

**NATIVE INDIAN CRIMINALITY: AN EXPLORATORY COMPARISON OF THREE
BRITISH COLUMBIA RESERVE COMMUNITIES**

by

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have not yet adequately explored the reasons for the overrepresentation of native Indians in the Canadian criminal justice system, nor have they attended to diversities among native Indian groups. This view of native Indians as a homogeneous political, social and cultural group presents serious implications for criminal justice programming and significantly constrains our understanding of native crime.

A community study approach to the problem of native crime enables an analysis of the variable conditions associated with crime in native communities. Focussed ethnographic research to date has revealed the complexity of issues and circumstances surrounding crime within particular communities, not normally addressing the diversity among communities. Comparative studies of community characteristics compensate, in part, for this problem, but are insensitive to differences in the qualitative characteristics by which the aggregate indicators are given meaning in particular contexts.

This thesis employs an integration of ethnographic and comparative approaches to investigate differences among three native Indian communities chosen for their varying levels of crime. Particular attention is paid to social, economic and political factors, as well as the existence and availability of personal and community resources. A flexible, phenomenological approach was appropriate to the heuristic, exploratory

objectives of the study.

The research suggests that organizational ability and community development processes inhibit crime and other social problems in these reserve communities. Organizational ability is indicated by the presence of an effective political structure that exercises control over local affairs in degrees proportionate to the crime rates in the communities examined here. Organizational ability may also be related to a number of other variables, including aspects of traditional social organization, and the extent of social disorganization resulting from European contact.

The need for a synthesis of theoretical perspectives to address the complexity of native crime is suggested. This study also affirms the need to examine qualitatively the indicators chosen to describe and compare community conditions.

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CHAPTER I

FRAMEWORKS AND THEORIES FOR UNDERSTANDING NATIVE CRIMINALITY

The overrepresentation of native Indians at all levels of the criminal justice system in North America has been well documented (Moyer, Kopeiman, LaPrairie and Billingsley, 1985; Reasons, 1978; Stewart, 1964; Verdun-Jones and Muirhead, 1978). One recent government publication reveals that native admissions to correctional institutions are overrepresented in all provinces when the representation of natives and non-natives in the general population is considered (Moyer et al., 1985). Although British Columbia's eight to one ratio of native to non-native admissions to correctional institutions is one of the lowest incarceration ratios in Canada (Moyer et al., 1985), this situation nonetheless deserves the serious attention of justice officials and researchers in this province.

A wide variety of explanations have been advanced to explain the overrepresentation of native Indians in the justice system. In the main, theoretical explanations have been guided by two competing frameworks that have been used to analyze race relations in North America.

The first of these two models, the order/assimilationist perspective, accepts conventional definitions of crime and deviance, and attributes criminal behaviour of native Indians to personal failure in conforming to the expectations of mainstream society. According to Reasons (1978:368) "the order/

assimilationist perspective minimizes the significance of power and coercion in everyday life between subordinate and superordinate groups, emphasizing the social psychology of individual and group adaptation to dominant group values and practices."

An order/assimilationist approach takes "the system" as a given and measures the adequacy of individuals by their ability to deal with it. Adoption of this perspective implies exceptionalistic (individual), rather than universalistic (structural) solutions (Ryan, 1971). "Treatment" for crime thus involves assisting native offenders to assimilate the values and behaviours of white society.

Under this cultural model, native individuals and groups are blamed for the low socio-economic position widely associated with their minority status. The "culture of poverty" concept (Lewis, 1971) has been criticized by Leacock (1971:34) who notes that "the effects of what is being done to people who are accorded a low status in a highly acquisitive, competitive and discriminatory society, are somehow ascribed to the people themselves." *copy*

The second perspective described by Reasons (1978) is the conflict/pluralist approach, which offers an alternative framework to examine the problem of native criminality. This perspective emphasizes the role of state control over the political, economic and social lives of native Indians. Reasons (1978:369) describes the historical importance of power,

conflict and coercion leading to cultural pluralism, and notes that "ameliorative action is one of lessening the extent of dominant group social control and exploitation."

A conflict/pluralist approach to the problem of native Indian criminality seems to be gaining popularity among contemporary researchers (see, for examples Hyde and LaPrairie 1987; Shkilnyk, 1985; Verdun-Jones and Muirhead, 1978). One recent report prepared for the Solicitor General of Canada (Havemann, Foster, Couse and Matonovich, 1984:vii) begins with the assumption that "the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples throughout the criminal justice system is the inevitable consequence of colonization and underdevelopment." These authors (1984:9) summarize the underdevelopment thesis, writing that:

...historically, over-involvement with the legal system was endemic to the relationship between the colonized (Indigenous) and the colonizer (non-Indigenous) and that this relationship was and is one involving economic, political, and social exploitation or social dislocation.

The report by Havemann et al (1984) draws upon the work of Gail Kellough (1980) who tracks the role of the state in the "development of underdevelopment" among Canadian Indian reserves. Kellough (1980) examines the exploitative relationship between the metropolitan centres and the rural areas they utilize, and concludes, in relation to native crime, that Indian violence is a reaction to the violence of their oppressors.¹

¹For earlier work on this development of underdevelopment thesis, see Frank, 1967 and Jorgensen, 1972.

In accordance with a conflict/pluralist perspective of native criminality, "treatment" targets structural factors rather than individuals. Ryan (1971:248) writes that universalistic analysis "will focus, not on problem families, but on family problems; not on motivation, but on opportunity; not on symptoms, but on causes; not on deficiencies, but on resources; not on adjustment, but on change." ⁴

Conflict/pluralist investigations of native Indian communities have resulted in recommendations of reduced governmental control and increased local (indigenous) participation in economic, political and social matters (see, for examples, Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Erikson, 1980; Morrison and Wilson, 1986). The acquisition of a meaningful economic base for native communities is also suggested as a strategy to reduce native overrepresentation in the criminal justice system (see also Canada, 1978; Hemingway, 1983).

The order/assimilationist and cultural/pluralist approaches represent two ideological frameworks that have guided research efforts regarding native criminality. Researchers have tended to locate causes of native criminality in a variety of personal and structural sources reflective of order/assimilationist and/or conflict/pluralist assumptions. This discussion is organized around five theoretical emphases identified in the literature.²

²May (1982) identifies eight thematic models. They are: acculturation/assimilation; social disorganization; social organization; a more criminal group; discrimination; overpolicing; differential use of legal services and recidivism.

Social Psychological Themes

Native criminality has been explained in terms of the social psychological responses of individuals and groups assimilating into mainstream society. Theories of this type reflect the assumptions of the order/assimilationist perspective; for instance, the deviant behaviour of natives is viewed as symptomatic of their difficulties internalizing the values and behaviours of the dominant society.

Most of the research using a social-psychological focus has used detailed social and cultural descriptions to account for deviant behaviour, particularly drunkenness and alcohol-related offences. For example, Riffenburgh (1964) and Ackerman (1971) describe the effects of cultural incompatibilities on drinking, crime and delinquency.

Minnis (1963) attributes "culture clash" and the ensuing deviant behaviour to the social, economic, family and community characteristics of a Shashone-Bannock Indian reservation. Grave's (1970) study of 259 Navajo male migrants who moved to Denver focusses on the "psychic misery" resulting from their inability to achieve one's goals, in the Mertonian sense. Graves (1970:50) concludes that "better prepared Indians have far fewer drinking problems than less well prepared Indians."

²(cont'd) The present review provides a condensed summary of these eight models.

Both Graves (1970) and Minnis (1963) recognize economic marginality as an important variable in native drinking and crime; however, these writers choose to focus on questions of personal inadequacies and adjustment rather than structural sources of conflict. It is this emphasis on the individual that places their work within an order/assimilationist framework (see also Jessor, Graves, Hanson and Jessor, 1968).

Structural Themes

The second theoretical approach falls within the rubric of the conflict/pluralist perspective outlined by Reasons (1978). Structural theorists examine the role of socio-structural factors in producing native Indian deviance. Verdun-Jones and Muirhead (1978:6), for example, attribute the poor social conditions and disproportionate incarceration rates of Canadian native Indians to "the effects of colonialism, chronic poverty, racism and legal dependency."

A recurring theme among structural theorists is that social, historical and legislative events have caused the disorganization of traditional aboriginal cultures. The ensuing state of anomie is then linked with deviant behaviour, including drunkenness and crime (for examples, see French and Hornbuckle, 1977; Mikel, 1979; and Wilson, 1982, 1985). Structural theorists have also focussed on relative economic deprivation and structural inequality using this approach. The overrepresentation of native Indians in the criminal justice system may then be explained by

the fact that Indians are also overrepresented at the lowest socio-economic levels in society (for examples, see LaPrairie, 1984, and Muirhead, 1980).

