

Policing First Nations: Community Perspectives

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Policing in First Nation Communities: Community Perspectives

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Executive Summary

The first component of this project was the production of a comprehensive literature review that presented an overview of the context in which policing occurs in Aboriginal communities in Canada (Jones, Ruddell, Nestor, Quinn, & Phillips, 2014). As noted by Jones and colleagues (2014), First Nations communities represent a small fraction of Canadian police officers; however, “the manner in which First Nations communities are policed has profound long-term implications for the residents living there, especially given the high rates of crime and victimization in many of these places” (p. 1). The literature review identified five policy-related gaps in the research surrounding policing: resourcing/capacity, administrative capacity, policing arrangements, Aboriginal policing as distinct policing model, and responding to crime and victimization (Jones et al., 2014). Finally, the literature review investigated “three distinct types of agencies policing Aboriginal communities and peoples, and that each type faces a different set of challenges that are shaped by their role and geographic location as well as organizational size and history: large networked police organizations, self-administered Aboriginal police services, and specialized Aboriginal policing programs delivered by municipal or regional police services” (Jones et al., 2014, pp. 2 -3).

This research is timely given that Public Safety Canada began a review of the First Nations Policing Program (FNPP) in 2014. As part of this review process, Public Safety Canada created the Federal-Provincial-Territorial working group on the renewal of the FNPP. Moreover, in 2014, Saskatchewan’s Ministry of Justice: Policing and Community Safety Services also engaged with a number of stakeholders to work toward a renewed strategy for policing Aboriginal communities in the province. In addition, it has been noted that, as part of the larger evolving landscape of policing in Canada, those changes might also affect policing in First Nations communities (Murphy, 2007) and vice versa. This report provides results that can be considered by these groups in their efforts to provide more effective and culturally relevant policing in these communities.

This study represents the second stage of a multi-stage research project seeking to understand the issues and challenges faced when policing in Aboriginal communities. The current study responds to a gap in the research literature about perceptions of Aboriginal policing. While the perceptions of officers policing in First Nations communities has been examined elsewhere (see Lithopoulos & Ruddell, 2011; Ruddell & Lithopoulos, 2011), there is a

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dearth of research examining the perspectives of First Nations Peoples. This study seeks to remedy this by providing the results of interviews undertaken in four Saskatchewan First Nations regarding policing in their communities.

This research began with the construction of the interview guide, identifying a possible sample of First Nations communities in Saskatchewan for participation, and garnering approval from the University of Regina Research Ethics Board to carry out the study. Although eight communities were identified for possible participation in the study based on their geographical location, linguistic/cultural backgrounds, Tribal Council affiliation, and Treaty status, in the end, four communities agreed to participate. These communities represent north and central Saskatchewan; Dene and Plains Cree linguistic groups; the Prince Albert, Touchwood, Meadow Lake Tribal Councils and one unaffiliated community; and Treaties 4, 6, 8 and 10. In total, 20 individuals participated in interviews that lasted between 30 and 90 minutes in duration. The interviews were initially transcribed, and then analyzed using Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analysis. The analyses presented in this report represent the perceptions of these research participants.

The results of the analysis led to the creation of the global theme of *Building a Holistic Policing Model* which arose from seven organizing themes, which in turn drew upon twenty-four basic themes. The primary findings associated with the global theme included, from the perspectives of the participants:

- acknowledgement and identification of the reality of crime and public safety issues in these communities by the participants;
- the importance of the role of history, language, and culture when considering the administration of justice;
- the importance of police awareness and acknowledgement of the effects of intergenerational trauma resulting from the legacy of Canada's colonial history, particularly the *Indian Residential School System*;
- the need for a more holistic approach to justice and policing centered on restorative values such as healing, helping, harmony, and balance that seeks to restore the community to a state of equilibrium rather than solely meeting legal concerns;
- the crucial importance of reciprocal mutual respect in relationships between the police and the community;

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- the importance of collaborations between the police and community in addressing public safety issues;
- the need to embrace and incorporate a holistic approach by the police that moves significantly beyond a law enforcement paradigm;
- the flexibility to consider different logistical models of administering policing that reflect the individual circumstances of communities (i.e., integrated, self-administered).

Based on these findings, a number of steps in creating a holistic model of policing that better address the public safety needs, the culture and traditions, and the worldview as it pertains to justice on First Nations communities were identified, and they included:

- recognition by police that First Nations cultures and traditions can play a key role in addressing crime in their communities;
- taking steps to foster and build mutually respectful and collaborative relationships;
- facilitating open discussions between police and communities;
- engaging in an examination of the public safety issues within each community and developing a comprehensive strategy (inclusive of police, other agencies, and all levels of government) to address them;
- cultural awareness and language training for officers working in First Nations communities (who could take advantage of local keepers of this knowledge such as Elders);
- hiring more First Nations officers (particularly local individuals) to work in contract policing;
- developing a two-tiered or blended model of policing that integrates self-administered policing (of some kind) within a partnered framework with conventional contract policing ; and
- securing sufficient funding to address these suggestions / recommendations in a comprehensive manner.

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Methodology

The interviews conducted for this study represent only a small portion of the First Nations peoples who might contribute their wisdom and knowledge to answering the research questions. Small samples are often chosen for investigations such as this one in order to work within time and cost limitations. To ensure the people who are interviewed can provide information that will fully inform the research questions, a comprehensive process is utilized to select the interview participants.

Mason (2007) emphasized that the relationship between the participants and the research questions must not be ad hoc or accidental. Drawing on Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987), and Strauss and Corbin (1990), Mason suggested that a process of theoretical sampling allows researchers to construct a sample that shows relevance to the research question and allows for the testing of theories and arguments. In other words, for this inquiry it is important that the participants be chosen purposefully so their interviews contribute in a meaningful way to the research questions.

Neuman (2006) concurred with this approach and suggested that qualitative research requires that samples be constructed in such a manner that deepens understanding and illuminates the research questions. He proposed a specific type of non-probability sampling referred to as *quota sampling*. In *quota sampling* categories or subsets of participants are established which are closely linked to the research questions, which in turn ensures that key components of the research questions are answered. Within each of these categories a limited number of participants are interviewed to ensure the totality of the interviews conducted are distributed across the relevant categories.

Sampling Process

Prior to engaging in any interviews, discussions took place involving the principal investigator and representatives from the RCMP and the Province of Saskatchewan to determine what subsets or characteristics within the First Nations communities of Saskatchewan should be included in the study. In this case, both time and cost were limiting factors, however within those parameters it was deemed critical to ensure that the quota sampling technique included as broad a cross section of Aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan as possible. Altogether, four subsets were considered of key importance: geography, linguistic background, Tribal council affiliation and which treaty the First Nation had signed.

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Geography was deemed an important subset given the distinctive challenges and opportunities it presents to policing and everyday life in Aboriginal communities. Geography can influence how a community's culture evolves and how community members interact with outside services such as policing. Similarly, geographical location can influence how policing services are delivered to communities. Limited road access, for example, influences which public safety issues are of greatest concern to the community and also influenced their historic relationships with the police. In that light, Saskatchewan was divided into different regions including: north — inclusive of northeast and northwest, central — inclusive of west-central and east-central, and south — inclusive of southeast and southwest.

The next factor deemed relevant to the research questions was the matter of linguistic background. Saskatchewan is composed primarily of peoples from Dene, Cree (Plains, Woodland and Swampy), Nakota, Nakawe (Dakota), and Salteaux linguistic groups. Each of these groups has distinct cultures and histories in Saskatchewan. As a result, there are potential differences in the ways they expect the police to interact with their communities, and this may also influence differences in the priorities for policing activities.

First Nations communities can also be grouped by their Tribal Council affiliation. Recognizing that some First Nations are unaffiliated to specific Tribal Councils, and that affiliation to a Tribal Council does not infer uniformity on policing related issues, Tribal Council affiliation was nonetheless considered an important subset of First Nations communities.

The last subset considered in building the sample was that of Treaty. Saskatchewan is comprised of First Nations communities that are signatories to treaties 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10, as well as communities not subject to treaty. While treaties employ a similar language, each treaty stands alone in defining the relationship between the communities and Canada. Moreover, within these treaties are references to policing or policing related activities. Since the research includes inquiries with respect to the policing obligations pursuant to these treaties this was deemed an important factor to include in the study.

Eight communities that provided broad coverage of these four factors were initially identified for inclusion in the inquiry. Letters and emails were sent to the Chief and Council of these eight First Nations communities soliciting their participation. Altogether, four communities participated in this study.

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Ethical Considerations

Prior to engaging in any interviews for this research, an application was submitted to the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Regina and approval for the study was granted after their review. Where possible (and if requested), the participants were provided with electronic copies of the final report either on an individual basis, through the band office or via the website for the Collaborative Centre for Justice and Safety.

There was no deception involved in the interview process. Each participant was presented with (both in written and oral forms) a copy of the informed consent form. No interview took place until after the informed consent form had been explained and signed by the individual participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the research during the consent-seeking process. They were advised that they could refuse to answer any questions or stop the interview at any time without any consequences. To avoid any potential issues with respect to confidentiality (anonymity could not be guaranteed as a result of the sampling process and the location of each interview), no names of individuals are presented in the report and potential individual identifying information (e.g. name of the community) has been removed from the quotes used in the report.

Analytical Process for Interview Data

The goal of any qualitative research, such as the current study, is to extract meaning from data. In this case, to find the wisdom within the interviews that answers the research questions. This meaning must be present in the interviews, or in other words it must come from the participants themselves, rather than from the researcher or any other outside influence. Furthermore, readers of this research must be able to see and understand the process used by the researchers in analyzing the data so they can be confident that the process used reflects what was conveyed by the participants in the interviews. In order to facilitate these goals the audio recordings of the 20 interviews were transcribed.

To achieve transparency in qualitative research, the process used by the investigators must be both explainable in the sense that the process can be described, as well as apparent and obvious within the analysis itself. In other words, the researcher should be able to describe the process that was used and that process should be apparent to the reader as they follow the narrative of the analysis. To extract this wisdom in a way that readers can see and understand,

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Taylor-Powell and Renner (2003) advocated for an iterative approach to analysis of qualitative data that allowed themes to emerge from the data.

Attride-Stirling (2001) pointed out the importance of disciplined analysis processes to give credibility to the research, and to ensure that the analysis leads to meaningful and useful results. Attride-Stirling outlined a comprehensive step-by-step process for the analysis of qualitative data and she argued that this process must be thoroughly explained to the reader to ensure the conclusions are understood. She described a process of *thematic network analysis* which includes a map illustrating the themes that emerge when the data is analyzed and the relationships of these themes to each other.

Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analysis process is described in Table 1.1. The process begins with the development of a coding framework based on the objectives of the research. This coding framework consists of a number of basic concepts that allow the researcher to dissect the data into smaller related segments. While this coding framework is typically developed based on the research objectives, this framework must also be allowed to evolve throughout the coding process so that it truly emerges from the data itself. In other words, the initial assumptions about what might be in the data must be allowed to grow and develop as the data is analyzed so that the final coding framework is truly reflective of the data. In this case, the coding framework was taken primarily from the research questions and the interview guide in order to start the analysis process. The text of the interview transcripts were read and individual segments of text categorized within this framework. As this coding process progressed, the framework was allowed to evolve and grow as meaning emerged from the words of the participants.

The second step in Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analysis involves the identification of themes from the coded text. In other words, the coding process provided a framework for the emergence of basic themes within the text. The coding framework is refined and definitions are applied to related concepts as they emerged from the data, leading to a list of basic themes, each of which is supported by the data. In this case the words of the participants led to a final coding framework that was then refined into a list of basic themes. Each of these themes is supported by the actual words of the participants themselves.

In the first and second steps, the text of the interviews was organized into codes and then basic themes by interpreting the meaning of the words and organizing the words under related

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concepts. In the third step, construction of the thematic networks begins by organizing the basic themes in a similar fashion. The meaning of the basic themes and their relationships to each other are explored allowing them to be grouped together under *organizing themes*. These organizing themes illustrate the relationships the basic themes have to each other but also reveal an elevated level of understanding of the data. Next, the relationships and meaning within the organizing themes are explored to expose global themes. These global themes represent the overall tenets of what was said in the interviews leading the researcher to identify broad based truths that are related to the research questions. The basic, organizing and global themes are then illustrated in a map that graphically shows the interconnected relationships between themes. One or more global themes may emerge from the interview data and each of these global themes should be at the center of its own thematic network. These networks allow readers to see the progression of the relationships between the insights and observations expressed by the participants and the conclusions of the researcher.

The next stage of Attride-Stirling's (2001) process is to describe and explore the thematic networks. The links between the themes are interpreted so that the patterns are evident to the reader and the themes fully understood. What is important at this stage is not only to describe these relationships, but also to understand them. What do the relationships between the themes reveal and how do these revelations lead to the global themes?

Finally, the thematic networks and their underlying conclusions are tied back to the objectives of the research itself to reveal what they have uncovered about the research questions and any underlying theories. This is the step that allows the research questions to be answered, and in some cases reveals gaps in the research that bears further inquiry.

By employing Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network analysis process the researcher can avoid pitfalls such as looking at frequency of ideas within the data rather than the importance of these ideas and how they relate to each other and to the research questions. This approach results in a graphic illustration of these ideas and their relationships, and shows the step-by-step process that led to them.

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Table 1 Thematic Networks – Steps in the Analytic Process

Analysis Stage A: Reduction or Breakdown of Text

Step 1. Code Material

- a. Devise a coding framework
- b. Dissect text into text segments using the coding framework

Step 2. Identify Themes

- a. Abstract themes from coded text segments
- b. Refine themes

Step 3. Construct Thematic Networks

- a. Arrange themes
- b. Select Basic Themes
- c. Rearrange into Organizing Themes
- d. Deduce Global Theme(s)
- e. Illustrate as thematic network(s)
- f. Verify and refine the network(s)

Analysis Stage B: Exploration of Text

Step 4 Describe and Explore the Thematic Networks

- a. Describe the network
- b. Explore the network

Analysis Stage C: Integration of Exploration

Step 5. Summarize Thematic Networks

Step 6 Interpret Patterns

(Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 391)

Analysis and Results

This section of the report presents how the analysis was undertaken and describes the results of the interviews. The sampling process is first described. That description is followed by an overview of some general observations that emerged from the interviews. The next section presents the results of the analytic process of thematic network analysis, a qualitative tool that initially produced a number of issues discussed during the analysis of the transcribed interviews which were then were organized into basic themes and then organizing themes. Using the analytic process described above, the global theme was deduced by integrating the contributions made by the organizing themes. The resulting global theme provides the highest order in the thematic network analysis, presenting the overarching conclusions reached based on the participants' insights, observations, and perspectives regarding policing in First Nations communities.

The Interviews

Although representatives from eight communities were initially invited to participate in the study, stakeholders from four communities ultimately agreed to participate. These four communities were representative of north, and central Saskatchewan; Dene and Plains Cree linguistic groups; Prince Albert, Touchwood, Meadow Lake and unaffiliated Tribal Councils;

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and treaties 4,6,8 and 10. A total of 20 individuals participated in interviews that lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

One limitation of the study is that we were not able to carry out interviews with representatives from all eight communities. Moreover, the principal investigator was also limited by considerations of time and travel to interviewing 20 respondents. As a result, there is no question that many individuals with important knowledge were not interviewed during this inquiry. This is not to suggest their insights were not important, only that the scope of the interviews was somewhat limited by logistical considerations.

General Observations Emerging from the Interviews

The concept of policing, as commonly considered today as officials empowered to enforce the law, does not translate well when discussing traditional Aboriginal practices of maintaining order within their communities. Historically, Aboriginal communities had mechanisms of what might be considered informal social control but rather than being undertaken by a distinguishable group, the maintenance and enforcement of social norms and community safety were a community responsibility. Depending on the given situation, those responsible for addressing the violations of norms that jeopardized safety could vary clearly demonstrating the holistic nature of Aboriginal traditional approaches.

The reality is that over the past 150 years “policing” terminology has embedded itself in Aboriginal vocabulary. One challenge in interpreting the information in the transcripts is that while the policing terminology is expressed within these interviews, it is not necessarily used in the same context that it would be in non-Aboriginal cultures and traditions. For example, participants will use the term “police” but describe a function that is outside of the traditional Eurocentric understanding of the role and function of the police and may include other professions, such as social worker or parole officer. As a result, defining who the police were as well as the role they may have played within the respondents’ communities presents a challenge because they were asked to define something that has no traditional historical basis. In some ways, we were asking them to create a role for policing within Aboriginal communities.

Lastly, it is critical to understand that the comments of the participants in this research were as varied as their geographical location and tribal ancestry. That is not to say that there were no commonalities but only that we need to recognize the diversity of each community and

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its own traditions and history that influenced the way they interpreted the contemporary understanding of policing.

Results

This section presents the findings that emerged from the thematic network analysis. It outlines and summarizes each of the organizing themes following the presentation of the issues discussed and their integration into basic themes as well as the integration of the basic themes in the development of the organizing themes. Direct quotes from the participants are provided to demonstrate the analytic process as well as explicitly reflect the insight and observations of the participants. Finally, the thematic map is presented and the global theme is discussed.

Organizing Theme 1: Community Safety

Table 2 provides a summary of the issues expressed in the interviews by the respondents and the basic themes identified in the analytic process that led to the construction of the first organizing theme: *Community Safety*.

Table 2: Organizing Theme 1: Community Safety		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Substance Abuse and Mental Illness	Current Public Safety Challenges	Community Safety
Increasing Violence		
Suicide		
Theft as a Result of Poverty		
Treating Addictions and Mental Health Issues	Effects of Current Judicial Sanctions	
Declining Support for Traditional Tools		
Negative Effects of Incarceration		
Inequities in the Judicial Process		
Long Term Effects of Criminal Records		
Lack of Deterrence		

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Police Response Times	Current Shortcomings in Policing	
Lack of Positive Community Contacts		
Police Awareness and Interest in Aboriginal Culture and Community Affairs		
Policing Bias		
Police as the Enemy		
Language and Communication Barriers		
Police Misconduct and the Public Complaints Process		
Lack of Local Control		
Police Officer Longevity in the Community		

Basic Theme 1: Current Public Safety Challenges

Basic Theme 1, *Current Public Safety Challenges*, represents the integration of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Substance Abuse and Mental Illness*, *Increasing Violence*, *Suicide*, and *Theft as a Result of Poverty*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Substance Abuse and Mental Illness

Drug abuse, including prescription drug abuse is central to public safety issues in Aboriginal communities because it leads to violence, property crimes and psychological illness.

But I guess the Elders say that's [Cree 47:35], that means it's a white man's sickness. Those are things that need the expert. Like schizophrenia is one of the worst. And bipolar. Like, those things are—and we know, like, that a lot of it is from drug abuse. (SKFN2)

And being a dry reserve, doesn't help anything. Liquor and that, drugs still get on the reserve. (SKFN4)

And one thing leads to another, involving violence, and alcohol gets involved and drugs get involved. I know where they sell the drugs here. I know where they sell alcohol here in the community. Right now you go down the street, you [will] see people that are staggering around, carrying liquor and stuff. (SKFN8)

Alcohol. There's a lot of drugs. (SKFN9)

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Even you talk to the Elders tomorrow, they'll do the same thing. They'll say the same thing like I said. Drinking problem, that's what they're going to say. Welfare is going to be on Monday. That night is—you know, a lot of drinking going on. RCMP back and forth, back and forth all night. (SKFN10)

All I can think of now is that bootleg is the biggest problem and drugs too. (SKFN11)

And when they start drinking and wandering around the community, when an Elder tells them to behave themselves, they verbally abuse the Elders. (SKFN14)

You know, and the thing about it is they don't do a damn thing with our doctors, those that are selling them or giving them prescription drugs. (SKFN18)

Increasing Violence

Violence, including violence directed at the police, Elder abuse and family violence is seen as on the rise in Aboriginal communities. Family violence is a significant issue, not only for its harmful effects on the victims, but also because healthy families have been identified by the participants as an important tool for social control.

