



Chaire de recherche sur les relations avec les sociétés inuit

Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies

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Police Services and Inuit in Nunavik (Arctic Québec)

Knowing each other better to help each other better



Research report submitted to Public Safety Canada

January 2020

Cover photo: Prevention activity by the Kativik Regional Police Force at Jaanimmarik School in Kuujuaq, 2019 @KRPF-KRG

Report by Marie-Ève Marchand, Pascale Laneuville, Caroline Hervé, and Francis Lévesque.

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The Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies has a mission to help develop harmonious social relations with Inuit societies. Its activities aim to produce new knowledge on relations between Inuit and non-Inuit and on the transformation of these relations in recent decades. It strengthens the excellence of Université Laval in northern research by enabling it to play a central role in the process of reconciliation with the Inuit. The Chair has been made possible by Sentinel North funding.

Website: <https://www.relations-inuit.chaire.ulaval.ca/>

Email: relations.inuit@chaire.ulaval.ca

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Acronyms and abbreviations

BEI	Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (Independent Investigation Unit)
CLSC	Centre local de services communautaires (local community centre for health and social services)
DYP	Director of Youth Protection
ENPQ	École nationale de police du Québec (Québec National Police Academy)
FCNQ	Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau-Québec
JBNQA	James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement
KRG	Kativik Regional Government
KRPF	Kativik Regional Police Force
NRBHSS	Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SAAQ	Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (Québec Automobile Insurance Corporation)
SPVM	Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (Montreal Police Service)
SQ	Sûreté du Québec (Québec Provincial Police)
Viens Commission	Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress

Introduction

With the launching of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2007, the national apologies for Indian residential schools in 2008, and the creation of the National Enquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2015, the federal government has shown its willingness to work toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. In Québec, following a crisis that got considerable media attention in 2015 and which involved the police services of the city of Val-d'Or and Indigenous women, the province launched a Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress.¹ The Commission sought to improve understanding of the causes of racism against Indigenous people in certain Québec public services, including police services. These different enquiries have uncovered the presence of many intercultural conflicts, discriminatory actions, and systemic racism that Indigenous peoples have endured in Canada.

As a result, Public Safety Canada issued in 2019 a call for proposals to get more insight into current practices and policies in police services throughout the country. The aim was to gain a better understanding of problematic behaviours, as well as good practices that contribute to more respectful relations with Indigenous people. As part of this call for proposals, the Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies of Université Laval has proposed to analyze the specific situation of Nunavimmiut (Arctic Québec residents) by submitting a research proposal *Relations of Police Services with the Inuit*:² *Analysis of Practices and Policies in Nunavik*. Its results are presented in this report.

The region of Nunavik is north of the 55th parallel of the province of Québec and covers two thirds of the province. It is inhabited by around 13,700 residents (ISQ 2017) who are mostly Inuit and clustered in 14 villages along the coast. The villages are linked to each other and to the rest of the province only by air or sea. The territory of Nunavik has been inhabited for around 4,000 years and for 1,000 years by Inuit and their ancestors. Inuit used to be hunter-gatherers and practised a semi-nomadic way of life until they were settled in communities. Although Inuit and *Qallunaat*³ first met as early as the 18th century in the region, it was not until the early 20th century that Inuit began to have longer-lasting contacts with *Qallunaat* through the establishment of trading posts and religious missions. It was only in the second half of the 20th century that the federal

¹ The commission was headed by Justice Jacques Viens. In this report, we will refer to it as the “Viens Commission.”

² In this report, we will not add an ‘s’ to the word “Inuit” because it is already plural in the Inuktitut language.

³ Inuit use this word when referring to non-Inuit.

government and then the provincial government really began to take control of the region, while developing colonial policies. This process included establishment of a police force on Inuit territory. The history of the police in Nunavik should also be understood against the backdrop of power relations between the federal government and the provincial government of Québec. Nunavimmiut are in a unique situation in Canada, being caught between two sources of influence, one French-speaking and the other English-speaking.

Unlike most Indigenous nations in Canada, Inuit have never been subject to the *Indian Act*. The *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), signed in 1975, even gave the Inuit of Nunavik special political status.⁴ It notably led to creation of a supra-municipal regional government, the Kativik Regional Government, which administers a regional police force. Nunavimmiut are nonetheless subject both to the Civil Code of Québec and the Criminal Code of Canada. Over the years, because of a deficient court system, an Itinerant Court was introduced to serve Nunavik better; nonetheless, it has been confronted with many cultural, linguistic, and logistical challenges. Nunavik police officers must daily represent an inadequate justice system and deal with laws that Inuit poorly understand. This situation, on top of the colonial heritage and major social problems, makes relations generally strained between the police and Inuit communities (Laneuville 2015: 95-102; Laneuville 2017; Viens Commission 2019: 271-310).

The Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies is committed to increasing our knowledge of relations between the *Qallunaat* and the Inuit of Nunavik and proposing concrete solutions to improve these relations. For this research, the chair had several goals: 1) learn more about the nature of relations between Nunavimmiut and police officers; 2) understand the cultural factors that harm the development of harmonious relations; 3) pinpoint the factors that make Inuit women more vulnerable to violence; and 4) identify good practices within the Kativik Regional Police Force. To reach these goals, the Chair has relied on its expertise and experience in Nunavik, on solid partnerships with regional organizations, and on participation by major local stakeholders.

In this report, we will first present the methodological aspects of the project and then describe the history of the police presence in Nunavik. We will next present, in two consecutive sections, the main characteristics and challenges of the Kativik Regional Police Force, as well as the testimony of police officers who work in Nunavik before we focus on how Nunavimmiut view and have experienced police services. Starting from both

⁴ This treaty was jointly signed by the Inuit and the Cree of Québec, the Naskapi, the provincial government, and the federal government.

points of view, one belonging to the police and the other to Nunavimmiut, we will present the main obstacles to mutual understanding and good relations. Finally, we will put forward a positive vision that the project participants put forward to build relations of trust, respect, and cooperation. Specific action priorities to improve relations between the police services and Nunavimmiut will be presented at the very end of the report.

Methods

Collaborative approach and qualitative methods

To conduct this research, the Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies developed ties of cooperation with different regional organizations in Nunavik, particularly those that work in the field of justice. Makivik Corporation allowed its local justice committee members to participate. The Legal, Socio-Judicial, and Municipal Management Department of the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) helped recruit public-sector workers from the Sapummijiit Crime Victims Assistance Centre and among community reintegration officers. The staffs and mayors of three municipalities (Akulivik, Kangiqsujuaq, and Kuujjuaq) also helped us plan our stays in their communities and recruit participants among the residents.

For data gathering, we also worked with the Kativik Regional Police Force (KRPF) and the Nunavik Community Justice Centre. Both partners were invited at the outset and showed much interest in the research project. Soon after the agreement, however, the initial work to set up the Community Justice Centre was halted, and we were unable to continue our planned joint effort with this partner. On the other hand, KRPF support was invaluable. The chief and deputy chiefs notably helped us get access to institutional information and recruit participants within the KRPF.

The project used qualitative research methods to gather subjective and narrative data, i.e., individual experiences and views, to provide an in-depth look into the ways the participants daily experienced and perceived the subject of the research. The data-gathering techniques were semi-directed individual interviews and a discussion workshop. We conducted a non-exhaustive search of the literature to gather what currently exists on the subject, particularly on its historical dimension. Several recent reports provided support for the line of argument presented here, notably two reports by Saturviit (Laneuville 2015; 2017) as well as the Final Report of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress (Viens Commission 2019). All three reports are based on numerous oral accounts by Nunavimmiut.

Interviews

The interviews had the goal of gathering individual experiences and opinions, whether personal or work-related, about the police services. The interviewees fell into three main categories: 1) police officers or former police officers (employed by the KRPF or the SQ),

2) Inuit residents of the villages of Akulivik, Kangiqsujaq, and Kuujjuaq (Nunavimmiut), and 3) Inuit and non-Inuit employees of health care services, social services, community services, and justice services. The participants were recruited in several ways. We recruited the police officers with assistance from the KRPF, which authorized us to contact many of its employees. We recruited Nunavimmiut with assistance from the municipalities, which identified for us people interested in talking about the subject. Finally, we recruited public-sector workers by targeting some job positions and then working with different organizations to contact the people who held those jobs. A template of interview questions, which is provided in Appendix 2 of this report, was used for the interviews, which lasted an hour on average. Around two thirds of the interviews were in English and a third in French. One interview was conducted in Inuktitut with an elderly woman.

At the beginning of each interview, a consent form was provided and read to the participant to inform him or her about the measures for confidentiality. Some participants nonetheless consented to be identified in this report. This is why some names are mentioned. Codes were used for the other participants. The list of codes is provided in Appendix 1 of this report. Each code begins with a letter that refers to the participant's category: "P" for police officers, "N" for Nunavimmiut, and "I" for public-sector workers. For the last category, a second letter is used to distinguish Inuit workers from non-Inuit workers: "I" for Inuit, "Q" for *Qallunaat*.

There was a total of 33 individual interviews. The "Nunavimmiut" category had 15 participants (nine in Kangiqsujaq, three in Akulivik, and three in Kuujjuaq). With the latter, we preferred interviewing in person to make contact easier and increase mutual understanding and trust. We interviewed nine participants from the "Police officer" category, including two Inuit. We also had informal discussions with KRPF officers, thanks to KRPF assistance, thus improving our understanding of the issues. It is important to note that the officers recruited for the present project generally had positive experiences with work in Nunavik; however, their opinions do not necessarily represent the views of all KRPF officers. The "public-sector worker" category mainly includes workers from social, community, and health care services and from justice-related jobs. There were nine interviews with them.

Workshop

A workshop was held from October 29 to 31 in Kuujjuaq, partly in the Makivik boardroom and partly in the Kativik Regional Government boardroom. It was oriented toward discussion and exchanges of views among participants from different walks of life with a

view to proposing concrete possible solutions. It brought together a total of thirteen participants from police services, from social services, from the Youth Protection Director, from the Legal and Socio-Judicial Service of the KRG, and from the Elders' Committee of Kuujuaq. During the three days, discussion focused on three main themes: the role of police officers, relations between officers and Nunavimmiut, and cooperation with police services and other services. Simultaneous translation made discussion possible in English and in Inuktitut. The workshop program is presented in Appendix 3, and a summary of the discussions in Appendix 4.

Although the topics of discussion sometimes stirred up feelings of sadness or anger, the participants said they were satisfied with the opportunity to talk with people from different services and think about solutions together. Unfortunately, despite the general interest expressed in this project, several people we wished to hear had to decline our invitation or cancel. Keep in mind that the region's public-sector workers and leaders have great responsibilities, are all very busy, and travel a lot in the course of their duties.

Project limitations

Lack of time was the most serious problem we had during this research. After securing financial support in May 2019, we had to wait for ethical approval from the human subject research ethics committees of Université Laval. Thus, participant recruiting and data gathering could not begin until late August 2019 and ended in November of the same year. During four months of data gathering and two months of analysis and writing, we could not get as much involvement as we wished from the partners, associates, and participants in the different stages of the project. In addition, because of the project's geographic and demographic context, and because of time and money limitations, we did not do all of the interviews we had wished to do (45 interviews originally planned). In particular, we were unable to travel to the community of Inukjuak, as planned in the project proposal.

The time limitations of the project were not only a logistical and administrative challenge but also an impediment to use of participatory and decolonized research practices. For some twenty years now, Indigenous people have questioned longstanding academic research practices that emphasize only what the researcher needs, while ignoring their own wellbeing and interests. For this reason, they have worked with researchers to develop ethical decolonized practices that make them real partners (Basile *et al.* 2014). Inuit have recently expressed their willingness to become true research partners, and no longer just objects of study (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2018). The Inuit of some Canadian regions have also drawn up research guidelines (Nunavut Research Institute 2012), even

though this is still not the case in Nunavik. We believe that researchers interested in Indigenous communities or their environment need to question and change their practices to promote trust and better balance. Projects proposed by researchers and funded by governments should take into account the interests expressed by the people directly affected and, above all, provide their lives with concrete, positive benefits. Thus, the feeling of weariness toward research, which is quite palpable in Inuit communities, may diminish, and both sides may begin to work together. Obviously, all of this will take time. To carry out a research project in Nunavik, you have to take time into account. It is very difficult to work on a project during certain periods, such as summer or the holiday season at the end of the year, when many workers go on vacation and the public administrations are operating at a slower pace.

The research did not enable us to identify, as much as desired, the specific experiences of Inuit women and the factors that make them more vulnerable to violence. Analysis of the gathered data did not reveal major differences between male and female victims in their relations with police services. Furthermore, lack of time kept us from dealing with this point in greater depth. Nonetheless, and to alleviate this shortcoming, we should state that this subject has been largely covered by two recent reports by Saturviit, Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik (Laneuville 2015; 2017).

To conclude, because the project has greatly interested Nunavimmiut, we would have very much wished to go farther in our analysis of policing issues and solutions. Many aspects of the data we gathered were not dealt with as fully as they should have been. Nonetheless, in this report, we have been able to identify keys to understanding and concrete ways to go about improving police services in Nunavik villages.

Bringing police services to Nunavik

To understand contemporary tensions between Inuit and police services in Nunavik, we need to go back to their historical roots. The history of the police presence in Nunavik is part of the colonial relationship that the Canadian government has long had with Indigenous peoples. Before the first police forces arrived in northern Québec, Inuit had their own mechanisms for maintaining order and resolving conflicts.⁵ Instead of favouring punitive measures, as in the Canadian model of justice, Inuit societies tried above all to preserve social harmony by encouraging dialogue, positive reinforcement, and integration of individuals into family groups. Whenever natural social regulation, like rumours, mocking, or social pressure, were no longer enough to keep an individual from doing wrong, he could be isolated from the group or cut off from the ties of solidarity that, in normal times, helped him survive in the harsh Arctic climate. An individual could also be abandoned or even put to death if he represented a real threat to the group. Typically, household heads and elders would meet to make such decisions and carry them out.

During the 20th century, when the federal government and then the provincial government gradually extended their administration over the northern territories, different institutions for law and order were imposed on Inuit, such as the justice system and police forces. The authorities ignored social mechanisms for conflict resolution that already existed informally in Inuit societies, and they sometimes even declared them illegitimate or overruled them.⁶ Some Inuit were judged by Canadian law for actions taken following a decision by their group, such as the killing of Robert Janes in 1920 (Grant: 2002).

An ambiguous relationship gradually developed between Inuit and police forces in Nunavik, as elsewhere in the Canadian Arctic. As three police forces came and went in Nunavik, and as key events succeeded each other, the police officer became a singular and paradoxical figure in the eyes of Inuit, a character who helps and punishes, and who protects and threatens. Ambiguity still runs through relations between Inuit and police officers in Nunavik.

⁵ See notably on this subject: Hoebel 1941; 1954; Koperqualuk 2015; König 1923-24; 1927-29; Pospisil 1964; Rouland 1978; 1979; Steenhoven 1959; 1962.

⁶ The *Eskimo Book of Knowledge* published in 1931 by the Hudson's Bay Company explicitly states that Inuit would be prosecuted if they carried out their own system of law (Jaccoud 1992a, pp. 37-38).

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

The same year of its creation, in 1920, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)⁷ established a network of posts throughout the Northwest Territories. The RCMP had three goals: establish Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic at a time when Norway, Denmark, and the United States were pushing their Arctic claims; monitor the activities of foreign whalers and traders; and enforce Canada's laws throughout its Arctic territories. From the outset, the development of Canada's police force was intended to ensure not only peace within national territory but also a "political project of colonization" (Jaccoud 1992: 29).

Thus, in 1920, the Port Burwell post was established on Killiniq Island, at the mouth of Hudson Strait. Officially located at that time in the Northwest Territories, the post was nonetheless less than a hundred metres from the mainland and, hence, the province of Québec.⁸ Besides monitoring the entrance to Hudson Strait, the mission of the RCMP detachment was to carry out long reconnaissance patrols by dogsled along the entire shoreline of Ungava Bay. To this end, the officers hired special Inuit constables whose role was to assist them with the dog-teams (Rasing 1994: 97). Inuit began to deal with the police at that time (Baril 2019).

In 1935, the RCMP decided to close that post during the winter and open a year-round one at Port Harrison (Inukjuak) on the east coast of Hudson Bay. The decision, which came into effect the following year, was made "[...] in the interests of the Indians and Eskimos and for the collection of revenue for the Dominion Government" (RCMP 1935: 39). The same year, the Canadian Department of Transport erected a radar station at Port Harrison to assist shipping in the region. The post had two officers whose role was to patrol the entire Hudson Bay shoreline as far as Cape Wolstenholme, the northernmost point of Québec. Patrols were done by dogsled, with the assistance of Inuit constables, for census-taking, mail delivery and, beginning in 1945, distribution of family allowances (Dorais 1996:19).

⁷ On February 1, 1920, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was created through the merger of the North-West Mounted Police (the police force of the Northwest Territories and the Canadian provinces formed from those territories, i.e., Saskatchewan and Alberta) with the Dominion Police, whose role was mainly to patrol the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa and keep certain military infrastructures under surveillance.

⁸ When it was created in 1920, the Port Burwell detachment was included in the headquarters division of the RCMP, which encompassed all of the Ontario detachments. In 1932, it was transferred to "C" Division, which covered all of the detachments in the province of Québec. The next year, it was finally included in the new "G" Division, which brought together all of the detachments in the Northwest Territories, and in which it would remain until its closure in 1936.