Much of the work using a social disorganization approach has also employed descriptive methods. For example, Hayner (1942) describes regional variation in criminal behaviour on three Indian reservations in the U.S. plains and Pacific Northwest. He attributes high levels of crime to unearned wealth, and to tribal and family disorganization resulting from white contact. French and Hornbuckle (1977) analyze violent crime data and several case histories among the Cherokee Indians. They conclude that federal paternalism and the establishment of a restrictive reservation system has resulted in marginality of native Indians, creating a subculture of violence.

Both these studies emphasize the importance of structural variables in creating the contemporary social problems of native Indians; however, both go on to recommend corrective action based on assimilationist policies.³ The tendency to blame the victim betrays a structural approach and reflects a basic tenet of the order/assimilationist approach; therefore, the works of French and Hornbuckle (1977) and Hayner (1942) may be considered within that framework as well.

³Hayner (1942) suggests revival of the best cultural traits, education and job creation as solutions. French and Hornbuckle (1977) recommend substitution of legitimate tension-reducing techniques for violent behaviour.

In essence, structural and social-psychological theories have relied upon data that are compatible with both views. Descriptive studies have tended to rely upon somewhat tautologous reasoning; in other words, the chosen explanation has been inferred from the observed deviance.

Although the theoretical emphasis of structural theorists appears to be based more upon ideological preference than empirical support, a few researchers have attempted to measure social disorganization with varying results. For example, Jensen, Stauss and Harris (1977) examined tribal variations in rule-breaking among three boarding schools in Nevada, California and Arizona. Although rule-breakers were more likely to come from disorganized families, tribal differences in social disorganization, based on measures of family and social environment, were not statistically significant (1977). Another attempt to measure social disorganization is found in the work of Wilson (1982) who employed multi-variate analysis of violent crime rates in all aboriginal communities in Queensland.⁴ His analysis demonstrated that homicide and assault rates were higher in areas where aspects of traditional culture were almost gone, alcohol was available and the community was a receiving ground for displaced persons from other areas (1982:55). Wilson's findings are framed in an explanation of social disorganization of traditional society, resulting from white

⁴This Australian work is considered relevant here since demographic, social, political and economic parallels between the Australian and Canadian indigenous peoples have been established (see Keon-Cohen and Morse, 1984).

conquest (1982, 1985).

Muirhead's (1980) statistical analysis of 4,990 inmates sentenced in 1975 to a B.C. correctional institution represents an attempt to test the relative importance of cultural and structural variables for the disproportionate incarceration rate of natives. Muirhead examined a number of offender characteristics (race, age, education, sex) in addition to information about the districts of offender origin (e.g., rural/urban, levels of unemployment and income, and population density). Statistical analysis suggests that community variables more accurately predicted the time incarcerated than did culture (measured simply by race). Muirhead's study illustrates the difficulties in operationalizing and testing variables relating to "culture" and "marginal underclass"; nevertheless, his work suggests that further elaboration and investigation of structural theories is warranted.

1975. refer to

Traditional Social Organization Themes

The traditional social organization of native Indian groups provides a third focus for theorists of native criminality. This theme focusses on aspects of traditional life among Indian groups and makes less direct attempts to place blame on individuals or on social structural factors relating to white conquest. Levy and Kunitz (1971, 1974) applied a variety of methods in their comparison of suicide, homicide and drinking among the Navajo and Hopi tribes. They suggest that the

prevalence and patterning of these particular pathologies may be influenced more by features of traditional tribal life than by disorganization and anomie. More specifically, these authors argue that a tolerance for flamboyant behaviour, including public drunkenness, is associated with loosely organized rather than tightly integrated tribes, and may be found more in societies that value individual prowess and magical powers. These findings are supported by Stratton, Zeines and Paredes (1978). On the basis of official statistics, these researchers found lower rates of alcohol related arrests among the (Eastern) agricultural tribes which emphasize communal values, and greater rates among the (Western) more loosely integrated tribes with a hunting and gathering tradition.

Jensen et al. (1977) tested a traditional social organization hypothesis in their study of rule-breaking in three boarding schools. Generally, tribal affiliation was found to be related to rule-breaking along the lines suggested by Levy and Kunitz; however, no direct link between behavioural variations and cultural traditions was established. Moreover, measures of social disorganization were found to predict incidence of rule-breaking regardless of tribal affiliation. The authors conclude that both themes of explanation may be relevant in explaining different forms of criminal activity (1977:250).

The Role of the Criminal Justice System

A fourth explanatory theme lies in the relationship of native individuals and groups with the criminal justice system. Explanations have been put forth to dispel the notion that Indians are, in fact, more criminal. This approach shifts attention from the behaviour of offenders to the behaviour of criminal justice officials.

Discrimination against natives has been advanced to explain their disproportionate representation at all levels of the criminal justice system (Hagan, 1977; Hall and Simkus, 1975). In their study of sentencing practices, Hall and Simkus (1975) found that native Indians were more likely to receive gaol as a disposition than were their white counterparts. John Hagan (1977) statistically analyzed presentence and inmate data in the Province of Alberta. He concluded that native offenders in rural areas are subject to more severe dispositional recommendations without consideration of legal variables, and are more likely to receive default time in gaol, than are their white counterparts. On the other hand, urban native offenders are sentenced within the context of bureaucratic uniformity.⁵ Finally, Bienvenue's and Latif's (1974) analysis of 1969 arrest statistics in Winnipeg, Manitoba also points to a discrimination hypothesis. (I)

Indians were found to be overrepresented in most types of crimes, although the results indicated greater native (a)

⁵It should be noted that uniformity of sentencing does not ensure a greater degree of justice or fairness (see for example, Palys and Divorski, 1986).

involvement in minor offences. Bienvenue and Latif suggest the possibility that increased visibility associated with the low socio-economic status of urban Indians may result in police discrimination or differential police surveillance (see also Randall and Randall, 1978).

Chadwick, Stauss, Bahr and Halperson (1976) addressed the role of differential use of legal services in increasing the ratio of incarcerated natives to non-natives. Their survey of urban Indians in the Seattle area revealed that many Indians are unaware of the legal services available, and there is widespread misunderstanding about the cost and the willingness of agency personnel to help. In a similar vein, Babcock (1976) points out the tendency of native Indians to plead guilty without an adequate understanding of the charges and proceedings. His article notes the need for criminal justice personnel to consider cultural and linguistic differences (see also Canada, 1978).

James (1979) also discusses the role of cultural differences in producing official deviance. He asserts that some reserve crime is a result of labelling by non-natives. His article points to a number of cultural factors affecting natives in the criminal justice system. For example, differential time orientations can result in breaches of court sanctions, failure to appear in court, and the ineffectiveness of incarceration as a sanction.

The above considerations are premised on the notion that native Indians do not actually commit more crimes than whites; rather, they are disproportionately arrested and processed by the criminal justice system. A number of self-report studies have affirmed actual behavioural differences in terms of native/non-native criminal involvement (Forslund and Cranston, 1975; Jensen et al, 1977). Although explanations focussing on the relationship of natives with the criminal justice system do not account for all native criminality, the extent to which these factors influence native conflict with the law deserves further consideration and testing.

Other Themes

Finally, a number of propositions essentially unrelated to the native Indian minority status have been discussed in relation to their criminality. For example, observations that a minority of offenders seem to account for a large proportion of native crime are found throughout the literature (Hawthorn, 1958; Minnis, 1963). In addition to recidivism, age has been identified as a variable that may influence crime rates (Muirhead, 1980; May, 1982). Since the general native population and general native/non-native offender populations are both skewed toward younger age groups, it has been suggested that this factor may, in part, account for disproportionate native involvement in the criminal justice system (Muirhead, 1980).

McCaskill's (1985) longitudinal study of Indian crime in the Province of Manitoba suggests the relevance of general criminological theories in explaining native crime. On the basis of file information and various agency, community and inmate interviews, McCaskill concludes that natives are now committing more "typical" offences, especially in urban areas. He suggests that the minority situation model, while appropriate in 1970, no longer adequately explains native criminal patterns in 1984. Instead, McCaskill (1982) proposes the application of containment and control theory, both of which focus on faulty socialization of offenders. These social-psychological theories attribute criminality to a lack of productive nurturing, which fosters self-control and a desire to conform. In addition to such "internal controls," social control theorists also consider the role of significant others (e.g., community) in providing pressures or incentives to conform (see Nettler, 1978). (5)

Conclusion

The order/assimilationist and conflict/pluralist approaches represent two competing frameworks which underpin theories of native criminality. In general, the selection of a theoretical framework appears to be based more on ideological preference rather than empirical support. Research data on native criminality are often compatible with either perspective.