Now when I sit with the RCMP I tell them, "Nowadays you guys, you have to be two in each vehicle." That's how dangerous it is now. Maybe a month, two months ago—that one guy always had a sawed-off shotgun in his, back [of] vehicle, and he's got 13 charges. So that's what I mean. It's different now. (SKFN6)

And the parents they drank, there was a lot of violence, lots of family violence. I remember that in my own childhood, there was a lot of family violence. (SKFN9)

We're at a time where it's hard to get back together again. So then violence gets involved. People, when they're—alcohol is involved, you know, they bump into one another and conflict, you know what I mean? (SKFN8)

So that's the only thing is, like the Elder telling me today, really he doesn't want armed. I said nowadays it has to. It's different here in the reserve now. There's too many young people. A lot of things happening. A lot of drugs happening. We need that. (SKFN6)

Like family violence and, like, in the home, a lot of people have problems. Family have problems with children. (SKFN8)

Sister [name] who was with us for three years. She was 69. She left in July. She got raped. Somebody went into her home during the night and raped her. (SKFN9)

Elder abuse, you know. There's lots in the community. (SKFN19)

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Suicide

Rates of suicide in Aboriginal communities can be several times the rates in non-Aboriginal communities (Lemstra, Rogers, Moraros, & Grant, 2013), and it often stems from drug and alcohol abuse.

It's getting to suicide. We had two this summer. It's really hurts us—because of alcohol. (SKFN10)

Suicide is a big problem too. (SKFN11)

I don't know how many times the people suicide, kill each other, all those things. Sometimes in this community there's a lot of people commit suicide, whether it's hanging themselves or shooting themselves. (SKFN12)

Theft as a Result of Poverty

The effects of theft are made worse because people are poor and victims might not be able to replace items that are stolen. Respondents expressed the view that others sometimes steal to survive due to poverty.

Even people that are well off they struggle because somebody else steals from them. That's what I mean, everybody's struggling, you know. (SKFN16)

What causes crime is poverty, you know. If you have that in your reserve, that's what's going to cause it. (SKFN6)

Everything is expensive. You guys have probably seen the price in the store today, it's really expensive eh? That's why people steal. (SKFN16)

Basic Theme 2: Effects of Current Judicial Sanctions

Basic Theme 2, *Effects of Current Sanction*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Treating Addictions and Mental Health Issues*, *Declining Support for Traditional Tools*, *Negative Effects of Incarceration*, *Inequities in the Judicial Process*, *Long Term Effects of Criminal Records*, and *Lack of Deterrence*. Each of these issues identified by the respondents assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Treating Addictions and Mental Health Issues

Aboriginal people in the corrections system are often there for problems caused by addictions and mental health problems. These are issues that could be better addressed through their participation in traditional cultural activities rather than incarceration.

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Our people, as you know, are dominating and there's overpopulation of our people in the jail systems, institutions. Saddest thing. 90% of those people don't belong there. (SKFN18)

It needs that balance, that medication. So when people have committed a crime that needs the professional, there's not—like, we have no alternative but do the retributive. (SKFN2)

Declining Support for Traditional Tools

Restorative justice processes such as sentencing circles, which are seen as beneficial, are rarely occurring and are less supported by the police.

They would, we pretty well had about twice a week sentencing circle, sentencing circles here in [Community X]. But they all are slowly going away. RCMP don't send us any more cases. Some small cases they'd rather do it themselves, take those people to jail. (SKFN19)

The best thing to do would be talk to people maybe, you know. The alternative measures you mentioned, they don't even exercise that, you know. As soon as something is going on they're just happy to lay a charge. (SKFN16)

Negative Effects of Incarceration

Incarceration in youth and adult custody tends to make young people and people with addictions into better and more dedicated criminals.

I've known of kids that come in there as 12 years old. And they come in for B&Es and so on and so forth. They, you know what? They meet up with a big gang-banger, right? Then next thing you know, they've picked up this charge, they've picked up that charge. And know what? That 12-year old ends up celebrating their 18th birthday in there. (SKFN2)

Put them in jail. You get more—you get more hate. They hate each other for that. (SKFN7)

Because there is a lot of young people, you know, when they go to jail down south, you know, they get hardened up and they come home, you know, they're worse than before they came here. So, when I see a woman go to jail, you know, seeing the kids seeing their mom go to jail, I can just imagine, you know, what they go through in their little minds, you know. "Mom going to jail?" You know, that really spooks them. (SKFN16)

Like, the guy that's drunk every day here, and eventually he gets sentenced on these bylaw charges and he goes to jail? You know what? He may be a drunk here, next thing you know, he'll go somewhere and shoot up and he'll learn how to—you know, things like that. (SKFN2)

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Inequities in the Judicial Process

Aboriginal people often either choose not to, or don't have the resources to fight accusations against them, even when they are not guilty.

These are some of the things, when a guy want to dig deep in there, a lot of people don't realize, a lot of people plead guilty to some of the stuff that they could actually get away with because if they follow the traditional route. Because I seen people where they hire a lawyer, like the white people, for a very minor offence that they know, you know it's not wrong. But it costs them a pile of money just to fight just to prove a point. (SKFN4)

Well, as you probably are well aware, that the majority of both federal and provincial incarcerations are Aboriginal people. (SKFN5)

And even as such, an Aboriginal individual getting a sentencing comparison to a Caucasian, it's totally—there's no sense of reasoning. Then our people are so—it's more or less like, "Ah, I'll go plead guilty. I don't care. I've been there already. So I may as well go back. Got nothing else to do." (SKFN5)

Justice means to me just like in—I'm judging you. You know what I mean? I'm judging you. That's what it means to me. Whatever I do, you're judging me and maybe [indiscernible] what I talk, how I talk. For me, it's—that's how I look at it. But I understand what your—what does that word mean. I understand you're [indiscernible] you're [indiscernible] is not justice. Right? (SKFN7)

Sometimes the justice system, that just gives them a slap on the wrist, you can't say it's just the community's fault. (SKFN9)

Long Term Effects of Criminal Records

Criminal records often disqualify promising young people from eligibility for certain jobs, including police jobs. The police sometimes contribute to this through overzealous enforcement.

How many boys and girls got too much court just for drinking on reserve, [for] something like that? When they got a job, there's a lot of mines around us right now—they can't get that job because he's got record. (SKFN10)

Every month over 50 percent young people is in the court, because they're getting the bad records. (SKFN12)

We tried that. Last year, two years ago we tried that, to be training in Regina this big—everything show up there [indiscernible]. When it's happened, record time, check record, he can't go because he's got record. That's why people can get—young people try to be [indiscernible] constable or RCMP, they tried that. (SKFN10)

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Now a lot of young girls, young boys, they're trained for nurses, those kind—teacher, we had professional—six hired last year, professional teacher we had in this community. They all passed everything. So there's a thing we have. The problem that we had is the records. It's killing us. (SKFN10)

Lack of Deterrence

The current justice system and its retinue of punishments does not deter people from committing crimes.

If you get fined hundred—five hundred dollars, you get smart I think when you go into court. Because he knows he got one case of whiskey, he could have in his pocket a thousand, that's it. (SKFN12)

And nowadays when you see a person go to jail, they're treated like kings. They're fed like a king and they sleep like a king. And because people are well treated, they're so spoiled, they're not scared anymore. And they're not scared to commit a crime. (SKFN14)

You know, by sending this young man to jail ain't going to solve anything, you know, there's no restitution there. (SKFN16)

And because of the way they were treated back then, people were afraid to commit crime. Nowadays they're not afraid of nothing. (SKFN14)

Basic Theme 3: Current Shortcomings in Policing

Basic Theme 3, *Current Shortcomings in Policing*, represents the integration of a number of issues identified by the participants including: *Police Response Times*, *Lack of Positive Community Contacts*, *Police Awareness and Interest in Aboriginal Culture and Community Affairs*, *Policing Bias*, *Police as the Enemy*, *Language and Communication Barriers*, *Police Misconduct and the Public Complaints Process*, *Lack of Local Control*, and *Police Officer Longevity in the Community*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Police Response Times

Response times are unacceptably slow, in some cases the police don't show up at all.

I'm not putting them down, but if we call the RCMP during the night, late at night or some even in the daytime, they don't come right away. It takes a few hours, maybe the next morning. I guess they're busy, they're too busy doing other things, more important things. That's what they always tell us. (SKFN1)

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But when we need these guys, you know, they're not going to be there in five minutes, ten minutes. So that's the problem we're having. (SKFN6)

The problem we're right now, if I call RCMP, if I call from my home even late, they will be here about [50] minutes, will be here. People call in [indiscernible] they come 45 minutes or something. It's happened already. (SKFN10)

So that we don't have to wait for the police to come. Sometimes it takes 30 minutes, an hour. Sometimes they don't show up, you know. So I get lots of calls from the Elders here. And so far it looks like we're not doing our jobs here, and also the police are not doing their jobs. (SKFN20)

So I hate to say this, but this is not my [indiscernible] I was just lay low, but trying to work with the community and the policemen. Sometimes we do call them, but they don't come. We have to do something about that I think, for the safety of everybody. (SKFN19)

But when I phone the cops, sometimes it takes an hour to an hour and a half. (SKFN11)

But in the other way, when you call them, it's hard to get to them because you've got to go through Regina, you know what I mean. By the time you get to Regina and by the time the cops comes to your place, it's, like, an hour or two hours, after everything happens. (SKFN15)

Lack of Positive Community Contacts

The police only show up when something bad has happened; they are rarely seen in circumstances that are more positive.

So, a lot of involvement in the community, to participate in stuff that happens in the community. When we have a, like even when we have a dance they should come and have fun with the community. Not only see them when there's a crime, they should see them also when there's something else like, happy going on. (SKFN9)

A lot of times we don't see that, they don't make that effort to go out into the community and just to mingle with people. (SKFN9)

They go straight to work and [no responding] to this [indiscernible] checking out Facebook and all that. The only time they move is when they're called. You know, lack of patrolling. (SKFN12)

Police Awareness and Interest in Aboriginal Culture and Community Affairs

Police officers often demonstrate a lack of awareness of Aboriginal culture and local issues, and lack interest in interacting with the community.

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And I've seen police to the point where they're disrespectful because they're not aware of our culture. (SKFN2)

I've seen the RCMP come to a sun dance thing, but they don't get close to it when they're in uniform. They kind of stay within the borders. Like, there's a border around when they have a—they kind of stay back over there. But they don't really go in there. (SKFN4)

Although we had some Indian officers, they never really worked the way we expected them to work. (SKFN1)

I've asked for RCMP to come to the board meetings. And I know for a fact twice a sergeant was invited to come to a board meeting. Never did. Never did show up. If they're invited, you know, get the leaders to invite them to these functions, then they'd have a better working understanding with native people. (SKFN4)

I've always said to whoever can listen or was listening, that there needs to be a component in their training that has to do with First Nations perspective, the cultural aspect. And so at least they understand us a little better before they're shipped or sent to our areas. (SKFN19)

But that's the way it should be. RCMP should have a working knowledge about the Indian culture and how to respect the culture and ceremony. We're all God's creations. That's the way to look at it. But somewhere in the police training, that the RCMP have to understand all these things. (SKFN4)

Then the—when they're shipped out from there, you take some from Ontario that have joined the RCMP, came here, and they ship them someplace, you know, where they're not familiar with natives. (SKFN18)

But with the training they got in the RCMP, they should be getting some training coming to a native community. They should [indiscernible]—they should be aware of what they're getting into. (SKFN4)

The new recruits don't have an understanding, or they have had no experience dealing with First Nations people. And a lot of it is based on what they've seen and what they've heard. (SKFN19)

Policing Bias

Aboriginal people see bias in policing on the basis of race, and background by police officers.

If I go to Lloydminster and if I use the—an Indian car, they call it, I'd be the one that would be stopped. If there was ten vehicles there, I would be the one that would be stopped and checked over. (SKFN5)

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See these old officers that's been here, I said, oh like so and so, and I tell the new ones, [oh there's a black person] [indiscernible]. They're influenced by their peers and they shouldn't be. Race has got nothing to do with it you know. (SKFN16)

Why are they searching people like that, especially when they don't commit a crime? And especially on the road, too. Sometimes they stop you and they just go through your belongings. (SKFN14)

They don't like me because of my past okay, but that's not my problem, that's their problem. (SKFN16)

Police as the Enemy

Some Aboriginal people see the police as an enemy that causes more harm than good, rather than as an ally in achieving community safety objectives.

Today as I see for myself, some guys, RCMP, they [indiscernible]. They're the enemy. How come? How come they're our enemy? ... But today some people hate that RCMP. (SKFN7)

I've seen a resource officer, you know, arrest one young guy here for nothing, he was just intoxicated a little bit. Because of things like that, they do things like that, you know, people start disliking them. (SKFN11)

I remember back in the old days, when police do their duties, they were doing a good job. But nowadays, now when police that are doing their duties properly, [indiscernible] resource officers too. They're stretching their authority and he's kind of against that. (SKFN12)

As a hunter we always carry a loaded rifle when we're on a hunting trip. We don't carry a loaded rifle for human beings. We're doing this for our own protection against predators, like, wolves, pack wolves, whatever. And based on that, resource officers charging people for carrying loaded rifle on a hunting trip, out on the trap line. (SKFN12)

Language and Communication Barriers

Communications between police and Aboriginal People can be a barrier. This can be related to language barriers but also poor communication skills and communications mediums.

They don't speak English. That's their second language for here. And mostly these Elders that call, they know because I work at the court, and they think it's much easier for me to get through to the cops. (SKFN15)

When you tell the police nowadays, they talk with you with their shoulders. They just go like this. How are you going to work with police when they talk to you with their shoulders and they just shrug at you like this? (SKFN14)

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Police Misconduct and the Public Complaints Process

Complaints about police misconduct, especially in remote communities, have to go to the police service that you are complaining about. Because of this, people choose not to complain when they really should. When they do, the perceptions are that nothing is done about the complaints.

Like, if I say—if I kick a cop, for sure, write a statement to charge me. If that cop kicked me, I can't. I can't charge him because I'm scared. That's how these people are in [Community X], too. From what I look at towards—for me, that happens a lot of times. (SKFN15)

There is a lot of police brutality happening in the north, you know. (SKFN16)

Yeah, we're on a dry reserve right now. Like, we can't drink, but these cops, we hear from them, they party out on their back yard. That's no fair to us, you know what I mean. (SKFN15)

In any cop station, like, when you go, you go to jail, one cell, like, there's about four cells. And they still send you to jail with men, like. Here they don't even—when they put people in jail, especially woman, they should have a security woman for the cell too. Not just for the men's security. We need woman security in the cells too. (SKFN15)

Lack of Local Control

There is a distinct sense that officers have very little local authority and that community engagement, local priorities and local relationships suffer as a result.

What is it that's holding them back from saying, "you know, this could work." Why don't we, you know, why don't we really look at this? Somewhere out there somebody saying, "No, it's got to be our way!" That's how I look at it when I think about it [laughs]. (SKFN18)

But even then, there used to be a school on the east side and I went out patrolling alone in [indiscernible] time, and these were small kids. I used to pull over and stop in there and I'd go [ten-ten] on the radio and tell the RCMP I'm going to be busy for a few minutes..... They come up to you and say your name. That's promoting PR. But, like, what that constable told me that my corporal told me then, don't ever do that again. (SKFN4)

I think it's better to be controlled... Whatever, like that, [inaudible]. Just like what I'm say the first time the Dené—the people work with them. He talk Dené, and I try to give him a chance to try to talk nice and give him a chance of, hey, you've been drinking. Go home. Maybe I'll drive you home. (SKFN12)

Train them. But I don't want them to work for you. I want them to work for us. Because the reason why I say this is, I went to meetings with peacekeepers. One was in Yorkton.

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And there were about three that were Aboriginal special police that used to work as special constables. And they said it doesn't work. Because after taking special constable policing, what are you under? You're under police, provincial police, RCMP policies. (SKFN6)

Well, they just get directions from people, how—they'll tell the RCMP [indiscernible] on reserve. Things work like this. We're trying this. (SKFN8)

Police Officer Longevity in the Community

The constant changing of police officers (RCMP) in the community makes it difficult to sustain programs and initiatives.

We tried our best to work with these RCMP but every time another commander comes along everything changes. You know how it is. That's what—we'd like to see something that carries on. We work with a commander in good faith and we work with him good. We'd like to see that carry on. We don't like to see the next commander do away with it, that's what's been happening ever since I've been here. (SKFN1)

The same way with the native RCMP, the few we had. They'd be gone right away. Like, if they had more stability working with us, I think they'd get to know families more better. (SKFN17)

You lose a court case, you're gone, or else you're getting too friendly with other people on the reserve that—the headquarters starting to think that people are taking advantage of you being too close to them. (SKFN4)

But when they—you have somebody that mixes good with us, they seem to pull them out right away. They don't keep them here for that long. If they get too friendly, it seems, then they're—they're transferred to a different district. (SKFN18)

They used to have cadets, whatever it was. They'd come back home in uniform, [with] revolvers. They'd work here for a while, a few months, and that was it. They were never sent back to do more training and to come back as officers, police officers. That wasn't right, for me anyway. (SKFN1)

They don't stay long. A lot of other places that I hear about on the outside, oh, them cops are really good. They come and visit with us and what not, you know. But us native people, they seem to leave us alone. The only time that they come and bother us is if we're wanted for something that we had done wrong, that was against the law. (SKFN18)

For me, I sure wouldn't want changes the way they change their cops. Like, they—all of a sudden, you get used to a cop, and they're gone. (SKFN17)

If we had a commander on the reserve here at our detachment for five or six years and get to know people. Then when a new officer comes in, the existing commander can tell if there is a problem and tell his constable to go and see a certain person on the reserve for

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help and all that. That's the way I'd like to see it. But now what I found out, like, if there's a problem in here, then a new constable is sent out. They don't know where the hell they're going. (SKFN4)

Summary of Organizing Theme 1: Community Safety

The organizing theme *Community Safety* came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Current Public Safety Challenges*, *Effects of Current Judicial Sanctions*, and *Current Shortcomings in Policing*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

The public safety challenges identified by the participants are not surprising. Participants identified that many of the challenges can be attributed to factors arising from marginal living conditions and substance abuse. Poverty, substance abuse and marginalization leads to suicide, violence, theft and poverty which in turn result in even more marginalized living conditions and substance abuse. Perhaps more importantly, they see these conditions as self-perpetuating cycles that are growing in both frequency and severity.

Ultimately the participants suggested the current range of judicial sanctions are ineffective because the factors leading to criminal behavior are not addressed, nor is there respect for traditional First Nations concepts of holistic and restorative justice. Other participants pointed out that even if the premise of punitive deterrence were valid, the current sanctions are not effective in deterring crime since there is little fear of being incarcerated. Correctional facilities are perceived as providing a better quality of life than First Nations people who are not incarcerated experience. The participants argued that what is needed is treatment and support. This is especially true with respect to mental health issues as well as addictions which are prevalent within First Nations communities.

The frustration with incarceration is exacerbated because the current range of criminal justice sanctions offers little hope for improvement, but also because being incarcerated may actually be contributing to the problem. Young people are in jail because of aggravating factors such as substance abuse, and while in jail develop both the skills to be criminals and the negative attitudes that motivate them to continue in a life of crime. Furthermore, respondents expressed the notion that many people find themselves enmeshed in a justice system that all too frequently incarcerates First Nations peoples. It is a system that most don't fully understand, and even more frequently persons accused of crimes don't have the money required to participate in fully (e.g.,

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by retaining private counsel). The practice of charging people and sending them to jail is seen by the respondents as creating a generation of criminals that, in turn prevents young people from pursuing jobs and careers because of the burden of a criminal record. Relatively minor infractions lead to repeated interactions with the justice system. These interactions result in criminal records that preclude them from getting the very jobs that might help them break the cycles of poverty and crime. Interestingly, participants noted that this is seen as one of the factors preventing people from entering the policing profession as well once the youth have turned their lives around and may be seeking to contribute to the community in this manner.

