to Indigenous communities (Paradis, 2023).

Immigrant settlements in the North of Canada date back to the seventeenth century, whereas the new arrivals relied heavily on Aboriginal people for their knowledge and skills for survival (Comacks, 2012). For example, European "explorers" are credited with "discovering" the High Arctic (evidenced until recently with many place names such as Frobisher Bay) while little attention is given to Inuit guides and their survival skills and knowledge of navigating the sea, ice, and land (McGrath, 2006). Inuit ontologies, or "ways of being", and knowledge about surviving in the Arctic, were used in the expansion and possession of land. This played a pivotal role in Canadian history and the creation of Hudson Bay Company (HBC) trading posts (McGrath, 2006). The deployment of police forces emerged in this context, introduced to govern relations between Settlers and Inuit, and to facilitate economic development (Comack, 2012).

The introduction of the police force marked a significant shift in the existing power dynamics and government strategies by the Canadian government. Those strategies were rooted in the broader colonial objectives of obtaining control and to assimilate Aboriginal People (Comack, 2012). In the nineteenth century, when Euro-Canadians started to view Aboriginal people as a minority in their own lands, this outlook reinforced a need for formalized enforcement mechanisms to ensure control and power to facilitate colonial objectives, such as expanding and possessing new land (Comack, 2012). As such, following Confederation in 1867, known as the Dominion of Canada, the Government of Canada sought to expand its reach into the western regions, notably Rupert's Land—a large area surrounding Hudson's Bay (Grant, 2010). This expansion prompted the creation of the first official North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1873, a paramilitary force tasked with securing the area and promoting policing activities at trading posts, such as patrol and surveillance (The Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum, 2018).

Some have argued that the NWMP was introduced as a response to the Cypress Hills Massacre in May 1873[2]; however, all it did was heighten the pressure to proceed with a plan: in 1870 Prime Minister John A. Macdonald established and asserted control and sovereignty over the “Indian and Metis Population” of the North West (Brown & Brown, 1978; Comack, 2012). This event marked a significant step in establishing Canadian authority in the North and laid the groundwork for governance of the territory. Subsequently,

> [a]cting through the power of organized religion and colonial government, Canadians insisted that Aboriginal peoples should abandon their ways, languages, spiritual and economic systems, season movement to hunting and gathering places and most importantly, their lands (Dion, 2005, p.36).

This perception of viewing Aboriginal people as a minority was embedded in the Indian Act of 1876, which treated them as “children of the state” (Comack, 2012, p. 70). According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the Act was "*based unashamedly on the notion that Indian cultures and societies were inferior to settler society*" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal People [RCAP], 1996, vol. 1, chap. 8). This led to the idea that “Indians” were to be treated as “children of the state,” or wards of the state, subject to various assimilation and paternalistic conformities, which set a symbolic and powerful perception of Aboriginal people among Canadians (Comack, 2012, p.70). Discussion about the Nunavut Land Claims, the Constitution Act, and the Creation of Nunavut will be addressed in greater detail below.

At that time, the Government of Canada embarked on a strategic initiative to extend its influence in the Arctic region. To achieve this, the government dispatched Christian missionaries on a polar

[2] The Cypress Hills Massacre occurred in May 1873 in the Cypress Hills region, which is now Saskatchewan, and involved American whiskey traders who murdered several Assiniboine peoples (Comack, 2012, p. 74). According to Brown & Brown (1978), this wasn’t solely what introduced the NWMP, but it has definitely hastened the organization of the force. The primary role of establishing the NWMP was to establish and assert control over the Indian and Metis population of the North West (Brown & Brown, 1978, p.10)

expedition to explore Rupert's Land and the western Arctic and establish new outposts throughout the Northern territory to provoke any potential claims by other nations. This effort was part of a broader policy aimed at asserting Canadian sovereignty and facilitating the integration of these remote areas into the national framework (Grant, 2010). Additional underlying reasons for sending Christian missionaries were part of the process of acculturation and assimilating Indigenous populations into the practices of the Catholic Church, as well as the endeavour to "civilize" Indigenous communities throughout Canada via the implementation of Westernized educational and healthcare frameworks (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). At the time, however, the role the missionaries and other Westerners were playing in the "Canadianisation of the Arctic" was not very evident (McGrath, 2006, p.72).

Thus, it was when Inuit traditional ways of living, as well as their values and belief systems were undermined when they began interacting with Qallunaat groups (non-Inuit), such as the NWMP. As stated by Grant (2010), the beginning of these interactions, including the demise of the whaling industry, the introduction of diseases, the loss of traditional hunting due to the introduction of rifles and access to other resources (such as flour), increased their dependence on Settlers for survival. When these changes were introduced, the Government of Canada made no effort to accommodate the well-being of Inuit (Grant, 2010).

Initially, the application of Canadian black letter law between the NWMP and Inuit interactions was not strict, with alternative solutions often used instead of formal arrest and prosecution (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). Elizabeth Comack (2012) mentions that there are historians who have recorded instances where NWMP members acted fairly with Aboriginal people. However, most members knew that acting this way could lead to negative consequences, such as endangering their careers in the Force.

Perceptions regarding Inuit seems to have shifted after the criminal prosecution of two Inuit individuals in 1913 for the killing of two missionaries: the government's stance on Inuit involved asserting

more police forces and detachments (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). These two Inuit were initially sentenced to death but were subsequently released under conditions that mandated them to work at the police detachment for two years before returning to their community (Grant, 2010). Allegations arose that the Inuit community did not take their punishment seriously, as they were provided with basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter, suggesting a lack of seriousness in enforcing both Inuit and Canadian legal sanctions (Grant, 2010). This lack of leniency was further underscored by a similar incident in 1921, wherein two Inuit individuals who stood in a murder trial were convicted, and subsequently sentenced to death in 1923 (Grant, 2010). Following this trial, it was observed that police officers in the Arctic Islands could uphold the law and administer "justice" (Grant, 2010). However, throughout these events, it remained evident that the overarching objective was to acquire more land and assert control over the Nunavimmiut population.

In the twentieth century, the NWMP played an instrumental part in this sovereignty project, with expansions, asserted authority, and surveillance in the Arctic. It also monitored and controlled those who in fact inhabited these regions (Comack, 2012; Grant, 2010). In 1920, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police came along, due in part to the combining of forces such as the NWMP and the Dominion Police (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020).

During the 1920s, the RCMP assumed a somewhat paternalistic role within the Arctic region, engaging in activities such as conducting medical checkups, registering births and adoptions, collecting taxes, taking and sending children to residential schools and delivering mail for Inuit communities (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). However, their function swiftly transitioned towards policing the interactions between Qallunaat and Inuit populations (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020).

Following a significant criminal prosecution[3] it became evident that the RCMP detachment needed a stricter approach to sentencing to demonstrate its capacity to enforce laws and administer justice in the Arctic Islands (Grant, 2010).

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, despite efforts by Inuit to maintain their traditional way of life, they found themselves increasingly influenced by Southern Canadian culture, resulting in a process of acculturation (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). This cultural shift coincided with government-led relocation initiatives driven by strategic economic interests in exploiting natural resources and broader socio-political agendas. Consequently, many Inuit families were forcibly relocated across the territory, including from settlements in the northern part of Quebec, as part of the government's relocation plan (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006).

The RCMP's expanding role extended beyond traditional law enforcement to actively promoting corporate colonialism in the North. This included overseeing Inuit families' relocation, ensuring children's compulsory school attendance, enforcing colonial laws, and assuming various other administrative duties (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020). This marked the onset of settler colonialism, leaving a legacy that continues to shape contemporary societies today.

c) Relationship – Distrust

The relationship between the Police and Indigenous peoples is a byproduct of over a hundred years of interactions. The historical engagement of the RCMP in enforcing colonial laws has had an impact on the everyday lives of Indigenous peoples, including Inuit, who are still living through historical trauma.

[3]In 1913, two Catholic priests were killed by two Inuit, who were sentenced to death, later commuted to life labor (Grant, 2010, p. 222). After two years working for the police, they were released, though their punishment was seen as lenient by the community. With increased violence reports, concerns about law enforcement grew (Grant, 2010). In 1923, another murder trial resulted in the death penalty, serving both as deterrence and to assert Canadian authority in the Arctic (Grant, 2010, p. 225).

Indigenous communities, as a result of the impact of colonialism. Additionally, some of the social and economic issues, such as food insecurity, poor living conditions and the shift of gender roles faced by the Indigenous communities, are part of the manifestations of the ongoing colonial encounters with Qallunaat (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020).

The forced relocation was part of a Canadian government policy intended to assert sovereignty in the Arctic during the Cold War. This policy resulted in immense hardship for Inuit, who were unprepared for the harsh conditions of their new environment and faced a lack of familiar food sources such as caribou (McGrath, 2006). To reinforce this relocation, a constable entered the Arctic Detachment in 1953, known as G Division, marking the first Arctic permanent posting (McGrath, 2006). A notion also emerged at this time from the RCMP Headquarters (HQ) in Ottawa that if one can survive "[…] in "G", surrounded by thousands of miles of lonely tundra, with Inuit and no one else for company, then you can survive pretty much anywhere (McGrath, 2006, p. 77).

In the years after WWII, challenges arose in the Inukjuak region as individuals urged to cease hunting resumed their activities, although under constrained circumstances due to a lack of available funds for purchasing ammunition (McGrath, 2006). Moreover, escalating food prices and declining demand for fur in commercial arenas exacerbated the tensions as a result of an increasing reliance on income, leading to persistent "poverty" with seemingly impossible resolutions (McGrath, 2006).

Officers posted to "G Division" were furthermore implicated in paternalistic assimilation practices via limits on resources and food rations (McGrath, 2006). In "*The Long Exile*," McGrath (2006) recounts the story of a Corporal in G division, responsible for allocating "destitution" rations, who became increasingly reluctant to assist the "needy" Inuit. As McGrath notes, "his instructions were to discourage welfare requests and disperse Inuit seeking assistance to avoid what HQ in Ottawa described as "vagrancy" (McGrath, 2006, p. 81).

In addition, many were relocated and promises were broken: Inuit were promised access to resources such as hunting and the option to return home to Nunavik from northern Baffin Island and Ellesmere Island. These promises were never fulfilled, and in fact some Inuit were relocated to second spots (RCMP, 2022a, p. 48). Due to the lack of hunting and living supplies, readily available food sources, and the capacity to survive under recognizable conditions, experienced hardships such as starvation and even death (sometimes by suicide) (RCMP, 2022a, p. 48)

This history underscores the RCMP's historical involvement in the colonization of Inuit and thus reasons why they may not be viewed as a “trusted” organization in the Inuit homeland (McGrath, 2006; Grant, 2010). These and other details clarify the role of the RCMP in harms against the Inuit.

Additionally, two significant occurrences between the 1950s and 1960s contributed to distrust and fear towards the police: the killing of sled dogs and the taking of children to residential schools (Marchand et al., 2020). The residential school system robbed Inuit children of their families, their languages, their culture, dignity, and sometimes bodily safety (McGrath, 2006). As stated by McGrath :

> [t]hey became rootless and drifting, cut off by language and by habit both from their families and from the traditions into which they had been returned. Residential school, for many, was residential hell (2006, p. 267).

The amount of loss and suffering that Nunavimmiut have endured during those years has led to significant despair and distrust towards authorities (Marchand et al., 2020). The removal and the killing of Inuit sled dogs were exercises of colonial power exerted by the Government of Canada with the intent to assert control over the Inuit’s capacity to continue living on the land - without dog teams they could not follow migratory prey and other sources of food. At least one family reported that the women and children out on the land died as a result of the RCMP killing the family dog team while their male hunter was at a HBC trading post collecting supplies (personal communication). The killing of the sled dogs had short-term and

longer-term consequences, as the dogs were means of safe transportation integral to hunting and finding food, as well as connecting to family networks across the region (RCMP, 2022b).

A recent report published by the RCMP examines public perceptions of the RCMP, revealing a significant level of distrust among some individuals due to experiences of racial profiling or biases during interactions (RCMP, 2023c). Indigenous participants recounted enduring traumatic incidents involving the RCMP, using descriptors such as “terror,” “violence and police brutality,” “oppression,” and “trauma” to describe their experiences (RCMP, 2023c). Instances like those described above have profoundly influenced the relationship between Inuit communities and law enforcement officers, fostering a climate of distrust. The tensions between RCMP Officers and relationships with Inuit will be explored further in the police legitimacy section below.

A public safety report by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack (2020) mentions that former RCMP Commissioner, Brenda Lucki, wrote in her mandate letter “[…] that we are now working on enhancing our role and in reconciliation with Indigenous people, and bolstering the efficacy, the credibility, and the trust upon which the RCMP’s authority depends”(p. 29). The letter also outlines new initiatives, such as a commitment to bias-free policing. This principle provides equitable policing services to all people, regardless of race, colour, religion, gender/sexual orientation, age, mental/physical state and citizenship (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020). Relatedly, Insp. Jim Potts states in a report entitled, *Indigenous Insight Building Relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis by the RCMP* (2022a), “[i]f I observe or experience behaviour that I do not understand, there may be a cultural explanation” (p.3).

d) Creation of Nunavut (1999) and Contemporary Governance

In 1999, Nunavut officially became Canada's third territory following its separation from the Northwest Territories. This historical event not only marked the emergence of the first territory

predominantly inhabited by Inuit but also represented a significant milestone for them in reclaiming their traditional social and cultural practices, which had been eroded through decades of assimilation processes (Dobbins, 2019).

The establishment of Nunavut had profound political implications. It granted the Inuit population self-governance over their land, granting them some measure of sovereignty over decision-making related to land, water, and people. This step towards self-determination and autonomy was a direct outcome of decades of negotiation on the part of Inuit representatives and the Government of Canada agreeing to Indigenous sovereignty over the land (although the Federal Government maintains veto power over extraction projects, etc) (Moss, 1995).

The definition of colonization is the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the Indigenous people of an area (Christian Aboriginal Infrastructure Developments [CAID], n.d). From the time the Dominion of Canada was federated in 1867 until the *Constitution Act* (1982) came into Force, Indigenous rights were not recognized, and Treaty rights were mostly disregarded (Moss, 1995). Canadian legislation was designed and enacted to: "[...] do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion" (CAID, n.d, para 3).

Prior to the original *Constitution Act* in 1867, Canadian policy laid the groundwork for federal policies involving legislation regarding Indigenous people, including Inuit (Moss, 1995). Prior to the *Constitution Act* in 1867, many of these laws were primarily directed at Indigenous people in the south, as Inuit were living too far north. However, the impact of these colonial policies significantly affected Inuit in later years (Moss, 1995).

Dobbins (2019) quotes Inuk John Amagoalik who shared his experience of being relocated to the high Arctic where he describes being treated as a "ward of the government"[4] by the Qallunaat. He describes the situation in which he lived during that time, where the government was so powerful and had so much control over him that he had little to no independence (Dobbins, 2016). By definition, a ward of a government, also known as a ward of the State, is an individual under the guardianship or control of a government – often described as an individual incapable of managing or making decisions for themselves (RCAP, 1996; Irwin, 1989). Such individuals are afforded limited autonomy and minimal control over their lives, leading to their colloquial designation as "children of the state". In contrast, citizenship confers upon an individual legal membership and equality with other citizens, enabling them to exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities without state intervention (Moss, 1995).

The Nunavummiut fought for decades[5] for control over their homeland - their lands, their cultures, values and more (Bonesteel & Anderson, 2006). The opportunity to exercise jurisdiction over "Crown" lands and Inuit Settlement land through non-ethnic government appears to be one of the leading factors for negotiating a model allowing self-governance for Inuit (Moss, 1995).

The creation of the territory of Nunavut, in part as a result of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NCLA), established grounds for Inuit-led governance of land and water use, local policies and privileging of Inuit culture and values. It was a crucial response to the ongoing legacy of colonialism, "[…], recognizing the right of Inuit to play a significant role in the decision making in regards to their governance and management of their land and resources" (Dobbins, 2019, p.12). After 40 years of fighting for their land

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[4] Although not legally considered "wards of the State" - a legal designation assigned to First Nations Peoples under the *Indian Act*, Inuit were still subjected to paternalistic treatment at the hands of the Government of Canada.

[5] Canada's original Constitution (1867) made no mention of Inuit because their homeland was not initially part of Canada. They were not mentioned in the *Indian Act* nor were there treaties with them. When Canada's borders expanded north Inuit technically became part of Canada, but there was little interaction. In 1934 Inuit were explicitly excluded from voting, but by 1950 they had voting rights (unlike First Nations Peoples who were governed under the *Indian Act*). (Elections Canada, 2024)

and title, “[t]he history of the Arctic had been given back to the people it belonged to. In the most profound sense, the people of the Arctic had, finally, come home” (McGrath, 2006, p. 293).

e) The Shared Directional Statement

The Shared Directional Statement represents a contract between the Government of Nunavut (GN) and the Government of Canada (GC) which is an agreement between those parties and the RCMP stating that the Minister of Justice of Nunavut will use the Royal Canadian Police Services as their Territorial Police Services (Government of Nunavut, 2020). The statement clarifies that:

> […] the RCMP "V" Division’s commitment to providing Nunavummiut with efficient, effective and culturally relevant policing services. It also outlines the RCMP and the Government of Nunavut’s policing goals in meeting public safety needs of Nunavummiut, as identified by Nunavummiut, the Government of Nunavut and the RCMP (Espinosa & Lawson, 2016, para 2).

It is a 20-year contract by the RCMP that provides stable and effective policing in Nunavut[6] (Akeeagok, 2023). The letter identifies the priorities to project the “well-being and safety” of the communities in Nunavut (Akeeagok, 2023).

At present, the vast majority of RCMP working in Nunavut are non-Inuit. Documented concerns about the comportment of officers include examples of prejudice and discrimination; Rohner (2020a), for example, argues that Nunavut leaders are calling for a territory-wide review of the RCMP after more than 30 cases have emerged involving allegations of police brutality, misconduct and insensitivity. Media reports indicate that systemic racism is on the rise, and highlight the call for: a re-evaluation of training and an internal review of the policing model being applied by the RCMP (Last, 2020; Rohner,

[6] I describe the current contract on page 30.

2020a). “Community members ... have experienced this in countless ways, from a simple lack of cultural awareness and understanding... to outright racist comments, attitudes and actions" (2020a, para 6)

2.2 RCMP Training

Before becoming a police officer within the RCMP, individuals undergo a rigorous training process. Therefore, the next section will explore the specific requirements and training involved in becoming a police officer in the RCMP, particularly for those deployed in the North.

a) Cadet Training and Selection for Northern Posting

To become a police officer in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, an individual must undergo a series of assessments and entry-level tests before entering the Cadet Program. The training starts once entering the cadet program in Regina, Saskatchewan, where cadets must complete a 26-week basic training course. During the 26-week training, according to the RCMP program training overview (2017), cadets will be trained on the following: applied police science (432 hours), firearms (104 hours), police defensive tactics/ immediate action rapid deployment (94 hours), police driving (67 hours), operational conditions (45 hours), drill and deportment (37 hours) and others (41 hours) (RCMP, 2019). The RCMP's vision for its cadets is to train its Regular Members based on the Operational Framework of CAPRA (Clients / Acquire and Analyze / Partnerships / Response / Assess), which is a problem-solving model to help define the competencies necessary for effective community policing (RCMP, 2024, para 20). In addition, the Cadets are evaluated and observed by facilitators and members with different areas of expertise in the field throughout the training at the Depot.

Once the training is completed and a cadet successfully graduates from the Cadet Training Program, they are offered employment in a detachment as a member of the RCMP and given the “peace officer” status (RCMP, 2019). Once employed, the newly graduated cadets are assigned with a Field trainer for six months at the selected detachments, where they are involved in everyday police duties under the

supervision of a Field Coach (RCMP, 2019). The field coach is responsible for educating the Regular Members about the community and its culture while facilitating their integration into the new environment. The foregoing information is alluded to in the direct description from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police [RCMP] as follows:

> In their first posting, new members are paired up with an experienced police officer: a field coach. Field coaching is an integral part of training that provides guidance, support and feedback for all new constables. It further develops skills required to be a police officer in an operational setting. The new members also learn about their community and detachment. Field coaching lasts an average of six months (2022b, para. 5).