This thesis rejects a pure order/assimilationist approach to explain native criminality. This position does not assume a pure

conflict/pluralist perspective; rather, the writer merely rejects the idea that native Indian criminality can be explained solely by examining native individuals.

Theories of native crime tend to focus on social psychological factors, on social structural sources, on aspects of traditional social organization or on the criminal justice system. Alternatively, a few explanations have been put forth to explain native crime without reference to their minority status.

In general, the scope of most existing research efforts to explain native crime has been narrow in that each has tapped a single dimension of a complex problem. Few scholars have attempted to consider the phenomenon of native crime and/or drinking by synthesizing or integrating various theoretical approaches (see for examples, Jensen et al., 1977; May, 1982a). Verdun-Jones and Muirhead (1978:35) suggest that "what is required is a more comprehensive, multidisciplinary and integrated focus which would draw together a number of perspectives."

Contemporary research efforts generally also fail to fully explore the variability in native crime across and within socio-cultural groups. Similarly, few studies consider the "ordinary" native community or focus efforts on explaining conformity among particular native Indian groups.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate three native Indian communities known to have different levels of crime.

Examination of social and cultural factors, and personal and community resources is undertaken to discover theoretically relevant characteristics distinguishing the communities with comparatively different crime rates.

A community level of analysis is selected to explore the relevance of structural theory, especially a social disorganization approach, as well as traditional social organization explanations for native crime. Social psychological explanations are not considered in detail, nor are explanations which focus on the behaviour of criminal justice officials. Although not a focus of this research, the applicability of these approaches and other explanations for the differential crime levels in the subject communities will, however, be addressed insofar as they may provide some insight into the existing crime problems.

This study is conducted for its heuristic value. Social disorganization and traditional social organization approaches are critically assessed in terms of their applicability to the data. A review of the literature suggests that these approaches hold some promise for explaining native crime; however, this thesis also strives to identify variables not necessarily related to these perspectives. The real value of this research is in its ability to suggest future research directions and potential areas of crime prevention programming.

The thesis is organized into nine chapters: Chapter I has provided an overview of existing frameworks and theories

concerning native Indian crime. This chapter has also described the framework for this thesis. A community level of analysis will facilitate examination of the social disorganization and traditional social organization explanations for native crime.

Chapter II describes a community approach to the study of native crime. Various ethnographies and aggregate studies of community characteristics are detailed. The positive aspects and shortcomings of each are described. The need for an integrated community study approach is established.

Chapter III details the methodology employed in this study.

Chapter IV gives a brief background of the Shuswap and Sekani cultural groups. Cultural differences will be discussed in relation to theory in later chapters. An historical perspective permits discussion about the applicability of social organization and social disorganization explanations of differential crime problems between these groups.

Chapters V through VII contain ethnographic accounts of the three communities studied. The chapters are organized similarly, with discussions about demographic characteristics, crime and other social problems, the community response to crime, the social, economic and political environments, community development and personal resources.

The next chapter (Chapter VIII) provides a summary of the significant findings and conclusions. Theoretical approaches to native crime and drinking are reviewed in relation to the data.

Chapter IX discusses the implications of this research for criminal justice programming. Future research needs arising from this study are also identified.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNITY STUDIES OF NATIVE CRIMINALITY

There seems to be growing recognition that native Indian offenders are not a homogeneous group with predictable patterns of crime and deviance (see for example Hyde and LaPrairie, 1987; McCaskill, 1985). Gaining parallel recognition are the advantages of community-based criminal justice programming that promote community definition, implementation and control of interventions (Draper, 1988; Weafer, 1986). Although formal criminal justice planning rarely involves consultation at the community level, reports of successful community-based interventions are increasing.¹

A community study approach to native crime enables an examination of social disorganization and traditional social organization explanations for native overrepresentation in the criminal justice system. Both these theoretical approaches maintain that crime is rooted in the conditions of the community. A social disorganization perspective holds that crime and other social problems such as alcohol abuse are caused by the disorganizing effects of white conquest on traditional native culture. A traditional social organization approach holds that contemporary patterns of crime and drinking are influenced

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¹For example, the Probation service supervisor in Kenora, Ontario reported a dramatic decrease in violent deaths and delinquencies following the introduction of the Grassy Narrows Crisis Intervention Program, initiated and administered by residents of that reserve community (Draper, 1988; see also Alkali Lake Band, 1986).

by traditional native cultural patterns. A community study approach thus addresses these claims by focussing on contemporary social, economic and political conditions and by tracking the impact of significant historical events.

Study of native communities is also required to explore the successes of community-based interventions. Identification of variables conducive to the success of such interventions is a necessary requisite to the promotion of community-based criminal justice programming and is, in this writer's view, a critical factor in understanding native criminality.

It should be noted that the term "community" may be used to denote a variety of situations. In general, the concept of community implies a spacial and social inter-connectedness (Lockhart, 1985). To the extent that community requires a sharing of social values and norms, there are grounds for disagreement about whether particular native Indian reserves constitute communities. Indian bands are a legally created group of native Indians who reside on legally designated parcels of land known as reserves (Indian Act, S.2(1)). While legislatively and spacially separated from the mainstream society, the Indian band or reserve does not necessarily meet commonly accepted criteria of community (Dunning, 1964; Gerber, 1984; and Wilson, 1982).

In spite of the conceptual difficulties associated with community, researchers have chosen to adopt a loose definition of this concept, equating reserve with community. The extent to

which community exists in accordance with a socio-cultural definition can then be analyzed in relation to native criminality (see, for examples, Shkilnyk, 1985; Wilson, 1982).

In general, research of crime in native Indian reserve communities has taken two forms. One approach has relied upon analysis of secondary data or, to a lesser extent, field interviews, to identify community characteristics associated with native crime (Hyde and LaPrairie, 1987; Kueneman, Linden and Kosnick, 1986). This approach enables a comparative analysis of several communities on criteria deemed relevant to native criminality. An alternative approach has used the focussed ethnography, or community case study, to provide a detailed account of life and crime within a particular native community (Shkilnyk, 1985; Wilson, 1982). This approach reflects the advantages of attempting to understand the complexities of a community from an insider's viewpoint.

The remaining sections of this chapter discuss these two approaches to the study of native communities. Examples of each are considered, along with the advantages and shortcomings of each method. Examination of how these approaches can be integrated for purposes of this thesis is then undertaken.

Comparative Studies of Native Indian Communities

The comparative studies reviewed here have tended to be quantitative in nature. Studies have tended to rely on secondary

data such as government or census data, and, to a lesser extent, field interviews (McCaskill, 1985). Some of the more revealing studies of native Indian communities lie outside the discipline of criminology, but have influenced research into native crime problems.

Perhaps the most comprehensive comparative study of Canadian Indian reserves is the work of anthropologist Linda Gerber (1984, 1979, 1977). In her statistical study of more than 500 Indian bands in Canada, Gerber discovered diverse community responses to changing societal conditions. Her work pointed to the dangers in stereotyping Indian bands as "pockets of rural poverty" (1979: 404).

Gerber identified a number of community characteristics affecting out-migration from Canadian Indian reserves (1979:2). Her study did not deal with native criminality; however, a brief review of her work is provided here since it has established a framework for criminological studies, including aspects of this thesis. In particular, Gerber's analysis identifies the importance of differential personal and group resources among Indian bands, and provides validated measures of these concepts.

'Personal resource development' is a measure of experience with mainstream society. Gerber (1977, 1979) measured this concept by the proportions of band members employed or attending school off the reserve. 'Group resources' or 'institutional completeness' refers to the ability of a community to meet all the needs of its members within group boundaries. This concept

indicates a community's organizational complexity resulting from the process of community development (see also Breton, 1964). Gerber operationalized institutional completeness as the presence of self-government; school committee; on-reserve employment; Indian-owned enterprises; a band council; band administration; farming; residents employed in professional, managerial and technical positions; a federal school; and residents involved in adult education.²

Gerber used the concepts of personal resources and institutional completeness to develop a two-dimensional typology describing four strategies of community adaptation: inert, pluralistic, integrative and municipal. 'Inert' bands are not adapting to changing societal conditions, either through community development or personal resource development. These bands score below average on both these measures. 'Pluralistic' bands are developing internally, as a community, (i.e., high institutional completeness) but participate very little in mainstream society (i.e., low personal resources). Conversely, 'integrative' bands are more involved in mainstream education and employment (i.e., high personal resources) with low levels of community development or local opportunity. Finally, 'municipal' bands appear to be developing simultaneously along both lines as indicated by their above average scores with respect to institutional completeness and personal resource development (Gerber, 1977).

²Community development was found to be related to a number of other variables: road access; average income; personal resources; and quality of housing.