With respect to policing, the respondents expressed concerns specifically about public safety in First Nations communities, as well as the police role as gatekeepers to the justice system. Excessively long response times were a common concern as were occasions where the police didn't respond at all. While concerns about response times represents more of a service-related issue, most of the other issues relate to a lack of openness to First Nations cultures and traditions as well as an apparent inability or perhaps unwillingness to embrace a more holistic policing model that embraces aspects of traditional First Nations justice.

The lack of engagement with respect to First Nations culture by the police is attributed at least in part to a lack of positive interactions between the police and the community. Participants suggested that the police have little contact with community members beyond being summoned during a crisis, and those contacts tend to be predominantly negative. There was also discussion of the biased treatment of First Nations people by the police. In some cases, it appeared to be based on race, while in other cases the officers seemed unable to see past a person's history when dealing with them.

Police misconduct was also seen as an aggravating factor. Where misconduct on the part of police does occur, First Nations people often do not feel comfortable, or inclined to complain. In some cases, this is because they would have to address their concerns to the very officers they are complaining about, in other cases they feel their concerns are largely ignored anyway.

A lack of a common language is an issue that can create communication barriers between the police and the communities, which worsens police-community relationships. People find it difficult to communicate with the police because few officers have the language skills necessary to fully understand First Nations languages, making it difficult to establish positive relationships. Where police officers do have the necessary language skills and develop positive productive

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relationships with the communities, they are often moved out of the community before this relationship is able to bear fruit. This means every two to three years the community and the police must start over in getting to know each other and advancing their common public safety goals.

Because of a lack of local autonomy, participants suggested that the police seem unable to address many of these issues. Policies and direction imposed from “above,” outside and unfamiliar with the local context, is often seen as being at odds with community goals and objectives. Local police officers seem constrained by these policies and unable to fully engage the community and respond to their needs.

As a result of these collective challenges, the relationships between the police and our respondents are such that the police are sometimes seen as the enemy rather than a resource by some community members. This is not a universal feeling, as many of the participants felt the relationship could be and was productive and positive with the right people in place within the police and within the community. However, this perception tended to be attributed to individual efforts rather than because the existing policing model was a good one.

The picture painted by the participants is one of communities beset by cycles of criminality perpetuated or exacerbated by social and economic conditions. The justice system is not viewed as an ally in addressing this behaviour; instead they are seen to be yet another factor that contributes to criminal behaviour within the community. As the most visible aspect of the justice system, the police are understood to be in a unique position to assist communities. Unfortunately, First Nations peoples have come to see the police as less interested in First Nations community safety than they are in supporting and advancing the objectives of the very justice system that are failing their peoples. For participants, the lack of a realization of community safety and harmony is a source of frustration. They are clearly seeking the same sense of security in their homes and communities as other Canadians enjoy, but achieving this goal in a culturally sensitive and holistic way may not be possible with the current policing and justice approaches practiced within First Nations communities.

Organizing Theme 2: Tradition and Culture

Table 3 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the second organizing theme: *Tradition and Culture*.

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Table 3: Organizing Theme 2: Tradition and Culture		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Strong Traditions of Justice	Traditional Justice and Public Safety	Tradition and Culture
Traditional Public Safety Roles		
Community Leadership		
Banishment and Shunning	Traditional Sanctions	
Compensation		
Capital and Corporal Punishment		
The Influence of Spirituality	Spirituality	
Historical Role of Christian Spirituality		
The Relationship to Christian Spirituality		
Diversity of Tradition	Culture and Language	
Returning to Traditional Roots		
The Importance of Language		
Aboriginal Youth		
Police/Aboriginal Cultural Dissonance		

Basic Theme 1: Traditional Justice and Public Safety

Basic Theme 1, *Traditional Justice and Public Safety*, represents the combination of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Strong Traditions of Justice*, *Traditional Public Safety Roles*, and *Community Involvement*. Each of the issues discussed by the respondents assists us in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme as well as their connection to the other issues discussed.

Strong Traditions of Justice

It is apparent that while the Aboriginal understanding of justice sometimes diverges from the Eurocentric view, there is and always has been a strong tradition of justice within Aboriginal communities.

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In the past we've always had, Indian people always had their own justice system, right from day one. (SKFN1)

But that's how I remember how people dealt with right and wrong. We answered to everybody. (SKFN9)

That time, nobody touch anything. He put that little nails on the side of the tent there. No—I was a kid too, [indiscernible] started moving. Nobody touch anything. Now things change like that now. Today if something like that overnight, be nothing left. (SKFN12)

You know, keep him in peace. There's a culture being run here. That Elders, one used to run, they called it [indiscernible 30:32] Three days. Lock the windows, cover it. And the spiritual. We do that. Three days. Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday night, you get out Sunday. And we used to do that. (SKFN7)

That's the way I knew—understood the traditional law. You would think about it, should I do it or I shouldn't? That's common sense, you know. (SKFN4)

Traditional Public Safety Roles

The historic public safety roles for Aboriginal peoples were not delineated the way they were/are in contemporary non-Aboriginal society. Informal social control seems to have defined these roles rather than the more legalistic and formal usage of power common in Eurocentric tradition.

We never really had like what is now seen as policing. Where they're going out there looking for wrongdoing, you know, that's pretty much what's happening now. You don't handle things. You don't go to things unless something bad has happened. (SKFN19)

They had warriors that would look after things—serious things, serious offences. But they lived in harmony with, as I said before, with nature. (SKFN1)

So, I think they always had some type of, not policing, but some type of maintainers I would call them, maintaining momentum, maintaining the order. (SKFN19)

I guess if you're talking a more modern sentencing circle, or a more modern healing circle, or reintegration circle, yeah, there's somebody going to be there putting these ground rules in. But traditionally we didn't need to do that. Because traditionally we all knew our roles and we all knew our responsibilities. (SKFN2)

There used to be a council. If there was a crime committed, there would be a council to speak on both—whoever done the crime and who he done it to. (SKFN5)

But I think they're—growing up there was always one or two people that seemed to know what to say and what to do in situations, eh. (SKFN2)

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We'd try and stop [people from fighting] them [without police]. (SKFN7)

Community Leadership

Community leaders could also be called upon to perform functions that were more formal and included the punishment of wrongdoers.

Chief [was responsible for dealing with infractions of the rules]. (SKFN15)

I think—to me, I think it was the chief and the councillors, or headsmen [who dealt with infractions of the rules] if you want to say, but not—like, today we call them councillors, eh? But in our early days. (SKFN17)

It was up to the—whoever was the leader of the tribe. ... And then he had other guys that would back him, if you want to call them councillors or whatever. But there was really never any councillors. There was—it was just the chief.... And he'd have a meeting with certain ones, and he'd ask what they should do about it. And then, if it was a decision that the person should leave, then so be it. (SKFN18)

They'd [the chief or headsmen] just go up to the parents and tell them, "Tell your kids to smarten up or leave." (SKFN17)

And they're the ones that seemed to—like, if there was something going on, they're the ones that kind of coordinated everything. And they just took the role naturally. (SKFN2)

Well, there was no police at that time. And if you got out of line, well, we had a chief if things are getting bad and we approach the chief and he would go out there. And the community was small. ... It's only that big of a [place]. Well, he'd walk there and talk to the person. If they're having a family problem, a man and a wife are not getting along, they call in somebody, grandparents, or they'll call the boss. (SKFN8)

Basic Theme 2: Traditional Sanctions

Basic Theme 2, *Traditional Sanctions*, integrates a number of issues identified by the participants including: *Banishment and Shunning*, *Compensation*, and *Capital and Corporal Punishment*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme and how they are inter-related to the other themes.

Banishment and Shunning

Banishment from the community was considered a serious penalty and could be short term or indefinite, often depending on the Elder's assessment of the person's readiness to return. This could involve banishment from the community or clan.

And in our Cree way, there was the whole matter of having to banish somebody. If it was to be done, they did it. (SKFN19)

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And in serious cases like murder, rape, or anything like that, serious cases. They talked about it. Talked to the offender and the accuser and all the—[unrelated interruption]. And then the serious offenders were usually put off the reserve. (SKFN1)

And I guess the old clan system is just what—and I'm just relating what they told me—and what they told me is that, you know, if somebody did something that wrong, they weren't even allowed to be in that clan. They had to go stay away from there. And eventually, in time they were brought back. (SKFN2)

When worst comes to worst, people violating traditional laws, they were kicked off the reserve. (SKFN4)

When there used to be an eviction, they used to discuss as to what is needed to be done so they can return. (SKFN5)

If they come back we talk to them here, have some questions and all that, we'd know if they're ready or if they're not. (SKFN1)

But, you know, in the past I used to hear stories about how the chief had a lot of powers on the reserve, that if you were drinking all the time they would ban you from the community. (SKFN9)

Well, if somebody fought and killed somebody, you know, that was the ruling. They—and if the other bands heard about them, then they wouldn't accept them, so they'd become nomads. They just went from place to place, and wherever they lasted for a little while and didn't get in trouble, then they—if they settled down, then a lot of them bands would take them ones, you know. (SKFN18)

They leave their people; go live somewhere else—in the wilderness at that time. After so many years, they came back, talked to the Elders, and the Elders would know right away by the way they act. They know if it was time, or appropriate that he should come back again or he should go back for so long. That's how they used to deal with it. (SKFN1)

Well I can only say what I can see, what I've read and what I've been taught. And that's—like, they were shunned at times, where they've done something. (SKFN2)

Compensation

Individuals could also be required to compensate their victims by working for them or providing necessities like food or shelter.

Another option they used was that if it was not banishment then that person who did wrong had to, for the rest of his life or for the life of that person that they harmed, would have to make amends in any way they can; like they had to maybe go provide for that person. If there was any food needed, they went and provided it. If there was any wood or

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anything that needed to be provided for, that they needed help with something, that person had to go. (SKFN19)

Capital and Corporal Punishment

It is clear that capital and corporal punishments were not common. Only a single example of each was provided.

There was times that somebody was—have stolen something from—especially a pipe, of that [indiscernible], they used to lose their fingers. (SKFN5)

I guess the only thing he heard about before the police was there was one person, he's got a big psychological problem and there's no way to deal with this person. So, they beheaded him and they cremated him. (SKFN11)

Basic Theme 3: Spirituality

Basic Theme 3, *Spirituality*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *The Influence of Spirituality*, *Historical Role of Christian Spirituality*, and *The Relationship to Christian Spirituality*. Each of these three issues discussed helps form an understanding of the overall basic theme as well as their connection to the other issues discussed.

The Influence of Spirituality

Aboriginal traditions of justice are influenced by spirituality. Rules of right and wrong are often anchored in spiritual beliefs.

It's all based on what we perceive as creator's law. That was always the basis of our being, our way of doing things, our way of living, as humans, as people, as a tribe, as a culture, as a nation. And that was the basis of everything that was done. And everybody had a role in it, nobody was left out. Everybody had a significant role in it. (SKFN19)

That whole aspect of living by creator's law stems from how life was perceived. The Elders had their role. The leaders, the headsmen had their role. They made decisions based on what they, not what they thought, it was based all on the teachings, on the laws. And those laws were not manmade, they were given by the creator, and they came in form of different teachings for us. (SKFN19)

There are kids in there that have never seen a blade of sweetgrass, and I go show them. I show the staff how to do that. I teach them how to respect—I tell them, "When you're picking the sweetgrass, you know, if your mind is not doing good you're not going to find sweetgrass because you—that's your mind that's doing your work for you. If you're thinking about gangster stuff, you're thinking about drinking and that; you'll be picking grass, not sweetgrass." (SKFN2)

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You take that knife—and it was a long knife, and it was—you place it on the fire, a pipe and the knife. If you so much—if you so much as think that you are a man, and that you are supernatural, that you can live with what you do. And overruling, the facts of the creator, you take that knife and you put it in my—if you think that you are so much of a coward, that you are so much of a baby, you take that knife and you put it in you. But bearing in mind that you still have another day of judgement beyond what is given to you here. (SKFN5)

Consistency is so significant. It's key to a lot of the ways we do things. Everything is consistent and that's based on following creator's law. (SKFN19)

My grandfather, when he gave—he smudged me, telling me the facts in relation why he was smudging me, and telling me that I am a creation of that creator. And the smell, the beautiful smell of that sweet grass, is the hair of Mother Earth. (SKFN5)

Historical Role of Christian Spirituality

According to some respondents, Christian spirituality has played a role in helping to maintain order in Aboriginal communities.

I remember my grandmother used to go to church every morning and because I lived with her, I used to go to church with her. And that's where I believe we were taught about right and wrong. (SKFN9)

When we lost that priest people just came out—chaos. He was like a big daddy to us, you know. He kept people in line. (SKFN16)

The Relationship to Christian Spirituality

Aboriginal spirituality has much in common with non-Aboriginal spirituality. Because of this, there is confusion over why Aboriginal spirituality appears to be seen as less relevant to community harmony than non-Aboriginal spirituality. This spiritual conflict still exists and can create confusion for some young people.

When the priest came, when the Catholic religion came to our communities, these people were just young people in that time, when this community formed. So a lot of this culture, it got lost because the Catholic Church thought it was a sin. (SKFN8)

You know, first of all, traditionally we're told that—I guess just like the Christian method, whatever method, you've got to repent, right? All your wrong-doings will come to you and you need to deal with them before your passing, before you go in the hereafter. (SKFN2)

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Like, I go to any church, and they're praying and they're all praying one way. We don't do it any different in the sweat lodge or a sun dance. We're all praying to the creator, and that's what that—that's the way I understood that person told—saying. (SKFN4)

You have the culture, you have the sweat lodges and stuff like that. Then you get—you have the church there. Then you have the band office there and—you know, it's kind of hard for these young people. Where should I go? Who should I listen to? (SKFN8)

And then when you smoke that pipe, that is with honesty. That is the bible. (SKFN5)

Because I remember back many years ago, hearing from the Elders, that they had tried to do away with traditional ceremonies. Like, they were trying to make it—outlaw them. They tried to make people quit while they were doing a lot of these stuff. (SKFN4)

We don't really get a whole lot of people or—see some of our Elders are still reluctant to sweat lodges okay. They figure it's the work of evil. (SKFN8)

Basic Theme 4: Culture and Language

Basic Theme 4, *Culture and Language*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues identified by the respondents including: *Diversity of Tradition*, *Returning to Traditional Roots*, *The Importance of Language*, *Aboriginal Youth*, and *Police/Aboriginal Cultural Dissonance*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Diversity of Tradition

The Aboriginal culture that distinguishes itself from non-Aboriginal culture, also distinguishes Aboriginal communities from each other. While there are notable similarities with respect to the application of justice, it is important that these cultural differences be recognized.

We might do things different from like, let's say Assiniboine [ph] or Saulteaux [ph] and Blackfoot. (SKFN19)

When the RCMP comes for the first time to work in the community from the south, they—I don't know, they think that—I think they think that the native people here are same they have in the streets of Saskatoon. They just think people are the same. It's not, not the same. (SKFN8)

I'm just thinking from some of the things that I've studied and looking at ideas around healing circles or sentencing circles? *Participant*: No. *Interviewer*: No. That's not a part of the tradition that you'd be aware of here? *Participant*: Not where I grew up. (SKFN9)

The further south you go the more racist. Like Indian don't like whites, you know, they don't like Indians, vice versa eh. Up here, we live in a harsh environment. Over the years,

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you know, [as if] we got along good with white people, you know, the ones that come up here. (SKFN16)

Returning to Traditional Roots

Some respondents expressed a desire to return to the historical and spiritual traditions of Aboriginal societies. There is a sense that this is inevitable because their values and traditions are part of who they are, but it is also important because Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal society have very different views of justice and how it should function in society.

[Community X] is trying to go back to our old ways. Again, same thing with justice, we have started here [inaudible], we have started what we call our own justice system. (SKFN1)

But we still have our way of life. They tried to change our way of life but our way of life is our way of life. It will never be changed. (SKFN1)

So, there's that aspect where we, if we want our own police we have to make sure that they are going to be interpreting our laws in the best way, our creator's laws and protocols. (SKFN19)

The healing circle, the sentencing circle, those kind of circles there is ground rules. One is respect. You know, respect each other's—when they're speaking, you know. No arguing and no swearing, that kind of stuff, eh. And it's just in the back of your mind when you're doing, like, a ceremony, those things just come to you naturally. Nobody's setting these ground rules but they're there, right? (SKFN2)

Well, back in the day—things have changed now. This is the way it is now. But it's up to us to take it back. Nobody can allow change—like, the change will happen if you allow it. But if you want to go back to the way it was, it can be done. (SKFN2)

A lot of respect, humility, humour. Which is one thing, that's the reason that we've survived is our humour. We're the greatest at laughing at ourselves when the worst things happen. (SKFN19)

That if we had more people living the traditional life, the way it used to be. It'd be a hell of a lot better. (SKFN4)

We used to have—two or three of them used to go to the chief's sweat lodge. They came on their own. They used to come and have a sweat, participate in a sweat. (SKFN4)

Our culture is living off the land. That's one of our biggest culture. And then we're out in the land, it's peaceful. And nobody—no violence, nothing. You got a clear head. You got a clear mind out there. And we could do more of that with our children. It'll be more reality. (SKFN8)

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If you're going to come in here, you've got to behave and you've got to follow the protocols coming in. But a lot of people don't do that today because there's not that many that go, now, to traditional—like, traditional events, and that's when the teachings are—SKFN17)

The Importance of Language

The use of Aboriginal languages by police officers is viewed as pivotal to providing effective and culturally supportive policing services. Language is seen as crucial to Aboriginal culture both as an indicator of respect for the culture, but also on a practical level to facilitate communication. The use of Elders could go a long way in bridging the language and cultural gaps between policing and Aboriginal society so evident today.

They'd be called to a party where a bunch of people are unruly and causing problems. And when they got in there and that Elder that rode along, he would use the language and right away that was it. And that's the significance of our language. ... So, our police need to be able to speak some Cree and use Elders, the use of Elders, advisors, needs to be there consistently. (SKFN19)

And that's the sad part, is because there's some things in our language that you can't translate to English, no matter how hard you try. ... And language is the biggest part of our culture. (SKFN2)

If I see Dene, I'm proud of them because it's a police Dene, something like me. Talk Dene and they understand them. I'm proud to see that Dene people in the RCMP. (SKFN7)

A lot of people, like Elders, whatever, it's Elders who try to inform RCMP. They can't talk English. ... Yeah, the language is [a barrier]—they don't talk English. So I have to call—they listen—they know me, these RCMP in [Community X], they all know me because I work with him since 1999 still. (SKFN10)

It was really good that time because there was so—Dené people RCMP from the [Community X] and [Community X]. He was there—is really good because he talked Dené too—with the Elders. My language, eh? What's happen—he's there right away because he understand. (SKFN10)

It would be good to have a police officer from the community but even though it's from a different community it'll still be good as long as that person speaks Dene, and understands Dene. (SKFN11)

I found that when I did counselling, if that person knew Cree and I talked to them all in Cree, it really helped with the whole process. They were willing to come back. They were willing to work out their issues, their whatever, as long as the language was used. (SKFN19)

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Some of these people, they don't even understand English. And the next time they go to court—and they still—some of them, they don't know what they got charged for. But they still stand there, because English is their second language. ... These boys been saying they've been threatened by the RCMP, been dragged in, been beaten up; some of them with bruises. Nothing was done, because it's their second language, English. It's hard for them to say it. (SKFN15)

Aboriginal Youth

Many Aboriginal youth don't understand their culture, language or history and have adopted lifestyles that are not healthy for them or the community.