It is important to consider that before getting deployed into V Division, members undergo a series of evaluations, including a "suitable interview". The suitable interview is an exercise that is conducted prior to having a member deployed to a post; it encompasses a lot of questions relating to the person's current familial relationships, the environment they are expected to work in, the types of calls they are expected to attend to, and the shift and overtime work expected of them. In addition, a series of tests are conducted such as health assessments, psychological assessments and personality tests.

Similarly, the Cadets are required to sign a letter of expectation (*Refer to Appendix A*). The letter is given out at the beginning of the selection process for the police officer to read, review and sign, acknowledging what they should expect about the "challenges" while living in the North. It is worth noting that some of these challenges and dynamics will be further discussed in Chapter 5 (Presentation of the Data) and Chapter 6 (Conclusion) of this work.

The letter of expectations delineates the requisite commitment of members to also engage proactively in non-policing duties aimed at community integration, fostering trust, and garnering respect (*Refer to Appendix A*). It underscores the individual responsibility of members to acquaint themselves with

the linguistic, customary, and cultural norms of a community, evincing a readiness to assimilate traditional practices (*Refer to Appendix A*). Notably, the letter provides insights into the prevailing weather conditions and housing challenges, necessitating members' potential engagement in independent repair and maintenance tasks, albeit offering scant guidance on cultural values and beliefs. Given the unique cultural landscape of Nunavut and its communities, V Division has instituted an orientation package, furnishing comprehensive information to incoming members prior to their deployment. This orientation package encompasses expectations of service roles during the anticipated tenure of 2 to 3 years, an overview of policing responsibilities within the Territory of Nunavut, and considerations pertaining to relocating personal belongings, educational arrangements for dependents, climatic conditions, healthcare provisions, and travel logistics. It is observed that most Regular Members, afforded the opportunity for preparatory measures, avail themselves of the chance to liaise with the detachment commander in their assigned community, thereby facilitating a thorough discourse on pertinent details prior to their arrival. Predominantly, the onus lies with Regular Members to conduct preliminary research prior to their deployment. Until recently, the V Division Orientation Package was not readily accessible to Regular Members, who relied primarily on the aforementioned letter of expectation and independently conducted research.

b) Paramilitary Training

According to Boutilier (2021), the RCMP is ingrained within a paramilitary culture, evident from the structured training provided at the Depot which serves to reinforce traditional paramilitary methods (Boutilier, 2021). As defined by Gersten (2021), paramilitary forces operate akin to unofficial armies, trained and organized as if preparing for warfare. In the same vein, Kraska (2007) argues that police militarization is demonstrated through the adoption of military-specific culture (e.g., values), use of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) or Emergency Response Teams (ERTs), normalized deployment of

these specially trained officers, and/or integration of military-grade material, such as weapons (e.g., carbines), diversionary devices (e.g., flashbang grenades), protective equipment (e.g., shields), uniforms (e.g., camouflage), and vehicles (e.g., armoured vehicles) (Kraska, 2007 in Blaskovits et al., 2022, p.2).

This observation, echoing Boutilier's findings, is not news, as the RCMP has been acknowledged as a paramilitary entity since its inception in 1873, drawing parallels to the traditional British Army Cavalry regiments (RCMP, 2023a). Arguments suggest that police power and discriminatory actions against people based on race, for example, are recognized as an ongoing problem and suggest that a big portion of this issue stems from the paramilitary structure of police officers (Boutilier, 2021). An example by Comack (2012) describes that police officers associate Aboriginal people with the "usual suspect" where this reinforces the mentality that they are recognized automatically as "problems" which may justify engaging in aggressive policing practices when dealing with Aboriginal people. Over time, a vicious cycle is produced that works to perpetuate conflicts between Aboriginal people and the police, leading to ongoing tensions (Comack, 2012).

The most sweeping recommendation identified by Boutilier (2021) in an article entitled, "*RCMP's 'paramilitary' structure should be dismantled to address systemic racism, Commons committee says*" addresses the organization's paramilitary structure. Boutilier (2021) focuses on how basic training isn't adequate for addressing the specific needs of the communities these officers serve. It is noted that police officers often attend calls that implicate a myriad of social problems that aren't necessarily related to crime-fighting or specific law enforcement activities (Comack, 2012). Having them enforce paramilitary training, aimed at "removing the threats and controlling the situation" is not necessarily what the community needs. The paramilitary model of policing can hinder the promotion of partnership and trust between the Indigenous community and the police. Numerous studies and reports, including the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, strongly reinforce

this viewpoint. The report emphasized the need for police forces to embrace culturally appropriate and community-oriented approaches to enhance relations with Indigenous communities (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019).

The RCMP's paramilitary structure is deeply ingrained in their operations, characterized by a military-like precision suitable for responding to terrorist attacks but not for handling personal situations where arrests may not always be appropriate (Gerster, 2023). While it is acknowledged that police organizations might require some paramilitary elements—given that many police practices have historical roots in militaristic traditions—military training is specifically designed for leading armies and protecting national security, particularly in the context of national threats like terrorism (Gerster, 2023). However, incorporating such militaristic approaches within a civilian police force can fundamentally alter its operations in ways that may not be suitable for managing delicate civilian interactions (Gerster, 2023).

Scott Blandford, a cadet who attended RCMP training at Depot, questioned the fit and wondered if becoming an RCMP Member was right for him, based on the orientation of the training (Simes, 2023). He commented that the training received 40 years ago had a heavy militaristic cultural component, which he described as similar to a military boot camp, clearly designed to develop an interdisciplinary, militaristic culture of the RCMP (Simes, 2023). A study on the public perceptions of the militarized appearance of the police, (Blaskovits, et al., 2022) suggests that certain characteristics of a police uniform and equipment will influence how the public perceives them. The study further argues that the public holds strong negative perceptions of officers who wear militarized attire because it impacts ideas about their approachability, trustworthiness, and moral character, among other attributes (Blaskotvits et al., 2022). Nevertheless, these officers also possess greater strength, confidence, and readiness to confront threatening or dangerous situations (Blaskovits et al., 2022). This suggests that not only do the military equipment and the adopted uniforms assert police authoritarian dominance, but they also create this

sense of police identity. Blumer (1986), through his symbolic interactionism theory, understands the symbolic nature of police uniforms, which symbolize the organization they represent, but also can have an impact on the officer's behaviours and public impressions.

Regardless of the negative impact of paramilitary training on community service, a deeply ingrained paramilitary culture pervades the organization. This has been extensively covered in the media, with reports highlighting internal dysfunction that spills over into public awareness through numerous class action lawsuits and complaints, including allegations of bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct within the organization (Gerster, 2023). It has even been argued that a paramilitary structure is not well suited to deliver on local communities' needs, values and expectations (Gerster, 2023).

In response to ongoing criticism from multiple sources, the RCMP has acknowledged the necessity for change in the training offered at Depot. Consequently, they embarked on a research initiative for a new Cadet Training Program (CTP) between 2021 and 2022.

c) New Cadet Training Program

The RCMP recognizes the Cadet Training Program's important role in shaping the RCMP's culture and identity (Government of Canada, 2022). Its Depot can be recognized as the most influential site that is aimed at shaping and training Regular Members and, consequently, the RCMP’s future. In 2021, the external RCMP Management Advisory Board (MAD) Training Taskforce underwent a series of revisions of a recent review of the RCMP Depot paramilitary training in order to modernize policing, meeting the targets set out in *RCMP Vision 150* (Government of Canada, 2022).

Vision 150 requires that the training at Depot : “provide an inclusive, modern, and progressive learning environment that builds cadets’ capacities, knowledge, and skills required to work effectively with diverse

communities across the country to ensure their safety and security" (Government of Canada, 2022, para. 24).

As such, the revisions, based on evaluating the Cadet Training Program (CTP) were aimed at modernizing the training to reflect the changing demands and characteristics of the communities they serve (RCMP, 2023b). The report recommended that the RCMP adopt a Finnish policing model, which, at its core, mandates the use of a minimum amount of force, and that the training give them skills to foster calm by de-escalating highly stressful situations (Simes, 2023).

2.3 Rural and Remote Policing

Moving through the world as a police officer may involve being called upon to do things other than law enforcement duties. Research on the Mounties notes that recommendations sometimes suggest that the RCMP streamline its activities to AVOID wearing "too" many hats (Gerster, 2023, emphasis added). For instance, in rural and remote communities with limited local services and infrastructure, as Griffiths (2019) points out, officers may experience professional and personal challenges when they are called to intervene in requests or actions that fall outside of official duties.

a) Cultural Awareness

Research shows that police-Indigenous community relations are characterized by a unique set of dynamics. Lithopoulos and Ruddell (2013) argue that non-Aboriginal police officers lack understanding and sensitivity to Aboriginal culture (see also Kiedrowski et al., 2017). This raises important questions about the efficacy of policing in Indigenous communities where there is distrust and a lack of cultural awareness, in addition to the challenges of rural and remote communities (Griffith, 2019).

As I argued in the section on training, there is no specific northern-related training being offered to police officers going to detachments in the Inuit Nunangat. Although some officers may have experience working in First Nations or Métis communities in other parts of Canada, there is nothing to

specifically prepare Members to work with Inuit community in Nunavut. Although recently the RCMP has mandated that Members take the online cultural sensitivity training modules, however, from the practical standpoint, there is a lack of how to implement this knowledge in a northern communities setting, specifically addresses Inuit communities (Public Safety Canada, 2022a).

Gina Nagano, a former RCMP Officer and a member of the Tr'ondëkHwëch'in First Nation said that she had never seen so much discrimination until she got into the RCMP (Last, 2020). She added that the model of policing that the RCMP has is outdated and very disconnected from the northern communities that it serves. She added that the two-year posting makes it very challenging for police officers to step out, engage with the community, and integrate themselves. Police officers may be uncertain about how to react due to the lack of awareness, and as a result, rely heavily on reactive policing, such as attending calls, stopping "crimes", or following up on incidents that have already occurred (Last, 2020; Laufs et al., 2020). Reactive policing is a style of policing that involves "fighting crimes" in the moment, versus proactive policing that involves intervening before individuals or groups engage in criminal activities (Laufs et al., 2020). Nagano suggests that the best approach would be to connect with the community through proactive policing, where acting this way would engage the community to work with and not against you (Last, 2020).

After being a police officer, Nagano established a program in Yukon where First Nation members conduct patrols and intervene in situations where police would normally be called. This approach was created because no one is better at policing their community than its own citizens. When there is an issue, they don't necessarily go to the probation officer; they see the elder in the community who will make that person accountable for their actions. As noted in the literature on policing in Indigenous communities - the goal is to frequently to foster self-policing.

In Nunavut, the current agreement for contract policing is in effect until March 31st, 2032 (Public Safety Canada, 2024) and follows a model consistent across provinces and territories (Public Safety Canada, 2024). However, in 2022 the Government of Canada and Nunavut signed an agreement to allow a First Nations and Inuit Policing Program (FNIPP) into the Territory. This initiative allows new Nunavummiut RCMP Officers to be hired and police their communities (First Nations and Inuit policing program expanding into Nunavut, 2022; Public Safety Canada, 2022b).

> This agreement means that Nunavummiut will have a greater say in how policing is conducted in their communities. Under the FNIPP, officers will be given a unique mandate, one that is developed in consultation with the communities they serve. Their focus will be community engagement, crime prevention and public safety (Public Safety Canada, 2022b, para. 3).

Although there was a record high of 5 Inuit Regular Members working in Nunavut in 2022 (Tranter, 2022), overall the FNIPP has not had broader success. Partially this is because the program stopped receiving funding after three First Nations Police refused to accept a contract that did not meet their community's needs (Hughes, 2024). As a cost-sharing initiative between federal, provincial, and territorial governments, the FNIPP was supposed to be treated like any other police service (Hughes, 2024). A report on the program highlights that the program did not fulfill its promise to collaborate with Indigenous communities and address their specific needs, including culturally informed police services (Hughes, 2024). Although the program aimed to serve the communities fully, data revealed that many could not progress with the initiative due to funding issues, limited resources, and ongoing operational challenges (Public Safety Canada, 2022a).

Furthermore, there were significant gaps in providing culturally appropriate training and responsive policing services within FNIPP community agreements (Public Safety Canada, 2022a). These deficiencies hindered the program's effectiveness, underscoring the need for a more robust and inclusive

framework that genuinely integrates and addresses the unique needs of Indigenous populations. In line with cultural training, a 2020 public safety report by Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and Dr. Elizabeth Comack acknowledges this concern. Consequently, they proposed a substantial investment in providing continuous and comprehensive cultural competency training for non Indigenous police officers. This training would encompass Inuit history and culture, focusing on language instruction, led and crafted by an Inuk.

b) Community Integration

To that end, the research also describes the necessity of integrating within Indigenous communities. To build trust, understanding and effective policing, integration with members of the community is therefore advantageous for Regular Members posted to Indigenous communities. Literature shows that police officers are more effective in rural communities when they engage and interact with community members, and, conversely, less effective where meaningful interaction is absent.

The literature also argues that policing in rural areas resembles the role of peacekeepers where the officers are perceived as local community members (Banton, 1964). This idea is strongly reinforced in the letter of expectation previously mentioned, and in the initiative led by the FNIPP, which endorsed that Regular Members should be involved and partake in local activities. The RCMP Letter of Expectation for its Regular Members going to V-Division states that: "[m]embers have a responsibility to become familiar with their community respecting the language, custom and cultural activities, with the willingness to listen and learn traditional ways." (*Refer to Appendix A*). Chief Superintendent Amanda Jones (commanding officer in V-Division from 2019-2022) believes members must be engaged in the community to be successful and happy (Canadian Press, 2020). Integrating themselves allows the officer to better understand the culture and reflects adaptability to learn that culture (The Canadian Press, 2020). Moreover, literature on police integration and legitimacy (which will be explored in greater depth below)

suggests that it is crucial for police officers to integrate themselves and to build relationships and trust within the community.

In a new version of *Core Values* developed by the RCMP, current V Division Commanding officer Andrew Blackadar mentions that "[b]eing open, welcoming and inclusive and demonstrating compassion falls within our renewed core values" (Antunes, 2024, para. 6). However, research shows that police forces are resistant to institutional cultural changes, including the adoption of new values and policies (Lithopoulos, 2006). Some of the challenges include not understanding Indigenous methods of justice or being unable to understand Inuktitut, one of the Inuit languages (Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Integration is important, but, as some authors point out, initiating and improvising ways to integrate puts a lot of pressure on recently deployed officers (Griffith, 2019).

There is an Inuit Police Program, founded in 1994 by the Government of Nunavut, Department of Justice, and Department of Security and supported by the RCMP. It is a constable community pilot project where Inuit police officers are recruited to assist the police members in the community to provide effective, efficient and culturally sensitive policing in the North (Lithopoulos, 2006). This program is still operating, however, there are challenges in the Member-Constable dynamic as the RCMP Members must rely on Inuit Constables when language or other culturally specific matters intervene in the course of doing police work (Lithopoulos, 2006). There is a high likelihood that the Constable and the person or persons with whom the Member is dealing know each other, complicating the dynamics between the Member, the Constable, and the public.

c) "Personal Policing" Vs Privacy

Another challenge which police officers often face in rural and remote communities is "personal policing" (Griffiths, 2019). This occurs when a community is small and it is hard to remain anonymous, so police often know the person of interest and vice versa. In some cases that may be beneficial, but for

those who would like to seek some help anonymously, some personal space and/or privacy may not always be feasible due to the fact that everyone knows each other (Ross, 2009). In such settings, police officers cannot remain anonymous because they are familiar with the individuals they encounter, making it difficult to maintain professional distance. Officers working in remote communities have expressed the lack of anonymity for themselves, and their families, comparing it to living in a fishbowl (Lithopoulos & Ruddell, 2011). This personal policing means officers are more likely to have direct and personal knowledge of the community members with whom they interact. On a professional level, Scott and Jobes (2007) found that in local communities with internal and external conflicts it is difficult for police officers to adopt a working style based on familiarity. For example, integration into a new environment requires a gradual process (Scott & Jones, 2007). It can become difficult for a police officer to perform their duties, including gaining the trust of the residents (Scott & Jones, 2007). Part of their role is to socialize and get to know their community, which in turn may produce tensions when police perform their duties and encounter civilians with whom they have socialized (Scott & Jones, 2007).

Studies have also shown that police officers in rural communities tend to have difficulties separating and insulating their families and private lives as they are constantly working and expected to engage with the communities (*Refer to Appendix A*) (Griffith & Clark, 2017). In rural communities, residents often know where the officers live, what they do and when they do it – such as attending certain calls (Scott & Jobes, 2007). It may be difficult to maintain strict working hours in a smaller community, where rotational or 24-hour on-call shifts are mandated due to staff shortages (Terpstra, et al., 2023). This on-call system and the long work hours may contribute to burnout, putting everyone at risk (The Canadian Press, 2020). Cavaliere (2021) highlights that burnout in law enforcement roles can lead to apathy, diminished responsiveness to individuals' needs, and poor performance. When officers reach this burnout stage, it can result in significant repercussions, including misconduct and other risks that affect the officers and the public during interactions (Cavaliere, 2021).

d) Resources

Policing in rural areas differs significantly from urban areas, particularly regarding resource accessibility. The availability of resources in rural regions is often limited, the cost of living is higher, opportunities for family members are low, and the nearest access to essential services can be considerably distant (Ruddell & Lithopoulos, 2016). This discrepancy underscores law enforcement's unique challenges in rural settings, necessitating tailored approaches to effectively address these communities' specific needs and constraints. The term “plural policing” by Merritt & Dingwall (2010) is applied in rural policing, where it requires that police officers deliver services that have not been historically carried out by police officers. For example, there is evidence that in a smaller community there is a shortage of accessible health resources (Griffiths, 2019). As a result, applying the term “plural policing” in a setting where they encounter situations requiring medical attention presents a daily challenge for officers as they often lack adequate support aid and proper training (Merritt & Dingwall, 2010).

Furthermore, police officers may be tasked with missions or calls typically handled by specialized units requiring additional training (Ross, 2009). However, they may not be as well-prepared for these calls as those who serve in specialized units and may lack the necessary equipment or tools to handle certain situations effectively (Ross, 2009). As a result, they are more vulnerable to developing operational stress injuries due to being ill-prepared for these missions or lacking the requisite training (Carleton et al., 2018; Griffiths, 2019). Additionally, officers may resort to alternative solutions or unconventional methods when dealing with problems due to the lack of resources. For example, detaining someone for a couple of hours to avoid any volatility or risky situations and giving second chances through verbal warnings are all examples of unconventional methods used in a remote setting (Ruddell & Jones, 2018).

e) Isolated Policing – Remote Policing

A remote community may be defined as a place where year-round access to the nearest medical centre is about 350 kilometres, whereas an isolated community may be defined as a place that lacks year-round road access (Health Canada, 2010, p.98).

Isolated policing often intensifies challenges for police officers stationed in remote areas; those listed above, alongside language barriers and social labelling, can further complicate their integration into the community. In addition, officers are encouraged to participate in recreational activities, such as parades, to integrate themselves into the community. However, these efforts are frequently hindered by the demands and constraints of their roles. Moreover, the lack of resources, including healthcare and immediate backup—often hours away—compounds the difficulty of policing and actively engaging with the community. These factors necessitate a comprehensive understanding and strategic approach to address the unique needs and challenges inherent in remote and isolated policing. Based on the definition provided by Health Canada (2010) all of the hamlets in Nunavut meet the criteria. Although Iqaluit has a hospital and multiple services, it can only be reached by plane.[7]

2.4 Police Legitimacy

One persistent issue contributing to the lack of trust in rural policing is the act of "over-policing", particularly in Indigenous communities. This concept refers to the tendency of police to stereotype and arrest Indigenous individuals more frequently than non-Indigenous individuals based on preconceived notions about Aboriginal communities (Mitchell & Rowse 2011). Consequently, trust is eroded. Without the trust and legitimacy of the public, effective community policing[8] becomes difficult to achieve.