In 1943, the RCMP opened a second post in northern Québec, this time at Fort Chimo (Kuujjuaq), on the banks of the Koksoak River, south of Ungava Bay. The detachment, which was near the Hudson's Bay Company trading post and the Catholic mission, was established during the Second World War, when the US Air Force built an airport on the left bank of the river for the Crimson Project (Gagnon 2002). In addition to their usual responsibilities, the detachment's officers were mandated to oversee the American servicemen.

Members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police with sled dogs in 1957. (KRPF: 2017)



In 1956, the RCMP established a new post at Poste-de-la-Baleine (Great Whale River, Kuujjuaraapik) (RCMP 1957: 11). Although very little is known about it, we know that the Americans were building military infrastructures in the region as early as the mid-1950s and that a federally operated school was established there in 1958.⁹ The responsibilities of the officers must have been similar to those of their colleagues at the other two posts in the region.

Thus, in the mid-20th century, the RCMP were patrolling the east and west coasts of northern Québec. The posts remained open until the Québec government decided to take over its northern territory. The Fort Chimo post was closed on January 20, 1961 (RCMP 1962: 26), followed by Port Harrison in October of the same year (RCMP 1963: 29). Although it is not known exactly when the Poste-de-la-Baleine post was closed, it is known that the SQ took over in 1961.

We have few details about the nature of relations between Inuit and RCMP officers at that time in the region of northern Québec. We do know, however, that RCMP officers patrolled the areas surrounding the more remote posts and villages once a year, that they

⁹ Archives of the Northwest Territories, Alexander Stevenson Fonds, Box File 35-16, *Communities – Great-Whale-River, Quebec 1955-1958*, "Great-Whale-River (Poste-de-la-baleine) P.Q.," December 1967.

helped resolve conflicts and arrested offenders in major crime cases, that they could act as justices of the peace, and that they enforced hunting regulations. They were also intermediaries between the government and Inuit, since they also managed the civil status registers, issued identity cards, administered different assistance programs, like family allowances in the late 1940s, and distributed mail and collected data on Inuit conditions of life. The relations that developed between Inuit and the police over the years are thus very ambivalent. From the outset, Inuit helped the police get around and find food in the harsh Arctic climate, thus favoring cooperative relations (Baril 2019). For their part, when they distributed mail or family allowances, the police played a role that Inuit judged positively. In some cases, they could seem like protectors or saviours.

Nonetheless, Inuit did perceive the police with some fear, and several key events made that feeling worse. In 1928, a poster was put up in all of the Arctic posts with a stern message: if an Inuk killed another man, the police would come to arrest and kill the murderer. The poster was taken down four years later following criticisms of the RCMP officers for undermining trust (Grant 2002: 225). In particular, the Inuktitut version explicitly used the word “kill” (Cancel 2011: 98-99). Thereafter, Canadian law enforcement, in the form of several arrests, imprisonments, and several trials, was often much misunderstood by Inuit, who felt mistrustful of the police and unfairly treated.¹⁰ To be more exact, a mixture of fear and respect characterized Inuit feelings toward the police, as expressed clearly by the Inuit concept of *ilira*-. Rosemarie Kuptana¹¹ explained its meaning:

Inuit use *ilira* to refer to a great fear or awe, such as the awe a strong father inspires in his children or the fear of the Qallunaat previously held by Inuit. This fear, or *ilira*, developed very early in our initial encounters with explorers, missionaries and traders. [...] Qallunaat could make the difference between success and disaster, sustenance or hunger, and Inuit responded to their desires and requests as if they were commands. In this cultural setting, a challenge to the authority of the Qallunaat or defiance of their requests was almost unthinkable. (Kuptana 1993: 5-7)

This fear of the police could even lead to fanciful stories. An Inuk from Ivujivik remembers that in the early 1950s the children of his age believed they would be put to death if they ever touched the yellow stripe on the vertical seam of an RCMP officer’s pant leg (Hervé 2015: 211).

In Nunavik, two especially significant events of the 1950s and 1960s would crystallize feelings of fear and anger toward the police: the forced High Arctic relocations and the

¹⁰ For more details, see the book by Grant (2002).

¹¹ Rosemarie Kuptana was the president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

sled dog slaughter. In 1953, seven Inukjuak families were pressured into moving to the High Arctic, specifically to Resolute Bay and Grise Fjord.¹² RCMP officers coordinated the relocation and, to convince families to leave the region, they lured them with promises of good hunting grounds and better conditions of life. They also promised to bring the Inuit back to their home territories the following year if they so wished, a promise the government never kept. John Amagoalik, from Inukjuak, explained how the RCMP were perceived at the time:

I think it's also important for people to understand that when the RCMP made a request to you in those days, it was seen as something like an order. You are ordered to do this. The RCMP had a lot of power. They could put you in jail. John Amagoalik. (Tassinari 1995)

Despite the government's apologies in 2010, the history of the relocations is still resented by the numerous families who were broken up. For many Nunavimmiut and especially the people of Inukjuak, which was also the site of one of the first police stations in Nunavik, that major event of the community's history is still a source of much suffering and caused a profound loss of trust.¹³

It was also during the 1950s that sled dogs were slaughtered in Nunavik. Though still needed for travel and hunting, they were becoming uncontrollably numerous with more and more being brought to the new Inuit villages. To ensure the safety of village residents, the government took measures that varied from one community to another. In some places, the measures led to a mass slaughter that was carried out by RCMP and SQ officers or sometimes by Inuit (Lévesque 2010). Inuit were not consulted about the policy or its implementation, both of which were very poorly understood. For them, the loss of the dogs not only limited their access to the land and its resources but also was perceived as a great loss because the dogs were considered to be full-fledged members of society.¹⁴ After tabling of the final report by Justice Croteau, who examined the allegations of dog slaughter in Nunavik,¹⁵ the Québec government acknowledged in 2011 the harm suffered

¹² See the documentary by Patricia Tassinari: *Broken promise* (1995). The relocation of Inuit families, in addition to serving to show the presence of "Canadians" in the High Arctic, had the goal of testing the capability of Inuit to return to their former way of life.

¹³ See the documentary by Marquise Lepage (2008) and the film by Zacharias (2005). In addition, the Iqqaumavara website presents oral accounts from the unwillingly relocated Inuit families (<http://www.iqqaumavara.com>).

¹⁴ Inuit believe a dog has a special bond with its master. The two of them form a "symbolic whole" (Laugrand and Oosten 2002: 101). "When dogs were killed, Inuit felt threatened because the symbolic whole that they formed with their dogs was broken" (Lévesque 2010: 162).

¹⁵ Despite the request made in 2000 by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association and Makivik Corporation of Nunavik, which wished to see the Canadian government launch a public enquiry into the sled dog slaughter, the federal government and the provincial government always refused to conduct an enquiry. Because of this inaction, Makivik Corporation mandated the Honourable Jean-Jacques Croteau to examine the allegations

by Inuit during that episode. With Inuit fearing the police and developing feelings of mistrust and injustice, those two major events resulted in a perception of the police officer as a nasty person. Inuit would call him a *pulisialuk*, literally “the big bad officer” (Hervé 2015: 211).¹⁶

The federal government became aware of strained relations between police officers and Inuit at a fairly early date. In 1947, to promote a more positive image, the Department of Mines and Natural Resources published a book in which the officer is described as “the Eskimo’s friend.” The Inuktitut translation that accompanied the “*Inuit ikajuqtinga*” illustration literally meant “he who helps Inuit” (Hervé 2015: 213), and emphasis was placed on the fact that police officers were in charge of distributing family allowances. Later, a new context emerged, one of anticolonialist movements, which made the federal government question its relationship with Indigenous people and especially the police officer’s role. In general, cracks began to appear in the political model through which the Canadian state imposed its domination over Indigenous peoples. That context, in 1967, saw publication of the Laing Report, which stressed the lack of trust that Indigenous people had in the police. To maintain good relations with them, it advocated using Indigenous officers (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 106).¹⁷ In 1971, a DIAND task force assessed the Band Constable Program and noted that Indigenous people were overrepresented in prisons and penitentiaries. The task force also attributed the strained relations between Indigenous people and the police to differences in culture and language (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 109). In 1973, for the first time, a broad consultation was organized to survey how Inuit viewed the justice system. The discussions led, among other things, to the observation, once again, that relations were strained between Inuit and the police and to promotion, as a solution, of development of the Special Constable Program of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was in this context that the conventional police forces would gradually become more and more Indigenous.

Sûreté du Québec and introduction of Inuit constables

Beginning in the 1960s, the Québec government gave itself the means to take over the entire northern region, which the federal government had previously administered. In

in Nunavik (Croteau 2010). For their part, the Inuit of Baffin Island carried out another inquiry chaired by the Honourable James Igliorte. That inquiry tabled its final report in 2013 (Qikiqtani Truth Commission 2013), including several thematic reports and community histories.

¹⁶ The suffix *-aluk* used with the lexical base *pulisi-* suggests the idea of big and bad, something that may be scary.

¹⁷ As early as 1880, the Dominion Police were using Amerindian officers to support band councils and Indian Affairs in enforcement of criminal justice on Indian reserves (Desruisseaux 2018).

1963, it created the Direction générale du Nouveau-Québec with a mandate to administer the region. It was in this context of taking over “its” North, that Sûreté du Québec (SQ) officers were sent to what was then called Nouveau-Québec.¹⁸ In 1960, an SQ police station was opened in Kuujjuaraapik and another in Kuujjuaq the next year. The two detachments conducted regular tours of the other villages, which were just being formed in the early 1960s, and would also go to them sporadically in exceptional cases, such as crimes.



SQ officers pose in front of the Kuujjuaq police station around 1980. (KRPF: 2017)

As early as the late 1960s, with publication of the Laing Report, the federal government was planning to develop an Indigenous constabulary on Indian reserves and in Indigenous communities. The new system had the aim of taking over police services on Indian reserves while perpetuating the conventional methods of the state police (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 104-107).¹⁹ The role of the Indigenous constables was to act as cultural mediators with Indigenous communities, while legitimizing the existing authorities (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 106). In 1973, policies on Indigenous policing reached a major turning point in Canada, with attempts to transfer administrative power gradually to the

¹⁸ The Sûreté du Québec has been Québec’s police force since its creation in 1870, a few years after Confederation.

¹⁹ The first Indigenous officers were stationed on reserves beginning in 1965 at a time when the federal government was starting to take a hard look at the high rates of incarceration and repeat offences among Indigenous people. This led to the publication of the Laing report, which would provide the basis for police service policies for the next two decades (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 104).

Indigenous peoples.²⁰ At the same time, the SQ underwent major reforms to modernize and professionalize its police force. Realizing the limitations of a repressive police force, Québec initiated a policy of community policing (Dupont and Pérez 2006: 78), which naturally led to the development of an Indigenous police.

In 1972, the Choquette Report²¹ listed Inuit criticisms of SQ policing practices: strained relations, lack of patrols, illegitimacy of the forces of law and order, a very high crime rate, and the cultural distance between the Inuit community and Québec's court process (Jaccoud and Spielvogel 2018: 16). The report's author recommended increasing the number of police officers and also providing Inuit with better access to justice services. In 1975 came the signing of the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement* (JBNQA), the first major modern treaty between the James Bay Cree, the Inuit, and the federal and Québec governments. Following that agreement, negotiations were finally undertaken with the SQ for training of Inuit constables (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 111). Indeed, the JBNQA provided for creation of a regional police force (Chapter 21), whose members would be trained at the provincial government's expense. The agreement also called for changes to hiring criteria to encourage recruiting of Inuit officers.²² Those measures were implemented under the *Act respecting northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government* (Chapter V-6.1 art. 370), passed in 1978, which created the main public administration of the region, which still oversees the regional police force. In 1979, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) gave the SQ a twofold mission: provide Nouveau-Québec with a police service for another two years while training Inuit recruits to create a regional police force.²³

As early as 1979, 12 Inuit were recruited from Nouveau-Québec villages for a training program created in partnership with the SQ.²⁴ Once trained, these special constables, still under SQ authority, would work under the supervision of regular SQ officers based in Kuujuaq and Kuujuaapik. Although they carried out their duties only over a limited territory, the special constables technically had, under Québec's *Police Act*, all the powers of police officers (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 111). The SQ dispatched trailers to each Nunavik village to serve as police stations and as officer quarters.

²⁰ Beginning in 1971, a task force was charged with assessment of the work of band constables. It launched a broad consultation with the First Nations and in 1973 entrusted DIAND with responsibility for developing an experimental program: the Special Constable Program of the RCMP.

²¹ *Administration du système judiciaire au-delà du 50e parallèle*, 1972, report of the committee formed by Jérôme Choquette who was Minister of Justice at that time.

²² Jaccoud, Barbeau-Leduc and Spielvogel 2019.

²³ In 1978, the Cree started up the first special constable program under the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement*, followed by the Naskapi, and then the Inuit.

²⁴ *Atuaqnik*, November 1979, p. 21.



SQ representatives with the first Indigenous constables (KRPF: 2017).

Although creation of this special force symbolized a transfer of power to the villages, persistent problems soon showed the limitations of the system. The first year of training had 110% turnover, and in the second year two more Inuit left the training program. In 1983, five Inuit decided that police work was not for them, and two others were dismissed because they had broken the law.²⁵ Several challenges were identified: the difficulty that Inuit had with arresting members of their own family or community; the feeling of isolation working alone in a village; the lack of equipment; the language barrier, since the training was in English; and finally the fact that Inuit special constables had no insurance protection against injuries or death in the course of their work.²⁶ In 1985, new efforts were made to train new Inuit special constables.²⁷

Despite being Inuit, they eventually were viewed as being merely the extension of an external authority and seemed no more effective in helping maintain or re-establish peace in the villages. In 1986, a new report on police services for Indigenous people in Canada described an identical situation and ascribed it to the persistence of “Western urban models of policing that led to the various programs for Indigenous communities” (Solicitor General Canada 1986: ix). A former Inuit constable (P3) confirmed this feeling of being the “façade” of an external authority. He also deplored the difficult working conditions, the isolation, the lack of material and equipment, and the pittance he was paid for the number of hours he put in. The last reason, on top of the difficulty dealing with family members and relatives, and in particular arresting them, made him quit his job.

²⁵ *Taqralik*, January 1984: 13.

²⁶ *Taqralik*, January 1984: 14.

²⁷ *Taqralik*, June, July 1984: 19.

Kativik Regional Police Force

In 1991, a third stage was reached in the development of Indigenous police forces in Canada: the federal government adopted its *First Nations Policing Policy* (FNPP) with a view to creating police services that Indigenous communities would manage on their own (Aubert and Jaccoud 2009: 112). Through a partnership between the federal and provincial governments, as well as with the communities, tripartite agreements would be signed to support creation of the new police forces

In July 1995, the Indigenous police division of the Sûreté du Québec transferred its power to the newly created Kativik Regional Police Force (KRPF), a process completed in April 1996 (KRPF 2017). The initial ambition was to make the KRPF independent, Inuit-staffed, and Inuit-run. Because of trouble training and retaining Inuit officers, the KRPF opened its doors to many *Qallunaat* officers, either French-speaking or English-speaking, whose numbers kept growing over the following decades, as the KRPF likewise grew. The KRPF went from having 44 officers in 2007 to 54 in 2008 and 66 in 2012 (George 2007). The 1990s and 2000s thus saw an expansion of the KRPF, and new needs were expressed in terms of organization and equipment.

When it was created, the KRPF inherited the old SQ trailers that served both as police stations and as officer quarters (George 2001). Faced with a shortage of decent housing for its growing number of police officers, the KRPF soon announced it would build new police stations in the region in 2002. In addition, police firearms were diversified. Previously, KRPF officers had batons, pepper spray and, as a last resort, pump-action shotguns. Beginning in 1999, they were each armed with handguns (George 1999). In 2007, the KRPF modernized. Its organizational chart was restructured, notably with the appointment of four captains who divided up responsibility for the 14 villages of the region. An initial collective agreement was also negotiated, and new attempts were made to train and retain Inuit officers.

Although some background information is available, we have only a sketchy understanding of the early days of the KRPF and even the SQ in Nunavik. We know very little about how Inuit first perceived the SQ and KRPF officers, how the latter were welcomed in each village, and what kind of relations they developed with local Inuit. We also know very little about the history of Indigenous constables in Nunavik, despite Jaccoud's contribution. How were those constables perceived by the members of the communities in which they worked? How were their relations with their *Qallunaat* coworkers? Research is needed to paint a better picture of the history of relations between Inuit and officers in this region of Arctic Canada.

To understand Inuit relations with the three successive police forces in Nunavik, we should view them in the context of one political order dominating another (Nungak: 2019). Although Nunavimmiut make distinctions between the three police forces, they nonetheless see them as institutions that have been imposed on them and which enforce laws that are not their own. Over time, and depending on the various duties the police forces have had to perform among Inuit, a variety of feelings has developed toward them, ranging from gratitude to fear, and from puzzlement to injustice and anger. The officers, mostly *Qallunaat*, who today work in Nunavik still bear the weight of this colonial history and the ambivalent relations of their predecessors with Inuit. Strained relations are nothing new. They are today palpable in Nunavik communities and have been noted in many reports over the last few decades (Laneuville 2015; 2017).