They don't know which way they're going. So we have to put our cap straight back normal and look straight. That's how it is. I see some people, they're walking, they have their hat backwards here. They don't even know which way they're going, my friend. Are they going backwards? (SKFN7)

And when these kids, you know, when they grow up like that they grow up with anger, you know, because they feel left out. That's why they're doing things, you know. They're breaking, they're committing the crime, you know. And then they get thrown into jail, you know, "Oh yeah I did this because my parents neglected me. The cops picked me up." Now, they tend to hate cops. (SKFN16)

Education is a big thing. The kids that are going to school, the ones that are being taught right now, it's very important. (SKFN14)

We don't work together. But when you look at this community, I'm hoping that people become judges and lawyers and so forth. (SKFN14)

You know how, what is [reality]. Your kids are growing up, what do you want to see in the future? Alcohol is not going to work for you. Drugs is not going to work for you. A lot of our students don't understand that. They don't know what they're going to get themselves into. (SKFN8)

I think if we can educate the young, the very young, and they had no other distractions, if they had no other interference from anybody and they were all brought up right, I think we'd have a better chance there. (SKFN9)

Police/Aboriginal Cultural Dissonance

In many ways, the culture of policing organizations conflicts with Aboriginal culture. This prevents police officers, even Aboriginal ones, from fully leveraging aspects of Aboriginal culture that might support public safety objectives. As a result of this cultural divide, Aboriginal police officers are sometimes viewed as traitors to their culture and their community.

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Talking to me than a white—you know. Like, when they—if you're interrogating a person, you have to feel relaxed, talking to the Native person. It doesn't take much for a Native person to feel threatened. And the way an RCMP, a white RCMP talks, these people kind of—don't want to talk or else find a way out that they get it out of that person. Yeah, they have to have that—I remember that one time, that culture thing, I wasn't—I went to a round dance and I was in uniform. [laugh] But they taught us PR in police training, and I was with another constable. Then I stepped in and danced with the people, one song. Then we left. But my other—my buddy went and told the corporal that I did that. The corporal called me into his office. "Don't you ever do that again." I didn't say nothing. (SKFN4)

Me, if I have Dene RCMP, there was about four Dene people here, oh, I'll be happy to have Dene people...they understand what we're talking about. (SKFN7)

One of the problems in trying to recruit First Nations people into policing was how they may be viewed by their own people as traitors, as enforcing white man's law. (SKFN9)

One of the Elders tell me yesterday that seeing his son graduate at Depot, he couldn't be prouder. But still wondering what the affect will be of him going into a First Nations community. (SKFN9)

When me and the white guy working together at night, and we'd get some boys out there late at night. They were reluctant to talk to the white, but they'd talk to me. It's just that—I guess how they been treated and all that, and they don't want—so that's why I'm saying if there was Native policing on the reserve, maybe we'd get quite positive, good—you know, good stuff coming out of it. We'd get more people to get encouraged. (SKFN4)

They're not really trying to become a police officer. That's one of the reasons why they're not. (SKFN14)

Let them understand our culture, you know. (SKFN16)

Summary of Organizing Theme 2: Tradition and Culture

The organizing theme *Tradition and Culture* came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Traditional Justice and Public Safety*, *Traditional Sanctions*, *Spirituality*, and *Culture and Language*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

All of the participants identified the presence of a positive history and strong traditions of justice within First Nations culture. Traditional understandings of justice were different from Eurocentric concepts of justice, and how justice manifests itself within the community in the past

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is distinct from the systems under which they now live. Whereas the broader Canadian society operates within a highly legalistic system (with relatively rigid delegations of responsibility and authority), First Nations tradition sees roles assigned according to circumstance, need, and the uniqueness of each situation. Elders, leaders and community members were all expected to play roles in addressing infractions of community standards, and those roles evolve according to circumstance. Traditionally, the “policing role” was filled on an as-needed basis by community leaders, Elders, warriors, families and other members of the community depending on the nature of the wrongdoing.

Responses to infractions of community rules and standards were premised on restorative principles with the goal of restoring balance and harmony within the community. Compensation and acts of contrition were reported by participants as the primary response to most infractions of community values and norms. Harsher sanctions were only seen as a necessary option when the welfare of the community as a whole was jeopardized. Even when sanctions of a more punitive nature were imposed, it was done in the hope the offender and the community could be reconciled at some point, often with Elders playing a key role in guiding that process. There were harsh responses to serious breaches of community rules including banishment, corporal punishment and in one case capital punishment. Whatever the responses to infractions were, they remained focused on restorative or protective goals rather than punitive ones.

Spirituality was seen as fundamental to concepts of First Nations justice by some participants, while for others it played a more peripheral role. While some concepts of justice were centered on common sense issues such as those against killing someone, in other cases justice was clearly linked to the community’s understanding of spirituality. In either case, it is an important piece of First Nations perspectives of justice (Sinclair, 1994), as are the moral underpinnings of Christian spirituality to Canada’s historical interpretations of justice.

Some of the participants provided a more traditional First Nations context to their spirituality, while others provided a Christian context. In other cases it was a blend of Christian and First Nations contexts. Some participants expressed confusion over historic rejection of First Nations spirituality given the similarities to Christianity. They felt this was confusing to young people trying to find their place in society.

First Nations people see their culture, in both historical and modern contexts, as being important and indivisible facets of policing and public safety. Furthermore, the participants

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frequently discussed a trend to return to more traditional practices. Having said that, it is clear that First Nations culture and tradition is extremely diverse and each has its own unique characteristics. This means policing must not only recognize First Nations traditions, but they must understand them as they manifest in each community.

Underpinning these traditions on both a practical and cultural level is the importance of language. On a traditional level, being able to speak the language shows respect to First Nations culture and honours the legacy of that culture. On a more practical level many First Nations people have limited command of English, especially in more remote communities, making communication with the police a challenge. In these ways language can be a communication barrier between police and First Nations people, but it also has the potential to be a powerful cultural bridge. A common concern expressed by the participants was the loss of spirituality, language and culture by the youth. Without spiritual and cultural beacons, the youth become lost, angry and adopt unhealthy and unproductive lifestyles.

First Nations culture and the culture of policing are frequently in conflict. The participants suggested that the regimented nature of policing prevents officers from participating in some of the activities inherent to First Nations justice and the culture behind it. Examples were given where police officers were discouraged from participating in ceremonial events and even engaging with Elders or young people. In some cases this discouragement came from superiors, in other cases it appeared to be based on tacit conventions within the police community.

The objective of *justice* from a First Nations perspective is to use common sense, the tools at hand and the teachings of tradition to build and maintain community harmony. When the damage can be repaired and lessons learned by those involved, then the goals of traditional First Nations justice have been met. When the damage is more severe, or community harmony (survival) is threatened, stronger measures were available to protect the community. This traditional understanding of *justice* continues to have a strong presence in First Nations communities today, and finds itself at odds with the more arm's length, codified, legalistic paradigm within which contemporary policing works.

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Organizing Theme 3: Holistic Approach to Justice

Table 4 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the third organizing theme: *Holistic Approach to Justice*.

Table 4: Organizing Theme 3: Holistic Approach to Justice		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Role of those Tasked with Security	Healing	Holistic Approach to Justice
When the Healing Begins		
Taking Responsibility		
Situational Uniqueness		
Consequences of the Failure to Heal		
Harmony as a Survival Mechanism	Harmony and Balance	
Community Equilibrium		
Community Roles		
Harmony as a Mutual Benefit		
Structural Flexibility		
Community Capacity		
Helping as a Foundational Principle of Policing	Helping	
The Importance of Personal History		
The Police as a Knowledge Resource		
The Community Role		
Police Community Integration		

Basic Theme 1: Healing

Basic Theme 1, *Healing*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Role of Those Tasked with Security*, *When the Healing Begins*, *Taking Responsibility*, *Situational Uniqueness*, and *Consequences of the Failure to Heal*. Each of the

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issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Role of those Tasked with Security

Those tasked with security may have a role in healing but they don't own it, nor have primary responsibility for it. They function only as one piece of the process and their role becomes subservient to that of the Elders once the healing process begins.

But we had a peace; we call them. ... Called them to—we called the family to the house, made a little peace and gave them little gifts. *Interviewer*: And would the police be involved in that? *Respondent*: No. We never even thought of the police. (SKFN17)

RCMP, they want us to listen to them. But that's not what we want. We want them to listen to us, because we know what's going on here. (SKFN6)

The Elders used to gather around this area, this area here and sit around and talk about things like that. And the younger people had respect for the Elders. They don't interrupt the Elders at their meetings. Don't go in front of Elders, even walking in front of the Elders when they're sitting down. (SKFN8)

When the Healing Begins

Healing must be integrated with the response to a conflict or infraction. There is recognition that the healing process has a time and a place, but whenever it starts, the collective response must provide tangible support for healing.

And before they let him out in the morning from the detachment, when someone is there overnight, they used to call an Elder. Take him up there and talk to the person that's spent the night there before he was let out. (SKFN 1)

But I don't know how the officers, RCMP, feel if they're trained. But I don't know how they feel after when they see somebody hang himself or a serious accident or people killed. I don't know how they'd feel inside. But us, when something happens, when someone commits suicide or some drunks roll over and two or three got killed; the whole community is affected. We all feel it. That's when we use our Elders. They talk to the people. (SKFN1)

Taking Responsibility

The healing process includes taking responsibility for one's actions and recognizing the importance of correcting the damage done.

Seeing what you've done, the damage you've done. Walking by it every day, seeing it every day and knowing that's the damage that I've done. So how am I going to better that? How am I going to fix that? ... The offender taking ownership of what they've

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done. And the victim standing—or sitting there—telling them what they've done wrong. And the Elder also having an input. (SKFN2)

They needed to spend some time away to think about what they done—what they have done—and to reconcile within themselves and then re-reconcile with the victims or the families that they had committed—harmed. (SKFN5)

So if you're dealing with seeing that person every day, you know, whether it's a kind gesture or, you know, the person is not able to put their jacket on because of that arm you broke, you know, go and helping them. Or going to—go and help them around their home. Little gestures like that, that'll lead up to that person realizing you are sorry, you are taking ownership. And you are trying to fix what you broke. ... Which, if we focus on healing, he would have to stay in the community and look at me every day in my pain, in my suffering, and what he's done to me. (SKFN2)

Situational Uniqueness

The healing process is unique to each individual and to each situation. For example banishment may promote healing in one case, while forcing the person to stay in the community and face the damage he has done every day may promote healing in other cases.

An Elder used to go [seek them out] where they were at, talk with them for so long, be with them. They would know in their prayers at that time how that person is progressing, that's how it was. (SKFN1)

If it wasn't for him to show me through this, through this time of judgement, I don't believe—I honestly believe that I would not overcome my difficulties in contending with who I am—who I was, and even as such, as to what garbage I was carrying. (SKFN5)

Consequences of the Failure to Heal

A failure in the healing process results in a continuation of cyclical problems like violence, drugs or alcohol. The failure to promote healing is seen to be a major problem with the current justice system where there is punishment, but not necessarily healing.

But they're still not getting the proper healing. And until people start to realize that, we're going to continue our cycle. That's why we're doing drugs, that's why we're drinking, that's why we're abusing one another. (SKFN2)

Where in sentence, circle sentencing, is that the people themselves can hear the person and go around. Then they can tell that person, you know, what's wrong and what they—and what that person can do to avoid the same thing happening again. (SKFN4)

But that person, you know, they get something like three, four, five years. Then when they come back, that person was still committing crime. How can we help this person

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when they commit a crime after they go through the system and he comes back, how can we help this person? (SKFN14)

Basic Theme 2: Harmony and Balance

Basic Theme 2, *Harmony and Balance*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Harmony as a Survival Mechanism*, *Community Equilibrium*, *Community Roles*, *Harmony as a Mutual Benefit*, *Structural Flexibility*, and *Community Capacity*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Harmony as a Survival Mechanism

Historically, maintaining harmony was a survival mechanism that allowed the community to meet basic needs including the acquisition of food and shelter.

Well, they tell us to go to church with them. The whole family walked to church, pray together. After church, talk—they talk nice to one another and they talk about how we're going to make a living. How—what we're going to do—are you going to go hunting? You going to go fishing? You know, people talk about that and [indiscernible] survival. (SKFN8)

And we were poor at that time. We had to be on our toes every day to survive. There was no welfare, no family allowance, no old age like today now. (SKFN1)

Community Equilibrium

Justice within Aboriginal communities is based on achieving balance. This might include punishment but also includes the idea that balance can be achieved through apologies or restorative justice approaches.

For an example, somebody steals something from me, they should make that person liable. And maybe work for me, you know, haul wood for me or whatever. (SKFN16)

When you do that healing circle, nobody leaves. You have to hear everybody out, no matter who [it is]. Could be your dad, could be your mother, could be your sister, could be your brother, it could be your uncles. Hear them out. (SKFN7)

But it wasn't a whipping or anything like that. If they—they were just kept to one side until they knew to talk better with other people and get mixed back in with the crowd again. (SKFN18)

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It all had to do with maintaining that peace and harmony within, so within the band or the tribe. (SKFN19)

My neighbours, they don't need the RCMP because we're living peaceful. It used to be like that here, [Band Name Deleted] one time. Peaceful. (SKFN7)

But that's behind me, you know. I apologized to that corporal that I shot at, I shot back you know, like I was intoxicated. I said, "I'm sorry," and I did time for it in the pen. (SKFN16)

Community Roles

The identification of community as a whole in each of the previous issues discussed demonstrates the importance of community responsibility with community members, including the police, having an important role in contributing to harmony.

If the community people made an effort to work together, I think a lot of these problems would be solved. (SKFN8)

And I see the nurses and band councillors, chief, police officers, when they're celebrating ... they're all celebrating together. And they all socialize together, and they live in harmony. (SKFN12)

Harmony as a Mutual Benefit

Harmony is a mutually beneficial process; it is not a zero-sum game where there are only winners and losers as possible outcomes. Individuals on both sides of an issue walk away feeling they have contributed to the resolution of the issue and have gained something for himself or herself as well as for the betterment of the community.

When both parties walk away feeling like they still are okay, when they still got something out of it, to us that's justice. (SKFN19)

And native justice is where they should be. Taking more of these circles sentencing and let the people hash out their problems in there. But under control, not get—start trying to fight or anything. (SKFN4)

Structural Flexibility

Re-establishing harmony, either on a community level or at an individual level, is a structured process that is adapted to each situation. Although the structure is adaptable, it is a process guided by tradition, culture and, in some cases, spirituality.

As far as I know, my experience, there is no such thing as Aboriginal law. But there is traditional law. That's common—that's just parenting respect and common sense. (SKFN4)

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The Elders were the advisor. The Elders used to get around together, sit together in a big circle and they used to—"What's happened?" And they fix it. (SKFN7)

Community Capacity

There is recognition that some Aboriginal communities have lost the ability and capacity to build and maintain harmony.

We don't do [anything]; they're just going to go worse and worse. Like, our people will go our separate ways and still do the things they want to do, and like, negative things. (SKFN8)

Before the police, people lived in harmony because there was no alcohol and there were no drugs. People never fought one another and they never broke the law. (SKFN14)

Basic Theme 3: Helping

Basic Theme 3, *Helping*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Helping as a Foundational Principle of Policing*, *The Importance of Personal History*, *The Police as a Knowledge Resource*, *The Community Role*, and *Police-Community Integration*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Helping as a Foundational Principle of Policing

Policing, whether in the form of peacekeepers or mainstream police officers, should focus on helping as opposed to law enforcement. This means helping individual people who need it, but it also means helping the community as a whole by participating in community events and making the community stronger.

The peacekeepers we have today are more security. But there's also the focus on being helpers. And I really like to push that with them. I don't—I like them to be security but I also like them to be—like, when there's a wake, I like them to be in there helping. I like them—when there's a ceremony, I like them to be there. I like them to go and meet the bodies and escort them out here. (SKFN2)

How we can help one another would be the first priority. (SKFN11)

Sometimes you just need to go and talk some people down. (SKFN2)

The Importance of Personal History

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The police must look beyond the actions of a person, and understand the circumstances that put them in bad situations rather than simply resorting to criminal charges that places them in the hands of the corrections system.

At some point in time, they're going to need to have interpreters, or Elders or advisors, cultural advisors, within their systems, to help them better understand why this person did what they did. (SKFN19)

Let's give him a ride home. Let's give him a bowl of soup, you know? Let's sit and talk with him for a while. And maybe that person's lonely. Maybe that's what they need, you know? Like, instead of charging him, charging him, charging him—because where are they going to get a hundred or a hundred and fifty bucks to pay this fine? (SKFN2)

The Police as a Knowledge Resource

The police are seen as people who have the knowledge of where and how to get help.

RCMP have to help us too because they know the way to get help. That's a problem we have in this community too. (SKFN10)

I think it would if it was [our own] community, eh? It might work if we had our own grade twelve [indiscernible] training and about six months [indiscernible] RCMP. (SKFN7)

The Community Role

The community also has an obligation to help the police when they take action in a helping capacity.

They're trained as mediators. They talk to whoever. They go talk when there's somebody, some offender, they go talk to him. Take him home. They talk to him in mediation. (SKFN1)

The mediators are so important to us because they're the ones that are going to sit with the people involved, the one that has done wrong, the ones that were wronged. (SKFN19)

So for me, we have to help them. Help the RCMP. (SKFN7)

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Police-Community Integration

This is a proactive process that involves recognition of positive contributions to the community, not just responding to negative behaviour. To do this the police must be an integral part of the community, participating in proactive positive reinforcement as well as responding to negative behaviour. This integration and involvement in the community, rather than just policing the community, will assist the community in reducing the number of negative issues that have to be dealt with.

In our time, in our way, our culture, I believe that there was that but also there was a lot of recognition of good. Our people had a way of acknowledging people who did—who lived a good life and did good. And they did not wait for a time, a special time. I think they went out and acknowledged that person. And I think people were, who felt that they were significant and important as, within their people, that there was little need to deal with anger or real conflict because people were made to feel like they're part, that they belonged. (SKFN19)

I'd start at the educational level, in the school system. I'd go in there recess time, play with the kids, play soccer or ball, volleyball, whatever they're playing and tell them that you're there for them. Not to hurt them, but for their good, you know. And especially at the high school. (SKFN4)

You know, that's the only way we learn. You learn from me, you hear from me, and I'm—you hear, what I hear from you [indiscernible]. You know, this [indiscernible] away like I said, that's the only way we're going to learn. (SKFN7)

Needs to find out what to do—meet with somebody and have a meeting. Just things like this. So not just coming here and well, you know, we're going to straighten you out. (SKFN8)

Learn about it. Study about it. Ask questions about it. Maybe they need to do that. Because suppose I came here as a police, I got to learn what the people are like, what do they want? They wanted to learn the culture, like, the culture what they have, you know, what you have as a community or as Aboriginal people, what you have culture-wise. (SKFN8)

The councillor, all councillors, they know, we train them every year. There's councillor [camp] going on. All—every RCMP was there. (SKFN10)

And this is what I say is, like, if these kids can get to Regina, to the Depot, and see on site for themselves what's actually involved in policing. (SKFN4)

If you're going to send recruits to my reserve, I want you to teach them about me and my people and my young people, how the reserve is running right now. (SKFN6)

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Summary of Organizing Theme 3: Holistic Approach to Justice

The organizing theme *Holistic Approach to Justice* came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes *Healing, Balance & Harmony*, and *Helping*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

Healing is seen as an important goal within the First Nations justice continuum. This is consistent with Ross (1994) who acknowledged the traditional First Nations focus on more multi-faceted approaches that include elements of retributive justice, rehabilitative justice and reparative/restitutive justice, but focussed more on restorative approaches in contrast to the more individualistic and adversarial focus apparent in non-First Nations justice systems. In that context, healing is viewed as a collaborative community responsibility to repair the harm caused by infractions of community rules. Healing may mean the repair of damaged relationships, compensation, as well as the rehabilitation of the people involved and the antecedent circumstances so that what caused the actions in the first place will not be repeated, and those involved can put the infraction behind them. It captures the belief that those directly involved in the incident (the victims and offenders) as well as the community as a whole must be repaired after conflict to ensure the community continues to function.