[7] When the sea ice is open almost all of the hamlets can also be reached by ship.
[8] I address the RCMP's new training modules on community policing in Chapter 6.

Therefore, building trust and establishing legitimacy are crucial for fostering positive relationships and successful policing in Indigenous communities.

Public perceptions of police officers can significantly influence their behaviours and interactions. Literature suggests that in small communities, integration is particularly beneficial for officers. Establishing relationships and gaining familiarity with the local environment can therefore enhance both the effectiveness of policing and community trust (Griffiths & Clark, 2017). However, (as noted above) this integration can also present challenges for officers, as their responsibilities often extend beyond what is legislatively mandated, requiring them to engage more deeply with the community on both professional and personal levels (Griffiths, 2019).

Research on police legitimacy further emphasizes that feelings of trust and safety play crucial roles in shaping attitudes toward law enforcement officers (Ewanation et al., 2019). When community members feel safe and can trust the police, it is often associated with favourable perceptions and attitudes toward officers, reinforcing the positive impact of community integration and trust-building efforts (Ewanation et al., 2019).

To add, officers who consistently adhere to the law and refrain from using excessive force or coercive interrogation techniques are viewed as more lawful, thus positively impacting perceptions of police legitimacy (Tankebe et al., 2016). Moreover, public perceptions of police legitimacy are influenced by feelings of fairness in distribution and procedural justice. Lastly, the effectiveness of police officers plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions. When officers are perceived as competent, protective, and dedicated to their duties, they are viewed as more legitimate (Tankebe, 2013; Tankebe et al., 2016). On the contrary, if officers are known to use excessive force, engage in misconduct, or fail to demonstrate fairness and effectiveness in solving incidents or crimes, the community is likely to have less favourable perceptions and a lower police legitimacy (Ewanation et al., 2019).

Broadly, the literature shows that police legitimacy is a core concept in police studies. As Tyler (2006) mentions "[t]o establish and maintain legitimacy, the communities' notions of justice and fairness must be 'enshrined in institutions and in the actions of authorities'"(p. 392). Police officers need to be viewed as "legitimate" so that members of the community and institutional representatives are willing to commit and obey the authority of police (Griffiths & Clark, 2017).

Aspects of policing that also have an impact on legitimacy and efficacy include shorter-term deployments (Public Safety Canada, 2022a). Every time a Regular Member has completed a posting, another Regular Member comes into the community and has to re-establish connections with the community and start all over where the other Regular Member left off (Ruddell & Jones, 2018).

Inspired by work in New Zealand and to change the perception of RCMP legitimacy in Indigenous communities, the RCMP have implemented a new Indigenous cultural awareness program (RCMP, 2021). Working with an elder, the goal is to educate officers on the historical and cultural contexts of Indigenous peoples' lives so as to enhance officers' capacity to understand and engage respectfully and effectively. The RCMP is also actively involved in raising awareness and preventing violence against women and girls, a critical issue for many Indigenous communities (RCMP, 2021).

Along a different vein, in 2021 the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and V Division collaborated on the unveiling of a monument honouring the legacy and contribution of Inuit special Constables and qimmit (sled dogs) in Nunavut (Hopkins, 2021). This was a special moment reported by the RCMP and supported the Qikiqtani Truth Commission Recommendation #3 that "the QIA and RCMP should formally recognize the contributions of Inuit Special Constables and their families to the work of the RCMP in the region" (para. 5). V Division RCMP Commanding Officer Amanda Jones mentioned that this was a step towards building trust and renewing relationships with Inuit in Nunavut (Hopkins, 2021).

Overall, these efforts demonstrate that the RCMP has launched initiatives aimed at reconciliation and improving relations with Indigenous communities. By implementing measures such as prioritizing cultural awareness, developing community-specific programs, and violence prevention, the RCMP seeks to adopt a more inclusive and respectful approach to policing (RCMP, 2021).

2.5 Living Conditions in Nunavut

a) Systemic Racism: Colonization

In examining crime-reported arrests and rates, it's imperative to approach the topic with a critical lens, delving into the historical context of Indigenous communities. As highlighted by Tabbara (2020), socio-economic disparities and systemic racism within the criminal justice system contribute to a vicious cycle that disproportionately affects Black and Indigenous individuals. This underscores the importance of understanding how entrenched inequalities perpetuate injustices within marginalized communities. The pervasive impact of colonization and ongoing systemic racism cannot be overlooked in discussions surrounding crime and policing. As Allen (2020) aptly notes, there has been considerable public discourse on this matter, particularly concerning the role of law enforcement. The dialogue highlights the necessity to tackle systemic issues that perpetuate inequalities in arrest rates and criminalization.

One study found that residents living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas in Winnipeg were strongly associated with the highest rates of violent and property crimes, many of whom were Indigenous (Fitzgerald, et al., 2004). Black and Indigenous people living in Canada are disproportionately affected by adverse social determinants such as low income, unemployment, unstable housing, limited access to education, and inadequate health services (Tabbara, 2020). Growing up in such an environment, shaped by the impacts of globalization and suburbanization and compounded by the long historical process of colonialism that instilled a culture of despair among Inuit, it is unsurprising that criminalization can prevail in this context (Comack, 2012; Fitzgerald et al., 2004). Reports suggest that crime rates in isolated

Indigenous communities “tend to be higher” (Ruddell & Jones, 2018). Documents put forward that “[…] studies of isolated communities report that social problems such as substance abuse, family violence, community conflict, and child welfare concerns are highly correlated with crime in these places” (Ruddell & Jones, 2018, p. 415). Sociologically, one must explore these reports through a critical lens, assessing activities deemed criminal, the intensity of police involvement, arrest rates, and the significance of generational trauma (Comack, 2012). In other words, to understand this data within the context of historical and systemic racism.

To address systemic racism in Canada, it has been recommended that governments :

> […] reform the broader criminal justice system (not just policing) and address the socio-economic conditions that disproportionately lead to the criminalization of racialized communities, referred to as the ‘social determinants of justice’” (Tabbara, 2020, para. 2).

Thus the solution to systemic issues includes programs that address poverty, housing, health care, childcare, and counselling.

Furthermore, Finkler (1985) argues that engaging in criminal acts may be a byproduct of colonization. The Inuit, for example, were forced to undergo assimilation that resulted in the erosion of their social traditions and cultural heritage, thereby putting them at greater risk for trauma, trauma-related behaviours, and self-medication related to trauma (Finkler, 1985).

Finkler’s (1985) research found a trend of criminal incidents during post-colonization, predominantly attributable to alcohol-related activities. The spectrum of reported transgressions encompassed offences, including theft, sexual assault, domestic violence, property crimes, and break-ins, with a conspicuous nexus to alcohol consumption (Finkler, 1985). This observation resonates with the research of Lithopoulos and Ruddell (2011), whose study in 2007 found elevated levels of violent crimes

and property offences in remote communities to be related to substance abuse. These infractions were frequently intertwined with substance abuse and familial discord, as underscored by officers' experiences in Isolated communities (Ruddell & Jones, 2018). The amalgamation of substance abuse, economic deprivation, child welfare issues, and intrafamilial conflicts in isolated regions has precipitated a myriad of social challenges for community members, manifesting in alarmingly high rates of both suicide and substance abuse (Ruddell & Jones, 2018). In response to the evident correlation between violence and alcohol, certain communities have implemented stringent measures, such as complete prohibition of alcohol consumption within specific jurisdictions (Charron et al., 2010). As noted by the RCMP, "[w]hy do we have an alcohol problem? Well. it's trauma, it's mental health. So, if we're not dealing with that, all we're doing is putting a Band-Aid on" (Jones cited in Rohner, 2020b, para. 15).

Finkler (1985) advocates for a forward-looking approach to justice and prevention strategies, suggesting an integration of traditional Inuit legal principles and sanctions. These insights underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to mitigate northern communities' complex socio-economic adversities. Incorporating culturally sensitive practices, such as those rooted in Inuit legal traditions, can be seen as making greater use of Inuit Special Constables to police the communities, or adopt a program of Indigenous peacekeepers. As Zacharie (2024) points out in his text, *A commentary on First Nations Policing,* policing services that *emerge* from the community are highly effective. To clarify his argument about the role of Peacekeepers, he says that they are better suited to protecting and building trust with the community, and that they ultimately help facilitate conflict prevention and crime reduction (Zacharie, 2024).

b) Crime Rates in Indigenous Communities

Studies have shown that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people have been victims of crime at a rate two times higher than non-Aboriginal people (Charron et al., 2010). From 2006 to 2008, police services reported a total of 45,000 criminal incidents in Inuit Nunangat, of which 10,000 crimes were reported to

be violent crimes (Charron et al., 2010). This is an extraordinarily high figure, given the fact that the total population of Nunavut was under 25,000 at the time. These figures thus raise the question of how the crime rates and arrest rates are reported. Further research suggests that the Territorial overall crime rate is six times higher than anywhere else in Canada (Charron et al., 2010). George found that "Nunavut has the most severe violent crime in Canada, and the second highest police-reported crime rate in Canada, behind the Northwest Territories" (2022, para.1). This raises significant concerns about the process of recording incidents and identifying crimes. If factors such as substance abuse, mental health issues, and socioeconomic conditions are linked to more frequent contact with law enforcement, do they account for some of the Nunavut stats? (Allen, 2020; Boyce, Rotenberg & Karam, 2015). When comparing crime statistics, especially crime statistics involving a specific group of people, one must analyze crime stats through a structural lens (Finkler, 1985).

c) Crime Rates vs Arrest Rates

In the context of this paper, it is important to note that criminal incidents are not distributed evenly across Canada and for that reason, when I discuss crime rates in Nunavut I argue that they differ from arrest rates.

In 2018, police-reported crime in Indigenous communities was 30,333 incidents per 100,000 population, or about 3 criminal incidents for 10 people living in the community (Allen, 2020, p. 7). This represents 7% of all crimes reported in Canada in 2018 (Allen, 2020, p. 7). In comparison, police serving non-Indigenous communities reported 5,191 incidents per 100,000 population, or about 1 incident for every 20 inhabitants (Allen, 2020, p. 7). What is interesting is that a lot of the criminal incidents reported in Indigenous communities are related to mischief (approximately 30%) (Allen, 2020). The *Criminal Code*[9],

[9] **Criminal Code Section 430** defines mischief as actions that cause destruction or damage to property or render property dangerous, useless, inoperative, or ineffective. It also includes actions that obstruct, interrupt, or interfere with the lawful use, enjoyment, or operation of the property (Criminal Code, 1985, s. 430).

Section 430, deals with mischief that covers a range of criminal behaviours such as graffiti, destructive or obstructive reckless behaviour, vandalism, etc. (…), and is often dealt with by provincial and/or municipal by-law officers and results in a ticket (Allen, 2020). However, these levels of officers do not work in Indigenous communities, which means that if the RCMP is involved it may result in a more punitive outcome (Allen, 2020).

The study conducted by Charron Penney and Senegal in 2010 sheds light on another intriguing facet of crime dynamics, particularly within Inuit Nunangat. It underscores a noteworthy correlation: communities with alcohol restrictions experienced higher crime rates, predominantly characterized by misdemeanors like mischief and disturbances of the peace (Allen, 2020). Furthermore, recent data from Statistics Canada in 2022 revealed a concerning trend: Nunavut witnessed an escalation in its Crime Severity Index (CSI) between 2020 and 2021, highlighting a pressing issue (Statistics Canada, 2022). Despite Nunavut consistently ranking among the territories with the highest CSI and crime rates in Canada, there remains a notable dearth of comprehensive examination into the nature and reporting of these crimes (Minogue, 2020).

Additionally, the statistical landscape portrays offences such as “breach of probation” and “failure to comply” as contributors to these elevated crime rates. However, these offences do not neatly fit into conventional crime categories, presenting a challenge in accurately assessing the situation (Minogue, 2020. This challenge arises because these offenses, categorized as administration of justice offenses, are typically handled by municipal or court authorities and are often described as "revolving door" offenses (Minogue, 2020, para 8). They occur only after an individual has had prior contact with the justice system, meaning they stem from violations of existing court orders rather than representing new, independent criminal activity (Minogue, 2020). This results in the overrepresentation of crime rates in Indigenous communities.

From a historical perspective, to understand the statistics and the high rates of reported crimes may require an exploration of what Inuit consider to be right or wrong behavior. The notion of what is right and wrong, such as discipline and self-control, was never written in Inuit legal culture, it was transferred orally from one generation to the next by elders, shamans and/or leaders (Loukacheva, 2012). For example, prior to contact with Western culture, Inuit traditional codes of behavior were guided by hunting practices and social customs. “Inuit law-ways were oriented towards the restoration of peace and communal reconciliation rather than the exercise of justice through punishment” (Loukacheva, 2012, p. 58).

As highlighted in the resource Loukacheva (2012), law enforcement practices in remote and isolated communities often diverge from conventional protocols due to unique constraints and limitations. In these contexts, police may resort to unconventional approaches such as verbal warnings, catch-and-release methods, and offering second chances without formal charges (Ruddell & Jones, 2018). It's important to recognize that policing operations in small communities wield significant influence over how incidents are reported and handled, particularly in comparison to non-Indigenous counterparts. When analyzing crime rates versus arrest rates in Indigenous communities, it's imperative to consider a multitude of factors including the absence of by-law officers and other layers of law enforcement (who issue lighter sanctions), as well as socioeconomic conditions, individual circumstances, and the enduring effects of intergenerational trauma stemming from colonization.

Merely increasing the number of RCMP officers will not effectively address the complexities highlighted by Statistics Canada. Many of the reported incidents may not inherently constitute “crime” in the traditional sense but rather point to underlying issues in need of attention (Rohner, 2020b). There may also be problems of “over policing” in the absence of other levels of legal intervention. These intertwined elements collectively shape the landscape of crime statistics within Indigenous communities.

Chapter 3 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In a qualitative sociological study, it is believed that studying a specific topic should not be done in isolation. Notably, research should be anchored to an existing knowledge set, whether concepts derived from theories or a theoretical framework with the ultimate goal to contribute to the field of knowledge. As stated by Maxwell (2009), a conceptual framework is a set of concepts, expectations, a framework (theory), assumptions and/or beliefs which guide and contribute to the findings of the study (Maxwell, 2009).

For this particular research project, two theories have been used in the analysis to enable the understanding of the participants' experiences. Theories provide a good roadmap of knowledge, explaining how or why certain things are perceived a certain way. Additionally, theories can offer a viewpoint or framework through which research is interpreted or contextualized, drawing upon concepts and/or ideologies developed by theorists during a particular era. Using a theory in research also engages the researcher to argue the topic of research based on their findings as much as rationalizing their findings with supporting evidence of a theory. A theoretical framework plays a crucial role in qualitative studies and while *Chapter 4 - Methodology* explains in greater detail the Phenomenological approach chosen for this research, further theoretical considerations are outlined here.

3.1 Paramilitary Training

The concept of habitus helps to understand one's involvement, attitudes and integration into a community based on their pre-dispositions. Policing habitus – which will be explored below in this chapter, helps us understand how one's involvement, attitudes and integrations into an organization can shape an individual's habitus tailored to the organization or professional status.

Many RCMP Officers are socialized into a particular culture that emphasizes discipline, loyalty, and a strong sense of authority. Since 1873, the RCMP has operated as a paramilitary organization - meaning that paramilitarism is embedded within the structure of its organizational culture (RCMP, 2023b). The training provided at Depot thus reflects military protocols (Hansen, 2018). From this perspective, the uniforms, the affiliation with the horses, marching and calvary, and their services in the World Wars are all affirmations of their work on behalf of the sovereign, similar to the military (Hansen, 2018). As I argued in Chapter 2, there are advantages and challenges to this approach. An example of this is illustrated by the actions of a former OPP veteran who had considered joining the RCMP but decided against it after reviewing their training program, claiming it was militarized and more akin to a [army] boot camp (Simes, 2023). Moreover, former Supreme Court Justice Bastarache argues that the fundamentals of cadet training at Depot contributes to the "toxic" culture within the RCMP (Bastarache, 2020 in Patterson, 2023). Bastarache (2020) further mentions that the objectives at Depot are to "break a cadet down and rebuild her/him into the RCMP mold".

Using Bourdieu's framework of social structures, individual agency, and power, and how these interact to shape human behavior in society, one can see that there is an "RCMP mold". The paramilitary culture is embodied and instilled in their ways of viewing and moving through the world, evident in this approach of breaking them down in order to rebuild them in a particular image (Boutilier, 2021).

The tactical use of advanced technology, specialized "SWAT" units, embedded organizational cultural values, operational tactics and patterns (Kraska, 2007), hierarchy, command structures, adherence to rules and protocols are all evidence of a military model. While these elements may promote efficiency and discipline within the organization (especially when dealing with national security), they can also foster a sense of detachment from the communities they serve. This detachment arises from a perceived power differential between law enforcement personnel and community members, wherein the

emphasis on authority and control can overshadow principles of empathy, understanding, and collaboration. It is evident that there are similarities between the foundation of a military organization and a police agency, as both employ power, force, and control when necessary to maintain order (Kraska & Kappeler, 1997).

Trained to adopt a police habitus and yet vulnerable to the unfamiliar in a new post in Nunavut, a disequilibrium could impact the habitus of Members deployed to a Nunavut hamlet. Bourdieu's concept of habitus, combined with his ideas about "field" and "capital", provides an understanding of the social and cultural dynamics that shape police officers' comportment, engagement, and the perceptions of those around them. Questions for this study were developed to get a better understanding of how the field has had an impact on their experiences, such as their integration and adaptation to the post. Questions surrounding their perceptions, challenges, dynamics and daily activities in the community were asked to get an overview of their behaviours and practices.

3.2 Concepts of: Habitus, Field and Capital

Pierre Bourdieu provides an understanding of perspectives on social structures, including but not limited to, colonialism, power, dominance, and culture. Bourdieu did not write about policing in particular, however, his fundamental concepts of habitus, field and capital will inform an analysis of officers' experiences, including their policing culture.

Habitus refers to a set of ingrained habits, skills and dispositions that the individual obtained mostly throughout their upbringing (Bourdieu, 1987). Bourdieu views cultures, and our dispositions, as complex concepts that encompass various facets of an individual's life, starting from birth and becoming an inherent part of their identity (Bourdieu, 1987). He suggests that cultural practices and behaviours are not always consciously chosen or intentional but are instead unconsciously ingrained in individuals and thoughts, such as language acquisition (Go, 2013). These ingrained habits and dispositions are developed

further through socialization and relationships, including encounters in their environment and with people who share similar biographical commonalities such as culture, nationality, ethnicity, education, social class and family background (Gillespie, 2019; Huang, 2019). These habits and dispositions guide our behaviours, actions and perceptions of our world. They are deeply embodied, meaning they are expressed through our behaviours and ways of perceiving the world (Huang, 2019). Our habitus is fluid and can change throughout our lives (Gillespie, 2019). As such, any exposure to any new structure or environment enables the habitus to change (MacArthur et al., 2017).

Bourdieu suggests that habitus encompasses both the external presentation of the social world and its internalization within the individual (Bourdieu 1990 as cited in Joseph 2020). This view suggests that our manner of existence is shaped not only by our actions and interactions but also by broader social frameworks, such as the cultural and historical contexts within which we live (Go, 2013). These social structures, often likened to a social field, intersect with individual habitus, drawing from a reservoir of past experiences that influence their future actions (Ilan & Sandberg, 2019). Consequently, the habitus remains dynamic and can be influenced and shaped by these larger social structures, known as the field.