Kativik Regional Police Force: challenges, realities, and initiatives

Honestly, Inuit opened up to me at the time I got involved, when they saw that what I was saying was sincere and that I wasn't just there to arrest them.
(P4)

We saw in the last section how relations have developed over time between police officers and Nunavimmiut. The Kativik Regional Police Force (KRPF) inherited this socially charged history when it was created, more than 20 years ago. We will now discuss its challenges and realities and put forward the views and experiences of the officers we interviewed for our research. Finally, we will address the KRPF's efforts to improve its services to Nunavimmiut.

An Indigenous police force

Like most Indigenous reserves, Nunavik's villages are served by an Indigenous police force,²⁸ with whom the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) assumes a complementary role. In 1996 the KRPF became the main police force to serve Nunavik residents on a daily basis. In keeping with the provisions of the *Police Act* (Art. 86), the Kativik Regional Government (KRG)²⁹ enforces the Act and oversees the KRPF. Pursuant to the Act, Indigenous police forces, including the KRPF, are excluded from the levels of police service that municipalities are supposed to deliver to their residents. The service levels, ranging from 1 to 6,³⁰ are defined in relation to population size and geographic location. They also determine the fields of jurisdiction for policing, investigating, taking emergency measures, or delivering and funding support services. In Nunavik, as in other Indigenous communities, funding depends on renewable government agreements, and the SQ takes up the slack for services that the KRPF cannot deliver.³¹ The SQ can also provide the KRPF with assistance if requested.³² In the specific case of Nunavik and in keeping with the Act

²⁸ The KRPF is one of 22 Indigenous police forces in Québec.

²⁹ The KRG is considered by the *Police Act* to be a "supra-municipality" and a municipality when it comes to implementing the *Police Act* (Revised Statutes of Québec, c. P-13.1, Article no. 86, 2000).

³⁰ For example, a level 1 police force has to deliver certain basic services like patrols 24 hours a day (Sécurité Publique Québec 2014).

³¹ For example, the SQ is in charge of major crimes like murders, attempted murders, and sexual assault of minors.

³² Only level 3 police forces and higher, such as the SQ, can investigate major crime cases. The KRPF can appeal to the SQ for reinforcements over a more or less long period of time. In July 2019, for example, 24 SQ members were sent to Nunavik to boost the small number of KRPF officers. In December 2019, following increased KRPF efforts to recruit, the SQ officers were almost entirely replaced with KRPF officers (Anselmie 2019; P1).

*respecting northern villages and the Kativik Regional Government and the Police Act, the KRPF's mandate is "to maintain peace, order, and public safety in the territory, to prevent crime and infringements of the by-laws of the municipal corporations, the ordinances of the KRG, and the laws of Québec and Canada, and to seek out offenders" (KRPF 2017).*³³

Each of Nunavik's 14 villages has a police station. The KRPF has its headquarters in Kuujjuaq, Nunavik's largest village. It is run by a chief and two deputy chiefs, the latter being based in Kuujjuaq and Puvirnituk, and has three regional divisions, each of which is supervised by a captain and covers four villages: East Division (Aupaluk, Kangiqsualujjuaq, Kuujjuaq, and Tasiujaq), West Division (Akulivik, Inukjuak, Kuujjuaraapik, and Umiujaq), and North Division (Kangiqsujuaq, Kangirsuk, Quaqtaq, and Salluit). Thus, most police teams are supervised at a distance by a captain who goes to one place or another as circumstances dictate.

In January 2020, the KRPF had 81 permanent officers, including the chief and deputy chiefs, four captains (one R&D project captain and three division captains), nine sergeants, three crime prevention officers, and 62 patrolling officers. The KRPF also has a crime intelligence officer for drug trafficking and bootlegging. Each community is served at all times by a team of at least three officers, the number being larger for larger communities. Kuujjuaq, for example, has eight permanent officers, in addition to the headquarters staff, which has a dozen or so employees, including civilians. Since 2009, through the Nunavik Investigation Unit, the KRPF and the SQ have been working together to fight drug trafficking, bootlegging, and sexual crimes. This mixed unit, composed of four SQ members (permanent officers stationed in Kuujjuaq) and three KRPF members, makes it easier to share information and expertise between the two police forces.

Although the KRPF's mandate resembles that of any Canadian police force, the realities of Nunavik make work in the field very different.

Challenges of recruiting and funding

Among its main challenges, the KRPF has to recruit and retain employees. When it was established in 1996, the aim was to create an Indigenous police service. Yet, despite willingness in the region and many efforts, the KRPF today has very few Inuit officers. In late 2018, there were only three Inuit officers for 79 non-Inuit officers (KRPF 2019). For several reasons, it is very difficult to hire and retain Inuit police officers. According to oral accounts, Inuit officers have the most trouble dealing with family members when doing

³³ (Revised Statutes of Québec, c. V-6.1)

their work. They regularly find themselves in a conflict of interest because of the many kinship ties that bind them to other community members.

The KRPF therefore has to recruit its staff in southern Québec, among non-Indigenous and mostly French-speaking people. Because the job location is far from home and geographically isolated, it is difficult to recruit experienced officers. Consequently, the officers who apply to join the KRPF are mostly young and just starting off in their careers. Although they have various motives for applying, most of them remain only for a very short time, ranging from three to twelve months. According to the police chief, “*almost the entire staff has to be replaced every twelve months*” (Viens Commission: 265). The service thus suffers not only from high employee turnover but also from an insufficient supply of officers for the demand. So it is a struggle to provide all of the officers who serve in the field with adequate training. In daily life, this situation means tough working conditions and services that are declining in quality.

With the recent renewal of the tripartite agreement between the KRG, the Québec government, and the Canadian government (KRPF 2019),³⁴ the police service is aiming for a figure of 90 permanent officers. Although the agreement has been improved and now covers a 5-year period, financial resources are a never-ending challenge. The KRPF has sharply criticized the precariousness and complexity of its funding process, and the continual need to “fight” with governments to get the minimum just to maintain services.³⁵ The KRPF wishes, among other things, to get recognition and funding for at least service level 1. The kind of services offered by police officers in the field and Nunavimmiut needs are closer to level 2, if not level 3. Such funding could, for example, pay for patrols 24 hours a day or creation of an Inuktitut call centre in Kuujuaq. These are things that Nunavimmiut have asked for.

A demanding social context

The region has been facing major social problems for many years now. Rates of violence and crime are much higher than elsewhere in the province:

The situation in Nunavik appears the most critical. According to the KRPF, in 2017 alone there were over 11,000 incidents and criminal infractions in the territory. The gravity of the incidents is also noteworthy. During the same year, seven murders and thirteen attempted murders were recorded for a population of 13,800. Also, in 2017, KRPF

³⁴ The agreement covers a period from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2023. Since 1991, Canada has contributed 52% of the funding for Nunavik police services and Québec 48%. A bilateral agreement with the Québec government covers the same period and is for maintenance of police services in the communities (KRPF 2019).

³⁵ Phone interview on January 9, 2020 with the KRPF executive.

officers had to intervene in 24 suicides and handle 346 cases of alleged sexual abuse, 130 of them involving minors. (Viens Commission 2019: 262)

Nunavik officers regularly have to intervene in highly violent situations, including various types of assault and suicide. Such violence, like the police interventions, are strongly related to overconsumption of alcohol. In 2018, out of all criminal incidents, alcohol was involved in 77% of assault cases and in 50% of sexual assault cases (KRPF 2019).³⁶ Officers also say they get many more calls and keep more people in custody at the police station on days when large amounts of alcohol come into the villages (P05; P06).³⁷ Among the factors that contribute to a high rate of violence, there is also poverty, intergenerational trauma, and insufficient or overcrowded housing. As an officer explained to us:

Sometimes, we have people we deal with every week and, all of a sudden, we don't hear about them anymore: it's just that new houses have become available, and they've moved into their home. It's like a melting pot full of social problems, but the main ingredient in it, I would say, is alcohol consumption. (P6)

These numerous problems have led to high rates of court action and incarceration involving Inuit. Imprisoned Inuit have the worst records, socially and in the courts, of all Indigenous nations in Québec (Dussault and Despatis 2016).³⁸

Specific features of the North: isolation, laws, and justice system

An officer's job in Nunavik is unique in many ways. First of all, police teams are not only small but also geographically isolated from each other. They cannot easily help each other out in a high-risk situation that involves firearms, for example. When it becomes necessary to go somewhere to help other officers, the trip is by plane because Nunavik villages are not linked by land routes. This point is discussed in the Viens Commission Report:

The issue is particularly challenging in Nunavik, where police interventions associated with what the locals call "gun calls" are frequent. These are high-risk interventions involving armed people behind barricades, sometimes with hostages, or presumed hostages. The evidence has shown that, forced to intervene without backup, officers

³⁶ Inuit are more inclined to periods of excessive consumption (IPQ 2019). Problems with alcohol and drug dependence are increasing in Nunavik, especially among young people. Young women are more affected (Brunelle et al. 2010). Also see Muckle et al. 2007.

³⁷ Alcohol is sold in stores in a controlled manner in two Nunavik communities: Puvirnituq and Kuujuaq. There are restrictions on how much and when a person may buy. Everywhere else, it comes in periodically by plane, either to fill legal personal orders or illegally.

³⁸ According to a 2015 report by the Québec Ombudsman, the number of Inuit who stayed in a detention centre increased by 64%, rising from 549 to 898 between 2010 and 2015. The average stay in preventive detention also increased by 8.2 days in five years and is 17.6 days longer than the average stay of the rest of the prison population.

generally muddle through using the means they have at hand. And as if that's not bad enough, said Jean-François Morin, when additional officers must be deployed to replace exhausted colleagues, it leaves the villages providing the backup unstaffed. (Viens Commission 2019: 269-270)

The weather in Nunavik also frequently causes flights to be postponed, thus delaying the arrival of reinforcements. For example, when an SQ intervention is required in a major crime case, the wait is normally 16 to 30 hours for the police to arrive. Weather can delay their arrival by several days.

Second, laws are not always enforced the same way in northern communities as they are elsewhere in the country. For example, Québec regulations on vehicle registration and insurance cannot be totally enforced, notably because there is no local office of the Société d'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ). Very little official paperwork is done for vehicle ownership, and drivers generally have no insurance to cover themselves in case of a mishap. Law enforcement is more variable and flexible, and thus more ambiguous.³⁹ With no clear and uniform regulations to follow, the KRPF watchword is to show "good judgment" and "common sense." Nonetheless, since the concept of "good judgment" is largely defined by the cultural context, non-Inuit officers may have trouble adequately judging a situation if they are unfamiliar with the community. It is also more arduous for the KRPF to provide new recruits with clear instructions.

Third, Nunavik justice operates in unique ways that affect the day-to-day work of police officers. An Itinerant Court system was introduced in 1974 by the Québec Department of Justice (Bonesteel 2006:25). Throughout the year, the Court visits 9 of the 14 Nunavik villages for criminal court hearings, and Kuujuaq and Puvirnituq for youth protection hearings (Saturviit 2018: 17). Around once a year, Kuujuaq is visited for civil court. Police officers often have to escort defendants from villages where the Court does not sit. In addition, since Nunavik has no detention centre, offenders have to be escorted to one in the South of the province in cases of preventive detention, conditional release hearings, and prison sentences. Thus, police officers travel very frequently⁴⁰ and leave their team understaffed. For this reason, and because so many cases are dealt with in Nunavik, often important ones, the KRPF is today calling for a permanent court of law and above all a justice system that is more adapted to Nunavimmiut reality. Jean-Pierre Larose, the KRPF Chief, wearily spoke of the unsuitability of a justice system *"which runs completely counter to the expectations of the region and is detrimental to the day-to-day relations of police officers with the people"* (Jean-Pierre Larose).

³⁹ This also applies to regulations on road safety, off-road vehicles, and possession of weapons.

⁴⁰ At least once a week, a police officer has to escort Nunavimmiut inmates or defendants by plane (P2).

Fourth, because the small isolated villages have a disproportionate share of social problems, police officers, like Inuit, have to cope with the lack of resources and psycho-social and socio-legal services (Lessard et al. 2018; Tran and Lévesque 2019a; 2019b). Thus, with many requests for assistance coming from the community for many different problems, the requests are often fielded by officers who lack the resources and the proper skills to act on them.

Positive aspects of the job

Despite the difficulties, different reasons motivate non-Inuit officers to apply for positions in the KRPF. The first reason they give is that few positions are open to young graduates in southern police forces, with the result that competition is fierce. So a job in Nunavik is an interesting option. The hiring process is fast, the salary is attractive, and the job location is a place that promises adventure and new experiences. Furthermore, Nunavik work experience is highly valued in the law-enforcement community because one has to develop many skills in a short time and take on big responsibilities. In several months, an officer will learn more and experience a greater variety of tasks than someone who has been working for several years in the South of the province or elsewhere in the country.

According to the officers we interviewed, once they are hired, the nature and diversity of the tasks they do, as well as the responsibilities they are given, are part of the more positive aspects of their job. Several of them appreciated the fact they have to show much versatility and resourcefulness, as this officer explained:

Here, in Nunavik, we answer calls, we investigate the file all the way through, apart from major crime cases like murder or attempted murder. But for everything else we're patrol officers and investigators. [...] We especially intervene in crime cases, which is a big difference from work in southern Québec. We do very little enforcement of the highway safety code, like intercepting a vehicle to hand out tickets. We do almost exclusively crime cases, municipal regulations, and assistance to the public. (P7)

For young officers looking for challenges, work in Nunavik is a chance to develop their skills. By regularly responding to emergency and crisis situations, they also get a feeling of being really useful to the people they serve. Finally, their work is in line with the image they had of police service when they chose that career.

Another positive aspect of a KRPF job is teamwork. Working together, being close to one another, and sticking together through thick and thin are key to an officer's life, both on and off the job. Meaningful, lasting relationships are often developed (P5; P9). In addition, many officers appreciated the fact that work in a small community is conducive to social ties with residents. Socializing and forging ties are part of day-to-day work, be it with

elected officials, students at school, or the general public at community activities. Social closeness makes it easier to understand family ties and personal histories and, in return, to intervene more effectively when conflict situations develop. Finally, to deal with the cultural difference and the specific social context, the officers emphasized that work in Nunavik requires being open to another culture.

Problems of police officers

Based on the experiences of non-Inuit officers we interviewed for our study, the main job-related problems are isolation, difficult working conditions, limited resources, lack of cooperation by some Inuit, and negative criticisms from the community.

First, the police officers are far from their families and friends and see them only very rarely, while on vacation. In addition to being far from their home environment, they also feel isolated in their new community. Regardless of whether they are in uniform or not (when they are most often on call), they are always identified as police officers in small northern villages, and thus limited in being able to integrate. An officer explained: *“Isolation is one of the greatest challenges, and the fact of being a police officer 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Here, you represent the KRPF all the time. You’re supposed to set a good example. That’s another big challenge”* (P8). In addition, most officers are overloaded and lack time for rest, recreation, and a social life. This clearly has an impact on their psychological state:

It’s hard on the morale, and it gets harder on the quality of sleep somewhere along the line, being always on call. We have a radio, which is always turned on, 24 hours a day, to make sure the calls coming in on the 911 line are transferred to our radios. At some point, it’s really tough to get away from the job in the villages when you’re always on call and don’t have much backup available. (P5)

Understaffing and lack of resources, like vehicles and equipment, create difficult working conditions and sometimes compromise the police officer’s own safety during high-risk interventions, which are common in the region. Several officers said they were not adequately trained at the police academy for such a work environment:

In the North, we’re really understaffed. [...] We do high-risk interventions with two patrol vehicles and four police officers. Here, sometimes there are five of us in the village, but in reality, on our shifts, there are just two officers. It’s not realistic. Sometimes, we’re also alone. [...] So what we learned at the academy and what goes on here are two worlds. (P5)

Since there is no call dispatch service in Nunavik, the police officers themselves have to gather enough information during a call to intervene adequately and safely. They have to

ask several questions, but the caller is not always cooperative and may become impatient and even intimidating. Sometimes, it is difficult to learn the reason for the call, and even more difficult to find out whether firearms are present on the scene, as this officer told us:

It's typical, [the radiophone] rings: "*Kativik Police. – Come to [house number] – What's going on? – Fuck you fucking asshole, are you fucking scared fucking pussy, just fucking come!*" and they hang up. It's fun time. Yeah, I feel like coming to help you ... But we go anyway. We get there, and there's someone passed out on the couch. (P2)

If, as often happens, the team receives a volume of calls that exceeds its capacities for intervention, it has to try to distinguish between situations that need immediate assistance and those that are not urgent, and likewise between benign interventions and high-risk ones. They try to prioritize calls, out of necessity, but are often criticized for doing so because everyone expects rapid assistance (P2; Annie Baron). While responding to a call that seemed rather humdrum, two police officers had to protect themselves *in extremis*. On the scene they were greeted with gunfire:

The call had come in, really nothing special. And the person who called had seen the firearm. She knew he was armed, but she didn't tell the police. She just said to come and then hung up. If the officers had known, they wouldn't have taken longer to get to the caller's place, but they would've been better prepared. (P2)

After several months, many said they were more at ease whenever dangerous situations arose, and they knew the village and the families better. Intervening to help people in distress, who are often intoxicated, is another common, delicate, and demanding situation for which young officers are not trained:

We have fewer resources here. When the phone rings, it's not a 911 call dispatch centre that gives me the call. I'm talking directly with the people in distress, sometimes they're intoxicated, sometimes it's while violence is happening. It's hard to get the information sometimes, but just having a name or a house number I already know where I'm going and who I'm going to intervene with. So that's an advantage we have here. Thanks to the community approach, we know the people we're intervening with. Eventually, we find out a little more about their history and family situation. (P6)

Besides the sometimes intimidating remarks that people make over the phone, some officers spoke more specifically about racism from some Inuit and ingratitude (Jean-Pierre Larose; P5). Although they understand that their work is not always appreciated, they sometimes get unkind remarks that imply they are not welcome in Nunavik (P6). They may feel despised:

There are many negative comments on Facebook, very few positive things about the police. Yes, there's some truth in the story, but it's blown up and it's always done negatively. (Jean-Pierre Larose)

[The biggest challenge], I would say is to confront the perception they have of us and do a job that's hard physically and on your morale, without people really being grateful for what we do. That affects your morale. It seems like we're detested. Regardless of what we do, there's always a negative point they'll needle you with. We arrest someone, and it's like "what do the police want again." Instead of wondering what that guy did to ... it's all the time our fault. (P5)

Finally, Nunavik's social, cultural, and legal context sometimes creates a feeling of powerlessness and frustration among police officers because they have the impression that they cannot contribute to social change or really help people in trouble. In other words, they simply "put out fires," an expression often used by non-Inuit public-sector workers in Nunavik (Laneuville 2015: 104). The feeling is probably made worse by the fact of belonging to a small community, walking by those people every day, and seeing them suffer (P2). In particular, some officers have trouble living with the fact that some victims of conjugal violence, whose lives seem to them in danger, refuse to lay criminal charges against their assailant: *"Sure, in terms of morale, it ends up that people often have the impression of working and seeing no results"* (P2).