To heal, everyone involved must be prepared to acknowledge their responsibility and their role in the incident(s) at hand. There is recognition that this process may include healing the police and other first responders, as well as the larger community, victims, and, of course, the offender. Failure to heal the wounds caused by violations of community rules results in the continuation of this behaviour and broken relationships within the community.

Harmony is closely related to healing, but is not the same concept and does not necessarily follow the same process. Harmony is a longer term, proactive goal designed to restore and maintain the community's ability to thrive. This concept emphasizes the importance of relationships (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000), ensuring that individual behaviour does not disturb the delicate balance between the interactions of people within the community, and the ability of the community to survive and grow. There were examples given where re-establishing community or individual harmony required strong measures that are punitive and therefore appear retributive in nature, such as banishment. However, the objective of these actions is always harmony, rather than punishment for the sake of retribution or deterrence.

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To ensure community harmony, community equilibrium must be achieved in the eyes of the community, the victim(s), and the offender. The idea that wrongs must somehow be balanced by rights was frequently reported by participants throughout the interviews. Balance can be tangible, such as material compensation for theft, but it can also be demonstrative, aimed at repairing a damaged relationship. The uncertainty that many of the participants expressed about the justice system, including the actions of the police, was centered on their lack of understanding of how balance was achieved by sending someone to jail, or imposing a fine.

Each situation is treated as a unique one and the roles of those involved, including the victim, the offender, and Elders, as well as entities such as the police, are fluid and dependent on the circumstances of each situation. No one should see himself or herself as outside of this process, as healing the wounds caused by the infraction and achieving harmony and balance remains a community responsibility. Ensuring that healing, harmony and balance is central to the actions taken after an infraction means that the police and others responsible for enforcing community rules and standards often have responsibilities early and throughout the intervention process that may not be consistent with Eurocentric understandings of police roles. Furthermore, although there is flexibility in the processes, there is also structure. Demonstrating mutual respect, accepting responsibility and supporting the results of the process are critical.

Although sometimes implicit, there was a strong central thesis throughout the interviews that the police and the community must offer a helping hand to each other in very practical ways. The police should see their role as supporting the individuals they encounter on a day-to-day basis, as well as ensure that all police activities support the overall health of the community. This means justice and its practical application must focus on the improvement of the individual's and the community's situation, as opposed to enforcement of the law for its own sake. By extension, and within the context of restorative justice philosophies, the community also has an obligation to assist and support the police in their efforts to perform this function. The participants viewed this as one of the foundational principles of policing and feel that the police sometimes forget their helping role and pass judgement on people because of a troubled past thereby not helping the people that need it most.

There is a clear message that achieving balance, harmony and a helping paradigm requires close and mutually respectful integration of the community and the police. Not only is this the most efficient way of achieving these goals, it was suggested by participants that it is the

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only way. There is clear recognition that First Nations communities have, in some cases, lost the capacity to build and maintain balance, harmony, and to help themselves. There is also recognition that the police are a source of knowledge and resources that could be leveraged to achieve these goals. That is the underlying reason communities have high expectations of the police and continue to push them in this direction.

Organizing Theme 4: The Relevance of History

Table 5 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the fourth organizing theme: *The Relevance of History*.

Table 5: Organizing Theme 4: The Relevance of History		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Colonial History and Community Distrust	Social Changes	The Relevance of History
Community Access		
Residential Schools		
Community Structure		
Serious Offences	Historic Public Safety Challenges	
The Prevalence of Crime		
Achieving Treaty Goals	Treaty Implications	
Policing and the Treaties		

Basic Theme 1: Social Changes

Basic Theme 1, *Social Changes*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Colonial History and Community Distrust*, *Community Access*, *Residential Schools*, and *Community Structure*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Colonial History and Community Distrust

Colonial history has left many Aboriginal people with strong feelings of distrust and even hatred.

Oh, yeah, yeah. Because nobody—teachers, priests, RCMP, nobody trusts those. There's a lot of trust issues, and that's why. ... So there's always been that unfairness in different

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respects. But, for me, I think the important thing is to try and move on. To try and move on. Recognize it, but don't dwell on it, you know. (SKFN2)

I guess more or less—the more understanding of what our people have gone through, the facts in relation to our residential school, segregation, assimilation, isolation, deprivation, total—I guess more or less, just about loss—complete loss. (SKFN5)

You know, some of us, we don't believe in Elders. "Ah, they're like that." We have to put that aside now, my friend. That's gone. What's happened in the past; it's past, it's gone, we're never getting it back. (SKFN7)

Community Access

With the building of roads and overall increased access to more isolated Aboriginal communities, problems like drug and alcohol abuse became more common.

Yeah, the highway. That's when violence came. (SKFN8)

Because the road is open season—three bands, we got a problem now, ever since this road is, last 15 years, eh. (SKFN10)

Residential Schools

Aboriginal people's experiences in residential schools have had an impact on their communities.

Because we're unique. We've been through so much, not only as First Nations people, but also with the residential school era. (SKFN2)

The problems that I had in regards for residential school. That made me pretty well hate anything, even the white man. ... And for whatever reasons it is, I'm quite certain that the facts in relation to the residential school are the major contributing factor. (SKFN5)

Yeah, it was that big famous word of love. And if I was to go stand close to the wood stove and then get real close to it, "Don't do that." She'd tell me, don't. And then she'd—and then if I got spanked, she would tell you, "I'm doing that so you don't burn yourself." And you would remember that. But then in the residential school, if I had somebody else's sock without my number in it, get taken to the right corner—to the corner and then getting 100, 200 [slash]. And then they tell you that—they show you the Bible. "This is the word of God. This is the word of the Lord." (SKFN5)

[I] was raised by my parents till I was seven years old, then I went to residential school. They taught us the good and the bad. Bad things happened. Some good things happened. They taught us how to respect one another. They taught us manners and—like, table manners, how to talk to one another, not to fight, not to swear, stuff like that. Be

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respect—respect one another. (SKFN8)

Community Structure

Some of the more isolated communities in the north were artificially created. Historically, people didn't live in large communities; they lived relatively isolated lives and came together on special occasions. Because of this they did not have formal leadership structures.

Like, some people come in and pull welfare, eh? Those days, two cents, five cent sweater. Trap. [indiscernible] give me here. Nothing. I never do that. That just come in lately, eh? Never knew. Everybody used to be out in the bush trapping. Freeze—the lake freezing, everybody is so anxious to go out fishing. (SKFN7)

Maybe for two, three families coming moving, since the people start moving. Be no chiefs, no councils, no store, nothing. (SKFN12)

And a lot of things happen, a lot of things happened after the '60s. It's—when the government told the Indians to take over their responsibility, as finances, and they—that's when that—the money got involved in the community. And then at the same time, the highway came into our community. And then liquor comes in. Drugs come in. People come in. Then some people start to grow apart from each other. (SKFN8)

So people used to stay in the bush mostly all the time. Like, people gathering together in [Community X] used to be coming in—that was in June sometimes for Treaty Day or something like that. They joined together and they all apart again. That's what they do. (SKFN10)

There wasn't a community like this. Just from the Elders. There were just a few people scattered on the land, you know, like, different trap lines. (SKFN12)

Basic Theme 2: Historic Public Safety Challenges

Basic Theme 2, *Historic Public Safety Challenges*, represents the amalgamation of two issues discussed by the participants including: *Serious Offences*, and *The Prevalence of Crime*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Serious Offences

Taking a person's life and sexual violence were considered serious of crimes.

My grandmother was 101 at her passing, and one of her sisters that she was related to would tell me that the biggest sin is taking one's life. (SKFN2)

And also invading them, as invading them as sexually assaulting them, eh. Those were really taboo, eh. (SKFN2)

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The Prevalence of Crime

In the past, crime was not necessarily defined the same way as in mainstream Canadian society now. As a result, there was very little crime prior to the imposition of European/Canadian laws and law enforcement.

So, when there was conflict in traditional times, we can call it crime, it was about relationships. (SKFN1)

But when I—when I heard Elders talk, that crime was fairly—rarely ever happened. Very seldom ever happened on the reserve. (SKFN4)

Yeah, but in the old days, they said—like, the way my mum talks to me, they said, there was no crime. (SKFN15)

Long ago, if—say if a young boy stole something from a person, they'd make them take it right back. They'd make them take it back. "That's not yours. What are you doing with that?" Even if it's a little thing. (SKFN17)

And the only thing that they had problem was their enemies. That was Crees in the old days, you know, they had the tribal wars. (SKFN14)

Basic Theme 3: Treaty Implications

Basic Theme 3, *Treaty Implications*, represents the amalgamation of two issues discussed by the participants; *Achieving Treaty Goals*, and *Policing and the Treaties*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Achieving Treaty Goals

If the terms of the treaties were designed to "protect" Aboriginal people, they appear to have failed. There is a general sense that the spirit of the treaties is not being fulfilled due to a lack of understanding and perhaps willingness on the part of Canada.

In the past when our treaties were signed we welcomed all the white settlers to come and live with us. At that time we expected that we'd all live together in peace and harmony, but it didn't turn out that way I guess. (SKFN1)

The RCMP need to understand it. We, as First Nations people, understand it because we're trying to hang on to what little we have. But we need everybody to understand it. But it's not just RCMP, it's all over. Like, the government, you know, the violations of our treaties continuously. (SKFN2)

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But when it came to an Elder's advisory, one after the other spoke up and said, we're breaching—we're breaching treaties. Then I told them—I told that woman, I said, "That person is wrong. There's no such thing under treaties." Well, she told me that that person said it's under treaties for protection. Not from the RCMP, I said. In the Armed Forces it'll be in there, but not in the law enforcement. (SKFN4)

I told you when they sign the chief, when the first treaty [indiscernible] deal with the chief and he make—shake his hand. He deal with—was when the sun shine, the river flow, the grass growing. He say never been changed, we been fishing, hunting, trapping [indiscernible] talk about. Now today, the resource is breaking the law, everything. I don't know who change that. Government change it, don't know. Just like what I'm saying if we talk about [indiscernible] put together. (SKFN12)

Policing and the Treaties

Historically the police were used to enforce government policies that were seen as contrary to the treaties and unjust. The police today wear some of that history in the eyes of Aboriginal people.

Down the line Indian people needed protection. That's when the Crown, the Queen sent in the Red Coats to Canada to protect us and to guide us along I guess. (SKFN1)

See, the redcoats were there to protect us. They were put on—and we signed the Treaty, the redcoats were here to protect us. (SKFN2)

That first treaty signed, the government told us the chief, this RCMP, we give to you, he work with you. If he work behind your back, [indiscernible] work for you, just like any of your staff or anybody. Wherever you come from, wherever your reserve, whatever your community, this RCMP is going to work with you. Whatever you told, he had to do that. ... Now today is changed too. (SKFN12)

We like, we trust, we respect all the peace officers that are in uniform. They were, and they still are and always will be, the RCMP are a part of our history here at [Deleted Name of Band], and so I understand that. (SKFN1)

We had to get a permit to leave this reserve, and if you didn't, you were threatened with jail, and the police made damn sure that you got back in time from where. (SKFN18)

And you couldn't sell them, and you couldn't eat them because they threw you in jail. And that's how come all Almighty Voice, from Poundmaker, he shot that cop. They were hungry. He shot one of his cattle. The police came up there, and he killed the police. You know, we couldn't just take our animals and, say, trade to somebody else for a piece of bacon or whatever in the line of food. We couldn't kill our own cattle. (SKFN18)

We had to listen to the Indian agent. He had all the say.... And if he didn't agree with us, then he'd bring the police in. (SKFN18)

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Summary of Organizing Theme 4: The Relevance of History

The organizing theme, *The Relevance of History*, came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Social Changes*, *Historic Public Safety Challenges*, and *Treaty Implications*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

Most of the participants asserted that in the past First Nations communities did not have the public safety challenges they have today. In modern vernacular, crime was not common. Although the participants described the existence of behaviours contrary to community values and expectations, this was not a topic they focused on. Some actions were condemned universally such as sexual offences and other violent crimes; however, much of the behaviour that the broader Canadian society might categorize as criminal today, was not necessarily viewed or treated that way in First Nations society. Often they were viewed as broken relationships or broken people that required a community effort to repair.

Many of the public safety issues in present day First Nations communities have come about as a result of social change. Colonial history, particularly the negative effects of the Indian Residential School System, has resulted in profound and fundamental changes to the culture and traditions of First Nations communities. The participants were not advocating reprisal or vengeance for the troubling impacts colonialism has had; rather, they are looking for an acknowledgment that it happened and that its inter-generational reverberations continue to affect First Nations communities to this day. As a result of colonialism, there is a legacy of distrust of government institutions like the police that makes it difficult for the police and the community to achieve a mutually beneficial relationship. The legacy of *residential schools* and the *reserve pass laws* are examples of this. The police had a role that must be acknowledged before communities can move forward from these unfortunate periods in history.

In other cases, the disruptive social changes can appear benign and even progressive. For example, improved road access to some isolated communities brought about social change that the communities were not prepared for, such as increased access to drugs and alcohol. Many of the participants discussed the changes brought about through the treaties, the *Indian Act* and other laws. For example, leaders were chosen in new ways not consistent with First Nations tradition and practice. Communities in some cases were artificially created to facilitate the

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signing of the treaties. These changes disrupted the social supports and traditions that had protected and strengthened First Nations people and they now look for support from the police among others, to fill those gaps.

There was a tendency among the participants to frame the discussion around tradition, culture and basic human rights rather than the more legalistic terms of the treaties. Nevertheless, participants did report a sense that the treaties have not been fulfilled as understood by the First Nations signatories. They also felt the police, especially the RCMP because of a shared history, need to understand their role in those treaty breaches. The participants expressed the desire for everyone to acknowledge the reality of that shared history in order to move beyond past grievances.

Clearly, history is alive and influencing not only First Nations communities, but also their relationships with the police. They see an imperative to at least acknowledge history and recognize its impacts on modern communities. Because of a shared history with the RCMP, they see this as particularly important for them. It certainly isn't being suggested that this will repair all the wrongs, but it is an important step nonetheless for the police and the community to take.

Organizing Theme 5: The Importance of Relationships

Table 6 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the fifth organizing theme: *The Importance of Relationships*.

Table 6: Organizing Theme 5: The Importance of Relationships		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Aboriginal Culture and Respect	Respect	The Importance of Relationships
Police Obligation to Respect		
Lack of Respect		
Understanding Aboriginal History	Understanding	
Understanding and Empathy		
Knowing the People		
Aboriginal Police Officers		
Families Defined	Family	
Traditional Role of Family		

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Breakdown of Family		
Strong Families		
Relationships Between the Community and the Police	Police-Community Relationship	
Mutual Respect is Essential		
Police Presence in the Community		
The Police and Young People		
Symbolic Acts by the Police		

Basic Theme 1: Respect

Basic Theme 1, *Respect*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Aboriginal Culture and Respect*, *Police Obligation to Respect*, and *Lack of Respect*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Aboriginal Culture and Respect

Aboriginal culture has a strong requirement for respect. It is the basis for the strength of their communities, and the basis for positive relationships including the police.

That's how we're connected. We're part of nature. Indian people are part of nature. We respect all religions, all the races, all different colours of people, their religion, their nationality. We respect them, that's our way of life. We respect everybody. We respect everything. (SKFN1)

The common thing we have is that we were taught to respect the teachings, respect the words, respect our Elders and have respect for ourselves and for others. That's one of the most important things is to respect. Have respect and you will get respect. (SKFN19)

And there's that respect. That's that respect to—they've been taught to respect their mothers and their kookums. And the majority of them still do that, no matter what kind of life they lead. (SKFN2)

But even though people were poor, people respected one another. (SKFN11)

That was a traditional teaching: you respect somebody that's older than you because they have more knowledge. You don't go and tell them that they should be doing this. No, they don't. That's one of the things that I was taught, is to have the respect. (SKFN4)

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Police Obligation to Respect

Police officers must also demonstrate that respect, or they will not receive respect from the community.

Yeah, if these cops have respect for people and show they're friendly, that'll be great. ...they'll get respect if they know people. (SKFN15)

When RCMP comes to the community, well, sometimes it's a lack of respect for our people. They need to respect the people. (SKFN8)

But knowing what that responsibility is, and also having respect for yourself and the community. So it's that fine line, I guess, there would be a fine line. But also, some people—and it's known—some people will put on a uniform and all of a sudden, they're somebody else. And that's what we must stay away from. (SKFN2)

But a lot of times the RCMP will just walk by you, not even shake your hand you know [and sort of] they say, the hell with you. I'm here to enforce law and that, not create public relations, positive. (SKFN4)

Lack of Respect

Lack of respect, particularly, although not exclusively, among young people, is seen as a significant contributing factor to the breakdown of Aboriginal communities today.

That lack of respect. Young people, they swear at Elders. They swear at Elders, even in public. At that meeting, young people, they swear against Elders for saying—for talking about what the Elder knows. For talking about what [indiscernible] is in the community. (SKFN8)

The rules of even respect [have] really, really been non-existent it seems towards, not only the RCMP, not only to the church, but even among families, even within families you know. (SKFN9)

They've lost that sense of respect that they should have had because they don't have that cultural connection, the connection to the Creator that we should have. (SKFN17)

Basic Theme 2: Understanding

Basic Theme 2, *Understanding*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Understanding Aboriginal History*, *Understanding and Empathy*, *Knowing the People*, and *Aboriginal Police Officers*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

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Understanding Aboriginal History

Understanding the history and the unique circumstances of Aboriginal people is imperative for high quality policing service.

Personally, I never went to a residential school, but I know a lot of people that did. And I know a lot of what they went through, and it wasn't pretty. And they're still dealing with those struggles. They're still dealing with them. And RCMP really [needs to be] educated on that. (SKFN2)

Understanding and Empathy

Understanding why people do what they do leads to empathy for them.

And I've seen it as a deputy sheriff, where people are called perverts and they're called pigs and they're called—you know; they're name-called by the RCMP. They're name-called by the system...Understanding our own people and our own issues. Like I said, our own people know the residential school era. They know—like, I'm not saying that it's okay to abuse somebody, but having more of an understanding as to why it's happening. (SKFN2)

Well, they need to know who and what the people are. So this way there may be some means of understanding as to why they do—why the people do what they do. (SKFN5)

Interviewer: Or is it important that they understand—*Respondent:* They understand us, and they should be able to see foresight. Like, if there's a problem they could see, okay, this is the—and then they'd come in to—if this doesn't get fixed or looked into, it's going to get worse. (SKFN17)

Knowing the People

For the police, getting to know the people is an important step in understanding them.

But you have to understand, try and understand us. How we do things in our reserve. How we think. How many young people there are now, how many old people. (SKFN6)

I'd tell him [police officers] [Community X] is nice. Go for a walk. Go fishing. Meet people. They'll take you out fishing. They'll take you out hunting, whatever. Meet a friend. That's how friendly these people are in [Community X]. (SKFN15)

If they kind of mixed with us a little bit, I think a lot of people would be a little bit easier when they're around, you know, But they really don't mix with us unless they're called out on something that had happened or what—drunk driving or what have you. (SKFN18)

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Aboriginal Police Officers

Gaining this understanding is probably easier for Aboriginal police officers because they may have a common language or common history.

Because he knew, he was the RCMP, and he knew, like, he could vocal—say what he wanted to say, be vocal, but in a way that not putting us on defensive. (SKFN17)

I would like to see more Indian people be police officers, peace officers. (SKFN1)

We need Dené RCMP. Our language—Dené RCMP. We had before. (SKFN10)

That person that knows the Dene language would be a Dene person and he would know the culture, and they are the ones that are educated. But us, we're not educated. We don't qualify as the police, you know, education wise. That's how they can help us, because they understand the culture already. (SKFN11)

And I found them pretty open-minded, eh? But I didn't—I was wishing we would have had more natives. We never had a native RCMP come into the meetings, eh? And I was wishing we would have had them. (SKFN17)

Basic Theme 3: Family

Basic Theme 3, *Family*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Families Defined*, *Traditional Role of Family*, *Breakdown of Family*, and *Strong Families*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Families Defined

Aboriginal “families” were, and are, understood to include extended family members. Within this conceptualization of family, all individuals are tasked with responsibilities for guiding young people.