The *field is* referred to as "[a] […] wider practice, through its interaction or 'unconscious relationship'" (MacArthur et al., 2017, p. 32). Essentially, the field is a social space encompassing a set of principles that cannot be seen and into which individuals often compete and/or are in constant conflict to preserve their habitus (Gartman, 2002). In other words, like an arena in time and space, a field is a power of relations where you will find negotiation and contestation between individuals for power and resources. As an example in a colonial setting, the field is represented as a colonial state or situation in which it is shaped by actors with their actions (Go, 2013). As Bourdieu (2003) discusses, within the field one can find a dynamic relationship between culture and power, between the colonized and colonizer; within a field, individuals have different amounts of capital that come into play in how they interact in an

environment and whether that harmoniously shapes their habitus, or if instead it creates conflict (MacArthur et al., 2017).

Associated with the concept of field and habitus is *capital*, which according to Bourdieu, is a set of resources that are accumulated, exchanged and used to maintain or improve one's social position and power within a certain field (Bourdieu, 1993). Examples of capital are money, property, access to social networks, the status/privileges within a certain group or field, knowledge, skill sets and more. For instance, the capital can be cultural (e.g. education, religion), social (e.g. resources available through social networks) and economic (e.g. wealth status) (Chan, 2004; MacArthur et al., 2017). The field and the amount of available capital that surrounds it relates to an embodied habitus, which consequently interferes with how an actor will intersect in its environment and how they are placed within the social space (Bourdieu, 2003). By understanding the field, we will come to understand social interactions, dynamics and challenges between Qallunaat and the Inuit community.

Within this field, or deployment in the northern region, police officers have different amounts of capital, such as institutional authority, sets of skills and knowledge related to a particular legal framework, various social networks and economic capital, such as financial security and stability (Gartman, 2002). As Bourdieu suggests, symbolic capital and power are crucial concepts to comprehending the dynamics of law enforcement organizations, community relationships, and decision-making within the police force (Pret et al., 2016). Symbolic capital influences perceptions of authority, community interactions, use of force, and accountability.

3.3 Policing Habitus

The role of a police officer grants an individual a unique level of authority when it comes to moving through the world, particularly in comparison to individuals who may simply be travelling to the North for other reasons. This unique level of authority, also known as symbolic power, ties in with a notion of

instilled habitus amongst police officers, known as habitus policing. This research will adopt Chan's (2004) definition of policing habitus as a set of dispositions acquired through police organizational socialization that enables officers to carry out their policing duties. As Loader (1997) argues, policing habitus is like a set of skills given or assumed to be developed through the career of policing as a set of ingrained traits that are expected to be embodied and executed by officers such as the law, discipline, authority, community relations, asserting power, being assertive and having effective problem-solving skills (p. 4). Drawing from Bourdieu (1991), police officers possess an intangible, symbolic authority instilled through training, habits, and daily practices, which is then wielded over those under their authority (Loader, 1997). Bourdieu noted that the military academy and officer training school is an intensive period of socialization which transforms new recruits into functioning "officers" (Pendlebury, 2019). This training is often done in a place, "a field", that is isolated, and as a result, new recruits are expected to develop and adopt this military identity within a relatively short time frame (Pendlebury, 2019). The development of this military persona, also known as the "policing culture", is like knowing that there is:

> [a] power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world and, thereby, action on the world and thus the world itself, an almost magical power which enables one to obtain the equivalent of what is obtained through force (whether physical or economic), by virtue of the specific effect of mobilization (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 170).

This refers to how symbolic power can define reality and influence people's thoughts, behaviours and actions through the use of words, symbols, and discourse. Furthermore, when employing Bourdieu's concepts in the context of policing and symbolic power, it becomes apparent that police officers participate in regulation at the social level (Chan, 2004). This research builds upon Pendlebury's (2019) exploration of policing culture, integrating Bourdieu's concept of the "field" as the social context.

Within the field,, the embodiment of a policing habitus is also evident in their tactical uniforms and materials, their police vehicles and other symbols that encompass the job of police officers. Perceiving capital this way – as something that is symbolic and at the same time having a material representation - helps in understanding how officers navigate their capital in different contexts and carry it with them when they arrive in new environments. In other words, the uniforms, recognizable vehicles, etc operate to communicate who they are without the individual having to utter a sound.

Habitus is learned and acquired through interactions with others and the broader social context. Individuals who possess knowledge about seeking and attaining cultural capital in their field, for example an understanding of Inuit culture, values, and ways of being, may experience a more seamless integration or comprehension compared to those who have not had the chance to acquire this knowledge. Knowledge about Inuit culture can have an impact on an individual's habitus by providing them with a certain level of cultural competence, which can influence their behaviour and decision-making in different situations.

3.4 Field and The Settler Colonial Theory

Settler colonial theory focuses on systemic power that includes but is not limited to, the example of colonization in Canada (Veracini, 2010). Settler colonization refers to populating a land with people from other parts of the world by removing the original people who occupied the land by introducing forceful policing, politics, and governments (Bell & Schreiner, 2018). This style of colonization was introduced to many different parts of the world and can be seen as an ongoing structure of power that systematically erases Indigenous people from their land and replaces or oppresses them with settler society.

To understand what is meant by colonialism and settler colonialism, it is important to distinguish these two terms for this research. Colonialism, as described in Crosby (2021), explains that it is the management and administration of an Indigenous population by extracting their health and resources,

whereas settler colonialism aimed to replace those by the majoritarian settler population. To add, settler colonialism involves the settlement of people from the colonizing power to establish permanency over this occupied land (Veracini, 2010). While both terms are closely related, settler colonialism highlights its maintenance through the implementation of power dynamics which includes the control, displacement, and habitation of Indigenous territories (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women [CRIAW], 2016).

Within this context, this research does not aim to delve deeply into historical events or the ongoing trauma of colonialism, nor does it seek to diminish the significance of these historical occurrences. Rather, settler colonialism is used as the “field” to understand the ongoing dynamics of the relationships between police officers and the community. The government of Canada and Nunavut continuously sign contracts allowing the RCMP organization as a police force in those communities. This contractual arrangement can be perceived by some as an ongoing exertion of control over these communities, reinforcing the RCMP’s role as an agent of the Federal Government in the Territory. Thus, this theory will be used to provide some context to the challenges that Regular Members experience.

Veracini (2015) and others use settler colonial theory to understand contemporary and historical relations. Veracini argues that settler colonialism is a distinct form of colonialism that is characterized by the dispossession of Indigenous peoples *from* their land and the establishment of settler societies *on* their lands (Barker, 2012, emphasis added). In other words, Cavanagh and Veracini recognize that settler colonialism does not occur through traditional forms of colonization, but instead is established and expanded through the implementation of power dynamics via the process of settlement (2017). They further argue that one must recognize and understand the dynamics of inequality between the colonizer and colonized (Cavanagh & Veracini, 2017). This ties in with Pierre Bourdieu's argument in “*Sociologie de l’Algérie* (1958)”, where he explores colonialism between Europeans and Algerians. Here, Bourdieu

described a systematic theory of colonialism that provides insight into colonial social reforms and cultural processes (1958). Through a sociological lens informed by Bourdieu's work, one can grasp the lasting impact of colonialism on social and cultural dynamics. The RCMP as such navigates historical power imbalances, shaping perceptions and interactions. Thus, acknowledging the complexities of colonial influence aids in fostering culturally sensitive relationships and integration processes.

Bourdieu understood that behaviors, such as relations between two communities, would be fundamental to understanding the internal logic and context of those relations (Bourdieu, 2006). Bourdieu reinforced how colonialism had a major impact on Algerian society, especially their identity. The oppressive relationship of Europeans with the Algerian community shaped their identity and cultural practices, disrupting and repressing their values, and cultural ways of living (Bourdieu, 1958). Bourdieu remarks that this colonial system created a class of those who were privileged and those who weren't, structured by unequal distribution of cultural capital and power (Go, 2013). Consequently, the individuals who were the colonizers had greater authority and cultural capital, which enabled them to exert more control over the colonized population. This led to a redistribution of dispositions, skills, and habits to the colonized people, causing them to become estranged from their cultural values, knowledge, and traditions (Go, 2013).

This project thus recognizes that law enforcement, such as the RCMP, has played a role in maintaining colonial power structures, including the dispossession of Indigenous people from their land (CRIAW, 2016). To better understand the experiences and behaviours of Regular Members in the field, Pierre Bourdieu's concept and the settler colonial theory will be analyzed through a critical lens. This will help in understanding how members develop a "policing habitus" and thus provide a better understanding to allow suggestions or recommendations to advocate for further training for police officers working in V division.

3.5 Theoretical Concepts in Phenomenology

As I will explore in greater detail in the next chapter, phenomenology is in essence about understanding the core aspect of a lived experience (Creswell, 2007 as cited in Larsen & Adu, 2021). It is important to note that the goal of this research is to capture Regular Member's awareness of their own experiences. In this study, I did not solely rely on the theories to interpret the data. Instead, the theories were used as a framework to refine the data to develop a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Larsen and Adu (2021) use a series of six steps, to illustrate how it is important for the researcher to know how to use theory in phenomenology research. Therefore, to facilitate the descriptive portion of participants' experiences, the concepts that I use are: "Decipherer" and "Standpoint". Bourdieu's insights serve to frame the meaning of *decipherer* - which means to make sense of the dynamics and conditions to which the participants give voice in their interviews (Adu, 2020 as cited in Larsen & Adu, 2021).

the settler colonial approach is used as a *standpoint*. Adu (2020) says that theories serve as a standpoint, functioning much like a lens from which this research should be viewed (2020 as cited in Larsen & Adu, 2021). This study was conducted in a setting that experiences colonization. To critically understand modern policing in Canada, the "police institution must be situated in the context of ongoing colonialism because of its historical foundations in constituting settler colonial order" (Dafnos, 2015 as cited in Bell & Schreiner, 2018, p. 120). Without this standpoint, it would have diminished the capacity of this study to understand the field.

Chapter 4 - METHODOLOGY

4.1 Qualitative Design - Paradigm Phenomenology

The research questions that guide this study are the following: ***What are the living and working challenges/dynamics conditions in the Qikiqtaaluk, Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions, such as in Iqaluit and other small communities, and what can we learn from those descriptions for policing?*** The question is divided into two segments. The first explores the conditions, also known as dynamics, that police officers are experiencing while living and working during their deployment in the North, and the second part explores how these conditions/dynamics may impose challenges. The qualitative methodology chosen to answer this research question is guided through the paradigm of “Phenomenology”. A Phenomenology study is a :

> […] systematic inquiry into social phenomena in natural settings. These phenomena can include but are not limited to, how people experience aspects of their lives, how individuals and/or groups behave, how organizations function, and how interactions shape relationships. In qualitative research, the researcher is the main data collection instrument. The researcher examines why events occur, what happens, and what those events mean to the participants studied (Teherani, et al., 2015, p.669).

To answer this question, this study primarily focuses on understanding the experiences of Regular Members posted in the North. Employing an “interactive model” in a qualitative sociology study enables the researcher to comprehensively review the entire analysis. The objective is to illuminate their subjective experiences of living and working in the North and to understand these complexities within their societal context.

It is important to have a paradigm when using a qualitative design model. A paradigm refers to “a set of very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology)” (Maxwell, 2009, p. 224). The paradigmatic method of *phenomenology* is exemplified in this research. Phenomenology studies a phenomenon such as what is being experienced and how it was experienced. Although this research could expand on the many different experiences that could be studied, it focuses on the subjective lived experiences of the Regular Members during their posting in the North.

Phenomenology was founded by Husserl in the late 1900s to critique the positivist research of social sciences, including psychology, and argued that researchers should use a descriptive method to capture and understand human lived experience rather than measuring and quantifying human behaviours (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2008). While Husserl’s phenomenology did face some criticism, particularly for primarily focusing on subjective experiences and avoiding quantitative data, it also encouraged researchers to approach their work with a willingness to put aside their pre-existing theoretical assumptions and to engage in their research with an unbiased mindset (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Due to the nature of this research, it is very difficult not to consider the historical aspect of the participants’ background and the events that occurred in the study's location. For this reason, this research employed the modernized version of phenomenology, also known as the hermeneutic phenomenology approach founded by Martin Heidegger with a twist of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), in addition to Gadamer’s hermeneutic approach for the analysis portion.

Heidegger’s approach was rooted in wanting to understand humans as actors, and how they interact within their world (Neubauer et al., 2019). In this approach, the goal is to interpret the lived experiences of the participants, all while using the literature and theories to better understand how the individual experiences or views their world (Neubauer et al., 2019). For this research, two theories were

applied to understand the conditions Regular Members are experiencing while living and working in the North and how the situational context of their deployment in the North might have interplayed or shaped their experiences of working up North. Furthermore, I considered the participants' background or past experiences when understanding their lived experiences in the North, which may have influenced or altered their perceptions compared to others. However, these were not disclosed nor discussed in the analysis portion to conform to the established privacy and confidentiality protocols.

This research also adopts the IPA approach, which is complementary to Heidegger's hermeneutic approach, as it recognizes that humans are organisms and that with their actions/endeavours, they make sense of their own lived experiences, which shapes their understandings (Smith & Osborn, 2015). This approach takes humans as actors in the world and focuses on the relationship between the actor, the individual and their context. In this research, the IPA method was jointly used with the hermeneutic approach to help make sense of Regular Members' adaptations in the North, their inclusion within the community and what it is like to work in a remote environment.

Studying the phenomenon (an event and/or situation) aims to describe the meaning of the experience, both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Phenomenology is a complex approach, therefore, to achieve the objective of the study and it is crucial to establish that this method for this study is not restricted to a linear process of analysis. This modernized version of the phenomenology approach is a subjective process, allowing multiple ways to come to conclusions. As such, thematic analysis, the involvement of the researcher, and theories will all contribute to the analysis of the findings of the study (Neubauer et al., 2019). To conclude, it is important to understand the researcher's role in the study and how the data was analyzed.

In this research, my role in employing this method is crucial as the aim is to broaden an understanding of the phenomenon. To achieve this, I aimed to be as unbiased as possible. However, the

modernized version of the hermeneutic phenomenology approach acknowledges that striving for complete objectivity, particularly in sociology, may overlook the full context and historical events that have shaped individual experiences.

My knowledge, gained through studying the literature, visiting the area, conducting interviews, and applying relevant theories, has contributed to a detailed analysis of the officers' experiences. This approach recognizes that the researcher's perspective inevitably influences the analysis and visiting the area and taking these steps have ensured to make the most of my data. The analysis, detailed below, was conducted using two methods. The first method involved analyzing the interviews and key terms with minimal interference. The second method incorporated the key terms into selected theories to produce a more in-depth understanding of the officers' lived experiences.

In addition to the second portion, I expanded my knowledge by visiting and exploring the field twice. It has been recognized that individuals are deeply influenced by their roots and cultures and that it is difficult for one to step out of these without further expanding their knowledge (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). This also applies to the researcher; therefore, the researcher plays a key role in research and by expanding their "fusion of horizons," they expose themselves to an open-ness subjective mindset to understand the phenomenon (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). For this research, I acknowledge that understanding what it is like to be an officer and what it entails to be deployed in the North for a minimum of 2 years is not easy, and some may have encountered challenges. To broaden my knowledge and achieve a "fusion of horizons," I travelled to the field twice for a total of 30 days, immersing myself in the officers' surroundings, environment, and spaces that they frequent. During my stay, I made detailed observations to gain a deeper understanding of their daily experiences and challenges. This direct engagement provided invaluable insights that enriched my analysis. As stated, having a fusion of horizons permits one to see past what is familiar and allows "[…] questioning [to] become[s] practical, as it helps the person create

new horizons and understandings possible which is a critical aspect of the interpretive process" (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021, p.5).

Although observations will not be analyzed individually, they may be used to support some of the findings and add greater awareness to the officers' interpretation of their lived experience. The researcher's role in a hermeneutic approach is to increase the credibility of the data and aim to highlight the experience as closely as possible to how it was lived by the participants. Therefore, the analysis is not solely based on the interviews, but also incorporates the knowledge acquired during the fieldwork, the literature review and the chosen theories.

The analysis portion is predominantly focused on the interview transcripts; however, other elements are considered. In addition to the interviews, a thematic analysis was undertaken to distill recurring patterns and key themes present in the officers' experiences. This analytical process was meticulously structured sequentially to facilitate a comprehensive understanding. To delineate these steps, the analysis incorporates Gadamer's hermeneutic approach alongside Heidegger's philosophical framework and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method. Through the amalgamation of these methodologies, the subsequent analysis section of this research is delineated, presenting a systematic approach toward unravelling the complexities of the data.

The first step, "immersion," involved transcribing the interviews and grasping a good understanding of the text as a whole (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). This step also involves the researcher sometimes re-reading the text multiple times and familiarizing themselves with the data. The second step, "understanding", involves the researcher approaching the data with an open mind to allow a deeper understanding of the written text, such as what the Regular Members express about their lived experience (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). Often, this part involves analyzing each sentence to determine what they are and identifying commonalities. The third step, "abstraction," also known as the coding process, or

thematic analysis, involves the categorization of key themes and sub-themes. The next step involves synthesizing the themes and patterns (Alsaigh & Coyne, 2021). This step is important as it is where I made connections and a deeper understanding of the data. The fifth and sixth step in Gadamer's approach, "illumination" and "illustration" of the phenomenon and integration and critique, is the written and descriptive explanations of the experiences lived by the participants in reoccurring themes, all while conceptualizing it with the framework used. In this research portion, the data was critically analyzed and conceptualized through the lens of settler colonialism and Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field.

4.2 Population

For this study, police officers, also known as Regular Members, from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were recruited. This research prioritized officers who are/were deployed into a community in Nunavut for more than twelve months (or ideally more if possible). The RCMP refers to the Nunavut region as V Division. That RCMP division encompasses all twenty-five communities in Nunavut *(Refer to Appendix B – Figure 3).* To explore the research question, the decision was made to interview officers who have been deployed for more than twelve months as this allows for a better understanding of their lived experiences in the North. There were no other specific recruiting criteria required. Although some biographical information was asked at the beginning of each interview, the gender and age of the officers were not key to this project. These questions were asked to better understand the context and to situate their experiences. For example, I asked about the presence of an officer's family (e.g., spouse, partner, children(s) during their deployment and whether it influenced their experiences.

The original objective of the study was to conduct a minimum of six interviews with a sample of Regular Members posted in Iqaluit, and others in a remote community. Expanding to include officers from multiple communities added variety to the interviews. The goal was not to reach a point of saturation but

to reach a point of understanding key dynamics and lived experiences of police officers in a northern community. Also, during the interviews, it came to my attention that officers can be mobile within the territory of Nunavut.

Most of the interviews were conducted in-person and recorded with a laptop. Some participants' interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams[10] (a safe two-factor authenticator encrypted online platform). This protected platform is being used by Federal Government sectors – including the RCMP - to communicate and to use as a video conference platform. Finally, some interviews were conducted by telephone. I sent an invitation to the interview participant through a link that was only generated and accessible by the two of us, initially restricting their access to the chat room. This enabled me to have control over who could access the interview, preventing other people from joining. Participants could visually present their daily activities or living spaces via photographs. This extra piece of data helped provide some context to visualize and situate the officers within their community as it was not feasible for me to fly to all of the communities represented. After conducting the interviews, all the collected data, including the recordings, were safely secured in a double password protected electronic folder. Additionally, the laptop utilized for the recording was password-protected and accessible only to me.

4.3 Data Collection

Throughout the research project, I visited Iqaluit, NU twice. During the initial trip, I explored the horizons, networked with officers, met other people in the community, walked in and around the city, and visited the RCMP detachment. A second trip was scheduled a few months later to gather data, which involved conducting interviews with the Regular Members.

[10]Microsoft Teams is a proprietary business communication platform developed by Microsoft as part of the Microsoft 365 family of products. Teams enforce team-wide and organization-wide two-factor authentication, single sign-on through Active Directory, and data encryption in transit and at rest (Microsoft, 2023).

The recruiting portion of this research was initially conducted through an email, attached with a consent form and a recruitment poster (*Refer to Appendix C – Figure 5,6 & 7)* sent a few weeks before travelling to Iqaluit. With the approval of the RCMP's Nunavut detachment, the email was broadcast to the entire V Division of the RCMP. The layout of the email included an introduction about me, the scope of the research, the recruitment criteria for the interview and what to expect in the interview. The consent form detailed the participants' rights, their engagement in this research, and how their information would be reviewed and kept confidential.