The relationship between Gerber's (1977) typology and native criminality was explored in a recent study by Hyde and LaPrairie (1987) which used Gerber's typology to relate community characteristics to rates and types of crime on 25 Quebec Indian Reserves. Police reports for the years 1978-1983 were used to statistically compare crime patterns in communities categorized as inert, pluralistic, integrative or municipal.

The Hyde and LaPrairie (1987) study confirmed the general native crime pattern of disproportionately high violent offence rates with correspondingly low rates of property crime. Their analysis concluded that municipal and pluralistic reserves have the most serious crime problems. These bands have relatively high mean rates of violent offences. In contrast, integrative and inert bands were found to have relatively little crime of any type. In addition, municipal and integrative bands were found to have higher average property offence rates than violent crime rates. The property offence rate, however, did not exceed the overall national Canadian average.

Hyde and LaPrairie (1987) apply a conflict perspective to the problem of native criminality; more specifically, Indian criminality is attributed to the disorganizing effects of urbanization and industrialization. Unfortunately, the authors do not present their findings of greater violent crime on municipal and pluralistic reserves within the social disorganization perspective. It remains to be explained why communities which have exhibited particular adaptive strategies

would experience higher rates of personal crime than others.

That Hyde and LaPrairie's (1987) conclusions must be interpreted with caution is evidenced by a number of concerns. First, the authors discuss a number of methodological shortcomings, including the small proportion of inert bands in the sample.³ Second, Gerber's (1977) typology is based on 1969 data. In view of dramatic changes in the circumstances of some Indian communities since that time,⁴ the applicability of these classifications to contemporary reserve conditions is uncertain. Hyde and LaPrairie addressed this problem by reclassifying a number of the communities in their study. They, however, employed vague procedures that do not correspond with Gerber's classificatory scheme.⁵ Finally, Hyde and LaPrairie relied on mean rates of crime to describe differences among band types. Examination of their data reveals a considerable range of crime rates among communities within the same category. Inferences about the suitability of specific crime prevention strategies for particular reserve communities are, therefore, suspect.

³Only three of the 25 bands in the sample were classified as inert.

⁴Hyde and LaPrairie point out that over the past two decades some Indian communities have changed considerably in terms of such factors as employment and education levels, income, housing and self-government.

⁵Some of the Indian bands in the study had not been included in Gerber's analysis. Hyde and LaPrairie classified these communities and re-classified others on the basis of information such as quality of housing, average income, remoteness and language retention. While these variables were found to influence personal and group resource development in the Gerber study, they were not used as measures of these dimensions.

A less direct application of Gerber's work is reflected in Kueneman, Linden and Kosnick's (1986) study of 28 rural and northern Manitoba communities. On the basis of government reports and 1981 census data, these authors developed a typology by which to classify rural and northern communities.⁶ Drawing upon Gerber's (1977, 1979) conception of institutional completeness, the dimension of "resource development" (developed, underdeveloped, rudimentary) was based upon measures of economic, social, counselling and recreational services development. The second dimension identified from the data, reflected the potential need for services in a community. Family structure variables (percent single parent families, number of children per family and average census family income) were chosen as indicators of need for services (1986).

Kueneman et al. (1986) found an almost perfect inverse relationship between resource development and the need for services. In addition, all of the Indian communities in the study were classified into the category indicating high potential need for services. The authors attribute the lower level of development in native communities to structural inequalities associated with their minority status.

The above typology considers a limited aspect of institutional completeness as it relates to juvenile delinquency. Resources (i.e., opportunities) and services are related theoretically to the production of deviance as well as -----

⁶Both native and non-native communities were included in the study.

the ability of a community to deal with the problems of its youth.

The nature of Kueneman's and his co-authors (1986) research curtails a complete understanding of the subject communities. Available data were limited and consideration was not given to the quality of resource development and how well resources meet the various needs of community members. Further, the indicators for service need are of questionable validity. A qualitative aspect to the study of each community would likely have enhanced understanding of these variables and their relevance in particular contexts. Nevertheless, the authors recognize the methodological shortcomings of their research which is of heuristic value for future research efforts to classify northern, rural and native communities.

The final classificatory scheme to be considered here is due to Ian Lockhart (1985). Like Gerber's (1977, 1979) study, Lockhart's research was not directed at the issue of native criminality. His typology, nevertheless, is also of heuristic value to criminologists and others who wish to explore the wide socio-cultural diversity among native communities.

Lockhart studied eight northern hinterland communities and developed a model of three community processes underlying differential social impact responses. Variability in 'social vitality' was found to exist along a continuum of individualistic and communitarian norms. 'Economic viability' ranged from highly dependent on mainstream society to highly

independent economies. Finally, 'political efficacy' was characterized by low to high levels of community participation in decision-making processes. In addition to their implications for social impact analysis, Lockhart also proposes that high scores on communitarian norms, economic independence and community (political) participation are indicative of community competence to manage their own affairs (1985: 5-6). Squires
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Lockhart's (1985) analysis is potentially useful for comparing a number of communities according to his dimensions once an intercorrelated set of indicators has been established. The typology is also useful for a more qualitative exploration of community process variables. The present model is useful primarily for heuristic purposes.

McCaskill (1985) suggests the potential utility of Lockhart's model to assess a native community's capability of developing community correctional programs. McCaskill's own research identified the importance of social, economic and political factors in relation to native crime. On the basis of file analysis and interviews conducted on six Manitoba Indian reserves in 1970 and 1984, McCaskill (1985) related observed decreases in crime to three variables: cultural revitalization; increased economic development; and greater self-government. de
crime
A V Interestingly these factors may be related to Gerber's (1977) notion of institutional completeness; in this analysis, the communities observed to experience a decrease in crime have achieved higher levels of community development.

McCaskill's (1985) research departs from the strict quantitative focus of the other comparative studies reviewed here. McCaskill (1985: 53) conducted a number of structured and unstructured interviews involving community members and criminal justice personnel, and found that "interviews do serve to reinforce the complexity of Native criminality and its relationship to the larger Native community." Stated differently, the qualitative aspect of his research helped contextualize the quantitative data. His research thus addresses a major shortcoming of much aggregate research on native crime.

Focussed Ethnographic Research of Native Communities

The ethnography⁷ provides an indepth analysis of community life. Few such studies focus particularly on native crime (see Shkilnyk, 1985; Wilson, 1985); however, other ethnographies which focus on the relationship of a native community to the larger society may contribute to our understanding about the socio-cultural environments which produce crime (see Driben and Trudeau, 1983; Stearns, 1981).

Perhaps the most comprehensive focussed ethnography relating to native criminality is the work of Anastasia Shkilnyk. Her book, A Poison Stronger than Love (1985) emerged after more than

⁷Ethnographic studies involve personal detailed accounts of social and cultural life in particular communities (see Beattie, 1964). Otterbein (1977) distinguishes the general ethnography from the focussed ethnography. The latter emphasizes one topic as opposed to a myriad of different subjects. An indepth study of native crime in a particular community may thus be considered a focussed ethnography.

two years of personal involvement with the Grassy Narrows Reserve, an Ojibwa community in Northern Ontario.

Case Studies =

Shkilnyk (1985) saw the high rates of violent death, suicide, alcoholism, criminality and family abuse in Grassy Narrows as symptoms of "a community destroyed" (1985: 11). She places the community's contemporary social problems within a historical framework, and describes a series of negative events resulting from white contacts and governmental control. The eventual breakdown of community life is attributed to a culmination of early influences and recent events. These include the disruption of traditional religious beliefs by missionaries and law enforcement personnel, an influenza epidemic, the bureaucratic decision of Indian Affairs officials to relocate the reserve, and mercury poisoning of the river system. The effects of physical relocation on the economic, political and social lives of residents are detailed, while the health, spiritual and economic consequences of river contamination are described as "the last nail in the coffin" (1985: 192).

II

Like most contemporary ethnographers, Shkilnyk (1985) applies a conflict perspective to the plight of native peoples. Community breakdown is attributed to the state of social disorganization and anomie resulting from Euro-Canadian conquest. Residents of Grassy Narrows are described as "being in a no-man's land, a place that hangs in the balance between two worlds" (1985: 239).

II

Another ethnography that echoes the theme of community disintegration is Wilson's study (1985) of Palm Island in Queensland, Australia. Plagued by one of the highest homicide rates in Australia, Palm Island is described as a victim of paternalistic government policies that have resulted in economic dependence, loss of traditional authority structures and a culture of alcoholism. Palm Island's history as a "receiving ground for displaced persons"⁸ is also viewed as a factor contributing to social disorganization. Elsewhere, Wilson (1982) has referred to the failure of government policies aimed at creating aboriginal 'communities' through designation of reserves.