Yet the police officers are not the only ones responsible for the vicious circles of violence and suffering. The current justice system contributes a lot through its inability to provide victims and defendants with adequate solutions. The officer's goodwill and desire to help clashes at the same time with a different culture that prefers forgiveness to punishment and sentencing, and with an inadequate justice system in Nunavik. The officers themselves say that they constantly deal with the same people, a minority of the population, and that the criminal justice procedures are having no impact on the crime rate (P4). They recognize there is a crying need to develop resources and services for psychosocial intervention and rehabilitation throughout Nunavik, as well as shelters and sobering-up centres.

Recent KRPF initiatives

Because of the numerous social problems, the KRPF has to manage many crises and often act in the here and now. To have an impact and intervene correctly, trust and cooperation from the community are needed, and that takes time. The KRPF is aware of the importance of improving its relations with the communities, and it regularly sends out messages for that purpose. Nonetheless, each mistake or case of abusive behaviour by one of its members can entirely tarnish its sincerity in short time and cast doubt on its good intentions. In recent years, it has undertaken different initiatives so that it can better meet Nunavimmiut expectations and improve its services.

First of all, the initiatives seek to improve the officers' working conditions, which were described as inhuman in a 2018 newspaper article (Teisceira-Lessard 2018). The aim is more effective recruiting and better retention of employees. A new collective agreement was signed with this in mind. Through the KRPF's efforts, a new cohort of officers, recruited in Ontario, arrived in December 2019. The KRPF thus hopes to increase the number of English-speaking officers, while making up for the shortfall in applicants. Attempts have been made to recruit retired officers, who would supervise and accompany younger ones for periods lasting several months. Similar efforts have been made with the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) to offer work placements lasting 8 to 12 months to more experienced officers, who could accompany the younger ones and help provide the villages with a little more stability during that time period. Finally, the KRPF has ordered the development of a 12-hour online training program to raise awareness of Inuit culture. The aim is not only to verify the applicants' cultural sensitivity but also to deepen their knowledge of Inuit society and inform them about the challenges of working in an intercultural milieu.⁴¹

Second, the KRPF is involved in different projects and memorandums of understanding with different northern organizations, in particular with the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS). The aim of the agreements is to improve services and bring law enforcement more into line with Nunavik realities. The Saqjuq Project, for example, is an outcome of a regional partnership with the NRBHSS and aims for a kind of community self-regulation by offering alternatives to the justice system, namely restorative justice rather than punitive justice. To fight crime, the two main project goals are 1) to prevent and limit physical and psychological harm due to overconsumption of alcohol, and 2) to prevent excessive use of the courts to resolve Inuit problems. In September 2019, as part of the project, mobile intervention teams composed of a police officer and a social worker were created in Puvirnituq (NRBHSS 2019). The program will soon be introduced in Kangirsuk. As Jean-François Morin, the KRPF Deputy Chief, explained to us:

We have greatly appreciated the tangible and positive changes since introduction of the mobile intervention team. One of the results has been to lighten our officers' workload. The team is very active in the community, creating positive links with other organizations and especially with people in the community. (Jean-François Morin)

⁴¹ The program has been developed by the Sentinel North Research Chair on Relations with Inuit Societies at Université Laval. The first part of the course *Inuit Cultural Competency Training-Step 1* was put online on the Université Laval website in November 2019. By mid-December, 15 KRPF applicants had taken the 3-hour course.

In addition, a regional agreement was signed in 2016 to improve enforcement of the *Multi-sectoral Agreement concerning children who are victims of sexual abuse or physical ill-treatment, or whose physical health is threatened by the lack of appropriate care*. Although this agreement of Québec's Department of Health and Social Services has existed since 2001, it was not always enforced in Nunavik; nor was enforcement always effective or even possible. The new working relationship between the KRPF and the NRBHSS has the aim of better defining each party's fields of action and jurisdiction and creating tools to ensure agreement implementation and compliance. Both parties are also working on protocols for joint action on missing or runaway young people, and on the *Act respecting the protection of persons whose mental state presents a danger to themselves or to others* (Statutes of Québec P38).

The KRPF also has a growing number of preventive and recreational activities in the schools to establish positive relationships with young people. In April 2019, it signed a collaboration agreement with Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the Nunavik school board (Kativik Ilisarniliriniq 2019) to improve preventive work with students and to foster a safe learning environment in the schools. The KRPF wishes to increase prevention activities and address specific themes like bullying, using an approach tailored to the needs of each community. It regularly organizes activities to encourage a more positive image of police officers and to facilitate contact with the public. In 2019, for example, a bike rally was held in the villages of Kuujuaq, Puvirnituq, Salluit, and Kuujuaaraapik. In the field, police officers are strongly encouraged, during their spare time, to visit local stakeholders: elected municipal officials, health care workers, and social workers. They are also encouraged to socialize with the general public.

Finally, we should point out that the KRPF has recently and urgently called on the government to deal with chronic funding problems and insufficient resources in order to provide Nunavimmiut with adequate police services. In 2018, the KRPF seized the opportunity of the Viens Commission to describe a situation it deemed unacceptable and intolerable. The Viens Commission Final Report acknowledged this state of affairs and, after identifying the obstacles to Nunavimmiut service quality, issued eight calls for action specifically on the funding problem, as well as calling for greater recognition of Indigenous police forces (Viens Commission 2019).⁴²

To conclude this section, we wish to highlight three things: the delicate and demanding position of Nunavik police officers, the nonetheless positive experience and commitment

⁴² See calls for action no. 29 to 36 of the Viens Commission Final Report (2019), in Appendix 5 of the present document.

of many officers, and the efforts of the police force to improve its services. In the next section, we will turn to Nunavimmiut and see how they view the police force and its officers. By learning about the views of police officers on the one hand and those of community members on the other, we wish to describe the experiences and realities of each side, in order to understand the main obstacles and to offer ways to create respectful relations and better cooperation.

Nunavimmiut views on police services

[The police officers] should be doing more. I know it's hard work, but you have to do a little bit more for the community. (N9)

Although most of the Inuit we interviewed for our project did not question the importance of having police in their communities, many sharply criticized some police practices or behaviours, or they criticized the justice system, which they felt to be inadequate. Nunavimmiut feel the officers could do more and better. We will describe here how Inuit view police services and the issues they have with the police. In addition to the interviews and the discussion workshop we organized for this research, we will rely on two recent reports: the Viens Commission Final Report (2019), which points to the existence of racist behaviours among police officers in Québec as well as systemic racism in some public services, and the report by Saturviit, Inuit Women's Association of Nunavik, on missing or murdered Nunavimmiut (Laneuville 2017).

Nuances and diversity of views

We should first stress that Nunavimmiut have had a wide range of experiences with police services. So their views are not black and white. In general, relations seem to vary from one community to another and from one individual to another. At the community level, relations are affected, and still are affected, by historical, organizational, and individual factors. In some villages, we can identify very serious traumas due to government decisions by police officers, such as the relocation of families from Inukjuak to the High Arctic and the slaughter of sled dogs. More recently, dramatic incidents, including shootouts, have taken place in some villages on the east coast of Hudson Bay. The shootouts involved police officers and sometimes caused Inuit deaths (Fennario 2018).⁴³ Many Nunavimmiut have felt very bitter since those events, becoming also suspicious and fearful of the police. Each event has revived the mistrust, feelings of injustice, and even anger that exist toward police services.

Likewise, as police officers come and go, the misbehaving ones leave behind memories, and the villagers become more mistrustful of the ones who take their place. Conversely, other communities have had fewer problems. They are lucky to have had devoted,

⁴³ Between July 2016 and October 2018 alone, the Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (BEI) conducted ten investigations into cases of Nunavimmiut who had been injured or killed by police officers in Umiujaq, Inukjuak, Puvirnituk, Akulivik, and Kuujuaq. Other inquiries are in progress, notably for an incident that happened in July 2019 in Salluit.

respectful, and long-established officers, with whom they enjoyed more harmonious relations. In those communities, unsurprisingly, criticisms and resentments are less harsh, and people are more cooperative with outsiders.

If we go through the oral accounts given for this project, we see that views about the police also vary among Nunavimmiut from one person to another, in line with their personal and family backgrounds. If one has had little involvement with the police in one's life, one generally feels rather satisfied with their work and feels safe because of their presence (IQ7; N6; N14). In return, according to some research participants, people who complain the most about the police are the least law-abiding and, quite often, have the most problems with alcohol consumption (N7; N6). Furthermore, the officer's image differs according to the police force. For example, it seems that Inuit have more positive memories of the time when the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) provided Nunavik with police services. They remember the time of a much larger number of Inuit officers, thanks to the special constable program, and wonder about the KRPF's apparent inability to integrate Inuit officers into their services. Although many understand how hard it is for Inuit officers to deal with relatives who break the law, they feel the KRPF does not do enough to encourage hiring of Inuit.

More generally, Nunavimmiut acknowledge that the police have contributed to their communities and consider their presence to be necessary today. According to them, the police should ensure everyone's safety, a role they perform well most of the time (N6). Their work is essential, according to Inuit, because of the magnitude of problems related to alcohol consumption, as well as the resulting violence. Indeed, they especially seek police assistance and protection when they feel threatened by the behaviour of someone intoxicated by alcohol, and they feel reassured by the assistance (Laneuville 2015; N10; N11). Nevertheless, Nunavimmiut have ambiguous feelings toward the police. On the one hand, they acknowledge the importance of policing in the community. On the other, they have the impression of not being properly respected or understood by such outsiders.

Negative image of police officers: immaturity, aggressiveness, and indifference

Over the years, Inuit have developed an image of KRPF officers that is not very rosy. Although they are grateful and appreciate the presence of some experienced and goodhearted senior officers, their constructed stereotype is based on an unfortunately still current reality and hinders integration of any new officer into a community. Such officers are burdened with the bad reputation of some of their predecessors. The officer's image is, so to speak, tarnished, and contributes to the mistrust and sometimes even scorn that Inuit may have for officers.

First of all, Nunavimmiut complain a lot about the hiring of officers who are still very young and inexperienced, both workwise and in their personal lives. This immaturity, in Inuit eyes, compromises their ability to intervene and assist adequately (N4). Inuit take them less seriously, feeling less safe, and confront them more, notably to test their character (IQ7).

Second, for many participants in this study, arrogance and aggressiveness are two traits that are strongly related to immaturity and which characterize the behaviour of most of the young officers (II5; II6; II9; N4). An arrogant attitude is based on a feeling of superiority that contributes to strained relations and conflictual interactions with Inuit. It can lead to disrespectful and aggressive behaviour, such as raising one's voice, verbal violence, and physical brutality. It is interpreted by Inuit as a form of racism and sometimes provokes a similar reaction from the confronted person (Laneuville 2015: 36): *"I think it depends on the police officers and the clients' behaviour, maybe both. If somebody is being very loud or rude, it's normal that somebody reacts the same way"* (II5). Thus, this attitude tends to worsen situations that could have been settled more peacefully. The aggressive behaviour of some officers is therefore, in itself, a cause of violence (Laneuville 2015: 95-98). To Inuit, immaturity, arrogance, and aggressiveness are attitudes that can imperil the authority of young officers.

Third, Inuit have the impression that most police officers come to work in Nunavik for selfish reasons and have no real interest in the people they have come to serve. The feeling is that such officers have come for the wrong reasons and that instead of being there to help they have chosen to work in the North to advance their careers, to earn a higher salary, or just because they had no prospects of getting hired in the South. Consequently, people feel they are closedminded and make no effort to understand either Inuit culture or the community they work in. For example, people regret that officers make no effort to join in community activities or become friends with Inuit. They keep to themselves and are indifferent to Inuit (II5; IQ7; II9; Laneuville 2015: 95-98; Lizzie Aloupa; N14). This attitude prevents them from overcoming their prejudices or understanding the social problems that Inuit are experiencing. Lizzie Aloupa, a former KRPF prevention counsellor, regrets that young officers come to the villages with the belief that Inuit are all alcoholics and struggling with problems of violence. As she explained:

When we arrived at the police station, he said: "We have never received a call from your home yet." And I said: "You know, we are not all drunks. I mean we don't get drunk and fight in our homes, not every home is like that." And he said: "No?" Like he thought that every home was full of drunk people, and that eventually he will get called to each one of

them. And that is the kind of story they get. That we all are drunk people, we all neglect our children, you know, that we are very low kind of people. (Lizzie Aloupa)

Project participants said they were mistrustful of the familiarity that develops among white workers, regardless of their occupation. The impression is that *Qallunaat*, when getting together off the job, take the opportunity to talk about their clients, disclosing confidential information, criticizing them, and making fun of them. This is what a social worker had to say: *“Often there’s Facebook statuses saying that: “Oh, there goes the DYP, the social services, and also the cops having supper at that house, I wonder who they’re talking about and who they are going to target next”* (I19). Others reported that French-speaking workers had discussed their clients in public places, something Inuit consider to be profound disrespect:

They openly talk about things like that in the planes, in the restaurants, because they think that maybe Inuit don’t speak or understand French, or in the hotel lobby, they just like talk, you know? We’re educated in the helping field that ethics and confidentiality are very, very important, especially in small communities. There is so much unprofessional acts like that happening, and you know I think it’s insane (I19).

We will give here two examples of frequent situations that Nunavimmiut see as unwillingness by police officers to help Inuit and as indifference to their problems. First, Inuit criticize what they feel to be excessively long wait times when they call the police station. *“When someone calls, they should answer right away. Don’t make them wait so they’re terrorized, like twenty or thirty minutes, it is very long”* (N4). When the officers arrive after a certain wait, a crisis situation may have improved or, instead, worsened. The wait times often suggest that the officers did not bother to find out the importance of the call, were not interested, or were afraid to intervene. Second, Nunavimmiut would like to see officers do more to fight alcohol smuggling, particularly by arresting the smugglers. They feel helpless about the harm done by alcohol and have a feeling that the officers are not doing everything in their power to help them, particularly by arresting the culprits (N14, N8). They would like to see concrete actions being taken more readily, without the police being held back because the evidence might not stand up in court.

Abuse of power and violence

Project participants deplored the fact that the police intervene too often with force that seems neither justified nor necessary. For example, some had observed people being violently manhandled and handcuffed without showing any resistance to the police (Laneuville 2017: 23-25). Some Nunavimmiut were particularly concerned about the way the police intervene with intoxicated or mentally ill people. According to them, an aggressive intervention has the effect of aggravating a problem situation, rather than

helping defuse or prevent a crisis. Violence not only leads to even more violence and anger but also tends to increase the charges laid against an individual. The police should instead help the community reduce crime and involvement in the justice system by people who above all need assistance:

Sometimes, they're quick with the handcuffs. Of course, the person is going to react and defend himself. He feels like a prey. He's going to kick, and it's going to land on the knee of the officer, who's going to make a complaint for assault against a police officer. And then that lengthens his criminal file, when that could have been avoided. (IQ7)

When people are heavily intoxicated by alcohol, they often black out and lose their memory, a fact mentioned several times as a problem that the police should learn to deal with more adequately. A person may be arrested for wrongdoings that he no longer remembers at all and which he did not wish to commit (P8; N3; N6). The officer should take time to tell the person what happened, after he sobers up. On this point, many believed in the need for a sobering-up centre in each community as an alternative to locking up intoxicated people.