In total, 15 interviews were conducted, averaging 60-90 minutes in length. Out of the 15 participants, 9 interviews were conducted in person and 6 virtually. The face-to-face interviews in Iqaluit occurred in an office or spare room outside the main V-division detachment, all while following the COVID protocol guidelines. Out of the 6 virtual interviews, three were conducted via the platforms MS Teams and others by phone. During some interviews, we encountered connectivity issues, therefore, with the participant's consent, the method of conducting the interviews by phone became the last option. The interviews were conducted during the months of November and December 2022. Most of the data collection occurred while I was in Iqaluit. Participant experiences ranged across 14 out of the 25 communities in Nunavut. Some participants had been deployed for longer than 12 months, and others had experience policing in more than one Nunavut hamlet. In-person interviews in Iqaluit provided the additional benefit of giving me context to their responses (e.g. I go to the arena, I go to the café, outside the detachment etc.) as I could turn and see what they were describing. Overall, these factors generated broad and rich data.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews (*Refer to Appendix D).* The interviewees were given the option to choose a time and day that was convenient to their schedules and, if desired, another designated interview location, should the office space not adhere to their comfort level. Although

Iqaluit is small, and anonymity is difficult in practice – especially given the number of Regular Members in Iqaluit - the aim was to prioritize Regular Members' comfort level and respectfully ensure that they were in an environment where they would feel comfortable discussing their experiences, especially since some topics were sensitive.

The semi-structure aspect of the interviews allowed me to guide the interviews and maintain a coherent structure. Semi-structured interviews are used to include open-ended questions in order to pursue tangential details in participants' answers. Given that these interviews were conducted during the pandemic, a COVID consent form was provided to those who participated in the in-person interviews, informing them about COVID protocols and safety measures in order to adhere to the Government regulations (*Refer to Appendix C – figure 8*).

The first set of interview questions is organized to situate the participants in the context. Since this study is a Phenomenology study, it is important to consider the participant's context in order to bring to light their own understanding of their lived experiences. Questions were asked about their origins and how they became police officers in the northern community. The rest of the questions were designed to get the participants to elaborate and thus obtain details about their daily activities as police officers, what they were expected to do, their approaches to working with the community, and more. The interview questions are open-ended and formatted with sub-questions to go in-depth or prompt conversations.

The socio-demographic questions, such as the participants' date of birth, name, family, marital status, and officer rank, were asked at the beginning of the recording for a quick introduction, making it easier to understand the participant's background and status. For example, some questions were asked about their family situation and support; therefore, knowing that information allowed me to ask specific questions based on their socio-demographic information later in the interview. It is to be noted that the personal information that was collected was to "paint" both individual portraits and to allow the analysis

to be understood across some lifecycle issues/events (member for less than or greater than 30 years, whether they had a partner, etc.) to contribute to a better understanding of their experiences.

Given the number of interviews conducted and length of each interview, it took a couple of weeks to manually transcribe all interviews. Each interview generated approximately 50 pages, arguably a lot of data to code. As a result, more time was taken to write each transcript. Moreover, to allow a concise analysis, I had to repeat a few coding steps numerous times. Each time this step was taken, it was to narrow down the topics into specific categories for the sake of analysis.

Due to the nature of this project and the risk of discussing sensitive topics, all participants were sent a list of accessible mental health resources at the end of each interview *(Refer to Appendix E).*

4.4 Data Analysis Procedure

As mentioned previously, the analysis stage of this research involves regrouping the data into themes, also known as a "thematic analysis". To capture the essence of the Regular Members' experiences in the North, the hermeneutic approach in phenomenology allows the researcher to capture rich descriptions in multiple ways. As such, I undertook Gadamer's steps to analyzing the findings.

The first step, called immersion, involves listening to the recordings and transcribing them. This process of the analysis allowed for a good understanding of what the data and little to no analysis was conducted at this point, although some key comments were noted on the side as a reminder to return to those transcripts. I also allowed myself to re-read some of the interviews to acquaint myself with the text.

The second step, understanding, involved re-reading each transcript with an open mind. This process allowed me to read each sentence and register the understanding of what each account entailed. This step also facilitated the identification of recurring themes that were not picked up during the interviews. Given the number of participants, the data collected during the field trip was substantial;

therefore, this step was important. As such, I was able to analyze and identify recurring patterns and commonalities from participants' accounts, which facilitated the next step: the coding process.

The third step involved the process of abstraction. Given the significant amount of data recorded, all written transcripts were uploaded to NVivo software. NVivo[11] is software that qualitative researchers use to transcribe, identify data, organize data in specific nodes (themes), and draw conclusions. This process was not linear as it involved re-reading each transcript and changing the codes a few times to allow a better representation of the Regular Member's experiences. I divided recurring and common topics into key patterns in order to capture the full essence of an officer's experience. In NVivo this looks like re-grouping each pattern and assigning them to a main theme. Each main theme then underwent another process of abstraction into sub-themes. Sub-themes were used to delve into specific topics to foster a deeper understanding of the data.

Some examples of the main themes were: mental health, policing in the North, adaptation to the North, types of calls, community, dynamics of the North, etc. Each of these main themes was broken down into sub-themes. Some examples of sub-themes were: anonymity, weather, fly-in, involvement, family, etc.

[11]NVivo is a software program used for qualitative and mixed-methods research. Specifically, it is used for the analysis of unstructured text, audio, video, and image data, including (but not limited to) interviews, focus groups, surveys, social media, and journal articles https://libguides.library.kent.edu/statconsulting/NVivo (Kent State University, 2024)

Name

- Backgrounds
- Community
  - Involvement
  - Policing
- Dynamics of the North
  - Anonymity
  - Entertainment
  - Family
  - Fly - in
  - Food
  - Weather
- Inuit-specific comments
- Management
  - Internal relationships
  - Pre-Post Preparation
  - Training
- Mental Healh
  - Burnout
  - Lack of support
  - Loneliness
  - Self-care
- Officers definition of crimes
  - Safety for the Kids
  - Types of calls
  - Youth 'crimes'
- Policing in the North
  - Adaptation to the field
  - Advantages
  - Band-Aid solutions
  - Cutting Corners
  - Dynamics
  - Iqaluit vs Small communities

FIGURE 1- NVIVO CAPTURE -THIRD STEP – CODING

Once codes and sub-codes were established, they were made into main themes and sub-themes – each code was reviewed individually and synthesized into groups.

The synthesis and theme development are the fourth step. Like the third step, this one involves capturing of recurring themes, including the sub-themes. A process of aggregation in a hermeneutic phenomenology approach is essential as it is the step where connections between theories, questions, and data are fleshed out.

Finally, the fifth step– illumination and illustration of the phenomenon - and the sixth step – Integration and critique - explored below in the analysis section - are presented as a coherent whole. The key themes are discussed using habitus, capital, field, and settler colonialism.

Participants are identified as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc bearing no reflection on the order in which the interviews were conducted.

4.5 Integrity and Ethical Considerations

I note that the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were priorities throughout the research process. As such, obtaining ethical approval from the RCMP Research Ethics Committee Board was important. Approval was also granted by the Commanding Officer from V Division at the time, allowing me to send out my recruitment email and by providing me with work space to conduct interviews. Without approval from the RCMP Ethics Committee and the V Division commanding officer, this project would not have been possible. This project also received approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board for this research to be conducted.

Chapter 5 – PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

I have organized the thematic analysis into the following three main sections:

1) Theme 1 - Field produces Relationship.
2) Theme 2 - Paradox of the Police Habitus and Field
3) Theme 3 - Barriers

5.1 Context of Participants

RCMP recruitment strategies include highlighting the opportunity to discover Canada and help others (RCMP, 2023a). Deployment stipulations include remaining in a detachment for 2-5 years, depending on the region, and then Members have the opportunity to be re-posted elsewhere (RCMP, 2023a). Some of the research participants identified “curiosity” and “interest in exploring and learning new experiences” as motivators for joining the RCMP. Canada’s northern region was included on their list of desirable destinations to fulfill that wish. In the interviews, several participants discussed having new experiences, such as the following reflection:

> Cultural misunderstanding is inevitable. We need to be aware that we have a different upbringing. And we need to be respectful of that, and we need to listen. But I was attracted to that cultural difference. I was attracted to that change challenge. So to me, it was never an issue because of my curiosity and my ability to express that (Participant 4).

Echoing participant 4, another commented :

> It would be different but willing to learn and come for the development growth. “this would be… this is a good developmental opportunity for you as a young member.” And, and I agreed, I was excited to come up here. Yeah, and try something different (Participant 10).

Being deployed to a northern posting was thus viewed as an opportunity to learn and add to personal growth. They also said that northern deployments can be advantageous financially[12], help them with their career (such as expanding their policing experiences), and for starting a new family.

The incentives for taking a northern deployment include significant promotional opportunities, two months of vacation, travel within Nunavut, overtime opportunities, and more agency in selecting the detachment for their next deployment. Participant 5 explains these incentives :

> I come in thinking that was just getting the experience and… but no matter what the reason people coming into… to the North and in Polar Express or whatever…. At least the people I know, I can speak to, like the members I spoke with… our members, they are willing to step out of their comfort zone. And what adventure is braver, willing to take risks, willing to work hard.

As I understood it, the "polar express" or "golden ticket" refers to the advantageous consequences for Regular Members after they complete a Northern posting. Although it is not guaranteed, the "polar express" is thus an incentive for Regular Members.

Respondents noted that those who enter the detachment solely for financial benefits or to get on the "polar Express" ticket tend to be disappointed early in their deployment. As Participant 13 said, "Yeah, if you're going up there solely for financial gain, that's a mistake. But, but to say that that's not part of it… You're not… you're not fooling anybody."

Participant 14 also reflected on the question of financial gains, stating that:

> I know there's a lot of extra money for anybody in the North, right? You just… money is thrown around in the North, like you wouldn't believe… like, it's just, it's unbelievable. I had no idea that

[12] Federal agencies pay a salary commensurate with the high cost of living and an *Isolated Post Allowance* to employees in Nunavut. Additionally, Members in V Division frequently log overtime work hours due to the limited staff available in some communities.

it was happening until I came up here. And whether they're right for the North or not, they came up because… two years, anybody can do two years in a spot. And so they come up to these places just for the money. And that never goes over well at all.

Participant 14 adds that the RCMP organization could intervene to a greater extent to ensure that Members going to Northern posts are not solely motivated by money:

> There's a lot of really amazing police officers that are up in the North… that are… that are doing things, and so… be… I just… the RCMP could definitely do a much better job of preparing people for being up in these communities. I don't think that's them picking those people. I think that's just the people that want the Northern adventure as opposed to just the money.

Furthermore, some Regular Members expressed an interest in renewing their contract once the first one is complete, for example Participant 3 says: "After my two years I asked to stay. I loved it. If I didn't have kids that were in school. I would be in [Hamlet] right now."

Another Member explained why they also requested a contract extension:

> The experiences that I've had, because of the [REMOVE] group, and the friends we've made in the community, that's, you know, that's one of the major parts, I would say probably the biggest part of us staying is… is the friendships, and we didn't want that to end (Participant 8).

Several of the participants said that they were preselected for a Northern deployment early in the Depot training and that they understood this to be based on their personality traits and skills. Others said that they requested these deployments. In both scenarios cadets must undergo "suitability" evaluations.

A Regular member emphasizes that the process in place, such as being pre-approved and undergoing an evaluation, is an important policy:

> They realize that you can't… you can't send people to an isolated place if they don't want to be there. And then, on top of that, if they don't have the mental resilience to get through it… (Participant 6).

Participant 5 described the types of questions that are on the suitability evaluation, such as:

> Are you dependable? Are you independent? Are you able to work on your own because with limited resources, you don't have as much help? And they look at my file… and they, of course, they talk to facilitators, too. So I guess it's… I got support. So I was lucky that way to come up here. Honestly, not many of our troop members wanted to come (Participant 5).

Despite the pre-screening, Participant 9 commented that they felt like they “fell on the moon” because the landscape is so different - the absence of trees and the thousands of kilometers of tundra and nothing else in any direction[13].

“Shock” was also described by Participant 10:

> My flight into Iqaluit... I remember it was a beautiful sunny day. It was actually gorgeous. We came here on a summer day. And we were landing and I looked out the window. And all I can remember is saying, ‘where's the trees?’ I didn't see any trees. I thought we were… to be honest with you, I thought we were kind of like… landed on the moon. That's the way I can describe it because there were no trees at all. All I saw was rock. And but… but the thing about it is, once I got here and I just realized like it's absolutely beautiful. I love the scenery here and I actually fell right in love with the place (Participant 10).

[13] Most hamlets are coastal so there would also be the ocean or sea ice. Seasonally, Arctic temperatures may drop below – 50 degrees Celsius in the Winter and the solstice means 24-hour darkness in December or 24-hours of sunlight in June.

5.2 THEME 1 - *Field Produces Relationship*

The first theme from the data is “relationships”. Participants describe their professional responsibility to engage with the general public. These interactions enabled some officers to establish relationships within the community, producing benefits such as: improved service delivery and enhanced trust. The relationships that participants developed and maintained also played a crucial role in their adaptation to the field. These research results underscore the substantial impact that relationships have on the police habitus.

a) Field: Iqaluit as a City

Compared to the smaller hamlets (for example with populations between 300-1500 people) some participants describe policing in Iqaluit as having qualities of “urban policing”. Participants 2, 3 and 12 make this point. For example, Participant 2 mentions the everyday life amenities, such as, “Two rinks… we've got curling rinks. There are four or five schools. We've got a movie theater. There's a certain restaurant we've got. We have a microbrewery. Like, we've got things to do.”

Participant 3 makes the point that work in Iqaluit is more specific to “policing duties”*:*

> The city environment is huge. There's a lot more amenities and stuff here. Both on the professional side, and the personal side. Here you’ve got a lot more resources available to you. And because it's more of a policing… like a city policing environment, your duties are a little more restricted to purely policing duties (Participant 3).

Participant 12 also reflects on the differences between Iqaluit and other hamlet posts:

> What happens in Iqaluit is not necessarily applicable to the communities. It just isn't. It's not the same. It's not the same problems. Iqaluit is a thriving community city that, you know, that has resources and because it's the capital, money flows there (Participant 12).

Participants also mentioned that working in Iqaluit means access to paramedics, a hospital, and medical services. Access to special services, such as social workers and mental health workers, is limited (sometimes based on a community fly-in schedule amongst professionals) in small hamlets. The larger size of the population in Iqaluit also meant that there were more options for forming personal relationships, such as friendships. The participants thus highlight these aspects of the field: that work and personal life are affected by the characteristics of the *field*. The amenities, things to do, options, and circulation of money make a difference in the experience of the place.

There are also more opportunities for field training for New Cadets in Iqaluit. A Regular Member explains the relationship between a recent cadet grad and a field trainer:

> You're tied to the hip with your field trainer. You go to everything with your field trainer, but your field trainer will go to a call. So you end up with three people on a call. And your cop… like, yeah… you don't necessarily count… and your on-field training…. But you've now got three police officers. It's fantastic because it's a very good way for you to learn (Participant 6).

To the point about building relationships, Participants identified *camaraderie* as a strong aspect of their experience, both amongst co-workers but also outside of the RCMP. As Participant 8 describes it:

> I would say, probably the biggest part of us staying is… is the friendships, and we didn't want that to end. You know, I had two years where it's like, 'oh, we can extend another year'. And things are going well for our family. We have those ties, where it's not just the RCMP family - we have friends and family.

Participant 11 also describes a sense of affinity that develops between the Members:

> The people that I work with… we all are quite similar. Like, on my watch. And you can say whatever you want, and just kind of like, let that… like, take that edge off a little bit without feeling like you're offending anyone. We're always laughing, joking. And I think like, you're not… if you can't laugh about stuff that we see like, it's just going to eat you up[14] (Participant 11).

b) *Field: Remote Communities*

In addition to forming connections amongst colleagues, Regular Members commented on the importance of fostering good relationships within the community. Some Members describe engaging with the community by facilitating sports, such as hockey, while others participated in cultural activities such as going on the land to fish and hunt. Relationship building activities included barbecues, participating in Christmas parades, and playing hockey with the kids at school (Participant 1; Participant 13). Participant 13 said that they keep a hockey stick in the back of their RCMP truck and, when time permits, jump in and play hockey with the kids. Others emphasized the importance of talking to people, for example while grocery shopping or during community events. Participant 7 mentioned that, "it's those little things you do when you're out in the community. And it just, like sits… even if you're stopped in uniform, talking to some… somebody having a conversation". Respondents described the impact of building rapport and gaining a greater understanding of the community, all of which fall outside of police habitus.

Several participants commented that those who would really take the time to connect with their community are better suited to building rapport. They argue that as a police officer it can really help to see the community outside of those calling the police for help. Participant 6 mentions that connecting

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[14] As a researcher I relay these quotes without judgment, understanding that humour is important for stress relief and bonding.

with the community outside of working hours helps to “switch the community's perception, it's becoming gradually more positive. And I think that has to do with the positive work that the members are doing”.

Thus going out on the field and engaging the community not only fosters the integration of police officers into the community, but also benefits the community by getting to know these Members. It establishes connections and allows the community to establish contact or come to recognize a familiar presence when contacting the police.

In the smaller hamlets, Members said that being introduced to the community as RCMP involves the mayor and/or an important elder(s). They said that it makes a difference when the most respected and influential figures actively link the community to the Member. Therefore it is important to get to know the elders in the community. For example :

> Being able to communicate with people, know the right questions to ask, or whom to ask… to go to for information, or who to help. Like, elders, wives… are different people in the community, not necessarily elders. And then just kind of like, getting to know… like people within the community as well. And then they come in now, they trust you more, and then they come and talk to you about more things (Participant 9).

Building good relationships within the community enables them to get to know the people, learn some of the dynamics, and earn trust. Working collaboratively with elders can also involve going out “on the boat, digging for clams with some of the locals, and, like… do some of those, like, cultural things” (Participant 2).

Others made the effort to learn about some of the traditions and few words in Inuktitut:

> […] go to the elders, go hang out with them. Learn. How would you do this? How would you prepare this? And they'll be like, ‘Oh, I'll show you’. And then they share the food, they'll have tea.

> They'll chit-chat. It has taken time to learn a handful of words. I mean, myself as well. I can't speak Inuktitut but I can understand, like, 50 - 60 words (Participant 6).

During my interviews some Members described how these connections have directly benefited their police work :

> So then I have somebody in the community, an elder that I've befriended. And they'll come and translate for me. So I'll kind of say it in English, and they'll say it in Inuktitut and then we have people calling or I've had people asking me to come to their house, you know (Participant 8).

In addition to assisting with translation, Inuit-RCMP relations also clarified the significance of non-verbal communication. A Regular Member shared that they did not initially understand the meaning of several facial expressions: *"a raised eyebrow meant someone's answering in the affirmative, or a squint meant that they were answering in the negative. So I remember asking questions to people. And they would raise their eyebrows"* (Participant 9). Participant 1 described the same early confusion, where the raising of the eyebrow was a "yes" answer.

Due to the positive effect of forming connections, respondents said that the best way to learn about Inuit culture is community immersion. Interview participants emphasized that this requires willingness to learn, an ability to cultivate oneself, and getting outside one's comfort zone. For example, one must:

> Have the openness and willingness to learn about the culture and, you know, the people and take the hardships, and the history is as much as they're willing to share. I think that that's a big trade - it's just being willing to learn (Participant 8).

Participants also mentioned that having their spouse and/or family with them during their deployment helped ground them. Having a support system and loved ones close by, for some, made a big

difference during their deployment. Some participants commented that their spouse became more integrated into the community than they did, and that it was thanks to them that they got the chance to explore the culture, connect with their community, and see it in a positive light.

Here, a member speaks to that point:

> I think that's another big one up here… is… to have the support of my spouse. And in… up here, I think a big one is… because my [REMOVE] has a job and… involved in the community, they see the community in a different way that… than I do. If I was just here working… Where with my [REMOVE] it helps to see the community in a different way. You know, because their interactions are mostly positive, right? It 100% helps (Participant 8).