→ see
1982
1985
297

Further discussions about the negative consequences of government policies are found in other works by ethnographers. Driben and Trudeau (1983) studied the economic circumstances of four remote Fort Hope Band communities in Northern Ontario over a seven year period. Contemporary economies, based upon dependence on government programs and subsidies, were traced to federal government initiatives of the 1960's. Paternalistic policies regulating residential school attendance and village life are first described in relation to their effects on economic and family systems. The failure of subsequent economic initiatives by government is then attributed to poor delivery of programs and lack of local input. Also of interest, from a criminological perspective, is the particularly high incidence

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⁸In the early 1900's the Queensland government used Palm Island to detain certain individuals including criminals and victims of infectious diseases (Wilson, 1985:50).

of alcoholism and violence in one of these communities. The authors discuss these problems in relation to the heterogeneity of this settlement; the Lansdowne community was characterized by Anglican/Catholic religious factions (Driben and Trudeau, 1983).

The final ethnography to be noted here is Mary Lee Stearns' (1981) in-depth study of traditional and modern Haida culture. Stearns examined the process by which the Haida lost their autonomy and became dependent on government to administer many aspects of their lives. Particularly relevant to native crime is Stearns' (1981) discussion concerning the loss of traditional native authority structures and the concomitant inability of an Anglo-Canadian criminal justice system to fulfill the social control function.

The contemporary focussed ethnographies reviewed here all employ a conflict perspective in their analysis of native Indian crime conditions and/or other negative aspects of native Indian life. This approach is useful to detail the unique circumstances of particular communities from an historical perspective and to explain the contemporary social, economic and political difficulties of Indian groups vis à vis their relationship to the larger social, economic and political order.

Ethnographers of native crime have tended to focus on 'problem communities.' The successes of particular communities or the circumstances of more 'ordinary' communities are difficult to address strictly within a structural-conflict perspective. For example, Shkilnyk (1985), in her postscript,

acknowledges community efforts to deal with crime and violent death in Grassy Narrows; however, she fails to explain this phenomenon within her social disorganization framework. Ethnographic research efforts generally have focussed on processes resulting in social disorganization and deviance, with a lack of corresponding attention to recovery processes.

Conclusion

A community study approach to the problem of native Indian criminality is based on the premise that native crime is closely tied to the conditions of the native community. A community approach thus examines the variable social and cultural contexts into which offenders are socialized. On a broader level, the unique social, political and economic characteristics of a community may be considered within a historical perspective, and related to the larger political environment in which the community exists.

Community studies of native criminality have tended to take one of two forms: comparative and focussed ethnographic. Comparative studies have tended to rely on secondary data to compare a number of communities according to a standardized set of characteristics (for examples, see Hyde and LaPrairie, 1987; Kueneman et al. 1986). This approach enables a comparison of low and high crime communities on a number of dimensions; furthermore, the variability within and among different socio-cultural groups may be examined. A difficulty with

existing studies of this type has been a lack of qualitative analysis of chosen indicators. In addition, the selection of variables and indicators generally does not reflect the perceptions of community members.

Ethnographic studies of native crime conditions have addressed the shortcomings of a more quantitative, comparative approach. Focussed ethnographies seek to achieve an understanding of the unique circumstances which encourage or discourage crime in particular communities (Shkilnyk, 1985; Wilson, 1985). An "insider's" viewpoint is presented through the intense personal contact of the researcher. Unfortunately, ethnographic studies of native crime have generally focussed exclusively on the process resulting in community disorganization and deviance rather than conformity or recovery from crime. In addition, a lack of comparative ethnographic work curtails the current state of knowledge about native crime and preventive strategies.

Although comparative community studies are not inherently incompatible with ethnographic work, investigators of native criminality have tended to adopt only one approach. This thesis was undertaken on the premise that an integration of these methods might produce a clearer understanding of the relationship between community characteristics and crime problems. The ethnographic aspects of the current research were undertaken in order to assess more closely the qualitative differences among communities and thereby contextualize the

secondary data considered. Close examination of the social, economic and political conditions in communities with differential crime rates provides a comparative framework by which to identify potential strategies to reduce crime.

It is also a purpose of this thesis to consider the relevance of several theoretical perspectives regarding native criminality. While a conflict/social disorganization perspective is a focus of the investigation, it is the writer's opinion that a single theoretical framework is not sufficient to explain the full range and complexity of native crime. A narrow application of theory is seen as a shortcoming of most community studies of native crime. The community study approach taken here will also consider the relevance of a traditional social organization perspective and, to a lesser extent, theories relating to the role of the criminal justice system and other theories of native criminality.

Again, the value of this thesis is that it is heuristic. Theories are not formally tested; rather, an integration of comparative and ethnographic methods permits identification of a number of variables that seem to distinguish these communities with differential crime problems. These findings are then discussed in relation to a number of theoretical perspectives.

The following chapter details the methodology employed. The integration of qualitative and comparative approaches is clarified.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Treating the community¹ as its level of analysis, this thesis examines native criminality within a comparative framework. Three native Indian reserves chosen for their variation in terms of criminality are described in detail. This approach addresses the complexity of criminality from the subject community's perspective and considers variables that are especially difficult to tap empirically. Examination of three reserves enables a preliminary comparison of crime and community characteristics within and between cultural groups.² In addition, emphasis on community characteristics and processes relating to a continuum of criminality provides a framework within which potential crime prevention strategies may be identified and considered.

Consistent with the conflict/pluralist perspective, the ideology of victim-blaming is rejected in favour of the

¹A loose definition of community based on geographic legal separation is adopted. The study focusses on three reserves designated by the Indian Act, and are referred to here as "reserves", "reserve communities" and "communities".

²Bunzel's (1940) ethnological research on the role of alcohol in the Mexican village of Chamula in the State of Chipas and the Guatemalan village of Santa Tomas Chichieastenango represents a pioneer study of the role that intoxicants play in two distinct cultures. While Bunzel (1978: 21-22) has recently stressed that her research on alcoholism, or drinking habits was incidental to the general ethnological research of the two communities, her method, which has become known as "controlled comparison", remains relevant to demonstrating and understanding how alcohol as well as crime and deviance, relates to the particular social, cultural context of each culture.

proposition that native crime is, in part, associated with the devastating consequences of white conquest and control. Within this framework, however, no particular theory is accepted as a complete explanation for the contemporary social problems within Canadian Indian reserves. Aspects of traditional social organization are also considered in relation to contemporary crime conditions, and attention is given to other theories that may contribute to an understanding of native crime.

Consideration is also given to factors that may be associated with conformity in these communities. Any heuristic contribution of this study is in its implications for future research efforts as well as its suggested strategies for reducing crime in native communities.

Site Selection

Three British Columbia reserve communities were sought that represented a continuum of criminality (high, moderate, low) crime rates. The identification and selection of three reserves for this study was satisfied primarily through a consensus of opinions among numerous native and non-native individuals, both within and outside the criminal justice professions. Variations among the chosen communities were identified by seven police officials in various regions of the province. The validity of the high, moderate and low designations was later confirmed by virtually all participants in the field work process.

Police statistics were considered only as evidence supporting the selection, since official data may reflect differential crime reporting and law enforcement practices rather than behavioural differences in criminal activity. Nevertheless, summarized police statistics provide some general support for the variable crime rates identified among these three communities. During the first six months of 1987, 33 actual³ offences were handled by RCMP in the reserve described here as "high crime." Based upon a population of 206 over a one year period, this number would convert to a rate of 32 criminal code offences per 100 population. The "moderate" and "low crime" reserves contrast statistically with the above community, but the distinction between these two communities is less significant. Based upon population estimates of 250 and 449, statistics for the same period produce annual estimates of four and 1.8 offences per 100 population.⁴ Similarly, figures for the calendar year 1986 produce crime rates of 41.3, 5.6, and 2.4⁵ respectively, for the "high", "moderate" and "low" crime reserves. Under-reporting and greater off-reserve offending may be attributed to the apparent statistical under-representation of the "moderate" crime community. These issues will be

³"Actual" offences refers to those reported offences for which there is sufficient evidence to warrant a charge. "Unfounded" offences are excluded from this category.

⁴Only five criminal code offences were reported between January and June, 1987 in the "moderate" crime community, with four corresponding reports in the "low" crime reserve.

⁵These figures are only approximate since accurate population statistics are not available. The actual numbers of reported offences for the "high", "moderate" and "low" crime communities in 1986 were 86, 14 and 11.

discussed in later chapters.

The choice of three reserve communities from two different cultural areas was incidental to the selection process. The only other criteria considered in addition to differential crime rates were physical accessibility by the researcher and willingness of reserve residents to provide information. Selection of the remote reserve in this study was contingent upon suitable transportation and accommodation arrangements, which were forthcoming. Visits to each community were preceded by telephone contact with band administrators.