Aggressive police interventions are to Inuit an abuse of power and show disrespect for them. They feel this abuse of power in other situations, such as when officers commit infractions of laws or regulations for which they nonetheless arrest some Inuit. The example given at the workshop is that of officers breaking the rules of the Highway Safety Code. Such behaviour tends to make them less credible and increases mistrust (IQ7). Even more inadmissible are the cases of physical violence and mistreatment reported by some participants (Laneuville 2017). Bernie Adams was a cell guard in Kangiqsujuaq for sixteen years and remembers having seen unacceptable acts of violence by police officers against intoxicated inmates. He deplored that the officers abused their power and did not try to understand why Inuit are grappling with such violence in their community:

I saw the physical abuse that the police officers do to intoxicated Inuit men and Inuit women. I saw the police doing verbal abuse. I saw the police picking up women and throwing them on the mattress. I saw the police pepper spray them. Yes, they are drunk, and yes, they have a tendency to be violent, but on your authority and your power, it's not something to do. They don't understand the violence in which we all grew up. They see the violence, but underneath the violence, why is there violence? They don't learn that in Nicolet. (Bernie Adams)

Another participant told us:

In general, we hear a lot of complaints, abuse of power, physical abuse, being over aggressive, forcing clients to sign their name when they don't want to. [...] They think they can do anything they want to the person they're arresting. Like, break their nose or kick their butt or things like that just because they think they can. (II5)

Some participants expressed their feeling of powerlessness about such abuses of power and brutality. Although procedures are available to them for filing of complaints against police officers, few people know them and many mistrust them. They believe very little in their chances of winning against an officer (Viens Commission 2019: 280; II9; Laneuville 2017: 24).

Relations with victims

In general, it was reported that victims of abuse and violence appreciate being able to call in the police for help and protection in a situation they feel is dangerous for their safety. However, according to the project participants, victims often expressed a feeling of being unduly pressured by the police to file a complaint against their assailant. Some participants told stories of officers simply refusing to provide assistance if a victim would not lay charges against her assailant (N4; II5):

One of my relatives in Kangiqsualujjuaq called the police for assistance because there was a domestic dispute and the police asked: “Are you going to file a complaint?” She said “no.” [And he replied:] “There’s nothing we can do.” Is it KRPF standards to say that? That’s not right. (Annie Baron)

When victims seek police protection, they do not always wish to initiate legal proceedings. According to the project participants, putting such pressure on the victims is not a good way to help them and may tend to deter them from calling the police. The real obstacles for them, however, are more the weaknesses of the justice system and their fear of reprisals by the assailant, rather than mistrust of the police:

I think they’re afraid. Sometimes, it’s a question of not having trust [in the police], and other times it’s because they’re simply afraid because the assailant will remain in the community and they’re afraid of bumping into them again. So it’s not fair when they deal with the police because they’re afraid. They’re afraid of reprisals. (IQ7)

Because criminal justice procedures take too long and because of the social context of northern villages,⁴⁴ among other reasons, the consequences for the victim are often more negative than positive when filing a complaint against an assailant, at least over the short to medium term. Indeed, such action does not have the hoped-for effect of ensuring her safety and re-establishing peace as soon as possible. Even over the longer term, Inuit see that imprisonment does not in any way cure the culprits or reintegrate them harmoniously into their environment (Laneuville 2015: 100-101).

⁴⁴ In Nunavik, social proximity, lack of housing, and poverty are major obstacles for victims who wish to stop the cycle of violence in which they are stuck. The way justice currently works is not adapted to these realities (Hervé and Laneuville 2017; Laneuville 2015: 95-98; 2017: 27).

As for the gender of the victim, i.e., female or male, the participants felt that female victims were more likely to get the police to intervene in a violent situation and ensure their protection. Although men are very regularly victims of violence, they are much more reticent about calling the police. According to the people we questioned, the main reason is the shame a man may feel in portraying himself as a victim, all the more so if his assailant is a woman.

Lack of humanity in enforcing the law

Project participants mentioned the feeling that the police too often enforce laws and procedures rigidly and coldly, without regard for the specific social and cultural context in which they work. For example, they enforce regulations that ignore the importance of family and community ties:

The stupidest thing I've heard that goes against our nature, our beliefs, our system is: there was a guy who escaped prison in Kangiqsualujjuaq and now all the detainees can't get visitors anymore. The relationship of proximity with your family is cut the moment you enter the police station. If you're suicidal and don't want to talk with the police officer because he speaks English or French, you won't talk about what's happening with you. They should start things over by bringing in the family, the boyfriend, the girlfriend, the kids. It's against Inuit culture to cut people off just because they committed a crime. (Annie Baron)

This measure is unfair not only because it punishes the inmate and the inmate's family for an act that took place in another context but also because it makes all of them suffer even more instead of helping them.

Let us cite another example: the many arrests for probation violations, which are often, for Inuit, a form of unrelenting harassment of individuals already in the justice system. The police have a duty to ensure compliance with probation conditions, but the social context and the poor understanding of the legal system by Inuit works strongly against them. Each violation may plunge them into a lengthy legal process that does not in any way help them: *"I think probation violation is a very good example of something that's becoming too big for no reason"* (IQ7). Thus, Inuit may interpret overly strict law enforcement as police insensitivity to Inuit reality.

Time and again, Inuit reproach police officers for lack of compassion and humanity. They have the impression that the officers sometimes forget that they are serving human beings with feelings.⁴⁵ One of the most flagrant examples is when officers forbid a dead

⁴⁵ The same reproach was reported in the Saturviit report on the experience of Inuit families when a family member or relative had died violently or gone missing (Laneuville 2017).

person's family to touch the corpse because it is a piece of evidence for the police investigation. According to them, this prohibition makes their bereavement even more difficult. It shows disrespect for the family. A participant described his experience:

I was not allowed to view my son's body. At that moment at the nursing station, my wife or I could not touch our son's hand, feeling his warm skin turning into cold skin. That was a part of the grieving process that I was looking forward to if one of my children had died before me. And that was taken away from me. I wasn't allowed to touch his hair, to make his hair pretty, and I wasn't allowed to kiss his forehead to say goodbye. "Your son is now evidence, you are not allowed to view your son." (Bernie Adams)

According to project participants, lack of humanity is also shown by the police not taking time to communicate with them, as if the police cannot be bothered with taking time to speak with them.

Communication problems: listening and understanding, explaining and informing

There is a lack of good communication between the police force and the members of Inuit communities. The problems are manifold: the languages themselves and the processes of listening, explaining, and informing.

First, the language difference is a major problem. Inuit speak Inuktitut as their first language and are less at ease once they have to interact in another language. Yet 96% of the police officers are not Inuit and do not understand their language. As a result, services suffer from reduced quality, efficiency, and accessibility. In particular, they are less accessible to elders who have to get other Inuit to help them contact the police (II2). In addition, although the second language of Inuit is English, most officers are French-speaking who, when they arrive in Nunavik, cannot express themselves clearly in English or even understand it adequately. French is merely the third language spoken by Nunavimmiut, and only by a minority of them. They thus expect to be served in a language they understand but instead feel disadvantaged and discriminated against because they cannot understand French. This is a big obstacle to mutual understanding. For example, at times some have the impression that their request is not taken seriously by the officer on duty because it was not made in French. Furthermore, because some *Qallunaat* workers, be they police officers or others, naturally tend to communicate with each other in French during interventions, some Inuit may react with mistrust, believing, sometimes wrongly, they are being mocked or criticized. Inuit are still calling for the presence of Inuit translators during all police interventions, but they realize that the police force is unable to comply.

Second, according to many Inuit participants, police officers often interpret situations prejudicially, without taking the time to ask questions and listen to what the people in question have to say. So they end up acting in ways that seem arbitrary and inappropriate for Inuit, and even arrest the wrong people. Bernie Adams, a Kangiqsujuaq resident, recounted how one day, during a dispute with his spouse, who was drunk and behaving violently, he asked his son to call the police. While he was trying to control his wife, the police arrived and immediately thought he was assaulting her. So they took him to the station. He regretted not having a chance to explain the situation to the police, from whom he had hoped to get assistance.

Third, Inuit feel the police should take more time to explain the laws, their duties, and the legal and police procedures when they intervene in a situation, and particularly when they arrest an individual. Many Inuit poorly understand how the justice system and Canadian laws work, and this poor understanding is in itself a major cause of crime and repeat offences (Laneuville 2015: 36). Lizzie Aloupa, a former KRPF prevention counsellor, explained at the workshop that Inuit are not always aware of the rules they are breaking when arrested. Some Nunavimmiut have reportedly spent time in a detention centre in the South without even knowing what offence they had committed (N2): *“I know people go to jail and they come out and don’t even know what they were charged for because they’re not educated”* (I16). Better understanding of the laws and procedures could help them avoid committing offences unintentionally, including repeat offences.

Fourth, there often seems to be a failure to communicate information to Inuit about investigation procedures, sentences, autopsy results, or summons. Inuit consequently often feel ignored and neglected by the justice system (Laneuville 2017). For example, some people may not show up at a trial they were ordered to attend. Perhaps the summons was not delivered to the right address. Perhaps the nature and seriousness of the letter was not fully understood. Perhaps there should have been a reminder letter. A simple police follow-up would have prevented such problems. On the subject of autopsies, some participants deplored the fact that a deceased person’s relatives never got the results. There also seem to be problems in sharing information and following up files between outgoing and incoming police officers in a village. Too often, the new officers may act without knowing the background of individuals who are in trouble with the police or the justice system. They are not sufficiently informed, for example, about the probation conditions of some people in the community.

Place of Inuit in the police force

Inuit we interviewed said it is very difficult for an Inuk to be a KRPF officer, especially in their own community. First, the officer’s image is so negative that Inuit officers become

easy targets of criticism and pressure, and sometimes rejection by their own people (P3). They are stigmatized and also have to endorse practices and a justice system that many take issue with because of multiple inconsistencies. In addition, they are very uncomfortable having to deal with people they have known since childhood, including family members, while remaining impartial and professional as required. In sum, they have trouble striking a balance between their responsibilities to their friends and relatives and their professional duties. A former KRPF officer explained: *“The issue that I observed during my time with KRPF was that the Inuit officers were not treated well amongst their community members because of the job they needed to do and therefore felt threatened or unwanted”* (I14). In this delicate position, they can easily feel doubly isolated: isolated from their community because of their position, and isolated from their mostly non-Inuit coworkers.

Some Inuit participants described painful work relations in the police force because of the inequalities and prejudices that target them. Some spoke of racism: *“Racism is still an issue. It should be addressed adequately, but I think that’s why we have less Inuit cops now”* (P9). Inuit feel they constantly have to show their ability and justify their actions, and cannot easily gain the professional recognition and responsibilities they deserve. Some criticized the fact that the few Inuit officers are often used as translators and end up in “movie extra” positions rather than in the real action:

My personal impression is that when you want to become a cop, you want to do a task, but often, Inuit are put in different things, like to be more in the prevention. They want to become a cop but they’re given special tasks and projects instead of being a cop, so they become more of an iconic person. But I know quite a few people who have been cops that have been affected so much because it’s a competition. (I19)

Former Inuit officers also said that much was required from them and that they felt overloaded and stressed out by their work (P3; P9). Since an officer’s job is very demanding, it requires some psychological and professional support. The participants said Inuit officers do not have access to the same resources as the others do, since no support services are available in their language. Whereas non-Inuit officers regularly seem to turn to their peers for mutual assistance, this is not possible for Inuit officers, who are most often alone. According to the participants, this situation puts Inuit officers in a highly vulnerable position and is a major reason why they resign.

To conclude, we have described here police attitudes and practices that, to Inuit, imperil service quality and good relations between the two groups. First, there is the aggressive and disrespectful approach, and the lack of real interest in Inuit. Second, there is excessively rigid and inhuman law enforcement, and lack of effort to communicate with and inform Nunavimmiut. For them, all of these failings are detrimental to a good working

relationship. They nonetheless acknowledge the importance of good relations between all Nunavimmiut and all public-sector workers—police officers, social workers, victim assistance workers, nurses, and so on—to ensure community safety and wellbeing. In light of the views held by officers and by Inuit, we will more specifically analyze the obstacles to cooperation in the next section.

Obstacles to cooperation

There is no connection at all. There is miscommunication, there is no relationship. There's nothing. It's sad, it's very vulnerable. There are really impressions, it's always negative impressions instead of the positive ones. (II9)

In relationships between the police and Nunavimmiut, the most serious problem is that none of them seems positive, as pointed out by the opening quote. Relationships and interactions are strained, and very few positive ones have actually been developed. Each side remains too closed to the other, too seldom trying to communicate, know, or understand the other. Without social relationships, mutual assistance and cooperation are impossible. Moreover, as Inuit see it, social relationships are constructed through relationships of assistance and cooperation (Hervé 2015: 155-160). While referring to the previous sections, and to the ways Nunavimmiut and police officers have experienced and viewed their relations with each other, we will now identify several obstacles to establishment of harmonious relationships of cooperation. We will also detail examples of misunderstandings that harm relations. Finally, we will come back to the concept of assistance and what it means in the two cultures.

Misunderstanding and prejudice on both sides

Previously, we discussed the prejudices of Inuit against the police and the prejudices of the police against Inuit. On the one hand, Nunavimmiut have constructed an image of officers as people who are immature, arrogant, aggressive, and racist and who lack devotion, openness, and humanity. On the other hand, police officers have strong prejudices against Inuit, most often to do with overconsumption of alcohol, carelessness, violence, and unwillingness to get out of a painful situation. Remember, the prejudices are on both sides. So both sides have to work to transcend them. They are largely due to negative experiences in the past, to preconceived ideas spread by both sides through various media,⁴⁶ and to lack of real knowledge about each other. The prejudices are maintained and perpetuated because people lack the means and the will to transcend them, not only individually and institutionally but also politically. Mutual avoidance therefore becomes the norm. We need to train ourselves, educate ourselves, and create

⁴⁶ We are thinking here about events that generally make the news in the media. A large majority are tragic events, like suicides and homicides. They perpetuate the idea that life in Inuit societies is simply alcoholism, distress, and violence. Social media, like Facebook, are clearly another source of sensational news and opinions tainted by prejudice.

ways and means to improve understanding and communication—these seem to be the main solutions, as we will see in more detail further on.

Police officers, for their part, choose to go and work in an Indigenous community, and even with good intentions this choice is evidently not enough to eliminate all prejudices, which often are partly unconscious. Cultural sensitivity is a quality that develops through experience and through efforts to develop positive social relationships. Furthermore, some prejudices are often strengthened among workers the moment they arrive in Nunavik, through stories and comments that other non-Inuit workers share with them. What they hear may make them mistrust and fear Inuit and keep some distance from them. On this point, according to some Nunavimmiut, fear of the other culture could explain some of the aggressive behaviours of young recruits. After they arrive, and having neither the time nor the interest, very few officers seem to take time to get to know the community they serve, by developing relationships off the job, by taking part in community activities, and by learning from and talking with community members, for example. Officers may perceive integration as being unnecessary or rather difficult and laborious.

Nunavimmiut, for their part, have experienced many traumas due to police services and the justice system. Despite mistrust of the police, most of them have sought police assistance. Nonetheless, there are still individuals who are so mistrustful or angry that a positive relationship cannot easily be established. They tend to be racist against white workers. Beyond the traumas and the prejudices, Inuit lack understanding of the laws, the police procedures, and the justice system in general, and this lack, in itself, compromises the quality of relationships. Indeed, Inuit easily tend to think that police officers have bad intentions toward them, when the officers are simply following the protocols and procedures they have to follow (Laneuville 2017: 20). If Inuit could better understand how justice works, they would be better able to work with police services. Several reports have already confirmed that Inuit need to learn more about the laws and how justice works (Laneuville 2015; 2017). This responsibility should be shared and not assigned solely to the police, who at the end of the day, for Inuit, are only the most visible part of the justice system.

Numerous misunderstandings

Prejudice and ignorance have many negative effects when you deal with another person or group. You end up misinterpreting the other's intentions, the result being numerous misunderstandings and sometimes violent conflicts. Mistrust and disdain are made worse, and you are less able to communicate adequately. Police services can become less

accessible and less effective, and personal safety endangered. Of course, all of this is compounded by the language barrier, which is an additional major obstacle, and one that we will discuss a bit farther on.

To give an example of a frequent misunderstanding, Nunavimmiut do not feel properly informed by the police about legal procedures that concern them. According to them, the police should come and see them regularly to explain the steps and decisions involved in their case file instead of leaving them uncertain and anxious. When we ask police officers if they take time to inform an Inuk about his or her file, they often answer that the necessary information is indeed provided and that they are not subsequently asked any questions. In sum, Inuit feel unfairly left out, and officers have the impression that Inuit are simply uninterested because they do not come and ask questions. If the police better understood the colonial relationship between Inuit and *Qallunaat*, as well as Inuit culture, they would not mistake silence for a sign of consent or indifference.

The history of colonial relations profoundly affected Inuit, who eventually adopted an attitude of obedience toward *Qallunaat*. The latter notably inculcated them with the idea that they were inferior and unable to manage themselves on their own:

But in the old days, they thought, Inuit always thought, white people always know everything. If the white person says something, we have to follow. That's what the Inuit people used to do. Even if the white person maybe gave them directions about a bad situation, because he's not Inuk, you had to follow. (N1)

Even in cases of disagreement, Inuit very seldom impose themselves on police officers because they fear and respect them, as suggested by the concept of *ilira-*, as we explained in the historical section of this report. Incidentally, asking questions is often identified as a typically “white” trait by Inuit, who generally do not ask questions, notably out of respect for the other person. This is how one female participant put it: “*We’re not questioners. We just expect right away that everything is being done the way it should. We don’t have the natural reflex to question “why,” or “how,” or “what does this mean,” you know?*” (I19). According to her, this reluctance to ask questions is especially problematic when people are sentenced for a crime, locked away, and then freed, without ever knowing why they were sentenced.