Internally, V Division recommends that Regular Members engage and report on their own participation in community events or initiatives that they have taken. As explained by Participant 14:

> [They] want to see what your numbers are, like, for community policing for this month, or what have you guys been doing? What initiatives have you been doing to be in the community more... V division they really are… they really want you to be out in the community doing things, starting initiatives to be in the community and things like that.

5.3 THEME 2 – *Paradox of the Police Habitus*

Theme 1 demonstrates that without relationships and connections, work in this field would have been significantly constrained. By socializing, interacting and engaging with the community, officers also challenged the parameters of police habitus. I argue that this creates a paradox within police habitus as it is not procedural to build connections. By that I am not talking about gathering information in order to know what is going on, but to establish relationships with Inuit to build mutual trust and understanding.

a) RCMP Training - Failure to Prepare for a Job that May Involve Lots of Calls about a Few People

The respondents described various approaches to asking for help from community members. A prerequisite for this may be emotional intelligence: “[i]f you can have members who are compassionate and patient, then you don't even really need the pre-deployment stuff” (Participant 3).

Participant 10 adds :

> If you… if you show them that you're just a genuine person, and you treat them like… like a person, you'll get a lot further. And that's how I found out… how I got involved and how people knew me.

Formal training to develop police habitus is thus challenged by these accounts of seeking help, emotional intelligence, and the primacy of humanity. Respondents also reflected on the unavoidable intimacy of small hamlets, as noted by Participant 15:

> You know, you go to… all this in grocery stores …is the people you arrest, like, you know… literally the guy that we arrested last week rang through my white cheddar popcorn today. So it's inevitable.

For those Regular Members who encountered language barriers when interacting with unilingual Inuktitut speakers it inspired some to learn Inuktitut (but found it difficult due to the cadence of the language and differences in dialects (Participant 1)), but also that several officers found that this challenged their efforts to be in “control of the situation”:

> The language barrier was huge. Like, even the pronunciation. Like, I remember interviewing someone and their last name was [NAMED REMOVED], spelled [NAME REMOVED] like very simple pronunciation, but different... I remember that first name and trying to repeat it and it was difficult. This does really impact how people respond to you, right? (Participant 7).

As such, seeking help includes finding a translator to communicate and to learn the pronunciation of names (including where to place emphases).

When they also reflected on how their work felt to them, a critique of Depot training emerged. Members highlighted the lack of preparation for context-specific daily policing life, particularly what that means for recent graduates. As stated by Participant 5: “[p]eople who go through the system have… a majority of them have mental health crises, but in Depot, we don't have that training”. There is a personal toll, respondents describe, to being on the receiving end of repetitive calls that involve alcohol, mental health, and domestic violence. In small hamlets where a small number of officers work, the calls come from the same small number of people over and over, handled by the same officers over and over. In these responses there is a distinct tone of frustration with these dynamics:

> Like they're… the crime wasn't very, like, it's not organized. It's very, like, personal. It's a personal crime, like domestic violence and stuff. Like, it's very, very much… Almost the whole experience is alcohol-related (Participant 1).

Evident in their responses are feelings of frustration:

> Just repetition and sometimes, like, you're dealing with the same problem, the same people more than once in a week. Like, ‘I was here yesterday for this, like, why are we here again? We had a conversation for an hour and a half yesterday. Well, all you need to make better choices and all we can assist you to make better choices’. And… while hours later we're in the same boat (Participant 2).

Also:

> You go to the same houses, you deal with the same problems, you arrest the same people… You release them in the morning or whenever… it's over. You try to have a conversation with them.

> You're granted with the 'fuck you', they leave, and you deal with them again that same night and it's endless. Like, why am I engaging in this nonsense? (Participant 6).

Participant 15 reflects that: "addictions in the North are predominantly what we deal with. It's rampant. Alcoholism and domestic abuse… and they go hand in hand".

Terms such as "personal", "choices", "nonsense", and "rampant alcoholism" are illustrative of personal struggles rather than criminal activity. The cyclical character of these calls draws the attention of the Members to what they perceive to be personal failings. From a sociological perspective, one asks why those intervening are police officers and not social service workers? Participants 15 discusses traffic stops in a way that I see as a metaphor:

> You don't have a highway, you have no traffic safety act, we do not do traffic enforcement. Nobody is giving you a ticket for running through a stop sign. And the amount of information, the amount of training you get… your skills of observation… In a traffic stop… is, I believe, indescribable to someone who is not a police officer. You… there are just too many things you learn that… it's like, to me, undeniable. Yeah, we don't do that. V Division doesn't do that at all (Participant 15).

Police habitus is about intervening when someone "breaks the law", but V Division police work may thus require heavy involvement in some lives as a counsellor, but restraint from enforcing seemingly straightforward legal rules.

> Your policing as… your standards of policing definitely change. Because you know that, hey, even if it's so if you want to really enforce the off-road vehicle Act, or the Highway Traffic Act, but really, at the end of the day, where are you getting, because… I mean, a lot of these people are not

> financially well off, when you're going to put them in more hardship. So you kind of got to pick your battles in terms of what you're actually going to police in these communities (Participant 10).

Participant 9 explains that while there is little breadth, there is depth; that certain calls that are difficult can be part of a pattern, and that this is particularly tough for new officers :

> The isolation, the violence, the degree to which everything happens is almost like it's amplified by ten. So when you're putting new members in a posting… I don't think I would be as successful in my career now if I had appeared out of Depot. And I think that's because you're just really dealing with the same five calls every day all day. And kind of forming all your habits around that. So, for somebody to come up from Depot who's just trying to learn how to be a police officer, you're just getting thrown into crazy calls. Routinely and repetitively. With no evidence or anonymity. It's tough.

Some observed that officers for whom V-Division was their first posting would have to develop the "ways" of doing policing in the North and might not acquire and develop the necessary skills that comprise police habitus.

> But when he leaves Iqaluit, he will still have those questions. And he will be a four or five-year member or a three-year member. So that's not fair, that is not fair to throw somebody like that down south and he has missed every opportunity that you get from a traffic stop (Participant 15).

Therefore, police habitus, development includes a breadth of experiences and responses to "crime" in the field. Policing in Nunavut, the respondents report, involves repetitive responses to "personal" problems. To be fair to the respondents, at least several saw these challenges in context. But as the metaphor of training for traffic stops and then policing in an environment where stop signs rank so low as a priority that almost no one cares illustrates - this field presents significant challenges. What are the consequences

where officers feel that their police habitus is undermined by the field, and what impact does that have on their sense of self as a cop?

b) Band-Aid Solutions

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked about their main reason for entering the Force. Many said that it was to help others. Once in the field, the circular/repetitive character of their work challenged that idea. Participant 6, for example, gives voice to this frustration:

> Probably the biggest issue that this place has… because, like… you don't get to make as much [of a difference]. You bring people to court because they've made horrible decisions. They've injured people perhaps. And the amount of times that people get off scot-free is insane (Participant 6).

Participant 6 adds that :

> It's not rewarding because you very rarely get to work… you don't fix problems. And you don't use your brain. Like you don't have to think about clever ways to solve problems. And people are not necessarily on board with helping to solve problems. So it gets very mundane, and repetitive.

Participant 9 echoed the frustration of not being called upon to "solve problems". This member expressed that :

> So many people who were involved in occurrences… that are involved in… they said that they just had no interest in charging afterwards or going through the courts and doing that kind of stuff. And I remember being really frustrated that I couldn't get statements and we couldn't build a prosecutable case.

Respondents described this work in terms of "putting out fires" or "band-aid solutions":

> Most people that have addiction issues, they are aware that their drinking habit is inappropriate. The people that I deal with, that we would deal with and… and the number of times that I've had, 'I wish I had my, my children, I can't get myself to, you know, I can't control myself, I want to go to rehab, and I want to do these things.' But like, yes, a person will talk like that, when you boot them out of the [jail] cell in the morning, but… That's it. That's kind of like all we'll put a band-aid on this one and we'll wait for the next time, but it just explodes (Participant 4).

Participant 6 explains it this way:

> We put a band-aid on, which is the job of law enforcement. Yep. And the biggest issue that we find is that once the band-aid is on… know that… now why? Because normally, you'd be able to refer these individuals to various other support services. Even the hospital sometimes turns away people, which I'm like, 'well, you can't, we don't turn people away'. We put the band-aids on (Participant 6).

They continue:

> You'll just grab the person who's causing the trouble right when… Your vehicle… and then talk to them there. And it'd be like, 'hey, like, where am I bringing you?' 'Well, I have nowhere else to go: jail.' It is like, it's, it's quite unfortunate.

Access to medical and social services personnel when the calls are mental health and alcohol-related problems range from limited to non-existent. Most detachment cells are used as "drunk tanks". Some Members described making ten to eleven of these types of "arrests" per night (Participant 1).

As one of the Members expressed their frustration with this pattern:

> The last place you want to put … you want to see someone you love, who's feeling like they want to hurt themselves, you'll put them in a cell block that smells like piss and has no windows and has no mattress? No. (Participant 4).

A sense of "putting out fires" was also evident in responses about family violence calls. Participants noted the importance of intervening for the sake of safety in the moment, but expressed frustration with the uselessness of their policing work and the necessity of longer-term solutions:

> So any member that you talk to has between three and twenty sexual assault investigations that they're currently investigating. Right? They ultimately know they're not going to go anywhere because the court system here throws a lot of things out. And the issues are actually quite deep (Participant 6).

Participant 2's interview adds:

> But when it comes to dealing with complaints and whatnot, we go through the process, but then the victims don't show up to court, and they don't want to proceed. Or when you go back and try to get more details or follow up here…. There's a lack of cooperation. So you're trying to do your job and protect them. But at the same time, we're like, 'No, I don't need protection from you guys'. And just… we just fought and… Fine. You told the stand you just misunderstood so that they could minimize the violence between one another (Participant 2).

I note that officers identify cyclical, frustrating patterns that lead them to feel that they are a band-aid solution in a field where, even if they intervene to "save" someone, those involved do not want to change the pattern. Implicit in the accounts of these Members is a sense of police habitus as: identifying crimes, apprehending criminals, and a justice system that dispenses consequences (justice). This is not the daily experience of their job.

5.4 THEME 3 – *Barriers*

Several respondents described aspects of RCMP culture that foster an in-group/out-group dynamic:

> The other thing though about it is that in any place that has multiple RCMP officers, you already have your culture. So I think it's… it's human nature to sort of fall into what you know. And so, yeah, inevitably… I'm integrated because I, you know, I live in these communities. We go to the same airport, I go to those grocery stores. But I also… then leave it when I go into the detachment. And I'm sitting there with RCMP officers, because that's a culture in and of itself, that other people cannot be integrated into, unless they are an RCMP officer. It is a very exclusive club. And that's sort of like… it… Right, you… unless you really actively go look for other people in the community, which… which is really nice (Participant 15).

This corresponds with the existing research on the paramilitary culture embdedded in law enforcement training, wherein recruits absorb a culture emphasizing discipline, hierarchical structures, authoritarianism, and for some, an adversarial mindset of “us versus them”. This mindset encourages the belief that officers adopt a shared culture, regardless of their diverse backgrounds, by virtue of membership in a profession within the same organization. There is also, as described in a previous chapter, an important historical context to RCMP – Inuit relations. The following theme of barriers explores the tensions reported by participants. Fieldwork will also be analyzed through the lens of settler colonialism.

a) Fishbowl Effect

Officers described a “fishbowl effect” that stems from working in small communities where you are known as The Cop. This effect includes constantly being watched and recognized everywhere you go.

> V division, in general, you're probably, you know, you're in a bit of a fishbowl and, and it doesn't matter, you go to the grocery store, and everybody knows who you are, you know, your family and everything else (Participant 8).

Another member described the fishbowl effect in a specific context, like the grocery store.

> Like going to the grocery store, like, I usually never have issues, but there's always the time like… that guy you're arresting every other day is there, and he's speaking to your [SPOUSE] and family saying like… atrocious things. And you, you're just trying to live your life like anybody else (Participant 1)

Also, people in town seemed to know who you were from the moment you arrived:

> Everybody knows you… that you… I remember… Actually, to be honest with you, the day I landed, after the shooting… was the day after the shooting. I remember I had to go down to the Northern store. And I had eyes on me. I could sense people were looking at me differently. And I walked down there… I was in uniform. But they were looking at me. I felt like, 'Okay, I gotta keep my eyes open here'. And my risk level was way off because I knew people were looking at me differently. Now, as time went on, it calmed down and it was back to normal. But we still get the odd comment thrown at us there (Participant 10).

In a smaller hamlet, Participant 10 describes the following :

> To know… you're in the middle of a small Inuit community where the… Actually there was… our houses… for a lot of foot traffic would pass in front of your house. You could use your barbecue and… on your front step and you got people walking by. And you know, they're saying stuff to you. I had people knocking on my doors for… either calls or for you know, obviously trying to sell carvings to you. So yeah… it was a kid throwing rocks at your house. You know, that kind of thing.

So, actually, it wasn't that bad when I was there, but it apparently got worse. But so yeah, you certainly are… your privacy is definitely more compromised (Participant 10).

Participant 7 adds:

So I go there with my family and our stroller, and I wouldn't have a uniform on or anything like that, or just be dressed like in civilian attire, but I'd run into a Member who's not on the call, and he'd be in full uniform, going into the grocery store on Saturday, and you're like, 'What are you doing?' And he would think that I was crazy for going out in the community without my gear on (Participant 7).

Interestingly, some felt that the end of a shift does not mark the end of the job. "Why aren't you out in the community in your gear" is about the layers of police habitus - the significance of the uniform, some distance from the people, and thus an observation that the people for whom police habitus is most pertinent is themselves.

Therefore, what emerges in the data is a tension between the recognition that relationships facilitate police work, there is also a sense among some participants that police habitus should foster a certain degree of personal anonymity and safety (for example behind the uniform).

That isn't to say that officers did not seek to understand the context within which they worked:

Yeah and… to my knowledge there are so many factors causing… causing that person to be in this place at this point. Upbringing, the family trauma, and residential school and all that. We all talk about it in the bullpen within RCMP. Oh, yeah. Recognizing residential school (Participant 5).

In terms of the legal framework that governs their job, Participant 4 noted:

> You win some, you lose some. And I mean, it's not my victory to claim. I think that there are a lot of things from the Criminal Code that really don't apply to the culture. Like there's ways to find justice. That is just incompatible (Participant 4).

This reinforces the idea that having Inuit police officers or Peacekeepers might be better suited to understanding the culture and supporting members of the community. This brings me to the next theme: the ethic of care.

b) Ethic of Care

Some officers reported feeling that they cannot make a substantial impact in this field. In addition to cyclical calls previously discussed, several respondents link the content of the calls to intergenerational trauma. In the following quote the Member is clearly working hard to understand the complexities of what they observe and how to understand them within a historical framework. Out of respect for their efforts to build a bridge between misinformed discourse and comprehension I include it verbatim.

> They have no coping skills. They just… and part of that is because of the government handouts to be quite frank. I think, like… as I'm like, talking it out in my head. The government pays for them for housing, the government subsidizes so much up here. And in part, it's because it's so expensive to live here. If it wasn't subsidized, you wouldn't… you wouldn't be able to afford to live here. So in part, it's… it's… it's because 50 years ago, or 60 years ago, or whatever it was, people were taken off the land and plunked in these freaking communities. And it wasn't them doing it. Like they didn't choose what was forced on them. So… so now, the government has a responsibility to basically provide every frickin thing they need for… for them. You know, it's not right. It's like, it's like a little piece of their soul is broken (Participant 12).

Another example of building bridges involves the work in which Members beyond police work. Participant 15 gives an example of these efforts:

> We went to a house where there was a teenage girl who was living with her mom and her uncle. And she had no door on her… She had no door in her house, like in her bedroom. So she's basically got this… trying to set up this, like, curtain system to, like, make a door. So I put on my carpenter's hat. And we tried to swap doors but they ended up not in… ended up… it ended up not working. But that was just like an example of you... you come up here and you still will police, you still will do policing like you normally would in the South. But you're gonna wear so many hats. And one of those that has been a carpenter. I've… I've put… I've built, like… I built, like, wooden structures to barricade doors closed for women that are suffering from domestic violence so that her their partner couldn't, … come into their house. So she puts up this barricade so he can't come in. (Participant 12)

In another example of trying to provide help beyond the scope of policing, Participant 4 recounts:

> Well, actually, yeah, the mental health calls… because I felt ill-equipped. And I… again, that's one that… It was so useless. Nothing more useless than a suicidal person call. Because we're not dealing with… we're not dealing with a problem. We're just, like, 'oh, before you hurt someone, or somebody or yourself, let's talk, let's go do something about it'. And I'm not an… I'm not a clinician. I'm not a mental health worker. My job is to scoop and go. And that's not what they need. And in terms of one of the biggest problematics is the expectation of the Nunavut Government to think that we can lodge a suicidal person in prison. Because there's no ward for them to be held at the health centre. Yeah, there are no resources at the health centre for them to be looked at (Participant 4).

WIthin the context of settler colonialism, however, are reasons for distrust, dislike, and rejection:

> I recognize that there is an undercurrent, and it's not spoken. But you can feel it: that there's… there's… there's an undercurrent of resentment about the RCMP. Yeah. And you are constantly being watched, everywhere you go, everything you do, who your friends are, who's hanging out at your house. You are… you are under scrutiny the entire time you're here by the local population, which is because we live in a… in a micro bubble here. Like, and you're the… you're the… you're, like… I'm a white guy. I'm the white cop in town and everybody knows me. You know, everybody knows my boss, and everybody knows if you're… if you're out of the community, everybody knows when you get back. Like, and they see you at the door and they're friendly with you. But I've also experienced where if I'm not doing what if I'm not doing what they want, the anger that they… the anger that you get is… is pretty high. They get very angry very quickly (Participant 12).

As stated earlier, the police habitus is challenged when they need to rely on relationships to do their jobs, but it's reinforced when Inuit look at them and only see police. The circular pattern of who gets arrested and for what suggests that issues are systemic, but seem to be signs of personal failings. Officers report an understanding of the historical context, express frustration with band-aid solutions, and make note of actions that fall well outside of their training and role. Furthermore, regarding the Ethic of Care, a Member described that someone would ask for them because, "I listen, and that… I may not be able to help fix their problem, but at least I'll really listen to what they have to say" (Participant 12). Participant 15 also discussed the importance of listening and the need for more mental health resources:

> Mental health is inadequate. You can see an overnight change when a good mental health worker comes in. But that takes a long time, just like us. Like, it's no different than when I went there. Like, after a year, people really started to trust us. People would come to my door, people would come talk, to want to talk to me at the Detachment and it was funny because you see the

> transference of that, like the members leaving or like your next step, because you've been here the longest, and there's that trust, right? So yeah, it's just the resources and things truly out of the control of the RCMP (Participant 7).

As some point out, making an “arrest” may be one of the only tools at their disposal in difficult circumstances:

> No, like a person… just a regular client…. and saying, like, ‘Really, I'm not doing good right now. I need help or the hospital’ and they'll be like, ‘I need help. I'm feeling suicidal. I'm not on any alcohol or substances. I need help’. And they'll call us and they'll be like, ‘you have to take them into custody’ (Participant 9).

Some of the respondents reflected that these issues are not matters for the police, but rather consequences stemming from trauma that require comprehensive strategies to address addiction, family violence, and suicidal ideation. Being called in to repair homes, for example, also speaks to the complicated relations between Inuit, the RCMP, and the interpretation of police habitus. Although many of the responses are about the people on the calls (and sometimes more broadly about the entire community), the focus of this thesis and thus the analysis is really about the working conditions. As I will explore in the next chapter, my analysis examines what the Members say about their working conditions and should not be read as a description of the people of Nunavut.