The Field Work

On site investigations of the three reserve communities in this study permitted a close examination of the unique historical and contemporary circumstances that may contribute to the particular crime problems in each community. A wide range of interviews enabled a multi-faceted consideration of community characteristics and individual perceptions often eluded by a more quantitative or statistical approach.

For the most part, the field work was not guided by predetermined research instruments or even any clearly established research protocol. Instead, in keeping with this study's exploratory objectives, a flexible and phenomenological approach was emphasized (see Palys, 1988). This approach is supported by other cross-cultural researchers, including

Morrison and Wilson, (1986:14) who suggest:

...critical rigour is obtained not by mechanizing the field work process but by openly recognizing its interactive nature: greater knowledge of the 'subjective' factors tends to increase a study's validity and reliability (see also Redfield, 1960 and, generally, Cedrix X, 1973).

Although this investigation was largely guided by the views of participants, some general areas of inquiry were identified a priori. A review of theoretical approaches to native criminality suggested that the following general areas of interest might be relevant in explaining native criminality within a particular theoretical framework.

1. An historical analysis of traditional and/or early native culture permits consideration of traditional social organization theory in explaining contemporary patterns of native crime and drinking. A further historical analysis which includes the effects of white contact on particular communities is required to assess the extent to which traditional native culture has become disorganized. Chapter IV of this thesis has summarized data from a number of interviews as well as archival information to examine the history of the subject communities in this way, albeit only to an extent which stimulates more questions than conclusions.
2. The nature of crime, drinking and other social problems permits an examination of the negative events which may covary together. Shkilnyk (1985) suggests that crime, alcohol abuse and child neglect are all symptomatic of

community disorganization.

3. Examination of the community's response to crime may provide important information about the processes which encourage or discourage conformity. Differential modes of social control may result in differential crime problems.
4. The social and cultural environment of a community is a focus of all ethnographic research. The present study has not emphasized participant observation as a method and is thus unable to describe social and cultural patterns in great detail. Instead, field interviews focussed on social conditions such as housing, health and education, and also looked at the extent to which traditional cultural traditions persist in particular communities today. Social service development was also examined. Kueneman et al. (1986) identify the latter as an area of community development that is inversely related to crime levels.
5. In conjunction with social conditions, the economic environment of communities is examined by conflict/pluralist theorists who relate the low socio-economic position of the native minority to high rates of crime. The field work described here investigated business and employment opportunities within and outside the communities, as well as the degree of dependence on welfare.
6. The political environment of native communities is also of interest to the conflict/pluralist approach to native crime. In keeping with this perspective, this study's inquiry targeted on the extent of local versus external (state)

control over many aspects of life and decision-making in each community.

7. Gerber's (1977,1979,1984) concepts of community development and personal resource development have been related to native crime (see Hyde and LaPrairie, 1987). This thesis employed interviews to investigate the relevance of these concepts to the differential crime rates in the communities studied here.

The general areas of inquiry described above provided some direction for interviews and established a framework for comparing the subject communities. For the most part interviews were permitted to deviate from any particular line of questioning taken. Issues or areas of interest raised by informants were generally investigated further among informants in all three communities.

In total, approximately 60 informants were contacted. Of this number, about one half were interviewed in the communities (10 per reserve community). On-site interviews tended to involve band administrators and other employees, many of whom were band members.⁶ These interviews were completed in each of two visits to each reserve community in the B.C. interior (the moderate and low crime communities) and one overnight trip to the remote Northern reserve (high crime). The field work was completed in -----

⁶Band employees included community health representatives, teachers or education coordinator, alcohol and drug counsellors, social development workers and other counselling staff. In the high crime community these positions either did not exist or they were held by non-natives; in that instance, a number of other interviews with other band members were sought.

the Spring and Summer of 1986.

Information derived from the on-site interviews was supplemented by interviews with individuals in the delivery of criminal justice and social services to each of these reserves. These included: RCMP and probation officers, officials from the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and provincial health, education and social work personnel. Native informants who were familiar with two or more of the reserves provided an especially valuable source of information. Several of these informants were members of reserve communities other than those considered in this study.

On-site interviews with many informants took place under informal conditions: many were simply casual conversations. In these cases, notes were recorded later. In other community interviews and most off-site interviews, notes were taken during the interview process.⁷

The cooperation of participants was encouraged by assurances that personal identities would not be disclosed and fictitious community names would be utilized. In many cases, positions of employment, or other information relating to informants, are not revealed. While this omission may present problems of accountability from a scientific perspective, the politically sensitive nature of this research required that personal identities be protected.

⁷Use of a taping device to record direct quotes was considered desirable; however, the idea was rejected because of its potential for intimidating participants.

Validation of information was assessed primarily by cross-checking the accuracy of particular accounts with multiple informants, both on and off the reserves. Conclusions about significant variations were made conservatively. In particular, claims about the role of the more "subjective" factors contributing to variable crime problems were made only with the support of a wide consensus of opinion. In addition, during the field work process, the ideas and conclusions formulated were shared with individuals from within and outside the communities involved. The ideas and conclusions that form the basis of this thesis were shaped largely by its informants.

Accuracy of information obtained was also assessed by considering the credibility of informants and information. For example, many informants were selected on the basis of referrals by personal contacts. In addition, information received was subjected to a credibility check that included considering questions such as: Does the informant have motive for misrepresenting the facts? Has the informant provided previous accounts that were substantiated (or found to be inaccurate)? How familiar is the informant with the situation and/or issues at hand? Is the information reasonable and believable, and does it "fit" with other accounts?

Reliance upon informants closely connected with the subject communities at present or in the past partially compensated for my own lack of intimate familiarity with these reserves.⁸

⁸Access to informants was greatly enhanced by my previous experience as a probation officer in this Province. For an eight

Although this dearth of contact and direct observation represents a clear limitation to the research, resource constraints did not permit the kind of personal, day to day involvement required to produce detailed ethnographic accounts of each community. The time requirements for such an undertaking are acknowledged by at least one ethnographer who noted that understanding a community's social system became more difficult after six months than after two days (Lithman, 1978). Nevertheless, an understanding of three reserve communities based upon the experiences and perceptions of many individuals within and outside the groups' boundaries is not a project without merit, and merely underlines the heuristic and exploratory objectives of the research.

Other Sources

The interview data considered in this thesis were supplemented by other sources including archival and statistical data. Archival data were used primarily to construct historical summaries of the three communities dating back to the period of early contact. Statistical data were used generally to support perceptions and impressions; however, quantitative data were often unavailable or inadequate for purposes of this research.

8 (cont'd) month period I provided intermittent service to the Northern community in this study. In the cases of all three communities examined here I was able to rely upon the cooperation of personal contacts and/or former co-workers.

Unfortunately, record keeping in the criminal justice system has not adequately addressed the need to assess native overrepresentation in a comprehensive manner.⁹ In addition, contemporary ethnographers have described how the dearth of adequate quantitative data has frustrated attempts to understand native communities (for examples, see Lithman, 1978; Shkilnyk, 1985). Similarly, the lack of comparative statistical information in this research is attributed to data unavailability or poor quality of existing statistics. Some impediments to quantitative research experienced in this study are as follows:

1. Some agencies avoid collecting information on the basis of ethnic group or race, as a result of interpretations of the Bill of Rights, prohibiting discrimination. For example, health statistics for native groups were not available for this study.
2. Most social and criminal justice agencies do not collect information on a reserve by reserve basis. For example, RCMP zoning procedures do not always allow for the separation of reserve statistics from those of the surrounding areas. The separate zoning of the reserves in this study has occurred recently; therefore, longitudinal statistical comparison is not possible. Coroner statistics pertaining to causes of death in B.C. were available for natives but did not distinguish residence of origin.
3. None of the reserves in this study completed the Canada

⁹For a discussion of data unavailability throughout the criminal justice system, see Durie, H. and P. Doherty.

Census in 1986; therefore, a potentially valuable source of data was missed.¹⁰

4. Many reserve communities keep limited records or no statistics pertaining to population characteristics (e.g., education, employment). Existing records vary considerably, hindering cross-community comparisons.
5. Access to official data may be complicated or prevented by bureaucratic procedures and policies. For example, at least one agency refused to release information deemed confidential.
6. The quality of existing data is generally poor: data collection reflects a mainstream bias, vague or inconsistent definitions of "Native" or "Indian" are employed¹¹ and many reports are sufficiently outdated as to be irrelevant to the current situation.
7. Small and/or fluctuating reserve populations present difficulties for statistical analysis.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology employed to examine the variability of crime among three different reserve communities. A series of interviews conducted on-site, and

¹⁰Many B.C. Indian band administrators boycotted the census process because they did not want the provincial government to benefit financially from the Indian population count.