Next, many Nunavimmiut complain that police officers ask too many questions when answering emergency calls. They insist that the police should intervene faster. Nunavimmiut do not always understand that officers have limited resources and means and often are already busy with other things. So they have to gather as much information as possible to assess the risks of an intervention—all this before they actually go to the scene.

The police, for their part, sometimes misinterpret Nunavimmiut intentions. For example, they often express the idea that Inuit do not cooperate fully with them to fight crime because Inuit do not systematically report crimes they have witnessed. The police end up feeling powerless and somewhat frustrated, especially when the victim refuses to file a complaint against the assailant. Actually, Inuit victims refuse to prosecute their assailants because of a social norm, and not so much because they dislike dealing with the police. For Inuit, talking about other people and reporting their actions is badly perceived and seen as a threat to social harmony (Lizzie Aloupa). They prefer a policy of non-interference in social relations, to keep things peaceful and not make them worse. The same reasoning explains why forgiveness is so prevalent among Inuit, a fact often misunderstood by *Qallunaat*. The aim is to bring the culprit back into the group and rapidly re-establish community harmony.

Finally, each culture has its own non-verbal communication codes, which are often poorly known. This, too, can cause major misunderstandings.

Language barrier and lack of translators

The language barrier is another big obstacle to developing relationships of mutual assistance. On the one hand, everyone has to get by in English, a second language that is not fully known by everyone. Inuit, like French-speaking Québécois, may feel some frustration because they have to speak a language that is not their own. Yet both sides feel they are at home: Inuit are on their territory, and the Québécois are in Québec, a French-speaking province.

On the other hand, use of French by white workers stirs up suspicion and anger against them by community members who interpret such behaviour as disrespectful. To many Inuit, it seems unacceptable that the KRPf mostly hires Québécois whose mother tongue is French and who in many cases have only a rudimentary command of English. Furthermore, Inuit criticize the lack of effort by the police to hire Inuit translators to assist them in their work. The KRPf has reiterated its good intentions on this issue, while pointing out the trouble it has finding anyone available to do the job. The pool of qualified people is very limited in Nunavik's small villages, and people are generally very reticent about working for the police, who have a negative image and are harshly criticized. Consequently, some of the Inuit research participants feel the police should take the time needed to find translators who can help them do a better job. The KRPf meanwhile hopes it can get more support from the municipalities for assistance with recruiting.

Difficult recruiting and limited resources

The police services are having trouble recruiting and retaining a qualified and fully staffed workforce, and this is another big obstacle to developing good relations with the communities. Inuit are more reticent about developing a trusting relationship with young police officers who know little about the reality of Nunavik, who lack work experience, and who do not stay for long. Moreover, the high rate of employee turnover does not encourage integration and development of relationships: on the one hand, officers do not have time to get to know their work environment; on the other, Inuit are less motivated to make efforts to integrate the newcomers (II9). This is how a non-Inuit former officer explained it:

I believe the general relationship between police and the Inuit public is not where we would want it to be, and I think it comes down to many aspects but none more important than stability of officers in one community. When the general public observe officers constantly coming and going, they are not able to form a relationship with each other and therefore there is no bridge of trust on either side. (Paul Palubeskie)

In addition, the high turnover makes it harder for the police force to train its officers adequately. Young, inexperienced, unprepared, and poorly trained staff are at high risk of committing blunders that will affect relations with the whole community. People will thus keep to themselves, and eventually many will resign and leave.

There are also not enough police officers on duty—as stated many times. First, understaffing necessarily means reduced service and slower response time. Because there are often too few officers to keep up with the demand, the police have to prioritize requests and intervene less rapidly in some situations, a failing for which they are strongly reproached, as we have seen. Second, because they are very busy, if not overloaded and exhausted, they have less time to take part in the community and get integrated. It is crucial to prioritize needs and tasks appropriately, while taking community expectations and realities into account.

Looking beyond the specific resources and mandate of the police force, we should point out that the police have a heavier burden because some public services and infrastructures are absent. For example, when people are grappling with substance abuse or violence, they should be able to get adequate resources for assistance and shelter, instead of being locked up in a police station cell after a crisis situation.

An inadequate judicial and legal framework

Police officers have to endorse and enforce laws and protocols that are inadequate for the Nunavik context and poorly known to Inuit. The police have no control over these laws and, because their experience with them is so short, they do not always know them perfectly. It should be stressed here that our legal system is very complex and constantly changing. The police are furthermore not responsible for most decisions on legal and criminal matters and, yet, they are on the front line of the system and receive most of the criticisms (Laneuville 2017: 20). Because the justice system is so inadequate and ineffective in Nunavik, in addition to lacking resources to enforce laws and protocols, officers are placed in a delicate position with regard to the communities.

This is especially so in the case of alcohol smuggling. When some Nunavimmiut call the police to provide information about a smuggler, they do not understand why the police will not arrest that person right away. Inuit would like to see smugglers arrested on the spot and criticize the police for being unwilling or even uninterested in what happens to residents. Yet this situation is quite often beyond the control of the police, who have to get a search warrant from a judge before they have the legal power to act.

The greatest challenge for justice in Nunavik is the slowness of legal proceedings.⁴⁷ The slowness, together with lack of understanding of the justice system, causes deep anxiety among those Nunavimmiut who are waiting for a verdict. Even their health may suffer (Lizzie Aloupa):

Yeah, and it's insane. Some people have very minor charges and there are files and they wait years with the notion of having to go to court, living day by day thinking: "For sure, it must be soon. I wonder if it's coming. Am I going to be tried this year?" It's so much stress on an individual. It's so heavy and it's unfair. (I19)

Misunderstandings are due to differences not only over how the justice system should work but also over how Inuit and *Qallunaat* view the concept of law. The police tend to stick to the law regardless of the circumstances because they have been educated and trained to act that way. In the Western legal system, the law has a universal value and applies to everyone at all times, thus guaranteeing some social order. Among Inuit, rules are often informal and flexible. When the time comes to punish a wrongdoing, the decision is based mainly on the specific situation and on the direct consequences for community wellbeing (Koperqualuk 2015; Saturviit 2018). To Inuit, *Qallunaat* have a

⁴⁷ To learn more about how the justice system works and the causes of its long wait times, see notably Jaccoud 1995; Laneuville 2015; 2017; Saturviit 2018.

relationship with the law that shows a kind of rigidity and lack of consideration for the people concerned; in other words, lack of compassion.

Inuit are not against the law, quite the contrary, but they believe that a balance should be struck between it and their culture (Hervé et al. 2019; N1), specifically by making more allowance for their unique outlook and by improving cooperation among everyone involved.

A different view of assistance

We often hear Inuit people repeatedly say that the police, like other non-Inuit public-sector workers, inadequately help their community. There seems to be a gap between the assistance that public services can offer and the assistance that Inuit expect. It is therefore legitimate to ask what this concept means respectively to *Qallunaat* and to Inuit (Hervé 2015: 66; Laneuville 2017: 33).

It has been shown that Inuit power relationships cannot be understood without understanding relationships of mutual assistance (Hervé 2015). If you can help other people, you are in a position of authority. Conversely, if you receive help, you are in a position of dependence. In addition, if you have a lot of resources, you will be constantly asked for assistance (Hervé 2015: 155-160; Laneuville 2017: 33). The network of mutual assistance is so important to Nunavimmiut that anyone without it has, so to speak, no social existence. Helping and being helped are ways to get socially integrated. Thus, to say that the police inadequately help the communities also amounts to saying the police are not fully integrated.

To Nunavimmiut, being helped by the police means that the police will share their resources, such as equipment and material, and use their power to benefit the community. Because the police are seen as being insufficiently equipped and experienced to guide the communities, they are not expected to impose their authority and ways of doing things. So Nunavik public-sector workers should show a balanced dose of community engagement. If we wish to serve the communities, we should avoid being domineering and always trying to promote our solutions. We should simply make our resources available to them, to the extent that our abilities and duties permit (II9). This brings us to the importance of respecting each Inuk's personal autonomy, which should be considered in any helping relationship (Briggs 2001; Hervé 2015; Laneuville 2017: 37).

Building a trusting and respectful relationship

It's important to have understanding between individual people and the police officers, what they are doing. It's a thing we need to work on as a whole town. Because some people usually think: "OK that's the role of the municipality, they're gonna take care of it." That's not true. It's the whole community's problem. It's not only the municipality's problem. (N10)

Despite the tensions, we find that police officers and Nunavimmiut alike acknowledge the importance of mutual respect and working together to improve community wellbeing. We also find that the cultural difference seems to be no obstacle in itself, once each side has shown that it is open-minded, can transcend its prejudices, and respects the other's culture. To develop a trusting relationship, four things are needed: 1) rethinking the officer's role and place in Nunavik, 2) educating, raising awareness, and training, 3) getting integrated and getting to know each other, and 4) improving cooperation between the different services. All four points will require not only efforts by the Kativik Regional Police Force and Nunavimmiut but also political willingness within the region and from governments. Finally, and more generally, Inuit knowledge and methods should be recognized, passed on, and used by *Qallunaat* and the public administrations. We will next see, in the final part, a more exhaustive list of priorities for action.

Rethinking the officer's role and place

To rebuild a trusting and respectful relationship between officers and Nunavimmiut, it seems vital to rethink the officer's role and place in Nunavik. This exercise should be done with allowance being made, above all, for the surrounding cultural, social, geographic, and political reality. Instead of seeing an officer's job as the traditional one of enforcing the law, it should be rethought in terms of the officer's place and role in Inuit society. Consultation and research are thus needed to understand Inuit views on what an officer should be, so that we may envision how that officer could become better integrated into the communities and use culturally appropriate tools.

In Nunavik's small isolated villages, newcomers, like police officers, often unknowingly have a special place in the group. They are outsiders, and yet they are in the thick and thin of the residents' lives while being in charge of their safety. In Nunavik, people dislike the idea that an officer should keep aloof from the community for the sake of better law enforcement and better compliance with the law. Although this is how an officer is

trained, it runs counter to the way Inuit prefer to see human relations. It is consequently vital to train officers first and foremost to take a social and community-based approach while encouraging them to forge ties with the community.

We need to support police officers. We have to understand, as well, they're human beings like us. They cry, they get mad, they laugh, they're heartbroken, and some people don't think that way. It was a very good thing this summer that we have the police officers who were giving out bicycles for the kids. Doing raffle tickets for the kids. Adults were invited to have hotdogs or hamburgers, whatever they wanted. That's good. That's building a good relationship with the people, the police, and the community. I like that, I like that very much. (N10)

To ensure that they are respected in their role and can adequately help Inuit, the police should develop strategies to get involved in the community. For this, a popular solution is to organize community activities.

Many Nunavimmiut stressed the importance of portraying the police officer as a peacekeeper. Whereas a police officer is perceived negatively as being coercive and punitive, a peacekeeper is seen much more positively as having a role based more on protecting citizens and keeping them safe. An officer in a peacekeeping role is expected by Nunavimmiut to intervene rapidly, while showing self-control and knowing how to re-establish peace and order. Although officers have to enforce the law, they must avoid making things worse by behaving impulsively or aggressively. To be able to help adequately, they should also know how to listen attentively and act with discernment. It was reported by several Nunavimmiut public-sector workers and even by former officers that more must be done to inform the public. Officers should explain their role, explain the laws they enforce when they are enforcing them, and explain their actions during interventions or arrests.

Finally, Inuit judge an officer's behaviour in terms of their own cultural referents and codes. They expect a newcomer to behave according to certain values and principles that seem natural to Inuit, such as saying hello to everyone. Nunavimmiut appreciate the fact that officers regularly patrol their communities and are accessible, available, and helpful.

[Educating, raising awareness, and training](#)

To improve relations between Nunavimmiut and the police, there should be more awareness and better training on each side. Greater understanding of others, their cultural specificities, and their social reality is the best way not only to avoid misunderstandings but also to develop empathy and respect that transcends differences.

First of all, Nunavimmiut could better understand the officer's job: its responsibilities, its limitations, and its challenges. Although they are already being informed about the way the justice system works and the current laws, efforts should be pursued on an ongoing basis. With this in mind, resources should be made available to the municipalities. Indeed, the municipality, with the assistance of Inuit paralegals and police officers, should play a central role in regularly broadcasting, via local and regional radio stations, information about the KRPF, about the officer's job and, more broadly, about the laws or the justice system. Such information should be not only broadcast in plain language to be accessible to a broader audience but also translated into Inuktitut. Inuit who work in justice services are key intermediaries whose role could be upgraded through more financial resources and a higher profile with more responsibilities (Hervé et al. 2019).

When they intervene, officers should redouble their efforts to explain their work, the laws they are enforcing, and the procedures they are following, while always making sure Nunavimmiut fully understand the different actions and decisions. One must fight tirelessly against mistaken ideas about the officer's job and against misinterpretations of the law. Such misunderstandings worsen the bad relations between Inuit and the police.

Despite all the efforts to inform Inuit, we still see much lack of understanding among them. We need to investigate and analyze Inuit concepts of law enforcement and how Inuit view justice. Such investigative work will provide better translations of justice-related concepts so that these concepts will make as much sense as possible to Nunavimmiut. In this respect, Inuit who work in the field of justice are best suited to translate such information and are good bridges between the Inuit community and judicial institutions. Indeed, such public-sector workers—victim assistance workers, community reintegration officers, paralegal assistants, and justice committee members—have much expertise that deserves to be put to greater use.

Second, *Qallunaat* officers should be trained in Nunavimmiut history, culture, and social and political reality, as a justice committee coordinator explained:

People who come up North—even when I go to Montreal or anywhere else, I would want to understand the history of Montreal and what's that Island and what is the land, what do they do—if *Qallunaat* come to our community to work, it would be easier to communicate and to respect that person if they know that about us. (Phoebe Atagotaaluk)

Police officers should be aware that they carry the weight of a colonial heritage when exercising their duties, despite their goodwill. They should learn about Nunavimmiut history, which bears the marks of the imposition of colonial institutions and policies. They should understand that police officers have often been representatives of those policies and should know about the different events that have adversely affected Nunavimmiut

relations with the police. In this respect, officers should learn by working with people who suffer from intergenerational traumas. When officers are getting trained, they should also learn the concept of cultural safety. Indeed, safety is not only physical but also cultural, all the more so in a society that is still victimized by discrimination and still fighting to affirm its identity and become more self-governing politically. With training in all these areas, officers will be able to work while showing goodwill, respect, and empathy, as pointed out by Lizzie Aloupa, Inuit Rights Officer at Makivik Corporation:

Some police officers are not there with their heart. They are here to gain experience. But we need people with their heart to work among us. Because of all the tragedies we had and all we have gone through, and many families have lost their children to foster cares, they also need compassion from anyone, so that's the advice, have a heart for the people that you are going to work for, or work with. (Lizzie Aloupa)

In addition to these historical points, the police should be taught the basics of Inuit culture, to interact better and have culturally respectful relations. For example, when communicating, they should learn Inuit nonverbal codes and body language, as well as the best way to ask questions clearly and be understood.⁴⁸

Finally, the people we interviewed for this research stressed the importance of training police officers in crisis management with intoxicated people, especially drunken people, and in intervention with people who are suicidal, have post-traumatic stress disorder, or are suffering from mental illness. As explained by Annie Baron, the NRBHSS translator and a former Itinerant Court translator:

Police officers should learn how to calm people down because I see too many people who get arrested and who resist, and they get even more criminal charges because they attack the police officers. [...] How to calm people down so that the situation won't get worse. (Annie Baron)

In this respect, the Saqijjuq Project, and its mobile intervention teams composed of police officers and social workers, is an initiative that should be strongly supported and funded. In addition to being a project initiated by the region, it improves interventions through sharing of knowledge and complementary techniques.

A key solution seems to be development of online and face-to-face training for police officers. However, to limit training costs, and given the high turnover of police staff, another option may be to share information and knowledge through mentorship and teamwork. By twinning experienced workers with less experienced ones, and some Inuit with some *Qallunaat*, we can exchange knowledge and create links. Police officers would

⁴⁸ Police officers, judges, and lawyers tend to put questions to Inuit in obscure ways, often negatively. This problem has been raised many times (see notably Laneuville 2017: 34).

then benefit from more supervision and regular advice from their superiors or from more experienced people, especially during the first few weeks of work.

Knowing each other better and working together through integration

Although the high turnover of *Qallunaat* workers and their short stays are not conducive to development of trusting relationships with Nunavimmiut, some measures can be taken for better integration of officers into the communities. Again, such measures will involve not only the KRPF but also residents, municipal leaders, and local organizations.