Chapter 6 - DISCUSSION

The research question for this study asks: *What are the living and working challenges/dynamics conditions in the Qikiqtaaluk, Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions, such as in Iqaluit and other small communities, and what can we learn from those descriptions for policing?*

The answer to the first part of the question of "*what are the living and working challenges/dynamics conditions for non-Inuit officers in the Qikiqtaaluk, Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions, such as in Iqaluit and other small communities"* can be described in one-word: layered. Where working and living overlap officers reported that they may not ever be "off-duty" in the eyes of the community. The Regular Members need to demonstrate some vulnerability and ask for help, but some of these efforts may raise concerns about respect and deference to their authority (for example when kids throw rocks at their home). Policing in Nunavut, some argue, requires listening, care, and an understanding of historical context. It is also frustrating when calls have them in a tight, circular loop with a small number of people who are struggling in life.

The second part of the research question, *"what can we learn from those descriptions for policing"* leads me to argue that policing in Nunavut means that officers must develop a complex understanding of police habitus: their role, their job, and what is possible.

Observations regarding officers' initial motivations and experiences in Northern postings seemed to be connected to career advancement. This opportunity (the Polar Express) would enable officers to advance "up the ladder" by gaining experiences, new skills, and financial advantages. Some were also enticed by the possibility of having more say in their subsequent posting. However, after analyzing the data I argue that there are deficits in their capacity to maintain police habitus and as a result some feel compromised, conflicted, and as though they cannot succeed as police. In the absence of opportunities

to see an arc to their work: identify crime, apprehend a criminal, and then submit them for consequences (justice),[15] some express blame toward the Nunavummiut. However, what they are describing is the mismatch between what the community needs and the capacity and scope of policing. This argument underscores the importance of understanding the expectations between officers and the institution. It highlights the need for early and transparent engagement with officers regarding the objectives in Nunavut postings, as well as the importance of fostering a culture that values both professional development and personal well-being within policing environments.

6.1 RCMP Training

The RCMP reflects a paramilitary model characterized by a top-down command structure and the authority of superiors. It involves rigorous training which includes developing physical and tactical skills. I argue that this produces a particular police habitus. Based on my analysis of the interviews conducted for this research, I argue that this training does not provide the tools necessary so that officers are prepared to navigate relationships, repetitive calls with a small number of people, nor solve the puzzle of personal and professional boundaries.

In 2021, the RCMP undertook a comprehensive overhaul of its paramilitary training program at Depot and introduced a model that emphasizes community policing. Political and media discussions suggest that this change is welcome. Angela Campbell, a law professor at McGill University and a member of the Advisory Board's Task Force, remarked that changes to cadet training are essential (Tunney, 2023). Campbell emphasizes that Depot’s 26-week program not only shapes the cadets but also influences the organizational culture from day one (Tunney, 2023). The focus on enhancing training related to community engagement, civilian interactions, and overall safety is crucial in the development of cadets (Tunney, 2023).

[15] The emphasis here is my point about an arc, rather than describing the job of a cop.

Transformation of the Cadet Training Program (CTP) brings to light the growing recognition that the gap between community needs and policing work needs to close (RCMP, 2023b). Expansion of community policing approaches are still in development.

6.2 Bourdieu – Habitus - Field

Habitus encompasses a collection of deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that individuals primarily acquire during their upbringing, but which become apparent through socialization and exposure to new environments (Bourdieu, 1987). In the context of this research, the "field" refers to the social spaces, the people, vehicles, dogs, borders, etc., that surround them and with which they interact.

As it pertains to their experiences there are differences in the "field" depending on whether the workspace is Iqaluit or a smaller hamlet. Within these fields, individuals come to engage with the community and establish relationships to facilitate integration into the environment. However, some individuals find themselves conflicted about the relational demands of the field, and therefore have conflicted experiences in their police habitus. Police habitus (Chan, 2004) refers to the collection of dispositions acquired through police organizational socialization that enable officers to carry out their policing duties. While habitus can vary both within and among policing organizations, there are certain fundamental principles that constitute an "ideal type" of street policing habitus, often shared across organizations (Chan, 2004, p. 333 in Quinlan, 2021, p.193). This refers to their role, their symbols, and their interactions with the public.

What, for example, does one expect of themselves and how are they perceived when it comes to being a "typical cop"? And what if this is neither possible nor desirable in Nunavut? Those who described a more positive experience as an RCMP Member in Nunavut do not focus on maintaining police habitus, but rather engage in conversations, build rapport with elders, and have connections to the community

(sometimes involving a spouse and kids). According to Bourdieu, the field can shape and change an individual's habitus.

6.3 Settler Colonialism

Historically, the RCMP played a pivotal role in the displacement and relocation of Inuit families, the dog slaughter, and the removal of children to residential schools. As a result, there are important tensions that persist between Inuit and the RCMP. There are persistent power dynamics, such that the RCMP presence as the arm of the Federal Government is a continuation of colonial processes. On an everyday basis, officer interventions in Nunavut may fall somewhere between "helping" and "enforcing": there are patterns to some of the coping strategies exhibited in communities that have experienced generational trauma. For Inuit, being policed for those coping strategies may reinforce rather than solve the problem. From the perspective of the RCMP, they feel frustrated that their interventions make no difference in the frequency or people involved in their daily calls.

The goal for this research is to engage with the RCMP so that officers being deployed to Nunavut (and other Indigenous communities) reflect on their capacity as police, are equipped with historically-informed cultural training, that relationship building skills are encouraged, and that RCMP share information with other government agencies to encourage investment in necessary social services. Recognizing that the needs of Nunavummiut are not being met when hardships are criminalized, and police are their first line of intervention for things that include addiction, family violence, suicidal ideation, and everyday supports. To that end I make the following 10 recommendations to the RCMP:

6.4 Recommendations

Arising from the field reports and the data presented and analysed in this research, I make the following recommendations:

1) There is need to update the training of police officers to privilege community-based proactive policing.

2) Before an officer commits to a 2–3-year contract in Nunavut they should complete at least one “relief” duty in V Division.

3) For new recruits, the first V Division deployment should be to Iqaluit. Deployment to smaller hamlets where there are far fewer Members should be a second deployment.

4) Regular Members should be trained in skills additional to their police training, such as coaching, plumbing, paramedic etc. Training in mental health support should be mandatory.

5) To that end, Regular Members in V Division should be trained in peaceful de-escalation skills and suicide prevention.

6) Although not part of the analysis, some V Division officers pointed out that management personnel and constable/corporal officers should be housed separately.

7) Some Regular Members in remote communities have expressed the lack of oversight and loneliness. I suggest regularizing check-ins and feedback sessions, thus normalizing conversations about mental health amongst officers.

8) To continue and find ways to actively recruit Inuit Regular Members.

9) Communicate to other Agencies that Nunavummiut need more comprehensive medical care, social workers, and addiction rehab centers.

10) Related to recommendation 9, the RCMP and the Government of Nunavut need to find alternative solutions to the practice of temporarily incarcerating people who are suicidal or/and excessively intoxicated.

6.5 Conclusion

This thesis explores the dynamics of policing in Nunavut and concludes that there are significant deficits in the training, preparation, and expectations placed upon RCMP Members. The challenges faced by officers are not only logistical but are deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and historical context of the communities they serve.

In the short term, officers need better training, including in-person mentorship, scenario-based training, de-escalation techniques, and real-world experience in remote policing. The RCMP engage in continuous efforts to improve training techniques; however, specific training on Northern postings, especially for smaller hamlets, is necessary. Many of these officers reported that they did not come to understand the realities of working in Nunavut until they were already there. Others reported engaging in some of their own research, including reaching out to their reporting supervisor before entering the detachment. In these efforts they were looking for some insights in order to be ready. Based on my analysis of these interviews I argue that some officers are implicitly concerned that they are not and cannot succeed *as police* in this field.

On a broader level, this research raises questions about the long-term viability of posting RCMP Members from southern Canada to police Inuit in their homeland. Furthermore, the current model invests heavily in policing, perhaps at the expense of other essential social services. The social dimension of many police calls, coupled with the tension between police expectations and community needs, illustrates the problematic nature of relying heavily on the RCMP in Nunavut.

In the medium term, the RCMP must prioritize the recruitment of Inuit officers and learn from Inuit cultural practices while training them to become Members. This approach would help bridge the gap between the community and the police, ensuring that the RCMP are better equipped to serve Nunavummiut while fostering a more trusting relationship between the two groups.

A more sustainable, long-term solution would involve recruiting and training Nunavummiut to serve as police officers. By doing so, the community would benefit from officers who understand their cultural context and can navigate the complexities of life in Nunavut more effectively. According to research by Zacharie (2024), reporting on a survey conducted in 2017, the Kahnawá:ke community responded positively to having peacekeepers who were from their own community. By integrating Inuit perspectives into policing strategies, the RCMP can create a more effective and culturally competent policing system that serves both the community's needs and the officers' professional demands.

I recognize that my interest in the experiences of the officers and thus some of my reflections are linked to my work as a public servant for the RCMP. It was a privilege to travel to the field twice in order to conduct observations and interviews these Regular Members in person. I take full responsibility for any evidence of bias. I am grateful for any "insider" access that I had to the operations of the organization. I was privy to informal discussions, meetings on ongoing issues, able to discuss solutions for the division, and had a chance to travel to a smaller hamlet.

As stipulated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action,*[16] the RCMP has responsibilities to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous communities. Relationship building and the fostering of trust between the RCMP and Indigenous communities is essential. Future research must foreground the perspectives of Inuit vis a vis RCMP work. Informed by the findings in the Qikiqtani Truth Commission Report,[17] the voices and experiences of Inuit are essential for understanding the long-term impacts of colonialism and its ongoing challenges. Although the specific goal of this research was to understand the complexities of maintaining police habitus while working in Nunavut, the greater goal is to contribute to strengthening Inuit governance, culture, and futures.

[16] See for example, the Calls to Action pertaining to "Justice": https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502695174/1557513515931 (Government of Canada, 2024)

[17] Qikiqtani Truth Commission. (n.d.) – see https://www.qtcommission.ca/en

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A -*Letter of Expectations (Understanding)*

Serving in the Territory of Nunavut presents challenges and opportunities for front line members who have chosen to serve in the unique conditions of the north. Members maintain high visibility in their detachments and possess the ability to provide significant contributions to their communities. Members are expected to contribute in a meaningful way towards the betterment of the communities that they serve. Service in "V" Division requires that members understand the following expectations, limitations and realities in meeting the needs of the Force and the communities they serve.

Philosophy of Policing

All members of the Force are expected to possess an understanding of the Force's Mission, Vision and Values and objectives that are key to rendering the best possible service to all clients. Members are encouraged to develop innovative and proactive measures in partnership with community resources in efforts to maximize opportunities in identifying and resolving localized issues.

Uniqueness of the Policing Role

The uniqueness of the Nunavut Territory consisting of its harsh geography, climate and remoteness requires that members possess a willingness to performing a variety of non-policing duties that are not required in larger urban settings. The scarcity of government and commercial services, community capacity and specialized police expertise results in members having to respond to a variety of duties outside those of traditional policing. This could include the issuing of a Territorial Driver test or providing assistance in completing a pardon application. In addition to this, members are expected to contribute to one's community in a meaningful way, which is paramount in not only the building of trust but in the maintenance of respectful relationships with members of the community. This can be achieved through the involvement in community feasts and community activities. In addition, members are expected to engage with the youth and be pro-active in educational programs that develop positive social behaviour.

Members need to recognize that they are responsible and accountable to the needs of the citizens of Nunavut through their multi-faceted role ensuring the safety of all, especially those that are most vulnerable.

Members will be familiar with “V” Division’s Annual Performance Plan and will proactively participate as an individual contributor to either their Unit Performance Plan or Detachment Performance Plan.

Transfer Policy

By accepting a deployment to Nunavut, “V” Division expects that members will commit to serving a three year commitment in the position that they accepted. This is consistent with the Career Management Manual which states:

> 3. 7. A member will normally not be considered for a transfer before the expiration of three years unless operational or administrative needs exist.

Unless extenuating circumstances apply, a member will not be released prior to their commitment. While extensions may be considered, extensions in small detachments are often discouraged due to the need for the member to further develop their policing skills in order to facilitate career advancement. Further to this, an extension may result in multiple departures from a detachment adversely impacting the community. Members must also recognize that upon departure from “V” Division, that they may not receive their Division(s) of choice.

Expectation from the Community

Members of the RCMP are viewed as role models and valuable contributors to their communities. Not only is there a high expectation that members will engage in law enforcement, but also be visible and participate in community life. Members will provide a strong presence in their communities with a willingness to providing quality service to our clients. In addition, members are accessible and will respond in a timely and respectful manner. Members are expected to be proactive in engaging the community as partners through innovative and open dialogue by establishing strategies to address issues. This places a high demand on members to provide resourcefulness and creativity while building relationships on trust, accountability and integrity in achieving common goals. Collaboration, engagement and inclusion formed in a trusting and honest relationship is the cornerstone for effective community policing in the North.

Members have a responsibility to become familiar with their community respecting the language, custom and cultural activities, with the willingness to listen and learn traditional ways.

Working Conditions

Due to the remoteness of each detachment within Nunavut Territory, a member accepts that additional assistance or back up may be hours away, thus recognizing that the mere geography may preclude them from the enjoyment of unfettered time off. By volunteering for the North, there is an expectation that members will be on call in support of their colleagues and their community. Further to this, members stationed in the majority of the Division's detachments are always on call, and accept that their privacy is often disturbed by calls for service. In two member detachments, a member will be required to provide assistance to the on duty member at all times. The National Compensation Manual provides financial compensation through both Operational Readiness (3. 2. 1. An off-duty member will be compensated one hour at the straight-time rate for each four-hour period he/she is on OR) and Operational Availability (3. 3. 1. An off-duty member will be compensated one hour at the straight-time rate for each eight-hour period he/she is on OA).

Members are involved in a variety of high risk complaints involving crimes against persons. This requires that the members will be responsible for the entirety of the investigation from its initiation to its conclusion in court. Statistics indicate that Nunavut has the highest rate of files per member which include but not limited to, violent crime severity rate, suicide within the Territory and second highest crime severity rate. Coupled with limited access for support, the requirement to work alone for long hours in often dark and bitterly cold conditions, members working in "V" Division require strong resilience, coping mechanisms and ongoing support by spouses and their family for the wellness and performance of the member.

Attendance at training courses will be reduced or not offered due to operational resourcing needs, and the high cost of travel. However, the successful completion of mandatory training and operational skills maintenance will be required throughout the three year commitment.

Members and their families will be provided with up to two 4 week periods of leave (referred to as VTAs) during each fiscal year. Although financial compensation is supplied for the VTAs, the leave entitlement is earned through annual leave, O/T, O/R and O/A.

Housing

Government housing is available and rental is based on the degree of isolation and size of the family unit subject to Treasury Board guidelines. Housing will vary in the degree of quality, size and contents. The maintenance of these residences is overseen by Property Management based in Winnipeg, MB. Due to a lack of local trades, members and their dependants are required to maintain their residences by providing housekeeping and ongoing repairs. This could include fixing a broken cupboard, tightening a loose fixture etc.

Community

The opportunities available within each community are distinct and characterized by their traditions and culture, resources and geography. Independent research relating to spouse employment opportunities, schooling, recreational activities, the significant cost and scarcity of child care, pets and the high cost of living is necessary. A review of weather conditions and lack of natural light during the winter months requires close examination. It is important to recognize that many amenities and the quality and selection of goods available in the south is not available or very costly to purchase.

Suitability

Members who are unable or unwilling to meet the operational needs of the detachment, provide assistance to their colleagues and/or contribute to their communities will be considered unsuitable for policing duties in "V" Division.

Commitment by "V" Division Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team in "V" Division is committed to responding to the needs and concerns brought forth by the membership and will take an active role in addressing and resolving these issues.

Please indicate your acceptance and understanding of the expectations, limitations and realities of serving in "V" Division by signing this document.

______________________	_________________	___________________	_______________
(Member)	(Date)	(Line Officer)	(Date)

______________________	_________________
(CDRA)	(Date)

(2018-09-01)

*_**This document was used with the permission of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Any authorization to reuse the material found in Annexe A, the Letter of Expectation, should be directed to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, National Communication Unit at:**_ rcmp.communications-communications.grc@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

APPENDIX B – MAPS

FIGURE 2 – CANADA'S MAP (NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA, 2022)

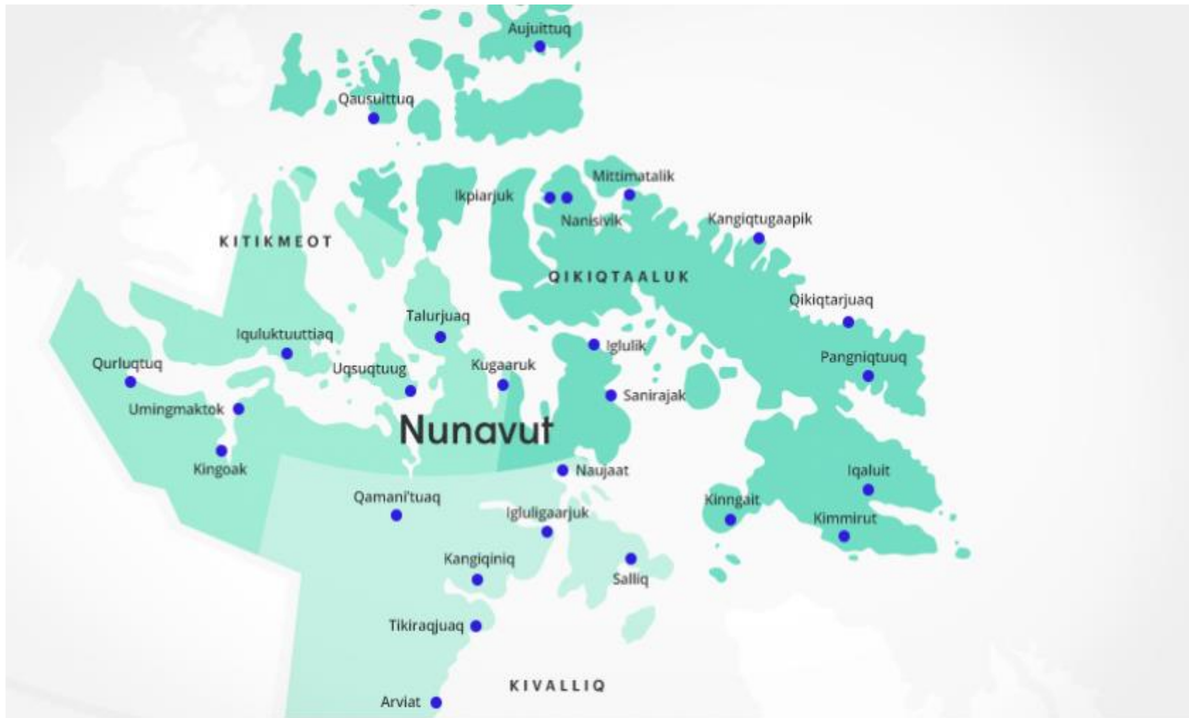

FIGURE 3 - NUNAVUT'S MAP - HTTPS://CARREFOURNUNAVUT.CA/EN/LIVE/MAPS-OF-COMMUNUTIES

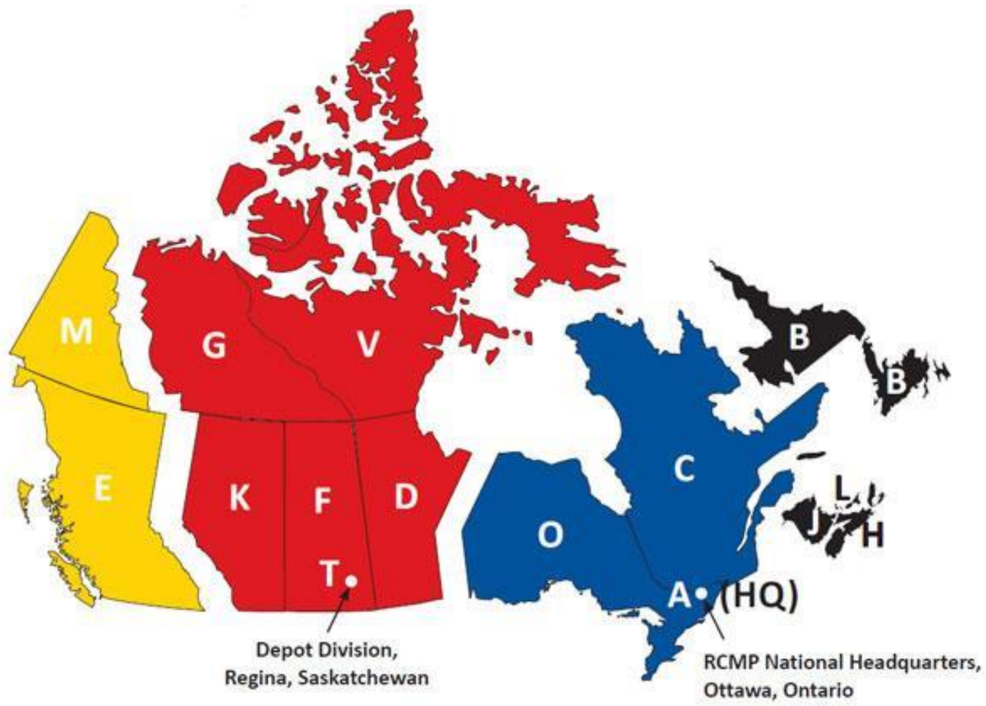

FIGURE 4 - RCMP DIVISION'S MAP - HTTPS://WWW.RESEARCHGATE.NET/FIGURE/ROYAL-CANADIAN-MOUNTED-POLICE-LETTERED-DIVISIONS-SOURCE-RCMP_FIG1_346881315

APPENDIX C – RECRUITING

Subject: Call Out for Regular Members - V-Division Policing in the North Research

Good evening V-Division,

For those of you who have not had a chance to meet me, my name is Sophie Hamel-Touchette. I have been an employee with the RCMP since 2018, currently working with [redacted] in Ottawa. I am also a MA Student in Sociology at the University of Ottawa currently working on a thesis research project that examines the experiences of regular members in the North (V-Division). Earlier this summer, I came to Iqaluit to visit and conduct preliminary observations for my research. I am returning to Iqaluit under an assignment for three weeks (November21- December11) to continue part two of my research project. Part two consists of collecting my data which involves conducting a minimum of 6 interviews with Regular Members.