¹¹Native Indian may be defined legally, racially and/or culturally. For discussion of the research implications see Durie and Doherty (1982).

supplemented by off-reserve interviews with native and non-native informants were undertaken to describe theoretically meaningful differences among reserves with different crime problems. Archival data and, to a lesser extent, statistical data have supplemented or enriched interview information. In general, this study relies upon consensus of opinion as a primary criterion for determining the accuracy of representations.

The focus of interviews was largely unstructured to include individual perceptions; however, some general areas of inquiry were covered in order to explore the applicability of structural/conflict and traditional social organization approaches to understanding native criminality. In order to facilitate comparison among communities, each will be described according to these general areas of interest. Each community will be presented individually, but will be "dissected" to permit analysis of underlying attributes and processes. Local crime and social problems are considered, followed by the community response to crime. Aspects of social, economic and political environments are then described. Finally, community and personal resources are discussed.

It is important not to understate the importance of considering the above aspects of community as an inter-related whole. Examination of particular community components does not suggest that crime may be understood in isolation from the "total" community; rather, this analysis is undertaken simply to

permit comparative, heuristic attention.

It was my hope that the approach described here will yield a broad understanding of the unique circumstances which contribute to the presence or absence of crime in each community. Prior to a description of each reserve community in Chapters V through VII, Chapter IV gives an overview of the cultural groups to which the subject communities belong. Within a structural/conflict or a traditional social organization framework, historical background information is essential to provide a broad view of contemporary community conditions.

CHAPTER IV

THE SEKANI AND SHUSWAP NATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

The reserve communities considered in this study are members of the Sekani and Shuswap Nations.¹ The White River reserve, characterized by high levels of crime, is located in Sekani Territory in the Rocky Mountain trench of Northern B.C. Both Spirit Lake and High Meadow, distinguished by moderate and low crime rates, respectively, are Shuswap cultural groups.² The Shuswap bands are located in the B.C. interior plateau between the Coast Range and Rocky Mountains. Both cultural groups are relatively small: there are an estimated 1,000 to 2,000 Shuswap speakers and 100 to 500 Sekani language speakers in Canada (Darnell, 1986).

This chapter examines the social, political and economic organization of the Sekani and the Shuswap as they existed prior to and during the period of white contact. Differences in traditional or early social organization could support a theoretical perspective that relates social organization to styles of crime and drinking. In addition, the impact of white contact on traditional native life is investigated in order to

¹The terms "tribe" or "tribal nation" may or may not refer to native groups who consider themselves to be politically separate (Morrison and Wilson, 1986: 16-17). Ethnographers also apply tribal designations on the basis of common political and territorial boundaries, language and culture (see also, Jenness, 197). The Sekani and Shuswap "tribal" divisions are perhaps best considered as distinct cultural groups, for purposes of this study.

²The reader is reminded that fictitious community names are employed here.

explore the social disorganization thesis. According to this view, native crime problems may be attributed to the devastating consequences of white conquest on native cultures.

There is obvious danger in trying to reconstruct the past to explain the present. With only fragmentary historical information to consider, the question of which factors are relevant to the present circumstances is a critical one (Redfield, 1960: 99). Difficulty in identifying significant variations compound the problem:

We are prone to exaggerate either generalities or dramatic variations and ignore ordinary variation or individual differences (Hawthorn, 1958: 33).

Hawthorn also makes the point that:

An over-awareness of the past can easily lead to a belief that a current situation has a mass inflexibility, and discourage initiative in seeking a solution to its problems (1958:99).

It is important to recognize that the history of contact and socio-cultural characteristics of individual communities within particular cultural groups may vary considerably. For example, the White River band is a heterogeneous community with a tradition not completely similar to other Sekani communities (see generally, Jenness, 1937). The effects of inter-marriage and other cultural contact with neighbouring groups cloud cultural and community distinctions and must, therefore, receive some consideration in studies of this sort.

With consideration to the above concerns, this chapter provides only general information about the social, economic and

political circumstances of its three subject communities just prior to and following white contact. Regional and community-based historical sources have been consulted wherever possible.

Social, Political and Economic Organization

Current understanding of traditional native Indian societies is limited by the incomplete nature of archival and ethnographic data. The reconstruction of history based upon fragmentary documentation is, therefore, rife with controversy. For example, Yerbury (1986) contests the assumption of cultural continuity explicit in the work of most sub-arctic³ analysts. He argues that early records upon which descriptions of "traditional" Indian societies are based often do not account for the vast changes in the social organization that had already occurred as a result of the fur trade. Other recent works have also pointed out the likelihood that significant socio-cultural change in the sub-arctic occurred prior to direct white contact, during the period of indirect trade in the late 18th century (see also, generally, Krech III, 1984).

It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide detailed historical and cultural accounts of the reserve communities and their cultural affiliations if, indeed, such analysis is possible. What follows is a brief overview of the

³Some Sekani are located within the territory defined as sub-arctic.

social, economic and political circumstances of the Sekani and Shuswap cultural groups around the time of white contact. These descriptions may not depict traditional cultural organization; nevertheless, they may provide some insights into contemporary community organization and social control within the subject reserves.

The Sekani

The most comprehensive research of the Sekani resulted from the 1924 field work of Diamond Jenness (1937). Subsequent descriptions have relied, to a great extent, on his data (for examples, see Lamers, 1976; McClellan and Denniston, 1981). The diaries of fur traders, explorers and missionaries have also contributed to descriptions of this cultural group (see, for example, Black, 1955 and Morice, 1971).

It is widely believed that the Sekani share kinship with the more eastern Beaver Indians. Pressure from the Beaver and Cree Indians apparently drove the Sekani west of the Rocky Mountains (Jenness, 1937: 7). The Sekani were generally regarded as a peace loving people (Morice, 1971; Teit, 1909).

During early contact, the Sekani apparently enjoyed a simple social and political organization characterized by small family groupings leading nomadic lifestyles. Seasonal movements were based upon the subsistence activities of hunting, fishing and trapping (Jenness, 1937; Lamers, 1976; McClellan and Denniston,

1981). There is evidence for attempts at more complex forms of social organization involving phratries⁴ and clans, but these institutions were not incorporated into the Sekani social systems generally (Jenness, 1937).

Sekani society was essentially egalitarian with no territorial claims and no identifiable unit beyond the band. Jenness noted that each band had a leader chosen not by election or heredity, but by demonstrated hunting prowess and strength of personality (1937:44):

...he was a leader, not a chief; and if he presumed to issue orders, he had no means of enforcing them.

Social control of serious crime was maintained through fear of the blood feud and public disapproval (Jenness, 1937; Morice, 1971).

Individual power was achieved through dreaming. In particular, the strong psychological link with the animal world provided opportunities for obtaining "medicine" for hunting, or diagnosing and curing illnesses (Honigmann, 1981; Jenness, 1937).

The extent to which traditional Sekani society was altered by indirect trade prior to actual white contact remains unknown, although there is some evidence to suggest some substantial influence (Krech III, 1984 and Yerbury, 1986). Certainly the period of direct involvement in the fur trade had immense effects upon this culture: outbreaks of disease resulted in -----

⁴Phratries were large social groupings formed for kinship, social and ceremonial purposes.

population alterations, resources were depleted and dependence on the trading posts increased. The situation was exacerbated by an influx of miners during the gold rush era. Further depletions of large game displaced at least one Sekani group, which subsequently formed the White River community. The post World War II collapse of fur prices ushered in the present Sekani welfare society; however, indications are that dependence was being nurtured at least one century earlier (Ray, 1984).

The Shuswap

Much of our knowledge about the precontact Shuswap society results from the ethnographic work of James Teit (1909) who conducted field work among the Shuswap between 1900 and 1904. The present discussion is primarily concerned with a description of the western Shuswap who are distinguished socio-culturally from other Shuswap bands.⁵

Prior to white contact, the western Shuswap were semi-sedentary. An abundance of salmon allowed for the establishment of permanent winter settlements. The pursuit of supplementary resources including large and small game and plant foods demanded some migratory activity, although the hunting and gathering tradition was less common among the western groups (Teit, 1909).

⁵Both the Shuswap communities in this study are considered to be western Shuswap as defined by Teit (1909).

The social organization of this Shuswap cultural group was defined by a number of social divisions, the significance of which is unknown. Within these divisions, a number of bands composed of closely related families would winter at particular village headquarters. Teit (1909) further describes the more complex social system of ranked classes, crest groups and dance societies that he believes the western Shuswap adopted indirectly from Pacific coast culture and practiced into the late 1800's; however, the nature of this system is unclear.