The arrival of police officers in the communities is a key moment in their integration. As suggested by the local justice committee coordinator, Phoebe Atagotaaluk, a warmer welcome by the community and a better presentation of the officer could lead to closer relations:

I would love to meet with the KRPF who come to the North for the first time, to come with us out in the land. Sometimes we invite the social services because we work with them as well. We ask them if they wanted to come, they would be welcomed. It would be nice if we could do that with the police, so that we could work together more and if they have questions, they can ask us. Sometimes it's hard when we have to call the KRPF and they tell us they can't really do anything. Maybe the coordinators could come and talk with the people and we could work together. It would be nice to work more with the KRPF so that if they ever get lost or are confused, they come to us. They work with Inuit where there's alcohol involved and where there are accidents involved, where suicides are happening, where they have to deal with all of this, and it's really difficult for them as well to deal with that. If we don't support each other with the kind of situations that happen in our community, it's difficult. It would make a very big difference if we work together and support each other to understand what's going on. We could welcome each other. And we don't have that right now with the KRPF. When we see someone new, it would be nice to introduce this person and know where he comes from, where he's been... it would be good if we could help him in any way. (Phoebe Atagotaaluk)

For this, each community, in conjunction with the KRPF, should locally prepare concrete and systematic measures to welcome new officers when they arrive. Such measures should notably include meetings with elected municipal officials, with Inuit and non-Inuit workers of other services, and with local committees and elder committees.⁴⁹

A message could also be broadcast via the local radio station to present the officer and his/her interest in coming to work in Nunavik. To assist the welcoming experience and to

⁴⁹ The KRPF is currently developing measures to provide new officers with a better welcome, notably through a 4-day stay in Kujjuuaq before being sent to another community. The KRPF is also working closely with each of the municipalities to provide better coaching of police officers and also to designate a resource person in each village.

rise to the occasion, the new officer should respond with courtesy and openness, for instance by smiling, by shaking hands, and by being curious, interested, and respectful.

Afterwards, instead of keeping to themselves at the police station or their personal quarters, new officers should join in community activities both on and off the job, in addition to paying regular visits to local organizations like the CLSC, the school, or the municipality. Feeling respected, Nunavimmiut will be all the more welcoming and will help integrate the officers, thus encouraging a working relationship.

Once an officer resides in one community for a considerable amount of time and also becomes involved in sports, school presentations, conversation at stores, enjoying the land, etc., it is at this time that stronger relationships are formed and both the officer and public can move forward. These relationships are then used in day-to-day occurrences in the community (outside of police calls) plus when police are responding to calls and the officer is well known, it can help in the outcome of the call. When there is better communication and trust during a police call, less charges are laid, less serious escalations occur, less people are sent to detention as a result. (Paul Palubeskie)

Police officers have to get known as individuals. This stage is crucial because it lays the foundation for a trusting relationship and greatly helps the work of officers, who will be better respected despite their job. Their work will also be perceived as more legitimate:

If the constables came into the community, but were not involved with the community, people started to, usually, look at them like different people. They cannot be open to them, they cannot work together with them. Because they are over there. If the person coming to us is involved with us, with our situation, people will say: "He's one of us, so we can work together." So they start to treat that person like he's our friend. That'll be creating a lot of difference. [...] To be with the community is the best way. (N1)

Creating social ties and personal relationships considerably changes the officer's job in a community. The officer will feel endorsed and supported, being now able to count on assistance and cooperation from Nunavimmiut on different levels: informal information networks during investigations; greater understanding by the community; and moral support. The officer will also feel appreciated and recognized. Such feelings especially matter when a person is alone in a very isolated community.

Getting local services to work together

To improve relations between Nunavimmiut and police officers, it is important to get the different local services to work together more. Relations can take place on group and individual levels. They can take place between local organizations through agreements and memorandums of understanding. Above all, they can take place on the individual level through contacts between police officers and all the local people who work in justice and in social services. Once the first contact is made, officers should maintain close

relations with such people, notably with Inuit workers in such services because they have much information about community members and may provide valuable advice. We nonetheless know that, as things stand now, public services are often overwhelmed, and it is difficult to find time for additional meetings. Opportunities to meet and discuss should nonetheless be given priority, in everyone's interest.

The municipality should be central to getting services working with each other more closely. Many of the public-sector workers and Nunavimmiut we met during our research hoped to give the municipal authorities a more important role in conflict management. Nunavimmiut expect them to do three things: think about developing different measures to welcome new officers; initiate meetings with them more regularly; and help improve the officer's image. The municipality could be the instigator, for example, of a regional consultation on the officer's place and role in Nunavik. For its part, the KRPF would also like to receive more support from the municipality to improve the officer's image and also to hire more Inuit officers and interpreters. The people we interviewed for our research furthermore mentioned that regional leaders should also work toward this end and have a stronger working relationship with the KRPF.

Thus, cooperation among services and among individuals is paramount. An elder explained this point: *"Well, Inuit culture is always rooted in survival. Survival together. That's the only way to survive, even the difficult situations. Work together as a group. If you learn something, you share. If you learn something, how to do things, you share with other people."* (N1). Nunavimmiut attach importance to working together because sharing and mutual assistance are still fundamental Inuit values. These values have always ensured Inuit survival and are still considered today to be vital to success.

Recognizing and promoting Inuit knowledge

For several decades now, regional and municipal leaders have been calling for greater recognition of Inuit values and practices. In a society still being decolonized, more must be done to appreciate Inuit culture for its full worth. In addition to being the basis of Inuit identity, such values and practices are also considered to be key to resolving numerous social problems. Their effectiveness, in different areas, has been shown by many projects, often carried out locally or regionally by associations or by committees of partners. The justice committees are directly involved in searching for an alternative form of justice that would be guided more by an Inuit view of justice. Such initiatives should be strongly supported and funded. To re-establish a trusting and harmonious relationship between Nunavimmiut and officers, we should recognize and promote Inuit knowledge and integrate it into police practices.

First of all, it appears essential to promote knowledge of how Inuit used to manage conflicts and maintain social order, with a view to recognizing such knowledge as legitimate and encouraging its use by the police. As one elder explained, Inuit had their own methods for resolution of minor conflicts:

In a minor situation, Inuit people were able to communicate and counsel and this sort of thing. They would go to a deeper problem and bring it to the policemen. That was the situation. Nowadays, even a small little thing, policemen usually take over, and Inuit never have time for counselling anymore. So they're not recognized as a counsellor anymore. (N1)

Through more in-depth research into the nature and transformation of Inuit practices in conflict management, we could select the ones that are still relevant to the current context. Among the methods traditionally used by Inuit, mediation is still a fundamental tool. Inuit prefer to discuss, make amends, forgive, or give "a second chance":

I heard from elders that there used to be counselling for the person who had committed something that they didn't want him to. They met with him; some elders met with him. If one elder couldn't do it, then there would be more than one elder to communicate with him and make him understand. Make him be a better person. That's what I heard. (N14)

The idea is to help the wrongdoer express remorse, become aware of what he did, right his wrong, and thus become better. Through personal accountability and community empowerment, the individual can be reintegrated into the group without shame or guilt. Although this approach is recognized and partly applied in minor crime cases, the search for more suitable alternatives to criminal justice could apply to other areas, such as domestic violence. As explained by Paul Palubeskie, a justice officer at Makivik:

I believe domestic violence could be dealt with differently and more effectively by using culturally adapted programs on healthy relationships, in addition to separating the two persons involved by using undertakings, etc. Should the offender or even both persons attend this program and complete it with good feedback from the facilitator, then the facilitator would report to the defence lawyer on their findings, and a "fit sentence" would be passed afterwards. (Paul Palubeskie)

The preferred approach here is personal engagement and the person's full participation in the restorative process. Thus, instead of imposing punitive sentences that fail to prevent repeat offences, alternative solutions based on caring, making amends, and empowering the community should be favoured.

Local organizations should also be offered tools and financial support for them to take greater charge of some interventions collectively. These alternatives do not mean less police work. On the contrary, they should be introduced in partnership with the KRPF. With fewer case files and administrative tasks, police officers would be able to concentrate on providing Nunavimmiut with protection, safety, support, and assistance.

The Saqijuq Project, the Isuarsivik Regional Recovery Centre, Qarmaapik House, and the justice committees, for example, are remarkable initiatives in this respect and should be better funded⁵⁰ and supported by local, regional, and government stakeholders. Other initiatives exist in the form of assistance and counselling through Healthy Marriage and Relationship programs or Stress Management and Anger Management programs.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The justice committees lack human resources and funding and are subject to obligations that are “higher than those to which the justice system itself is subjected” (Sylvestre and Perreault 2019: 4).

⁵¹ In this regard, it would be very appropriate to compile an exhaustive list of the different programs and structures in Nunavik to give us the big picture. These programs and structures could then provide models to follow and be shown to other communities as ways to meet community needs.

Conclusion

Everybody agrees not only on the importance of having police services in Nunavik communities but also, and especially, on the importance of maintaining good relations, which today seem unsatisfactory. Nunavimmiut say they are frustrated with the work of police officers, and we must take their frustration into account to rebuild a positive relationship. In dealing with the crime rate and social problems, officers hold a key position in the community, since they have a duty to ensure Nunavimmiut safety and protection. They should take an active part in community stability and wellbeing. Nonetheless, they do not always seem aware of their place in the group or what people expect from them. Better mutual understanding is needed to deconstruct all forms of negative prejudices and racism.

At the local level, efforts to work together have shown extremely positive results, and such efforts should be promoted, while including regional organizations and, above all, local Inuit decision-makers. For Inuit, working together means establishing personal and individual relationships, which are a basis for reciprocal trust. If you talk with Inuit who work as police officers, social and community workers, or paralegals, most will say they do their jobs to help their community. In Inuit society, each member belongs to a larger group: the community. Each person's wellbeing depends on everyone else's individual investment. *Qallunaat* who come to work in Nunavik should not simply hold a job. They should insert themselves into existing networks of mutual assistance and provide real help by getting more involved. Without such engagement, assistance will be ineffective and trust impossible.

Relations can be improved through better communication, greater understanding and, above all, more respect for Inuit culture and practices. Young officers should be prepared for their entry into Nunavik's historical, cultural, and social reality. Police methods should be rethought and adapted to this specific context. Funding should be sufficient for all stakeholders to carry out this rethink, while providing key players with the requisite tools to ensure Nunavimmiut wellbeing and safety in accordance with cultural differences.

This report is an outcome of comprehensive and constructive thinking. The aim was above all to understand the expectations and realities of the police and Nunavimmiut with respect to each other and to analyze the nature of their relations today. The acute tension that characterizes these relations is a mirror image of a system of domination that is still trying to impose itself. With reconciliation in the air, it seems urgent to find new ways of thinking and working. Instead of being at odds with each other, the police and

Nunavimmiut should strive to build new relations together. This task is a responsibility in which everyone should join in helping create a shared and better future.

Priorities for action to improve relations between police services and Inuit in Nunavik

1. Create a guide to good practices for police officers in Nunavik

A guide to good practices for police officers in Nunavik, whether they work for the KRPF or the SQ, should be created to provide them with the knowledge and tools they need to develop positive practices. The guide should promote the officer's role as a peacekeeper, define behaviours deemed respectful and appropriate in an Inuit context, and put forward community-based intervention practices. The guide should also invite members of the police forces to treat Inuit employees equally, recognize their special skills, and respect the duties for which they were hired.

2. Provide all new police officers in Nunavik with training in cultural competence

Once hired, a new officer getting ready to work in Nunavik should receive substantial training on Nunavimmiut history, society, and culture. The training should also serve to prepare officers for a community-based approach, to teach them the concept of cultural safety, and to initiate them into intervention techniques that are adapted to northern social issues.

3. Explain the officer's role in the communities

It is necessary to develop and provide Nunavimmiut with communication tools, such as posters and radio spots, which may be used to explain an officer's job, to enhance the officer's image as a peacekeeper, and to encourage hiring of Inuit officers. It is deemed especially important here that officers should be involved with young people. All of this should be done with a view to helping Nunavimmiut understand that an officer is only a frontline worker of the justice system.

4. Develop measures to welcome new police officers

In each community, measures should be developed to make it easier to welcome and integrate new officers. Such measures should, among other things, include meetings with elders, with local elected officials, and with public-sector workers, as well as a guided tour of the community. The measures could also include presenting the officer through an announcement on the local radio station. Once on duty, all officers should be required to meet local elected officials and local committees regularly.

5. Increase hiring of experienced police officers who are proficient in English

The police forces in Nunavik should hire a larger number of experienced officers and officers who can understand and speak English adequately. Proficiency in Inuktitut would be even better.

6. Establish a respectful approach to victims of violence and abuse

Efforts are needed to establish ways and means that are more respectful of victims of violence and abuse. For example, we could review the ways used to encourage filing of formal complaints, to collect testimonies, and to ensure follow-up after a complaint. More specifically, an increase in the number of female officers could improve relations with victims of the same sex.

7. Ensure adequate communication of legal and judicial information

Better means and more appropriate tools for communication should be developed to provide community members with information on criminal files, results of investigations and autopsies, and Court decisions. In particular, police officers should make sure that the individuals and families in question, both on the victim's side and on the defendant's side, are always kept informed about any developments in the legal procedures.

8. Better inform and educate Nunavik communities about justice, rights, and laws

Efforts should be made to increase Inuit understanding and knowledge about justice, rights, and laws.

9. Increase the Inuit presence in the police forces in Nunavik

The Inuit presence should be increased in the police forces in Nunavik. For this, it is important to pursue efforts to recruit, to train, and to provide suitable working conditions. There should also be a psychosocial support service that is adapted to Inuit culture and language. It would also be appropriate to broaden and diversify the nature of possible Inuit contributions to police services, without limiting them to the positions of police officer and translator. In particular, some Inuit could be hired or used as mediators, advisors, or negotiators. This would require better recognition of their distinct forms of knowledge and their skills.

10. Organize local consultative committees on safety and crime issues

Public-sector workers, elected officials, local committee members, and police officers, among others, should set aside times and places for meeting and discussing safety and crime issues, as well as any local issues deemed important. Such

discussions would be scheduled more formally and systematically than in the past and would help people learn more about each other, improve communication, define common goals, and increase cooperation.

11. Open sobering-up centres and shelters in all the communities

Each village should provide a place where people can sober up, and which is not at the police station. Such a place would take in people who show no signs of violence. There should also be a safe place for temporary shelter of people and families who are victims of violence and abuse.

12. Provide the KRPF with better financial support

To deliver more suitable and higher-quality services, the KRPF will need more funding and also more secure funding. Its service level should also be reassessed upward to recognize the work it is actually doing in the field, which goes beyond its official obligations and competencies. Working conditions, employee hiring, and employee retention will likewise be improved and so will relations with Nunavimmiut.

13. Provide alternative justice initiatives with better financial support

Local or regional alternative justice initiatives should receive better financial support for their work to ensure that each community may benefit from their services on an ongoing basis. Such initiatives notably include the local justice committees and the Saqijuq Project. The latter is working in particular on forming mixed-sex mobile intervention teams in the communities and is helping police services and social services to work with each other. With better funding, these initiatives could take over from police work more easily in cases deemed appropriate, thus providing support that is more culturally adapted.

14. Develop research-action projects to support alternative justice initiatives

Research projects should be funded and conducted on the history of relations between Nunavimmiut and police services to fill in the gaps in our current knowledge. In particular, by knowing the history of Indigenous police in Nunavik, we would be able to offer concrete solutions to improve recruiting of Inuit officers. Research projects should also be funded to study Inuit perspectives, knowledge, and practices in the field of justice. Such research would lead to better recognition of such knowledge, in addition to offering tools for use by local and regional alternative justice initiatives.

15. Implement calls for action no. 29 to 39 in the final report of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec.

The list of the calls for action is in Appendix 5 of the present report.

All of the priorities for action suggested here should be viewed as a shared responsibility of the different institutions that are active in the field of justice in Nunavik or that work with the justice community, be they local institutions (such as municipalities and justice committees), regional institutions (such as the KRPF, the Kativik Regional Government, and Makivik Corporation), or national institutions (such as the Court and the departments of Public Safety or Justice). Additional funding should be granted to those who assume the responsibility of implementing the priorities for action, to keep the additional workload from increasing the existing burden on communities, police officers, or civil servants.

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Appendix 1: Interview codes

Participants	Organizations	Towns or villages	Codes
Category 1: Members or former members of a police force (non-Inuit and Inuit)			
Jean-Pierre Larose	Chief of the Kativik Regional Police Force (KRPF)	Kuuujuaq	P1
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P2
Unnamed	Sûreté du Québec (SQ)	—	P3
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P4
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P5
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P6
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P7
Unnamed	KRPF	—	P8
Unnamed	Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), SQ, KRPF	—	P9
Category 2: Nunavimmiut (Inuit population in general)			
Benjamin Arreak	Counsellor on Women's and Elders' Issues – Kativik Regional Government (KRG)	Kuuujuaq	N1
Eva Putuguq	Makivik Corporation	Montréal	N2
Bernie Adams	Municipality of Kangiqsujaq	Kangiqsujaq	N3
Annie Baron	Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS)	Québec City	N4
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N5
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N6
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N7
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N8
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N9
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N10
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N11
Unnamed	—	Kangiqsujaq	N12
Unnamed	—	Akulivik	N13
Unnamed	—	Akulivik	N14
Unnamed	—	Akulivik	N15
Category 3 : Employees in public services other than police (Inuit and non-Inuit)			
Lizzie Aloupa	Inuit Rights Officer - Makivik Corporation	Kuuujuaq	II1
Phoebe Atagotaaluk	Justice Committee - Makivik Corporation	Inukjuak	II2
Aileen MacKinnon	Saqijuaq Project Coordinator - NRBHSS	Kuuujuaq	IQ3
Paul Palubeskie	Justice Committee - Makivik Corporation	Montréal	II4
Unnamed	KRG	Kuuujuaq	II5
Unnamed	KRG	Inukjuak	II6
Unnamed	NRBHSS	—	IQ7
Unnamed	NRBHSS	Kuuujuaq	IQ8
Unnamed	—	Kuuujuaq	II9

Appendix 2: Interview template

Questions for current or former police officers

Professional career

- 1- How long have you been working as an officer in Nunavik?
- 2- Have you worked in other Inuit communities? In your own community?
- 3- What motivated you to apply and stay in this position?
- 4- Before holding this position, did you have any experiences in Nunavik or other indigenous communities?