I know that, because I have big family. Fifteen—and I raised one of my young brother's son. ...Eight boys, seven girls I've been raising. I've got over sixty grandkids. (SKFN12)

Then they'd know the head person of the family, eh? There's always a head person in the family. And that's very important to know. (SKFN17)

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Traditional Role of Family

Traditional Aboriginal families were one of the first lines of defence when it came to youth accountability and teaching young people. They performed many of the roles that people now look to the police for.

I think a lot of the old people, long ago were very, very strict because they demanded that of the family. Like, you don't pussy around with your grandkids if they're being not themselves and being naughty. (SKFN17)

Well, you knew you were going to get a whipping for something that you done wrong. So to make it kind of hard on you, they'd make you go and cut your own. And if you brought back something that wasn't good enough, they'd throw it away and make you go and cut another one until they were satisfied with the switch that they were going to use for you. (SKFN18)

I think it [teaching accountability] was done in families, eh? Some of the families are huge, and there's all—we used to have people that you could go to, eh? That—to go, okay, let's go and see so-and-so because he'll tell us what to do. But today, we don't seem to have that connection. (SKFN17)

When I was a young man, we just didn't have to deal with [indiscernible]. My parents [were] my police, my mom and dad. (SKFN14)

When there was a crime committed, it was dealt through by the peace pipe and the knife and I was given the time to experience that type of judgement by my grandfather. And it's rude. It's harsh. (SKFN5)

Fathers haven't always been there. And, in a way, that goes back to our history, because a lot of the fathers, the men, would go and hunt for days, leaving the mother to play both roles. Or where they would go, you know, they'd have to move to where the, you know, the wildlife was. So they'd be away from home longer, that kind of stuff. And then they'd go to work. As time grew on, they'd go work for a farmer and go stay with the farmer. And guess who was always at home with them? It was mum and it was kookum, you know. (SKFN2)

Breakdown of Family

Families have become weakened, instead of guiding and teaching Aboriginal youth, families have become part of the problem by sometimes encouraging and defending negative youth behaviour.

And these are kids that got themselves into trouble, and they should be getting themselves out of the trouble, but not the parents. But the parents come in there and they—and [indiscernible]. So that doesn't make it any better. Instead of the kids, the parents offering

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to help, you know, correct the problems—they defend their kids, and their kids see that. (SKFN4)

There's a lot of people that are fatherless. Based on that, these fatherless young men, when they grow up, now we're dealing with a lot of hardship because their fathers aren't there to direct them. (SKFN14)

Parents could—wouldn't care if their kid was stealing somebody else's vehicle. That's where a lot of the foundation of all the—in the reserves really, because they can't talk. (SKFN17)

So, there must have been some sort—and I'm pretty sure not everybody, but because you respected the law, and so he had to do it. See, a lot of years ago it was like, I don't know whether it has to do with being naive, but you listened to authority. People nowadays don't listen to authority, even their own; even the kids don't listen to the parents. (SKFN9)

And in our way too we need to kind of retrain our people to those teachings, because a lot of those have been missing in the home. Our families are not as strong as they were before because a lot of the parenting skills are missing in teaching the children they're parenting, about cultural. A lot of our people don't know some cultural ways. (SKFN18)

Nowadays, the Dene and the Crees, they're having a hard time because they're bringing in new laws. If you spank your children, you go to court nowadays. (SKFN14)

Strong Families

Strong families can still make a difference for Aboriginal youth.

There's even one young guy here on the reserve that had been in a lot of trouble when he was growing up. But he's got a family now. He's totally different, from black and white, totally changed. (SKFN4)

Today, I'm a role model for my children. I don't know from the outside, I don't know about that my friend. (SKFN7)

Basic Theme 4: Police-Community Relationship

Basic Theme 4, *Police-Community Relationship*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *The Relationship Between the Community and the Police*, *Mutual Respect is Essential*, *Police Presence in the Community*, *The Police and Young People*, and *Symbolic Acts by the Police*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

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The Relationship between the Community and the Police

The community and the police must have a strong partnership. A strong relationship with good dialogue is essential to collaboratively address community problems.

Well, like I said, this—it should be done with the people. But that's one thing. The crime's always there—that crime is always there. Even if [indiscernible] we work together, maybe there'll be less crime. (SKFN7)

We love those kind of RCMP work with us. (SKFN10)

Well, they help us—[I say to] police, would you like me, if I see somebody over there drunk, [indiscernible] see the police [indiscernible]. Help me to get this guy back home, instead of me fighting with him. (SKFN7)

The young people that will be going for training. But when they come back we need to train them, the Elders will take that role of training them about our culture, our traditional ways. We'd have to train them. And the RCMP would put people in there too, they'd train along with them. Because I know that too, that the young people we're going to be sending out there, they're as green as the RCMP about our culture, our way of life. (SKFN1)

Well, to understand us, like [indiscernible] a guy from Regina which maybe Ottawa [indiscernible] out on the land. Like, just you know, teach him how to get—how to—the way we live. The way we eat, what we eat, you know? How we—how we fix the fish, how we fix the rabbit, how we fix the beavers, skin the beaver, you know? How to skin a moose; you know? (SKFN7)

Mutual Respect is Essential

Mutual respect is both the result of good relationships between the police and Aboriginal communities, as well as essential to establishing these relationships in the first place.

I can't say that because people know police are here for peace. That's why people do respect them. But if we worked side by side with the leadership and the Elders, they can be respected. (SKFN14)

Mutual respect is like having a football team. We all have to pull together in order to win. You know, for a hockey team or whatever it is. And we've got to have mutual respect with each other and with the teams that you play against. (SKFN18)

When I look at the police officers, it's just like looking at the priest because I know their duties are hard and I respect that. (SKFN11)

But a lot of times, it was somebody they were looking for or something happened. They'd go and ask the old people, eh? The communication was open with them, eh? And my

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grandfather, he wasn't a chief or anything, told them—but they were respected, eh? So he was one of them they'd come and visit and talk to them. (SKFN17)

If I were a police, I'd go and see people that's well respected by the people in the reserve, in the community. It's just a lot of men, eh? There that are really good women. There's one woman, I'd send them right away to her because she's really a good person. If they wanted to know, they'd hear it in a way, that would be said in a way that they'd understand, eh? There's not enough communications with them. (SKFN17)

And I think, as far as the law goes, you know, that works both ways with us and with the RCMP. If they don't respect us, then we don't respect them either. (SKFN18)

Police Presence in the Community

The police must physically be present and actively engaging the community to build a strong relationship.

So we built a really good relationship with the RCMP where they'd come and eat by our campfire and, you know, when somebody killed something they'd bring it to us and then we'd so—smoking the meat and stuff like that. And the RCMP, we built that relationship with them. (SKFN2)

I mean if you're going to work with the people in a community you don't do it sitting behind a desk and just doing what police work is. There's also involvement in the community. (SKFN9)

I guess when you talk about police, it should be with us, amongst us all the time. We'd like to see their presence, he said. We only see—the only time we see the police is when somebody [has gone] for the police, and then they come over. (SKFN12)

And they still live in—they still work out of [the community]. It's—for me, that's how I look at it for the future. If they have a cop station in [this community], it would be much easier, much easier, and a translator. (SKFN15)

The Police and Young People

Where the police have engaged young people in activities such as hockey, the effects on those young people as well as the community are very positive. Young people get to know the police officers and trust them rather than seeing them as a threat.

Now our young people—just crazy. Skating, young kids, eh. They start four o'clock. [playing hockey] Yeah, all day. Now they all at school, young students, eh. Four thirty they all going to be there. That's helped us. (SKFN10)

You know the young people like the cops because they play hockey together and stuff like that. (SKFN11)

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I used to step into my [jogging thing] take my firearms off, and I'd play soccer with the kids for a little bit of ball. Then the next time you saw them, they're more than willing to shake your hands, you know. (SKFN4)

Symbolic Acts by the Police

The relationship is also strengthened through symbolic acts such as the police dancing with people at community events.

Even with the uniforms, they were dancing with the people. Something like that would be good for the community. (SKFN12)

They're the ones that [have] to bring themselves into—introduce themselves to us. (SKFN15)

Socialize with us, you know, come to our gatherings, come to our dances, you know. Get to know us, you know. (SKFN16)

Summary of Organizing Theme 5: The Importance of Relationships

The organizing theme, *The Importance of Relationships*, came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Respect*, *Understanding*, *Family*, and *Police-Community Relationship*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

It is true that the roles of the community and the roles of the police are important; however, the relationship they form with each other is even more important. Cardinal and Hildebrandt (2000) used the Cree word *miyo-wichehtowin* to describe the importance of good relationships and the principle of getting along with others. If any single theme can be said to overshadow the comments of the participants, it was the importance of building and maintaining respectful relationships. The participants suggested that where there is a mutually respectful relationship, the community's interests are better served. The police become knowledgeable about the community, and the community better understands what the police can bring to the table. This synergy can be powerful in addressing community safety issues. This is particularly important with respect to young people. They stand to benefit the most from positive role models police officers can be.

Respect is a pivotal characteristic of this relationship. It allows people to interact as equals learning and growing as a result of their relationship. The participants suggested that to respect someone does not imply the absence of flaws; instead, it is a mutual recognition that both

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have something to offer based on their unique knowledge and their skills. The police must not only learn to respect the people within First Nations communities, but they must show that respect. There is a strong sense among the participants that this respect is lacking in the relationships between police and First Nations people because the police do not demonstrate respect with simple gestures such as a handshake or acknowledgements. It is also recognized that respect does not occupy the position it should within First Nations communities themselves, particularly within younger generations. As a result, there are occasions when First Nations people do not show respect for each other or for the police.

To build this relationship, the police must be present in the community and be actively engaged with the community. It cannot be achieved through reactive policing or from behind a desk or the wheel of a car. It will only happen when the police become involved with the community, enhancing their respect for and knowledge of the community, its cultures, and traditions. Some participants suggested that when the police participate in cultural and ceremonial events it is a strong indicator of respect, shows an interest in their culture, and opens many doors to the community.

First Nations people also want to be understood; they want the police officers they deal with to have some social, historical, and cultural context for First Nation communities and the people in them. This awareness should include knowledge of historical experiences such as residential schools and treaty implementation, as well as the stories of the community, the family and the individual. This understanding would give the police the tools they need to address the situations they encounter more effectively and compassionately, and bind them to the community at a deeper more empathetic level. The participants suggested that First Nations police officers might find it easier to build this respectful, empathetic relationship with First Nations communities. They will have a shared history and culture that allows them to see and empathize with First Nations people.

Families (including extended families and, in some cases, clans) are critical to providing guidance and accountability to the youth within the community. Traditionally, families played many of the roles the police see themselves in today. Accountability and sanctions were, and to a somewhat more limited degree still are today, dealt with by the family rather than an external agency such as the police. Strong families continue to provide that direction while weak families can have the opposite effect by encouraging or excusing bad behaviour. Unfortunately, colonial

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history and the residential school experience have undermined the role of the family, weakening the structure and reducing the skills necessary to build and maintain strong families.

Understanding and leveraging the role of families is critical to providing effective and culturally sensitive policing service to First Nations communities.

Strong relationships are fundamental to the health of First Nations communities. This strength is defined by words like respect, empathy, and understanding. These relationships must exist not only between the police and the community, but also within the community and within families. These relationships require considerable effort, and everyone, including the police, must be prepared to step out of their comfort zones and engage the community in a meaningful active way. Once established and nurtured, these relationships can be a powerful tool in addressing the public safety issues faced in First Nations communities.

Organizing Theme 6: Roles and Responsibilities

Table 7 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the sixth organizing theme: *Roles and Responsibilities*.

Table 7: Organizing Theme 6: Roles and Responsibilities		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Elder Intervention	Elders	Roles and Responsibilities
Elders as an Important Resource to Policing		
The Diversity of Elders		
Historical Basis for Leadership Positions	Leadership	
Leadership Gaps		
Relationship with Policing		
Mutually Beneficial Roles	Community	
The Community must be a Supportive Partner		
Community Self Help		
Governments as Barriers to Aboriginal Self-Policing	Government Control Issues	
Barriers Anchored in Law		

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Basic Theme 1: Elders

Basic Theme 1, *Elders*, represents the amalgamation of three issues discussed by the participants including: *Elder Intervention*, *Elders as an Important Resource to Policing*, and *The Diversity of Elders*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Elder Intervention

Elders will involve themselves in situations when they are asked, or when they recognize the need and it is in the community's interests.

Well, it all depends how he thinks about me. You know, to me, if he's going to be quiet and not ask any questions, what good I am—what good am I to him, you know? Unless he asks me, you know, how to—where—how do you do this and that amongst your people? See, we've got to make the connection...I got to tell him how I feel, and he's got to tell me how he feels. (SKFN18)

Even the Elders, you see an Elder, like, Elder was the most powerful people for [Community X]. Elders were the one we listened to those days. (SKFN15)

It was the Elders' [job to make sure people stayed in line]. (SKFN8)

There used to be an Elder and a servant, [Cree word] they called them, that would generally go and monitor and kind of more or less, like, keep an eye. (SKFN5)

But Elders were mediators at that time and they'd go talk to, just like we're doing now, in mediation. That's what they used to do. They fixed up everything eh, all the problems. They were good speakers. (SKFN1)

And him as an Elder, he's willing to help the young people. (SKFN12)

The Elders and the people that were regarded as wisdom keepers and peace makers, they were called in. They had dialogue with the offender and with the families and following protocol and the law; they dealt with it as such. (SKFN19)

If there's a guy over there, you know, as a Elder let me talk to him first. Then they talk with that young guy there, what's happening with him; let me help him out first. (SKFN7)

Elders as an Important Resource to Policing

Elders can be an important resource to the police through increased understanding of Aboriginal culture, language, and the community.

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I have told them myself, when you're travelling down the road and you feel like having coffee, just drive off the road to an Indian house and have coffee with them and talk to them. Or if you're travelling around, if it's quiet, if you want to talk to somebody, pull off the road to a house, an Indian house, talk to them. Or go visit Elders. (SKFN1)

And he would tell that new officer that advice, how people are in [name of community] and so forth ...I would tell them to communicate more with the Elders. (SKFN11)

They used to take an Elder and drive around with the RCMP, you know. (SKFN7)

The Elders were the ones that imposed the laws and customs. (SKFN12)

As an Elder, he can give advice to the new police officer so that they can work with the people. (SKFN14)

Well, my friend, we have to work with them. Us Elders, we're lots of Elders in [Community X]. We have to work with the RCMP. (SKFN7)

I think before standalone policing is let out there, we need the Elders' help. We need the Elders to tell them, you know. Like, I told you about the young offenders, what they've been through and what they've seen. (SKFN2)

Then when there's that action or something when a person or security are shaken up, when they see someone commit suicide or some people dead on the road, they're shaken up. But these guys go for an Elder and talk to them right there. And in the morning an Elder would come and talk to them, if they're shaken up. (SKFN1)

He was barricaded in the building. He says, "We could have shot him. It was all ready." But one Elder came by and said, "I'll talk to him." So he went in and talked to that guy. He was already—he had a .30-30 rifle. But he said that guy went in and talked to him, and he came out. (SKFN6)

But I do know we had some awesome corporals in here, or sergeants, that really made that effort to be part of the community, and as such, directed their officers to be that. There were times when they took Elders along, ride alongs eh? (SKFN18)

The Elders were the police. (SKFN7)

Whatever arises the Elders deal with it. (SKFN1)

The Diversity of Elders

Elders are a diverse assortment of individuals and each of them brings their own history, strengths and unique approach to bear on community problems.

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They made decisions based on what they, not what they thought, it was based all on the teachings, on the laws. And those laws were not manmade; they were given by the creator. (SKFN18)

That's what I'd like to see, our Elders take the role for, our own police they take the role of training them our way of life and the creator's laws. (SKFN1)

Our Elders are very wise. So that's why, I think, when you say [name] said the Elders need to be a part, yeah, they do. But we also have to be specific with them Elders too, eh? (SKFN2)

Well, our Elders are part of the residential school era. So we do have some that are alcoholics. We do have some that are—have abused. But we also have a lot of them that have done things and have healed themselves in more ways than one. So Elders know the Elders. So we have to put our faith and trust in them. (SKFN2)

They see the Elders, the older people, they see them, like, they're having problems. Those kids see us and we're having problems amongst each other. And so what do they think? They don't care anymore. (SKFN8)

A lot of people, young people start to talk. When they're there, they listen to us. It's not only me. There's a lot of Elders—he's non-drinking for 25 years. A lot of them like that. (SKFN10)

Basic Theme 2: Leadership

Basic Theme 2, *Leadership*, represents the amalgamation of three issues discussed by the participants including: *Historical Basis for Leadership Positions*, *Leadership Gaps*, and *Relationship with Policing*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Historical Basis for Leadership Positions

Historically, leadership in Aboriginal communities was conferred based on skills and personal commitment rather than elections and appointments.

People were there all 'til they died or 'til they decided to step down or do something else. But it was always like a lifelong commitment, or a lifelong role. (SKFN18)

And there was one time we had a really good chief but they wanted him out because everything he did was right. (SKFN9)

I think that if we had somebody, if we had a chief, a hereditary chief, for lack of a better word, but if we had a chief that's going to be here for as long as he lives and everybody respected that. (SKFN9)

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We do a lot of things—we had a letter, [VCR] to the judge. And he listened to us that time. Now it's changed again, because every two years we have an election for chief and councillors. (SKFN10)

Long ago, the leaders had really, like, good control then because a lot of them, they really picked their headsmen, their chief. Today, it kind of—to me, it's not done in a way that people consider that's a good man to be there—like, to serve us in the best way. It's—today, it's who you like. (SKFN17)

Leadership Gaps

Regardless of how they are created, gaps in leadership affect the community's ability to address issues like public safety.

When I say the community is separated, like, you know, they—it's hard for the chief and council to work when you get every day somebody saying something negative to you. Writing on Facebook, stuff like that. How will the chief work here in our community when community members are doing this to him? (SKFN8)

The leader doesn't care. I mean, I can sit right in front of him, he stays in [name of community] 20 miles from here, and he doesn't know what's going on here. We have to do something about that too. (SKFN20)

We need our leadership here and then how—then you can approach other things. We got no leadership. (SKFN8)

The council members that we have, two of them that are here right now are facing assault charges. But the community, the chief and council, don't want to deal with it. (SKFN9)

Sometimes, you know when somebody steal something, they go to court, and then they go to jail. But a lot of times our leaders here, leadership, they tend to [indiscernible] money. How come they don't go to court? That's thief. ... Talking about leadership is stealing thousands of dollars, they get away with that. They should go to court too. (SKFN12)

Relationship with Policing

To be effective, the police must work closely with community leaders, sharing information and consulting each other on issues.

It's [an important role of the police] to work with the community, to work with the chief and council. (SKFN9)

The leadership's not doing anything about it. We're not working with the police. (SKFN10)

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The leadership, RCMP or no matter where, have to work together. (SKFN12)

To have more community meetings. To have, so the police can—but, you know, we've had meetings like that in the past. We had a community meeting where the police were there, the justice worker was there, the community was there, and the chief and council. (SKFN9)

Because as a leadership, this refers to the Chief and the Council, they should work side by side with a police officer because they know what's going on first-hand. (SKFN14)

People respected the community because the chief worked with the RCMP. (SKFN9)

Basic Theme 3: Community

Basic Theme 3, *Community*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Mutually Beneficial Roles*, *The Community Must be a Supportive Policing Partner*, and *Community Self Help*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Mutually Beneficial Roles

The police and the community have a symbiotic relationship and the failure of either party ultimately hurts the community.