My research examines the working and living conditions of officers posted to Nunavut, focusing on Iqaluit and other communities where possible. The criteria is simple; I need participants who have been a regular members, operational on-duty, for a minimum of 12 months in V-Division. This research seeks to understand the dynamics and/or challenges that regular member's experience.

Your involvement as a participant would involve a 60-90 minutes semi-structured interview with me in person or video call. You may also elect to share photographs of your daily activities for my reference. ***Please note that if you wish to take pictures of your daily activities and surroundings, please avoid the inclusion of people.*

The interview portion will cover questions about you, why you became a police officer for the RCMP, and how you ended up on posting to a northern community. The other questions explore your daily activities as a police officer and your approach to working within the community. My questions may prompt you to go into detail about additional relevant topics.

The interview will be recorded for my own purposes and will be transcribed exclusively for data analysis. The recordings will be kept in a safe, secured space where only I will have access. The recordings, along with other personal information in my computer, will be secured in a double password protected folder where again, only I will have access. I will safely remove all recorded data and personal information once the data retention period is complete. (*more information can be found in my consent form attached*)

FIGURE 5 – THE RECRUITING EMAIL BROADCASTED TO REGULAR MEMBERS IN V DIVISION

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Faculty of Social Sciences

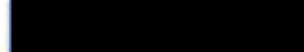
École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques / School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies

Consent Form

Title of the study: *RCMP Officers Posted to Nunavut Communities: Exploring the Policing and Private Life Challenges of Qallunaat Police in Inuit Nunangat*

Researcher: Sophie Hamel-Touchette, MA Student
Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociological and Anthropological

Thesis Supervisor: Willow Scobie (PhD)
Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies



Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a Master's research project entitled, *RCMP Officers Posted to Nunavut Communities: Exploring the Policing and Private Life Challenges of Qallunaat Police in Inuit Nunangat*, conducted by Sophie Hamel-Touchette *(researcher)* and Willow Scobie *(Thesis Supervisor).*

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to understand the ongoing dynamics and/or challenges that police officers experience on a personal and working level. Also, to learn about policing in Nunavut communities more broadly, based on officers' accounts of their own experiences.

Participation: Your participation will consist of an interview of approximately 60-90 minutes, comprised of questions about your experiences. The interview will be recorded on an app on a device. You will have the option to share photographs of day-to-day activities and surroundings. You understand that sharing photos is also a fully optional aspect of your participation.

Risks: You understand that the risk to you is minimal. You understand that your participation in this study will entail that you describe your involvement as a police officer, specifically in relation to policing in northern communities. These questions may cause you to feel discomfort or nervous as it may involve questions discussing particular emotions that you have felt as a police officer, potential activities which might be considered taboo, or otherwise that you have witnessed or where an active participant in, and perceptions that you might have had as a result. The anonymity and confidentiality of the data, the events described, and other identifying details will be respected at all times. With respect to repercussions if colleagues query your participation, you are reminded that the goal of this project is to understand the experiences of officers, and not to criticize individuals. You understand that you may decline to answer any question, to take time to reflect on your answer, and may stop the interview at any time.

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A list of resources will be provided should you wish to discuss if you feel discomfort or nervous about some of the sensitive topics that may arise throughout the interview and/or after the interview.

Benefits: You understand that your participation in this study will give you a chance to share your experiences. Organizations, such as the RCMP, may gain insights into the dynamics that police officers are experiencing.

Confidentiality and anonymity: You have received assurance from the researcher that the information that you share will remain strictly confidential. You understand that the contents will be used only for data analysis and that your confidentiality will be protected through anonymity.

For those who are participating via web link: in order to minimize the risk of security breaches and to help ensure your confidentiality we recommend that you use standard safety measures such as signing out of your account, closing your browser and locking your screen or device when you are no longer using them / when you have completed the study.

Anonymity: You understand that your anonymity will be protected by removing or modifying the data. For instance, the use of a pseudonym and changing event/community details to prevent any direct or indirect identification of a participant. In additional, information that will be collected are to be analyze collectively rather than individually, thus, this will migitate the risk associated to your participation.

Conservation of data: The access to the protected data will be limited. You understand that the data collected such as: the recorded interviews, transcripts, photographs, interview questionnaire and notes will be kept in a secure manner in a double protected password folder on the researcher's laptop. The laptop is double password protected. There is a password to enter the laptop, and another password required for the folder where all of the data (e.g : audio recording, transcription, emails etc) will be kept. In addition, the recorder that the researcher will use will be password protected.

Only the researcher, Sophie Hamel-Touchette, and thesis supervisor, Willow Scobie, will have access to the data. The disposal of your data will be conducted in a secure manner once the retention period of five years has ended. In the meantime, a copy of the data will be kept in a locked cabinet in a locked office on uOttawa campus during the full period of retention.

Voluntary Participation: You understand that you are under no obligation to participate or share any experience that you do not want to share with the researcher. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time, refuse to answer any questions and/or mention you do not want to share specific information for the used of this research project without suffering any negative consequences. If you choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be safely and securely permanently deleted.

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École d'études sociologiques et anthropologiques / School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies

Acceptance: I, ___________________________*(Name of participant),* agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Sophie Hamel-Touchette, MA student from the *Faculty of Social Sciences, School of Sociological and Anthropological*, under the supervision of Willow Scobie (PhD).

☐ Please check box if you consent and agree that your photographs can be used in the researcher's Master's Thesis as supporting evidence/analysis.

☐ Please check box if you consent and agree that your photographs can be used in the researcher's Master's Thesis Document.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact the researcher, Sophie Hamel-Touchette at [redacted] or the thesis supervisor, Willow Scobie at [redacted]

If you have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: Date:

(Signature) *(YYYY/MM/DD)*

Researcher's signature: Date:

Sophie Hamel-Touchette *(Signature)* *(YYYY/MM/DD)*
[redacted]

Pièce 10005 / Room 10005
10ᵉ étage / 10ᵗʰ floor
120, rue Université / University Pvt.
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

3

FIGURE 6 - CONSENT FORM

School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies
University Of Ottawa

Research Participants *NEEDED*

RECRUITING REGULAR MEMBERS to take part in a study about policing in the context of Nunavut

You are invited to participate in a Sociology Master's research project entitled, *RCMP Officers Posted to Nunavut Communities: Exploring the Policing and Private Life Challenges of Qallunaat Police in Inuit Nunangat,* conducted by Sophie Hamel-Touchette (researcher) and Willow Scobie (Thesis Supervisor).

Essential requirements *Must be a Regular Member posted in one of the 25 detachments in Nunavut and have been deployed for more than 12 months.*

Your participation would involve ***a virtual*** **or in-person** ***semi-structured interview, 60 –*** **90** *minutes in length, conducted November-December, 2021.*

If you have any questions, or require additional information about this study, please contact:

Sophie Hamel-Touchette

This study has been reviewed by and received ethical clearance from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board and the Royal Canadian Mountain Police HHRRC Ethic Committee Board

FIGURE 7 - RECRUITING POSTER - ATTACHED TO THE RECRUITING EMAIL

uOttawa Consent Information Addendum- COVID-19 Risks

Principal Investigator:

Study Title:

Please note that a Word version of this form can be requested to the Office of the Vice-Dean, Research of your faculty.

Please read the following statements carefully and feel free to ask questions if anything seems unclear.

We are putting in place safety precautions to reduce exposure to COVID-19, but the risk of exposure can still exist. COVID-19 can result in severe illness, medical expenses, and loss of income and in some cases, death.

If you are considered vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 (e.g., an older adult; underlying medical conditions or a compromised immune system), please discuss your participation with the research team before consenting to participate.

If you are feeling unwell or experiencing any potential COVID-19 symptoms leading up to the research session, please stay home and notify the research team that you cannot attend. Should you experience symptoms in days following the session, please also notify the research team.

Potential COVID-19 symptoms include: new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, temperature equal to or over 38C (100.4F), feeling feverish, chills, fatigue or weakness, muscle or body aches, new loss of smell or taste, headache, gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting), or feeling very unwell.

To reduce the possibility of COVID-19, we have implemented the following safety procedures *[Instruction to researcher: keep only the measures that apply to your project; remove this instruction text in the final version provided to participants]***:**

- Regular handwashing
- Using hand sanitizer when handwashing is not possible
- Wearing of face masks/face coverings
- Physical distancing (as recommended by the local health authority)
- Limiting shared material and documents (pens, paper)
- Sanitizing surfaces and shared equipment
- Waiting ___ minutes between each session
- Using face shields or goggles
- Using lab coats
- Using Plexiglas barriers
- Collecting personal contact information for contact-tracing purposes.
- Other

Please advise a researcher if you believe a safety measure is not being taken, or that your safety is at risk.

Considerations for the Participant:

We ask that you:

- Wear a mask or face covering. Masks will be provided by the researcher if you do not have one. If you feel that you are unable to wear a mask, discuss your participation with the research team.
- Complete a screening assessment before each research session.
- Wash or sanitize your hands upon arrival. Hand sanitizer will be provided or a washing station will be available.
- Maintain physical distancing to the extent possible during the in-person research activities.

We ask that you follow the health-related directives above for your safety and the safety of the researchers.

Information for Contact Tracing

We are collecting personal contact information for contact-tracing purposes, in the event that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the research site.

Your name and contact information:

- Will not be stored with the research data
- Will always be securely stored
- Will only be used if requested by Public Health authorities for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes
- Will be held only for the time required by Public Health authorities

Right to Withdraw

You are under no obligation to participate. You can stop participating or withdraw from the study at any time by notifying the researcher using the contact information above.

Thank you for your interest and participation.

Information for Contact Tracing (to be kept separately from research documents)

This information:

- will not be stored with the study data;
- will always be securely stored;
- will be used only if requested by public health to provide this information for COVID-19 contact tracing purposes; and
- will be held only for the time required by public health authorities

Name (please print): ____ (required)

Phone: ____(required)

Email:____(optional)

Name (please print): ____ (required)

Phone: ____(required)

Email:____(optional)

Date: ________________________________

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FIGURE 8 - UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA - COVID CONSENT FORM

APPENDIX D -*Set of Interview Questions*

Questionnaire – Set of Interview Questions

The proposed set of interview questions will allow RCMP officers to share their personal experiences about living and policing in the northern communities. This will enable the researcher to identify issues experienced by V Division officers. Interview questions will cover the following topics: biographical information, job description and daily tasks, knowledge and understanding of policing issues pertaining to Indigenous communities in northern communities, officers' integration and adaptation in northern communities, and officers' health and use of free time for enjoyment. Please note that all interviews will be recorded, but kept anonymous and confidential. At any point, a research participant may refuse to answer certain questions and may ask to stop recording.

Ask at the beginning/prompt discussion:

1. How do you self-identify? (Are you a visible minority? Are you Indigenous?)
    a. (e.g. the government of Canada's definition of what a visible minority is "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour")
2. Where were you born?
3. Where did you grow up?
    a. Explain what was your community like.

Current posting, daily tasks and policing in Indigenous communities

1. What motivated you to become a police officer?
2. What rank level are you?
    1. (e.g are you a Cst-Cpl, Sgt-S/Sgt., Insp-Supt or C/Supt – And above)
3. Where was your first deployment?
4. When were you deployed to [insert name of city/northern community]?
    1. How long was deployment in [insert name of city/northern community]?
    2. Can you describe the community you worked in?
        1. Before going into that community, what information was given to you?
        2. Was this part of your training?
5. Was being deployed to a northern community a primary choice?
    1. What were your options before you got deployed?
6. Which communities have you been deployed to?
7. Were there adjustments you had to make to be deployed in this community?
    1. If so, can you please describe those adjustments or changes that you made?
8. How would you describe your job description in this community?
    1. How does it differ from past deployment/posting experiences you have had with the RCMP?
    2. Before arriving, what were some of your expectations about working in this community?
    3. (If applicable) How did your daily tasks in this posting differ from those of other postings you've had in non-Indigenous communities or other regions in Canada?

9. How informed were you about Indigenous values and culture before being deployed to [insert name of city/northern community]? Where did that information come from?
    1. Tell me about this community. Tell me what is like.
10. How informed were you about policing in Canadian northern communities?
11. What are policing dynamics you have identified or experienced since occupying your current post in [insert name of city/northern community]?
12. Tell me about when you arrived in the community?;
    1. How would you describe your relationship with the community?
13. Do you believe the pre-training offered by the RCMP prepared you for your deployment in [insert name of city/northern community]?
    1. If so, explain how?
    2. b) If not, explain why? Can you provide any recommendations or solutions?

Integration and health of RCMP officers in northern communities

1. How would you describe the relationship between RCMP officers and [insert name of city/northern community] more broadly?
    a. Can you give some examples to illustrate this?
2. What factors do you believe have helped or hurt your relationship with [insert name of city/northern community]?
3. How would you describe your relationship with colleagues in this community?
    a. How would you describe the relationship you have with the other police officer(s) in your detachment?
    b. Could you describe to me a scenario/situation that made you feel uncomfortable?
    c. Can you describe a situation that made you feel proud?
    d. Is there another type of scenario/situation that stood out for you? Will you tell me more?
    e. Can you give me an example/can you describe a situation when you experienced a gap in cultural knowledge or cultural misunderstanding?
4. How often did you communicate with friends and/or family in other parts of Canada? How did you communicate?
5. Have you been able to visit friends and/or family since you were deployed? How often?
6. How has your deployment affected your relationships with friends, partner and/or family?
    a. How was this impacted your mental and/or physical health?
7. What leisure activities did you participate in before your deployment to [insert name of city/northern community]?
    a. Have you been able to participate in such leisure activities in [insert name of city/northern community]?
    b. If not, why may this be and how has this impacted your mental and/or physical health?
    c. Have you taken up any new leisure activities? Hunting? Fishing, etc.?
8. Could you provide a brief description of some other everyday things related to self-care, like your diet prior to your deployment to [insert name of city/northern community]?
    a. How has your diet/food consumption changed (if at all) during your deployment?
    b. (If applicable) why has your diet changed? Is it the cost and/or the variety of food?
    c. How has this impacted your mental and/or physical health?
    d. Is there anything else related to taking care of yourself that you would like to mention?
9. In your opinion, does the RCMP provide you and other officers with physical and mental health resources in [insert name of city/northern community] that meet your needs?
10. How would you describe the weather/climate here?

a. Does the weather have any impact on your mental and/or physical health?
b. Does the weather pose any challenges to fulfilling your duties as a police officer?
c. Does the weather/climate relate to your leisure activities in any way?
11. Do you miss anything specific since moving to [insert name of community]? What is it?
12. Have you incorporated anything new into your life? Can you tell me more about that?

Ways forward

1. What recommendations would you suggest to improve pre-deployment training?
2. What recommendations would you suggest to improve post-deployment training?
3. What advice would you give newly deployed RCMP officers in northern communities?

Biographical information

1. What is your legal name? (e.g. only for this question, this will not be used in the data collection)
2. Please select the range that represents your age: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69)
3. Prior to your deployment, where did you live?
4. What is the highest level of education you've completed? (e.g.: University/College/High School Diploma)
5. What is your current relationship status? (single, common law, married)
    1. a) If partnered, are they here with you?
    2. b) Is there anything you would like me to know about your partner's experience in this community
6. Do you have any children?
    1. a) If children, are they here with you?
    2. b) Is there anything you would like me to know about your children's experiences

APPENDIX E - *List of Accessible Resources for all Canadians*

1. ***Crisis Services Canada***

Toll-Free (24/7): 1 (833) 456-4566

Text support (4 pm-12 am ET daily): 45645

www.crisisservicescanada.ca

2. ***Canadian Crisis Hotline***

1 (888) 353-2273

Text Support: **Canada** via SMS at 686868.

3. ***The LifeLine App***www.thelifelinecanada.ca

Direct access to the phone, online chat, text, and email crisis support

E-counselling, self-management tools, access to crisis centres across Canada

Available for iPhone and Android users

4. **ONLINE PEER SUPPORT**

Big White Wall Canada

Big White Wall Canada www.bigwhitewall.ca

Anonymous peer support community accessible anytime, anywhere

List of Accessible Resources in Nunavut

1. ***Nunavut - Awareness Centre Crisis Line (24 hours): (867) 982-0123***

Nunavut and Nunavik (Arctic Quebec)

http://nunavuthelpline.ca

Toll-Free (7 pm-11 pm): 1-800-265-3333 Crisis Line (7 pm-11 pm): (867) 979-3333

List of Accessible Resources from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

1. ***Peer-to-Peer Program***

All categories of RCMP employees have access to internal Peer-to-Peer Coordinators. They can help you with work-related or personal issues. The coordinators provide information and help you access services. These include Health Canada's Employee Assistance Services (EAS) and RCMP resources.

To contact your peer-to-peer coordinator in your division, please contact P2P-SPP@rcmp-grc.gc.ca with your *name, phone number and division.*

2. Employee Assistance Services (EAS)

.EAS provides ***free and confidential*** short-term counselling services. You do not have to access your health benefits to use this service. EAS is available 24/7. EAS counsellors may refer you to other services as well.

Dependents include:

- a spouse, including a common-law spouse
- unmarried children, including adopted children, step-children and foster children who meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - 21 years of age or under
  - over 21 up to and including 25 years of age and in full-time attendance at school, or
  - who are wholly dependent because of physical or mental impairment, if the impairment existed before the child reached age 21, or started while the child was covered as a student over the age of 21
- Call Employee Assistance Services at:
- 1-800-268-7708
- 1-800-567-5803 (TTY)

3. Occupational Health and Safety Services Offices for Regular Members

Divisional Psychologist – NHQ Occupational Health Office

Reception [remove] /Fax [remove] - General mailbox: HQ Health Services/ Services de santé RCMP/GRC [RCMP Health Services Email]