Perceptions of the North (for non-Inuit)

- 5- Before coming to Nunavik, did you get informed or prepared about Nunavik realities, the history, or the culture?
- 6- Did you have preconceived ideas or expectations about the reality of Nunavik?
- 7- Had you heard about specific events relating to Nunavik?
- 8- At first sight, what did you find different from your own culture? Did you experience culture shock? What did you do to adapt yourself to this new reality?
- 9- Do you feel your perception of the North has changed since your arrival?

Work in the community

- 10- Is your job experience here different from other job experiences you have had, or from what you learned at the police academy?
- 11- How would you describe your current role and work in the community? What part of your work do you think is most important?
- 12- What are the main issues you face every day in doing your job?
- 13- What is your biggest challenge as an officer in Nunavik? Jobwise and personally?
- 14- What parts of your job, or tasks, do you find most tricky to do here?
- 15- Do you feel that Inuit understand your work, actions, and explanations when you have to deal with them?
- 16- Do you have the feeling that legal procedures or policing practices are inappropriate or not effective enough in Nunavik? What alternatives would be more successful?
- 17- Do you have the feeling that Inuit understand the legal system?
- 18- Do you take time to explain your job, your actions, and legal procedures to Inuit? How do you make sure they understand?
- 19- Have you ever tried to adapt some aspects of your work to make them fit in better with Inuit society or local culture?
- 20- Should certain practices or structures be changed to improve your work with Inuit?
- 21- What parts of your job do you find most rewarding?
- 22- What would make you feel more effective and useful in your current position?

Relations with the community

- 23- How do you think the community perceives officers? What do they expect from them?
- 24- What parts of your job do you feel are most appreciated by the community?
- 25- *(For non-Inuit)* In general, how would you describe relations between the police and the community? The positive and negative aspects? Have relations evolved over time? Do you have friendly relationships with some Inuit? Do you feel disrespect or racism toward you?
- 26- *(For Inuit)* As a police officer, how would you describe relations between the police and Nunavimmiut? Has your relationship with the community changed since you began working as an officer? What are the main challenges you face in your relations with the community? What are the main sources of conflict or misunderstanding? How could respect, trust, and communication be improved?
- 27- What do you think are the best practices to be appreciated and accepted by the community?
- 28- Do you take part in community activities, information activities, or prevention activities?
- 29- Do you have the impression there are misunderstandings, due to language or culture, between Inuit and non-Inuit officers?

Cooperation with police services

- 30- Do you have the feeling that Inuit are comfortable asking for police assistance when they need it? Why do you think some people are uncomfortable asking for police assistance?
- 31- Do you think women call less often for assistance?
- 32- For what reasons do Inuit generally call the police station? Is there a difference between men and women, and between elders, adults, and youth?
- 33- Do you think Inuit are sufficiently informed about laws and legal procedures?
- 34- How would you define your working relationships with community services, health-care services, and social services? Do you think these working relationships are important?
- 35- How would you define your relationship with the mayor or with the municipality in general? Do you think this relationship is important?
- 36- Do you work with other services, such as justice committees, women's shelters, community wellness coordinators, or the school, for example?

Position of female victims

- 37- Can you talk about the role of officers when a woman is being abused?
- 38- Do you often get calls for cases of assault against women?
- 39- Do you think police services respond correctly to the situation of violence against women?
- 40- What could be changed to police services or to other services to improve support and protection for female victims of violence?
- 41- Why do you think a woman often hesitates to press charges against her assailant?
- 42- Can you talk about any situations of missing or murdered women?
- 43- Have you ever dealt with a case of sexual exploitation in Nunavik?

Recruiting and retaining officers

- 44- What would you recommend to an officer who has just arrived in Nunavik?
- 45- What would you recommend to an Inuk who is considering becoming an officer?
- 46- What could be done to increase the number of Inuit officers?

- 47- Do you think officers should have access to more training or more appropriate training to work in the North?
- 48- What could be done to increase recruiting and reduce turnover?

Conclusion

- 49- Do you think we could get inspiration from Inuit traditional practices and knowledge to improve policing practices and the justice system in Nunavik?

Questions for Nunavimmiut and public-sector workers

Professional career

- 1- What is your previous work experience?

Perceptions and relations with police officers

- 2- In your opinion, what is the role of officers in the communities? What are the positive aspects of their work? What are the negative aspects? Are the officers helping the community?
- 3- Have you ever contacted the police? Do you contact them regularly? Are you satisfied with the assistance you get from them?
- 4- In your opinion, what perception does the community have of officers? Do you think Inuit are reluctant to contact the police for help?
- 5- How would you describe general relations between the community and officers? Do you often see conflicts or misunderstandings between some Inuit and some officers?
- 6- Do you think police officers make enough effort to explain the laws and legal procedures to Inuit? Do they make enough effort to listen to Inuit and understand their point of view?
- 7- Do you think community members make enough effort to communicate with the police?
- 8- What types of misunderstandings may be due to linguistic and cultural differences?
- 9- Have you ever experienced or seen a serious conflict between a police officer and an Inuk, mistreatment by officers, or racist remarks by an Inuk?
- 10- In your opinion, why are there so few Inuit officers? Do you think they could help their community better?
- 11- In the past, when there were no police officers here, do you know how Inuit resolved conflicts? Do you think traditional knowledge or practices could be used today?

Dealing with police officers at work

- 12- Do you have a professional position or specific role in the community (past or present) in which you work with police services or communicate with them?
- 13- How would you describe cooperation and communication between the police and your services?
- 14- Do you have any agreements or memorandums of understanding that involve dealing with the police in some situations?

15- Have any specific practices had an especially beneficial impact?

Female victims of violence

16- Could you talk specifically about the role of officers in situations where a woman has been a victim of violence? Do women feel comfortable calling the police for help? Are police practices adequate for this kind of intervention?

17- How can trust be improved between victims and officers?

18- What resources are available for female victims of violence?

19- What practices or structures should be created to provide these victims with better support and help them break out of the circle of violence?

Justice system

20- What is your opinion of the justice system in Nunavik?

21- Do you feel that some legal procedures or police practices are inadequate or inappropriate in the context of Nunavik?

22- Do you feel that some Inuit poorly understand what the Court does and the justice system?

23- In your opinion, could some parts of the justice system be improved to provide crime victims and their families with better support?

24- Do you know existing support services for crime victims or ex-inmates

25- To improve community wellbeing and safety, could we look for inspiration from some parts of Inuit culture and put them to greater use?

Appendix 3: Workshop agenda

Improving relations between police services and Nunavimmiut

Workshop on October 29, 30, at MAKIVIK Conference room and on October 31 at KRG conference room, KUUJJUAQ

DAY 1 – Role of police officers

9:00 to 10:30 – Introduction

Word of welcome

Objectives of the research and the workshop

Round-table introduction of all participants

Icebreaking game

10:15 to 10:30 – Coffee break

10:30 to 12:00 – Thematic Session # 1: Role of police officers in Nunavik communities

What do Inuit expect from police officers?

What are the main reasons for police intervention and assistance in the communities?

Under what circumstances can the work of police officers damage or injure the community's wellbeing?

12:00 to 1:30 – Lunch break

1:30 to 3:00 – Continuation of thematic session # 1

How do police officers help communities and what do they do best?

How can police officers provide more help?

What sort of resources or ways and means do police officers need to be more useful and effective?

3:00 to 3:15 – Coffee break

3:15 to 4:30 – Feedback on your ideas and feelings

What is the police officer's job and what does he or she need to do it right?

What have you learned today, and how do you feel about the discussions?

DAY 2 – Relations between police officers and Nunavimmiut

9:00 to 10:15 – “Share an anecdote” activity: Cultural misunderstanding

10:15 to 10:30 – Coffee break

10:30 to 12:00 – Thematic session # 2: Relations between police officers and Nunavimmiut

What kind of problems may be caused by cultural and linguistic differences?
Which police practices and behaviours make relations worse, and which ones make them better?
How can we improve communication and mutual understanding?

12:00 to 1:30 – Lunch break

1:30 to 3:00 – Continuation of thematic session # 2

How can we improve recruitment, training, and retention of Inuit and non-Inuit police officers?
How can we help police get integrated and take part in community life?
How can we make police and justice more accessible and useful to women who are victims of violence and abuse?

3:00 to 3:15 – Coffee break

3:15 to 4:30 – Feedback on your ideas and feelings

What can you do to improve relations with police officers?
What have you learned today, and how do you feel about the discussions?

End of the day

*Thursday evening: Dinner at Nuna Golf (paid for all participants).

DAY 3 – Getting different services to work together and the legal context

9:00 to 10:30 – Thematic session # 3: Getting different services to work together and the legal context

Which police practices make it easier or harder for police to work with other services?
Which policies / rules should be improved to help different services work together?
How can we improve understanding of the justice system and the duties of police officers?

10:30 to 10:45 – Coffee break

10:45 to 12:00 – Continuation of thematic session #3

When it comes to preserving harmony, how can Inuit knowledge and practices help improve current public safety practices and policies?

12:00 to 1:30 – Lunch break

1:30 to 3:00 – Write down a strategic plan (if needed)

End of the workshop

Appendix 4: Workshop summary

Relations between Police Services and Inuit – Analysis of Practices and Policies in Nunavik

Summary of the workshop held in Kuujuaq from October 29 to 31 Prepared for Public Safety Canada

A discussion workshop was held in Kuujuaq from October 29 to 31, 2019. Its objective was to gain a better understanding of relations between Nunavimmiut and police services in Nunavik, and to propose solutions to improve police services. The thirteen participants came from different services: police services, social services, youth protection, the Sapummijit crime victim support centre, and the community reintegration program. They discussed the following themes: role and image of police officers, relations with Nunavimmiut, and cooperation between public services.

DAY 1

The workshop participants first discussed the **role of police officers in Nunavik**. They mentioned that most Inuit currently have a negative image of police officers, whose actions seem to be mostly punitive. Participants suggested that police officers should put their “human” side forward, whether on duty or not. They pointed out that police officers should have a role of helping and protecting Nunavimmiut and should act as peacemakers in the communities.

Participants also talked about what **Inuit expect from police services in Nunavik**. First of all, they stressed the fact that the role of police officers was never clearly explained to Nunavimmiut when police services were introduced in the North. Participants wished to see improvement in Inuit knowledge of the justice system. For their part, police officers should better understand Inuit culture, values, and history. Improving mutual understanding would help them deal with Inuit expectations and adjust their work to the reality of small, isolated northern communities. Participants also mentioned that some police officers go too far in their duties and commit abuses, due to an accumulation of frustrations and harsh working conditions. They suggested implementing a better system of surveillance to prevent such situations from happening, since Inuit victims of police abuse often fail to report incidents that involve police officers.

Police assistance or intervention in Nunavik is sought mainly for cases of violence (especially conjugal violence) or distress (especially suicides), most of the time when someone is intoxicated. For many reasons, such as past negative experiences with police officers, Inuit are often hostile towards police services. In the case of female victims of violence, participants stressed that there is a lack of resources and compassion. This problem applies also to mentally disabled people and to people who have suicidal thoughts. Furthermore, participants wished to see more action against smuggling of hard liquors and drugs from the South by plane.

Participants also brought up **positive aspects of police services** in their communities. They mentioned that police officers help ensure public safety, accompany and support victims, arrest and penalize offenders, are involved in prevention activities, are available at all times, and are a gateway to other services that people may need. At the same time, **police services were criticized** for not taking certain cases seriously, for resorting to unnecessary threats, for using violence against Inuit, for being racist, for not respecting confidentiality, and for miscommunicating information. Participants thought that police officers should focus on de-escalating situations non-violently. There should be more communication in Inuktitut to avoid misunderstandings, and this recommendation would imply hiring more translators or more Inuit officers. In addition, young, inexperienced police officers should not patrol on their own without supervision, should have basic knowledge of the North before being hired, and should continue such training after they arrive. Police officers should be more involved in their villages, as police officers and most of all as community members.

DAY 2

After pointing out different cases of cultural misunderstanding, participants concluded during the second day of the workshop that in order **to reduce such misunderstandings** everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their ethnic group, their education, their mother tongue, their family's reputation, or their job position. They came up with the idea of forming a human rights committee in order to promote equality between *Qallunaat* and Inuit, thereby encouraging everyone to work together for community well-being. **A good practice to adopt for police officers** would be to hold regular meetings between Inuit and police services, as well as other services when needed, thus providing a space where everyone can share their views, be on the same page, and act consistently. Furthermore, police officers should be more involved with youths by visiting students at school and by participating in traditional activities with them. Getting to know each other and creating a strong feeling of community could help police officers work with and for

Nunavimmiut. Everyone would become more comfortable and able to work with and talk openly to each other.

To develop a positive image of police services, participants proposed that police officers should show their commitment to working in Nunavik by smiling and waving at other members of the community. They should visit schools at least once a month, or, when available, teach kids the role of a police officer.

Hiring and retention of more Inuit police officers is one of KRPF's top priorities at the moment. Hiring more Inuit could ameliorate the image of police officers in communities and resolve the pressing need for more Inuktitut-speaking services. Better retention of Inuit officers would require providing them with access to counselling in Inuktitut, taking care not to overwork them, and respecting the fact that they were hired as officers, not as translators.

To make police services more accessible and useful to women victims and elders, participants discussed different ways of accompanying victims through the legal process and supporting them to the end of their case, while letting them know that the police are on their side. Women should also learn more about the implications of pressing charges and be reassured that they are not the ones who should feel guilty about their situation. They should also be able to get non-police support, such as talking to elders or being helped by family members so that they would not have to live in constant fear. With regard to elders, it was suggested that they should at least get basic knowledge about the justice system because most of them had not been educated in the Western education system. They also need services in Inuktitut, since many do not speak English well enough, or even not at all, and therefore cannot ask for help from English-speaking police services.

DAY 3

The third day started with a discussion about **cooperation and communication between police services and other services**. Some participants noted that the ongoing project in Puvirnituq, *Saqijjuq*, which pairs police and social services to cover "social cases," had been a success and should be implemented on a larger scale. In the same vein, there was discussion that more stable work teams, not only in the police force but also in all other services, would help improve mutual understanding and service delivery. Some added that Inuit should be included on all the teams of all the services, in order to increase involvement by the local population. Participants were concerned about poor communication of information from investigations and autopsies; a better system should be implemented to ensure that community members are correctly informed and have access to documents translated into English or Inuktitut (and not only into French).

Miscommunication and mistakes also occur when people receive a summons to appear; police officers should make sure that the right person gets the right document and understands the information on it and its seriousness. To conclude, all police officers should be fluent in English; otherwise people's lives may be endangered if they cannot properly understand and communicate in emergency situations.

Different ways were proposed to **improve Inuit understanding of the duty of police officers**. First, participants talked about educating Inuit so that they can understand the seriousness of their acts and their rights. Such education would prevent multiple convictions for the same crime in cases where the individual does not fully understand the justice system. The KRPF should also have a complaint commissioner: a neutral person who could help defend the rights of Inuit and support them if they are victims of unfair treatment by police services.

Appendix 5: Calls for action of the Viens Commission Final Report

The calls for action presented below are listed in the *Final Report* of the *Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress* and more specifically in Chapter 7 “Findings on police services” (pp. 255-289).

- CALL FOR ACTION No. 29: Revise how the training of recruits hired by Indigenous police officers is financed to reduce the cost difference between the various categories of candidates.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 30: Inject the funds required to ensure that the offering of regular and continuing education at the École nationale de police du Québec is fully accessible in English and French.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 31: In collaboration with Indigenous authorities, establish a complete status report on the state of the infrastructure and equipment available to Indigenous police forces, the wages and the geographic (distance, road access, etc.) and social (criminality, poverty, etc.) realities of the communities they serve.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 32: Initiate negotiations with the federal government and the Indigenous authorities to agree to a budget to regulate salaries, the infrastructures and the equipment for the Indigenous police force.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 33: Assess the possibility of implementing joint purchasing policies for all Indigenous police forces in Québec.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 34: Amend Section 90 of the Police Act to readily acknowledge the existence and status of Indigenous police forces as being similar to those of other police organizations in Québec.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 35: Undertake negotiations with the federal government and Indigenous authorities to ensure recurring and sustainable funding for all Indigenous policing.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 36: Modify the process for allocating budget resources to police forces to reflect the needs identified by Indigenous authorities in terms of infrastructure, human, financial and logistical resources and the individual realities of the communities or territories.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 37: Assess the possibility of setting up mixed intervention patrols (police officers and community workers) for vulnerable persons, both in urban environments and in First Nations communities and Inuit villages.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 38: Amend the Police Act to extend the time limit for filing police ethics complaints to three years.
- CALL FOR ACTION No. 39: Conduct information campaigns among Indigenous populations concerning the existing complaints processes.