Now these kids, they see a cop, they won't know his name. But this cop that was doing all this, everybody knew him. Like goes door—you know what I mean, give people a ride home with their groceries. That's how he was. Now these cops, because they all live in [name of community]. And they have one, two, three, four, five houses in [name of second community]. (SKFN15)

Work together. We have to work together. That's the only way that our community in [name of community] would come back. Have more [visits]. Yeah. (SKFN7)

Well, like, I think they—for making abiding citizens with the community and the police, I think they have to work together. (SKFN17)

You know, where there's laughter and jokes going on, if the police comes there, then everybody keeps quiet, you know, until after they're gone. Then they start joking around again. (SKFN18)

Yeah, the Elders, police and the teachers. Because children when they're in school, they listen [inaudible] right. But, like, the young ones, they're okay right now. (SKFN8)

Well, we could work with them. Work together. (SKFN7)

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The Community Must be a Supportive Policing Partner

Sometimes the community, through local leadership, is the reluctant partner and does not engage or support the police as they should. In some cases they turn on the police or don't share relevant and important information with the police.

And with policing, well, if the band chief and council and the people don't cooperate with the RCMP, they don't sit down together and straighten some of the things out, like, what to do—what they should do, why the community is having all these problems. Which way should they go? It's not being talked about. (SKFN8)

Yeah, as individual people, you got to help the cop, that's what I mean [indiscernible]. Cop can't do everything, like I said, you know, can't do everything by themselves. They have to protect themselves too. Yeah, they're human beings like me and everybody else. They have to protect themselves. (SKFN8)

I do believe that the RCMP that are here, they are doing their job. But if they do something, if they piss somebody off, and then the whole community is after them. (SKFN9)

You see what I'm saying, the leadership there, our chief, he has to call the meeting, a band—the whole community meeting, those RCMP, like, everybody. How we going to work in [XX]? How are we going to slow down these drug dealers? How are we going to work to get control? And the peoples have to make decision. (SKFN12)

Yes, but in our community, nobody wants to hurt each other. That's the hardest part. Like I say, if my [indiscernible] was a [boot]—I wouldn't want to tell. If he knew I was, he wouldn't want to say it. You know what I mean. It's just secret, secret. So it's hard for the cops. (SKFN15)

Community Self-Help

The community also has a self-help role that requires people to help their neighbors directly by talking to them and assisting them without necessarily involving the police.

In the old days when the schools were introduced to us, the Dene was supposed to get educated, they were supposed to become police officers, they were supposed to become nurses, store managers and so forth. But they're lazy, they're not doing anything. So the new police officer comes here, I thank him. Thanks to him. You're doing our police work, thanks to you, because the Dene people were supposed to be replacing the outsiders but they're not really motivated to do it. (SKFN14)

That was one of the teachings we were taught. Like, if you've seen your neighbour really having a hard time, we used to always offer, like, long ago. They don't do that today. Just go and make tea. (SKFN17)

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Yeah, well, a lot of times, you know, it's the Elder in the family that will speak up and talk [to make sure everybody followed the rules]. But now if we have a problem, like somebody violating a traditional law, they're more than most likely go to chief and council and try and get them to exercise their authority as leaders before they come to native justice. But more than likely chief and council will refer that person back here. (SKFN4)

We cannot point fingers at the young people and say, "Oh, they're bad." We can't say that. We've got to work with them. Like I said, once or twice, maybe three times a month that we sit down with them and have a meeting with them. Tell them what's the problem, you know, get to the bottom of it. (SKFN14)

Basic Theme 4: Government Control Issues

Basic Theme 4, *Government Control Issues*, represents the amalgamation of two issues discussed by the participants including: *Governments as Barriers to Aboriginal Self-Policing*, and *Barriers Anchored in Law*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Governments as Barriers to Aboriginal Self-Policing

Government continues to be seen as a barrier to the advancement of Aboriginal police services including on practical issues such as funding and the authority to carry firearms.

We're not even allowed to be armed. (SKFN6)

I'm not talking about how the police, they work, what the laws. I'm not saying change the law, nothing like that. (SKFN8)

As is right now, [indiscernible] we can't really do anything with them because they're run by the province. And we have tried to have our own police ever since I was sitting here, [and boy] we have tried, but we were never given the chance. (SKFN1)

This justice system, when it first started, it was real working good, it was really working. We had lots, we had lots of say at first. They were first telling us, "This is going to be your system, you run it. It will never be broken," they'd tell us. But then once we started it then they took over, they run everything. Gave us a little bit of money every year. (SKFN19)

And that program ran for a year and a half. We were funded by Canada. Indian Affairs funded that program. So, and then the following couple years after, there was no funding. And I say this a lot, when I sit with RCMP. I say "They cut us off." (SKFN6)

Why can't you have two recruits to come here, just 24-hour call. Just let them sit there, don't do anything 'til we call you. We want them here, now. And the first thing they

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came up with is money. Where are we going to get money? Well, we said if we have to pay them, we'll pay them. So same thing is happening right now. (SKFN6)

Barriers Anchored in Law

There are also barriers in law that inhibit Aboriginal communities from achieving their policing/public safety objectives.

And our children see that, and they still go ahead and do it. You see, the thing is, again, the government took away the spanking, if you want to call it that. You know, in the Bible, it says, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." You know, that's what the old people used to say. You know, today, we can't spank our kids. If you look at our penal system, there's probably 90% of us in there, and that's from lack of discipline. We, the parents—they took that away from the parents. Not only us, but the Europeans, also. (SKFN18)

There's a lot of bootlegging around this community too right now. RCMP knows who's selling, but they can't go in the house without a permit. (SKFN10)

If I was there as a peacekeeper, I should be able to stop that vehicle and either she wants to listen to me or not, then I call RCMP. If not, I should be able to give her a ticket, maybe for impaired driving. But we don't have that authority. (SKFN6)

Summary of Organizing Theme 6: Roles and Responsibilities

The organizing theme, *Roles and Responsibilities*, came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Elders*, *Leadership*, *Community*, and *Government Control Issues*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

The participants confirmed the pivotal role played by Elders in addressing those activities deemed harmful to the community. However, "Elder" is not a position that is easily defined. They are individuals that function outside the formal leadership of the community, and yet their existence and role are so ingrained in First Nations culture that they command deep respect from the people. Within First Nations societies there is a clear understanding of the role they play, yet their involvement and their duties are not codified in a way non-First Nations Canadian society would expect. Each Elder brings a different set of skills to bear on any given situation, with some relying on mediation, others spirituality, all with a deep context of history, tradition and wisdom. Elders have an entrenched role, well understood by the community and everyone inclusive of the police and community members must respect and support that role.

Elders, therefore, can be a powerful ally for the police to have in addressing community safety issues. They can help familiarize the police with the community and provide a cultural

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context with respect to community issues. They can assist police by acting as a cultural liaison between the police and the community. They can and do work with the police and may even help the police heal their own wounds as they deal with stressful and dangerous situations.

Leadership was not discussed extensively within the interviews; however, lack of leadership was blamed for many of the issues in First Nations communities today. There was an undercurrent of blame for some of these leadership gaps on the selection systems imposed by the *Indian Act*. Elections versus hereditary chiefs and even the short tenure of leadership under the *Indian Act* were reported by participants to impact the effectiveness and credibility of modern First Nations leaders. There were also suggestions that the police are seen as leaders by the community in the same way that priests and teachers were, and that the expectation to provide leadership within the community may not be well understood by police officers and police agencies. There is an expectation and need for the police to work closely with community leaders treating them as partners rather than clients.

The police and the community are seen to have mutually beneficial roles in collaborating to ensure safety and order within the community. A strong symbiotic relationship benefits both parties; while alternatively, a weak relationship will hurt them both. This means that the police must become a strong respectful partner, and the community must reciprocate. As critical as the participants were of the police failing to engage communities and their leaders, they are equally critical of the lack of engagement of the police by some communities and their leadership. Where police/community relationships are strained or non-existent, it is sometimes because the community is the unwilling partner. The participants acknowledged that in these cases the police have little control over how much the community helps itself.

Governments, at various levels, are seen as an obstacle rather than as a partner in addressing the need for more First Nations involvement in policing and the administration of justice. This includes First Nations self-policing as well as integrated policing models. While it is apparent that First Nations people would have different policing priorities than is the case under the current paradigm, generally speaking with a little government flexibility First Nations people see themselves as able to work with government and police to mold an appropriate policing model if given the opportunity.

More broadly speaking, some of the barriers to addressing public safety issues in First Nations communities are anchored in law. The participants discussed restrictions imposed by law

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on the disciplining of children and the inability of the police to catch and prosecute people for activities such as bootlegging and drug dealing. Lastly, and more specifically, the limited mandates and authorities given to First Nations policing concepts such as peacekeeping has reduced their effectiveness.

The acknowledgement that the police have an important role to play is important to the participants. However, they also emphasized the importance of the roles of the community, Elders, community leadership, and governments. The police cannot be effective or embraced by First Nations communities unless the pivotal roles of these groups are acknowledged and integrated into public safety systems. Each of these entities depends on the others to be effective, and efforts need to be made by all of them to more effectively address community safety issues.

Organizing Theme 7: Conceptions of Policing

Table 8 provides a summary of the issues discussed and basic themes resulting from the analytic process that led to the construction of the seventh organizing theme: *Conceptions of Policing*.

Table 8: Organizing Theme 7: Conceptions of Policing		
Issues Discussed	Basic Theme	Organizing Theme
Policing is Important	Security	Conceptions of Policing
Public Safety Responsibilities		
Local Priorities		
Peacekeepers		
Visibility		
Aboriginal Communities Policing Themselves	Self-Policing	
The Importance of Learning to Aboriginal Self-Policing		
Policing Your Home Community		
Relationship with Mainstream Policing	Integration	
Filling Policing Gaps		
Mutual Respect and Communication		
Mutual Support		

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Basic Theme 1: Security

Basic Theme 1, *Security*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Policing is Important*, *Public Safety Responsibilities*, *Local Priorities*, *Peacekeepers*, and *Visibility*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Policing is Important

The police provide an important and valuable service for Aboriginal communities and this is recognized by people, especially when the relationship between the police and the community is close.

Lucky we got our police in this world. If there was no police, everybody would be shooting left and right. So it's got to be somebody in this world just look after the people. And we have to look after police too. (SKFN7)

I don't want to look at the cops as our enemies. I want to look at them as a professional that's trying to keep peace you know. Which they did in the past, but don't stretch their authority, you know. (SKFN16)

And it's really good, the chief is really close to RCMP. All the councillors, we have good meetings. His boss is always with us when we call them. We have a good talk. (SKFN10)

RCMP, they got the wisdom. They're smart. They didn't brought them here as a dummy for sure, on the reserve. (SKFN7)

The relationship right now is RCMP—we close together, you know. (SKFN10)

Public Safety Responsibilities

It is an important function of the police, to give the members of the community a sense of security that is visceral, especially for vulnerable members of the community such as Elders. The security role is not seen as one that is intended to solve all community problems, instead it is the capacity to respond to and manage tactile emergency situations.

Yes, definitely. We need to have—I don't even like the term policing. I'd rather call it peacemaking. Peacemakers. Keeping the peace. Then we need the peacemakers to be out there and about making sure that there is peace out there. (SKFN18)

I guess [the role of the police] more or less to provide protection, safety. (SKFN5)

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They check all the community buildings. They're also first responders. They have big roles. I'm a first responder. We're certified EMR/EMT. So if there's a rollover, we're there first. If there's a sudden death, a drowning, you know, anything, suicide, we're usually there before EMS. So most of our guys are—our guys and girls—are trained first responders. (SKFN2)

If you're driving the highway, you're speeding they'll be—go after you before you can kill somebody on [indiscernible] road. That's what I mean. If there's a fight, he'll go there. (SKFN7)

But I cannot point fingers and say police are bad because we do need police, because they are the peacekeepers. (SKFN11)

Local Priorities

Policing and public safety priorities must include a local flavour. For example, if a community elects to be dry (no alcoholic beverages), that should be a priority for security officers because it addresses concerns the community has identified and demanded action on.

Mainly our job was to, say, protect our people and no liquor in the reserve, because this was a dry reserve. (SKFN6)

Yeah. Now we have to hire maybe two or three—three security. That's what we did every year, to look at these house. We told them this house is empty, make sure at night you guys take turns. (SKFN10)

Even, like, for them to go check up on them. And sometimes, if they know there's going to be something going on like a—say a wedding or a funeral. (SKFN17)

Peacekeepers

The mainstream police are seen as important in this role, but there is a gap that might be filled by community-centric, locally recruited and managed, peacekeepers.

Yeah. Just like RCMP security, yeah. They can't touch them. People know that about security anyway. They got everything, everything, clothes and everything, eh. (SKFN10)

Even if they [peacekeepers] move around and just seen now with a—especially Elders. A lot of Elders live alone, eh? (SKFN17)

Visibility

The security of a community also requires that the police, or peacekeepers, be highly visible to the people.

Like, I was on a security in 1977 for over a year. There was only two of us, and we only had one truck. But anybody on the road after two in the morning we stopped. (SKFN4)

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Just being visible is good for us. Even though you don't phone them, as long as they're patrolling and being. (SKFN12)

Basic Theme 2: Self-Policing

Basic Theme 2, *Self-Policing*, represents the amalgamation of three issues discussed by the participants including: *Aboriginal Communities Policing Themselves*, *The Importance of Learning to Aboriginal Self-Policing*, and *Policing Your Home Community*. All of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Aboriginal Communities Policing Themselves

Aboriginal people should police themselves because they understand the culture, history and language of their own people.

But I guess if we were to run our own—and I've always said this—standalone policing, you'd have to have the same what police are doing. (SKFN6)

We have an idea what it is we want to do but it's always good to see what other tribes are doing that's really making it work for them. (SKFN18)

Well, it's been something that's been talked about since I come here, and I've been here over a year now and it's standalone policing, our own people policing. (SKFN2)

Why don't we, as a reserve, as a band, concerned band members, get policing on the reserve? Our own—like, when I was in the police force and we make a presentation at [indiscernible] here and I tell to the kids at that time, grade 11, I said, "One of these days, you'll need to be 100 percent Native policing, our own RCMP." That's what I told them. (SKFN4)

I don't know how old I was, but I had two kids already. And the Band started policing in our reserve. And we used to be called tribal police. (SKFN6)

Who can better police a community than members of our own? We know who's who, we know what's going on. But we also have to have the support in the community. (SKFN2)

If we're going to start our own policing, I don't want to be in bed with RCMP on this standalone policing, [Community X], to be on their own. (SKFN6)

That would be good, if we have our own police. (SKFN11)

So they have—we have done that. And we're ready. The only thing is, like I say, the next step is authority and armed. But that has to be trained, too. So that's the next thing. But I said, see, Band used to go—they went to [Community X], east, and how they started.

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And same thing that's what we're doing. We want to start our own policing. I know they're not going to—you know, these guys are not going to appreciate what I do. But sooner or later, they have to. (SKFN6)

The Importance of Learning to Aboriginal Self-Policing

It will be vital that self-policing options for Aboriginal communities comes with the opportunity for them to learn all the necessary policing skills for those Aboriginal police officers.

That our officers would go training and come back, have the—what do you call it—pepper spray, handcuffs, batons and all that. No revolvers but down the line. (SKFN1)

But I said, if they're not going to do it because of money, I said we'll go and train sheriffs. We'll train them. (SKFN6)

Policing Your Home Community

Aboriginal police officers policing in their own home communities may struggle because of their personal connections within the community.

[Aboriginal police officers should be] from a different community. I think it'd be hard on a person if they were from here. Because they know everybody, and somebody might poke—like, give them—like, somebody might start an argument because they know him good, they know his family, and start bringing up the dirt or whatever the family has. (SKFN17)

Another thing would be—you see, maybe them guys that get into this position [peacekeepers], if they have favouritism and if they don't like somebody, you know, then they'll kind of mix with the people that they're related to or whatever you want to call it. (SKFN18)

You know, I would have said, years back I would have said the community, the community members, our own police. But I've worked in communities where they have their own policing and I've seen a lot of nepotism. (SKFN9)

It got into a big issue. Like, they were after that guy because they knew that guy busted—you know what I mean. Even it's a small town, yes. *Interviewer*: So if we were going to talk about a police service, for example, led by the community, you feel like it wouldn't work here because of that reason? Would that be fair to say? *Respondent*: Okay. (SKFN15)

But what I'd like to see is from a different band, and our peacekeepers from here go to a different band. (SKFN18)

I think that would be, I think that would work. But then again, what if it's your family member, eh? How is that going to look? (SKFN9)

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Basic Theme 3: Integration

Basic Theme 3, *Integration*, represents the amalgamation of a number of issues discussed by the participants including: *Relationship with Mainstream Policing*, *Filling the Policing Gaps*, *Mutual Respect and Communication*, and *Mutual Support*. Each of the issues discussed assists in developing an understanding of the overall basic theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connection to the other issues discussed.

Relationship with Mainstream Policing

Aboriginal-based policing should maintain a strong working relationship with equal but often different mandates.

Yeah, working together [Locally managed Aboriginal police officers and the RCMP]. (SKFN1)

RCMP can go anywhere, their jurisdiction they can go anywhere. But as far as situations out here, and we have standalone policing, we're going to need each other's help. There has to be a memorandum of understanding. (SKFN2)

We have to understand each other. Work together. It's important to us that we have our own police system too, on this side. It would work [well] once it starts, once it gets off the ground. And we work together with the police, RCMP. (SKFN1)

I think the Native—the provincial police would be enforcing provincial law, okay. And Native police would be doing traditional, you know, federal crimes. (SKFN4)

[Peacekeepers should] talk to people and see what needs to be done and where they need help. Yes, [be present in the community] and know people and people would know them, eh. (SKFN15)

But we lack our own officers. They would be better—these security we have right now they work hard. They work at night while the RCMP have a rest. They do the work all night, 24 hours a day they work. (SKFN1)

Filling the Policing Gaps

This kind of integrated model could fill some of the policing gaps that the RCMP don't have time or the cultural knowledge and skills for.

Just go and talk to youth. Anybody drinking. "You know, you better smarten up, or else we'll go and tell RCMP." (SKFN6)

I think it would be good. It would give a lot of relief to the RCMP. It could be—things could be straightened out by the peacekeepers. RCMP don't have to intervene sometimes. (SKFN8)

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I think if we have band counsellors, at least two of them, helping the police officer enforcing the, like the bylaw, that will be a good solution. (SKFN11)

That would be nice to see. Maybe that'd be one way of communicating. You know, if we had our—if you want to call them Indian police or whatever. (SKFN18)

Mutual Respect and Communication

Mutual respect is vital; each mandate and each organization must listen, respect and learn from the other.

Interviewer: And what about the relationship between the peacekeepers and the RCMP?

Respondent: It's supposed to be good but it's not always good. It's not always good. There are times where they're really appreciated. There are times where they're respected, where RCMP are grateful for our help. But there are times where they'll call me or they'll call [name of person] and they'll say, "this is what they did." But whether it's constructive or criticizing, I guess we take it as we take it. And we decide, is it something that we need to work on right away. (SKFN2)

Oh yeah, there would be, yeah, because we would do things quite differently from what they do. But we'd also have to—we'd have to respect their mandate. But it would go both ways. (SKFN2)

There needs to always be that dialogue and [you can see them]. That's always—our vision is to be able to always work with each other based on where we come from. We're not trying to change anything about the RCMP. (SKFN18)

Communication. Communication is a big key. Communication and also making sure that everybody's doing what they're supposed to do, so that we're not offloading things that, like—they're not asking us to do things that aren't in our mandate, and also the other way, too, that we're not trying to do the RCMP role. And EMS, too. Well, of course, we never really have an issue with them because they're just grateful, like, we're able to keep a person alive, right. (SKFN2)

Mutual Support

Aboriginal police officers and RCMP officers must support each other, not be in conflict or competition.

So we meet with EMS, we meet with RCMP and we meet with FRP. So we go over what—you know, different scenarios, what we could have done wrong, what we did right, you know, and pat each other on the back. So we're trying to build that relationship. It's slow, but it's something that should have been built a while ago. (SKFN2)

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Okay, we're going to follow you. Go straight home if you want to drink. If you want to drink, but if you—if we stop you again tonight, RCMP are going to be called and you'll be charged. (SKFN6)

If they [peacekeepers] work with the police officers it would be good, because they can work side by side, you know, and talk to them and say, "Oh yeah, we sent the police." And then work for us I guess, you know, don't turn your back on the RCMP but, you know, work with them. (SKFN11)

Rob Clarke, that MP in Ottawa that sits over there, used to be an RCMP here. I used to help him when I was a peacekeeper. He'd stop people, three people, he was all alone. He'd call us, and I would be sent to go and help him because nobody's going to deal with three people. (SKFN6)

Summary of Organizing Theme 7: Conceptions of Policing

The organizing theme, *Conceptions of Policing*, came together as a result of the interaction of the basic themes: *Security*, *Self-Policing*, and *Integration*. Each of these themes contributes to the understanding of the organizing theme in and of themselves, as well as in their connections to each other.

The concept of *policing* is understood and described in very diverse ways by the participants. These descriptions are not confined only to the Eurocentric understanding of policing, rather they are more broadly based as a more holistic, restorative concept of policing and public safety, anchored in concepts of justice more consistent with Aboriginal tradition and culture that includes the concept of peacekeepers and community builders. Notwithstanding this divergence from the more common Canadian policing practices, one of the important roles assigned to the police is that of security: the very basic expectation that the police have a front line/first responder role in protecting people and their property. The security function was discussed by participants as significantly important with respect to providing safety for the most vulnerable within their communities who are at a high risk of victimization. This role is important in light of the findings of Perreault (2011) whereby Aboriginal people are at high risk of victimization, particularly from others within their communities, and therefore in need of this particular aspect of policing service. The security function was further described by participants as requiring a sensitivity to local priorities and issues that requires collaboration between the police and the community in ensuring awareness as to what these needs are.

When providing policing services in a collaborative, objective manner, the police can be seen as important allies and a valuable resource to the community. There is an undercurrent of

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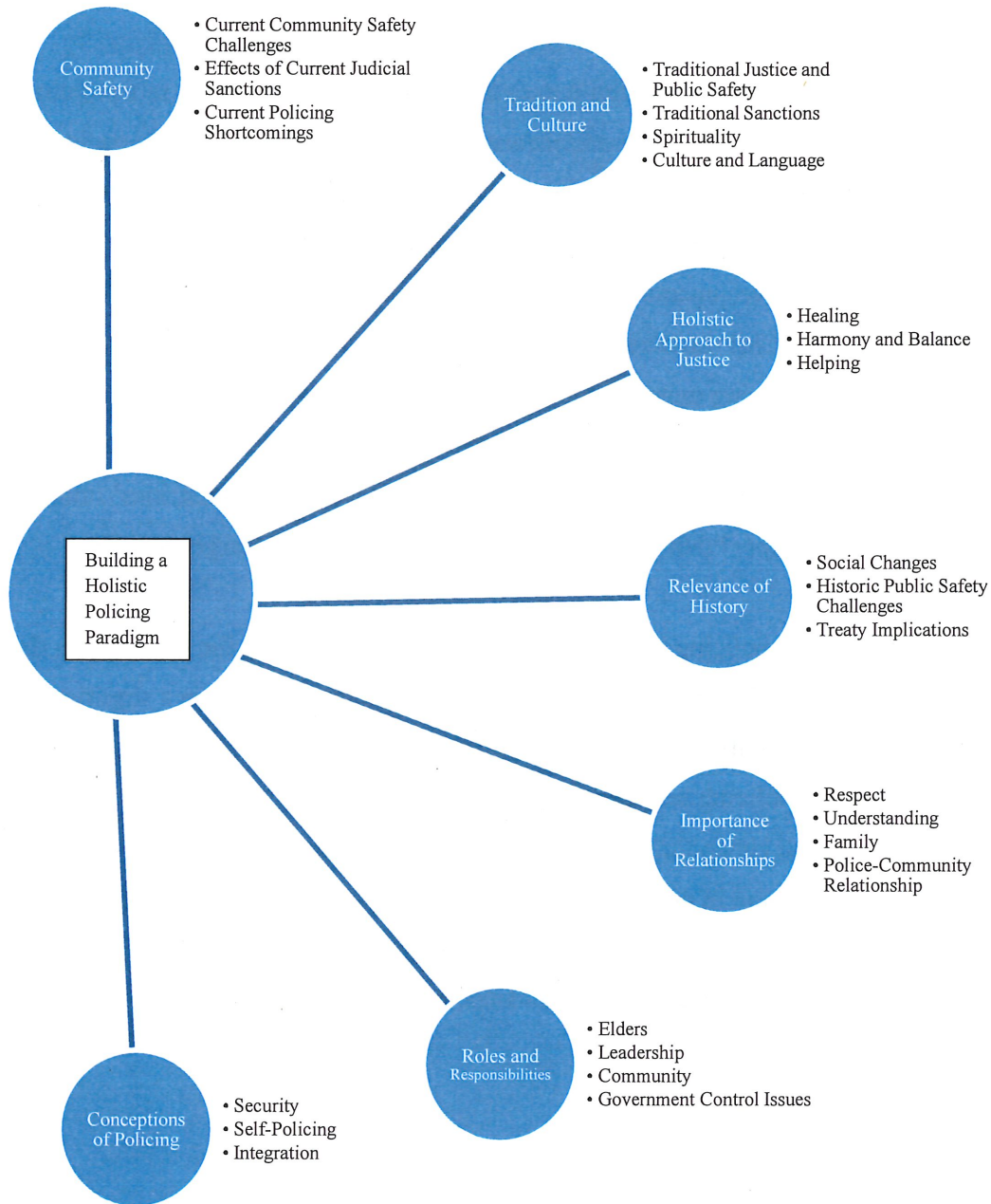
respect for the policing profession; however, this respect is conditional on the relationship police officers establish with the community.

The idea of self-policing of Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people was generally supported while recognizing some of the challenges this may present. However, self-policing was not necessarily understood to be *self-administered policing* as defined in Public Safety Canada's FNPP. Discussion also included achieving a more culturally sensitive, community-oriented policing model that included the RCMP on a sliding scale of police responsibilities. In other cases, the participants were unequivocal in their assertions that Aboriginal people must police themselves without RCMP involvement. In either case, this theme emphasizes that primary responsibility for policing must shift to Aboriginal people and any role played by mainstream policing would be a secondary one. This shift requires that identified local community members have access to training wherein they can meet the communities' immediate security needs as a "peacekeeper" that functions in collaboration with the larger policing organization.

In contrast to the self-policing theme, there were also views among the participants that whatever policing model is ultimately adopted, mainstream policing must retain a significant role in policing Aboriginal communities working in close partnership with the community and, where applicable, Aboriginal self-policing services such as peacekeepers. The Aboriginal policing models discussed from these viewpoints seem largely designed to fulfill the cultural knowledge and language gap clearly present in non-Aboriginal policing services, as well as to support those more traditional restorative approaches to justice. This relationship between these policing entities would have to include clearly defined mandates, mutual respect and strong communication.

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Figure 1: Thematic Map



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Global Theme: Building a Holistic Policing Paradigm

The Global theme, *Building a Holistic Policing Paradigm*, came together as a result of the interaction of the organizing themes: *Community Safety*, *Tradition and Culture*, *Holistic Approach to Justice*, *Relevance of History*, *Importance of Relationships*, *Roles and Responsibilities*, and *Conceptions of Policing*.

The organizing theme, *Community Safety*, addresses the issue of policing and public safety challenges currently experienced by First Nations Communities. The participants acknowledged the reality of crime and public safety issues in their communities and described how the socio-economic, historical and cultural circumstances contributed to the current state of affairs. From the participant's perspectives, some police officers on First Nations appear at times to be unaware or potentially indifferent to the underlying conditions experienced by First Nations peoples and the struggles they undergo, of which crime is only one challenge. This systemic unresponsiveness carries on throughout the justice system and generates results that tend to satisfy the legalities of the justice system, but does little to address the underlying issues that led to the crime in the first place and may even be contributing to crime and disorder.

Tradition and Culture formed the basis for a second organizing theme which pointed out the role of history, spirituality, and language in First Nations conceptions of justice and policing. Tradition and cultural frameworks are presented as both historical and contemporary because while they are anchored in history and affected by more recent events, they remain an important aspect of First Nations society that must be included in discussions of First Nations justice. In other words, tradition and culture cannot be separated from the administration of justice because they are inextricably tied to First Nations people's understanding of the world around them.

Under the theme of *Holistic Approaches to Justice*, the participants focused on the common principles that First Nations' justice should embrace. These principles are centered on restorative philosophies such as healing, helping, harmony, and balance. However, overarching these restorative principles is the understanding that no one segment of society has predominant responsibility for justice. It is a holistic responsibility that leverages all available tools within the community to restore a state of equilibrium to everyone affected. Therefore, the goal of this approach is not solely about satisfying legalistic expectations of justice, as the participants suggested the police focus on now. Rather, the emphasis is on the restoration of community and

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individual wellbeing using a broad cross-section of resources, including the community and the police in whatever role they can best contribute.

The organizing Theme, *Relevance of History*, pointed out the impacts that important historical antecedents have had in creating the current challenges in First Nations communities. There are direct links to crime and public safety, such as easier physical access to the community as a result of the building of roads leading to more drugs, alcohol, and gangs. Furthermore, there are also indirect links such as the long-term effects of the pervasive intergenerational trauma in many communities as a result of the legacy of *residential schools* and the *Indian Act*. This finding is consistent with that reported by Clairmont (2013, p. 86) that “policing in Canada’s Aboriginal communities faces many challenges due to the combination of colonialist legacy.” In many ways this history is shared with the RCMP and, while the past cannot be changed, the respective roles in that history can be acknowledged as a first step in repairing some of the damage done and building positive respectful relationships.

In the theme of *Importance of Relationships*, the participants identified how the fundamental concept of *respect* forms the basis for the relationships that underpin a truly holistic approach to justice. Respect helps position people as equals within a relationship. In practical terms it means the police must acknowledge and seek to understand the communities they are working within and their cultures, traditions, and beliefs; and the community must do the same with respect to the role of the police in their community, including what resources and knowledge they can bring to help respond to public safety challenges. The participants suggested that this respect is missing from many police community relationships. In either case, repairing this relationship and building a mutually respectful partnership is essential to a holistic approach. Without these relationships, the necessary synergy and police-community alignment cannot be achieved.

Under the theme *Roles and Responsibilities*, the participants observed that many important human resources are not being allowed to take their place in moving towards a more holistic paradigm. Elders, for instance, can be a powerful instrument in a restorative holistic system; however, they are not utilized by the police to the extent they should be. Elders command respect within the community and have a wide variety of skills that can be brought to bear on public safety issues. Similarly, First Nations leaders, families, and the community itself tend to occupy the sidelines as the police and the justice system take a decidedly non-holistic

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approach. The participants acknowledged that in some cases leaders and families are not able to fulfill their traditional roles in this holistic system because of historical or legal impediments.

The Organizing Theme *Conceptions of Policing*, introduced a variety of policing concepts. Fundamental to these concepts is the notion that holistic and restorative approaches will change the way policing is carried out. According to the respondents, the police can no longer categorize themselves as *law enforcement services* but must embrace a holistic, relationship-based, problem-solving approach with restorative goals. The participants acknowledged the importance of the work the police perform, but did not necessarily endorse the role they currently play. Some participants endorsed a more integrated model that leveraged the resources and expertise of conventional policing, working alongside a First Nations self-policing model that incorporates the knowledge and cultural awareness of police officers of First Nations ancestry. While the participants emphasized the importance of the current police services becoming more aware of First Nations culture and language, they also acknowledged that people with First Nations backgrounds would be able to understand and apply these holistic restorative approaches in a First Nations context more effectively. Such an integrated model would require not only current police service cooperation, but also government support and the relaxation of legal and policy constraints that prevent First Nations self-policing from assuming a prominent role in First Nations community safety.

The premise that crimes and the individual behaviour of First Nations people should not be looked at in isolation of culture and history was given great emphasis by the participants throughout the interviews. The respondents described how First Nations people are products of current and historical traditions, culture, and spirituality that are not well understood by the police nor the broader justice system. Furthermore, that history, culture, and tradition are anchored in holistic and restorative philosophies that are embedded in First Nations beliefs, practices and value systems. Addressing public safety issues in the absence of these beliefs, practices, and value systems appears myopic to the participants, and one of the reasons the current justice system is failing them. An individual's spiritual or cultural beliefs, personal history, and the community's interests cannot be ignored any more than the central facts of any given situation.

This suggestion that the justice system, inclusive of the police, is not meeting the public safety needs of the community is at the foundation of the participant's assertions. From their

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perspective, the concept of justice as it is commonly applied, is less important than recognizing, in a holistic way, what is happening in their communities, who is doing it, and why. That holistic view of what is happening must then translate into a holistic and restorative response. Policing must be a part of that response and evolve into a model that is less constrained by Eurocentric convention, and driven more by a holistic understanding of the issues within the community and restorative philosophies. According to the respondents, the list of concerns about the current model of policing is dominated by practices that prevent the establishment of strong, respectful, collaborative relationships whereby the police see and respond in accordance with First Nations justice principles, rather than focusing exclusively on being servants of the law. They suggest that those engaging with the community in a policing capacity need to embrace the often-conflicting roles of peacekeeper, law enforcer, and community builder as described by Bazemore and Griffiths (2003) in their discussion of “restorative policing.”

Conclusions and Next Steps:

Collectively, the insights and observations of the participants revealed that members of four Saskatchewan First Nations communities have significant concerns about public safety and that the respondents feel the justice system is not responding to those circumstances in an effective manner. The participants provided important cultural and historic contexts to a First Nations understanding of justice, relying on holistic and restorative practices and beliefs while recognizing the need for retributive approaches when deemed necessary. Contemporary policing challenges are deeply rooted in history and practices of colonialism that disrupted the ability of community members to use informal and formal social control to address public safety concerns.

The importance of establishing better working relationships between First Nations and the officials working within justice systems, as well as the pivotal role that respect plays in building and strengthening these relationships was emphasized. The participants pointed out that many aspects of Aboriginal traditions and culture can still play pivotal roles in addressing public safety challenges. In the event that Elders, families, community leaders, and entire communities can develop and maintain strong respectful relationships with the police, they can collaboratively have the potential to make significant progress toward community safety goals. The respondents further speculated that models of policing that blended a self-administered First Nations with more conventional police services might prove to be more effective than what currently exists.

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The consistent emphasis expressed by the respondents was on creating a respectful partnership that functions in a collaborative and holistic manner to achieve community safety goals.

While there was not an expectation that the police alone can address many of the underlying issues that lead to crime, the general sense was that there should be an increased awareness and recognition of these “root cause” factors, such as entrenched poverty, by those policing First Nations communities. In furtherance of this, there should be a comprehensive examination of the public safety issues within each First Nations community, where possible showing the links between public safety and these underlying factors. This work should be a collaborative effort between the community, the police service, government, and other social support agencies. The resulting narrative can then underpin a collaborative plan to work toward real progress on community public safety goals.

As language, tradition, culture, and history represent the foundations upon which the First Nations worldview is constructed, those engaging in policing Aboriginal communities need to have some understanding of this environment while cognizant that differences exist in each community, which presents the police with a formidable challenge. An important component of this undertaking is the acknowledgment of colonial history, including its historical impacts, as well as the resulting intergenerational trauma that in many cases is the root cause of many of the addictions and other criminogenic issues (Hoffart, 2016). This history, combined with the cultures and traditions of each community, provides critical context for the public safety challenges predominant in the community. Training for the police in each First Nations community that highlight their history, culture, and traditions should be collaboratively developed and made available to all police officers and justice system officials working within the community. Aspects of this awareness training should be delivered by community members and leaders, including Elders, and should include experiential components such as participating in traditional activities.

Equally important in strengthening First Nations-police relationships is developing an increased awareness within the community of policing challenges and realities. Frequent *open house* events hosted by the police to facilitate discussion on issues of community concern may help community members better understand their policing service. Issues highlighted by the respondents in this report, such as public complaints, legal limitations, capacity, police/community relations, and even policing contracts, could be discussed to increase public

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understanding and build critical relationships. Elders and community leaders should play an integral role in these events, leveraging both their knowledge of community concerns as well as ensuring the community is aware of and comfortable with participating in such events.

The Province of Saskatchewan has been a strong advocate for the use of a holistic and inter-disciplinary approach to addressing community safety issues. In 12 non-Aboriginal Saskatchewan communities this approach has been implemented using a *Hub* model whereby a more holistic approach to identifying and resolving these issues has been shown to reduce crime and social disorder (McFee & Taylor, 2014; Nilson, 2014). The structure of the Hub approach appears to be very adaptable to First Nations cultural environments. Such an approach could be structured within each community so as to incorporate the crucial holistic approach inclusive of issues of helping, harmony, healing, and balance that are so pivotal to First Nations conceptions of justice. This means it will be important that the Hub model be designed by and for each First Nations community (incorporating best practices and lessons learned from other community efforts to incorporate this approach) and remain largely driven by the community itself. This would necessitate strong practical support from the community and Federal and Provincial governments as the Hub approach requires a range of social supports that are intended to reduce risk. Moreover, in order to ensure that First Nations can work toward self-determination, such programs cannot be imposed from external parties.

Lastly, the respondents reported that the structure and operations of policing in First Nations should undergo a fundamental change. While the participants did not take the position that RCMP contract policing should cease, it was suggested that there were gaps in providing a culturally appropriate service that could be addressed in two important ways. First, more police officers with First Nations backgrounds would bring improved knowledge and understanding of First Nations culture and language to policing. This suggests improved and increased efforts within conventional policing services to recruit First Nations people to policing as well as to retain them. Programs such as the Polytechnic *Aboriginal Policing Preparation* program, and the University of Regina's *Justice Studies* program have the potential to be strong partners in this goal, as would the Saskatchewan Police Aboriginal Recruiting Committee (SPARC). According to the respondents, the actions to increase the recruitment of Aboriginal police officers might also include more flexible policies on accepting people with criminal records for minor offences that occurred in the past and are not indicative of their current behaviour.

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Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the advice from the participants on developing or extending an integrated two-tiered model of policing throughout First Nations communities should be considered. While there is a long history of band constables involved in Aboriginal policing (initially introduced in the 1960s), some Saskatchewan First Nations have already introduced *Peacekeeper* programs, and these officials go by different occupational titles, such as community safety officers, community program officer, and community constable. As the Province of Saskatchewan and the RCMP already have frameworks in place for these officials, it might be feasible to extend their roles throughout Saskatchewan. In order to facilitate this process, the Saskatchewan Polytechnic offers an *Indigenous Peacekeeper* certificate program. This program was designed in consultation with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN), and the curriculum includes many of the holistic, restorative, and cultural factors emphasized by the participants. Critical to the success of such a two-tiered system would be local control, secure funding, supportive policy and legal frameworks, as well as respectful mutually beneficial relationships with conventional policing agencies.

Addressing the concerns expressed by the participants in this study will begin the process of healing the relationship between the police and First Nations communities. This is not to suggest that this relationship is necessarily broken in all cases, as participants described healthy collaborative relationships with the police in spite of the system they work within. These healthy relationships seem driven by individuals on both sides of the equation who understand the complexities of First Nations justice and have built relationships that embrace the principles expressed by respondents in this report. Unfortunately, these circumstances are often driven by individuals and they are not formally institutionalized; as a result, they tend to be fleeting and sporadic. The systems in place now do not always provide the strong support for these kinds of collaborative relationships which would ultimately help reduce the crime and public safety concerns that plague so many First Nations communities.

These suggestions as to how the systems and relationships might be improved to meet that goal will move policing forward in that regard. However, what is more important are the words of the participants who have provided wisdom and clarity to the discussion, and opened the door for a new relationship with policing.

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