All Shuswap bands had hereditary chiefs (Jenness, 1972; Teit, 1909) although other leaders were selected on the basis of merit (Whitehead, 1981). Unfortunately, there is little information about traditional forms of social control exercised by the chiefs. Early observers of Shuswap culture suggested that the blood feud⁶ was common in some bands (Morice, 1971; Teit, 1909). These observers also described the western Shuswap as "war like" people.

Like the Sekani, the Shuswap derived individual power through the vision quest. Youth at puberty were physically isolated to provide opportunities for acquiring a guardian spirit through dreaming.

The fur trade likely had less severe consequences for the western Shuswap than for the more northern Sekani. The plentiful salmon resource of the Shuswap provided considerable stability.

⁶The blood feud operated to check serious crimes such as murder. Under this system, the family of the victim would avenge his death by killing a family member of the offender.

According to one Shuswap historian, the material and value culture of the Shuswap did not change much before the gold rush era: prior to that period, they traded for implements that would improve the efficacy of their own material culture (Mathews, personal communication, September 8, 1987).

The advent of the Cariboo gold rush in 1858 brought devastating consequences to the Shuswap. Epidemics preceding direct contact wiped out large segments of the Indian population in 1862 and 1863. The subsequent influx of prospectors provided packing and guiding wage labour for the Indians, as well as an increased availability of alcohol. After the gold rush in 1870, many of the settlers remained in the area to pursue farming, ranching, logging and trapping. These developments resulted in the loss of traditional Shuswap hunting lands and reports of starvation (Furniss, 1987; Whitehead, 1981).

The establishment of the St. Joseph's Mission in 1866 also created serious repercussions for traditional Shuswap culture. The Durieu system, practiced by local Oblate missionaries, had been designed to facilitate conversion through the establishment of the new village system based on Catholic beliefs. In her book, The Cariboo Mission, Margaret Whitehead (1981) describes the allocation of new hierarchical roles whereby the hereditary chief, or another appointed chief, became the representative of the church, with authority for order and discipline, and a variety of watchmen and policemen were appointed to report rule

infractions.⁷ The Durieu system waned in popularity among the Shuswap soon after its inception, but was revitalized in 1890. In 1895, the Indian Total Abstinence Society of B.C. was inaugurated by missionaries in Shuswap territory, with local chiefs empowered to maintain social control in their communities.⁸

The loss of traditional Indian territory and the disruption of political and social patterns was further aggravated by the construction of mission residential schools, which separated children from their parents. Within this context, assimilationist activities were pursued by the missionaries; for example, children were punished for speaking their native language. The Durieu system began to weaken in the 1940's, with the loss of church and tribal authority. Whitehead observed that while many of the Shuswap elders favoured the mission schooling, the young people resented the role of the church in undermining their cultural heritage.

Aspects of Catholicism also reached the Sekani through the prophet movement in the mid-19th century and this cultural group also experienced direct missionary contact through residential school attendance (Whitehead, 1981:32). Unfortunately, the extent to which the Durieu system operated successfully in

⁷For example, intoxicants, gambling and traditional cultural festivities were prohibited.

⁸Whitehead (1981: 96) notes that the use of public whipping as sanctions for rule infractions was approved by some missionaries; however, it is not known whether or not this activity was part of traditional social control.

particular bands is unknown.

A recent ethnographic study of the sobriety movement in High Meadow⁹ provides one account of the Durieu system's influence on the present "strict chieftainship" in that community (Doe I).¹⁰ This band's apparent allegiance to the implicit cultural rule that chiefs should not drink might also be traced to the Durieu system, although both these features might also reflect individual band practices or pre-existing cultural traditions. In any event, cross-cultural and cross-community studies on these historical topics are required before claims about their connection to current organizational social control practices can be advanced.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the early social, economic and political organization of the Shuswap and the Sekani during pre-contact and post-contact. Such an historical investigation is required in order to assess the relevance of the social disorganization (structural/conflict) and traditional social organization perspectives of native criminality.

⁹This name is fictitious, as it is a subject of this study.

¹⁰Any reference which would compromise the confidentiality of the participant communities have been listed as authored by "Doe". The intent is not to impair scholarship, however; subsequent researchers who find these references obstructive to their own pursuits should contact the author's Senior Supervisor at the School of Criminology.

Certainly there is enough evidence to suggest that Shuswap and Sekani communities were influenced to a significant extent by European contact and conquest. It also seems likely that the Sekani experienced a longer period of disruption through the fur trade and gold rush eras than did the Shuswap, who enjoyed a more stable food supply. The fact that the Sekani community in this study was formed by a displaced group of individuals is consistent with the highest relative crime rate found there.

On the basis of general cultural information, the social disorganization explanation of native crime does not explain the differential crime problems in the two Shuswap communities considered in this study. Also problematic is the dearth of information concerning Sekani and Shuswap crime prior to contact, although it is known that the blood feud operated to control serious crime in these groups. In a similar vein, the extent to which these cultural groups used intoxicating substances other than alcohol prior to contact with whites is unknown.¹¹ Greater historical analysis is required to discover details about the extent to which crime rates have varied over time with levels of disorganization or cultural disruption.

Examination of traditional or early social organization of the Shuswap and the Sekani has revealed similarities as well as differences. Both cultural groups have tended to take an individualistic orientation that emphasizes personal prowess achieved through the vision quest and dreaming. These factors

¹¹For a discussion about the aboriginality of liquors see La Barre, 1962.

have been related to crime and drinking patterns (see Levy and Kunitz, 1974). Although traditional social organization of the Sekani is unknown, archival data suggests that their social organization was simple, based upon egalitarian principles, as early as the period of direct contact. On the other hand, the social and political organization of the Shuswap has been far more complex. This difference would also support the traditional organization thesis that higher rates of deviant behaviour are found in bands that traditionally enjoyed a loose, band-level organization (Levy and Kunitz, 1974); however, this explanation does not account for crime differences within the same cultural group.

Traditional social organization has been used to explain native criminality; however, consideration might also be given to its implications for community recovery processes. These points will receive further attention following detailed descriptions of each community.

CHAPTER V

THE WHITE RIVER RESERVE COMMUNITY

The White River community originated from the union of a Cree woman and the son of a French employee of the Hudson's Bay Company. Motivated by disturbances of animal populations following white contact, this family unit, including five daughters and their mates, moved from the far North of B.C. in 1917, and settled at the site now known as White River (Lamers, 1976).

The village of White River borders a major river in Northern B.C. It is situated on reserve land of about 1,000 acres, more than 400 kilometers from the nearest urban centre and more than 200 kilometers from the nearest town of approximately 5,000. There is no road access to White River; transportation is by chartered air craft. The waterway that once served as a primary transportation route was flooded with the construction of a hydro dam in the 1960's, and is generally hazardous to navigate. There is now only seasonal and intermittent river access. Mail arrives twice monthly by air and telephone communication has existed only since 1986.

According to band officials, the (1987) village population is 206. The Department of Indian Affairs' statistics are somewhat outdated, but they provide a closer analysis of population characteristics. In December 1986, the total band population was registered at 228. Males represented slightly

less than half (47%) of the total population. Thirty-five percent of the band population were between the ages of 15 and 19, but only 14% of the male population were in that age group.¹

Crime, Alcohol and Other Social Problems

The White River community is troubled by high levels of reported personal and property crime. Of the 98 reported offences in the first six months of 1986, only 12 were considered unfounded. The remaining 86 offences include 21 assaults, 30 property offences and 36 "other" criminal code offences. The latter category includes nine weapons offences and 10 instances of disturbing the peace (RCMP Operational Statistics Reporting System, December 12, 1986).² Of course, official statistics do not reflect an accurate estimation of commonly "hidden" offences such as incest.

The tradition of blood feud³ is not manifest in the contemporary situation, although police note that retaliatory behaviour does occur, and the fear of retaliation is very real

¹The male/female ratio of the 15 to 29 age group is considered here, since males of these ages are generally believed to account for disproportionately high numbers of criminal offences.

²Police statistics for this particular community are probably relatively reliable since White River receives intense policing.

³The blood feud operated to check serious crime such as murder in traditional Sekani society. Since Sekani bands were generally very small family groupings often related to one another, the blood feud usually operated outside the band (Jenness, 1937: 45).

to those members who may assist in the criminal justice process. Just prior to my visit, a man had been severely beaten on his return to White River; he had testified against a man who allegedly raped his wife. For the most part, however, the violence is of no particular pattern and the stories one hears do not encourage a sense of safety. One government official recalls that a few White River residents requested log home construction because of its resistance to penetration by bullets. A former White River police officer recalls that an intoxicated woman, for no apparent reason, once threatened him with a rifle, which he only later discovered was unloaded. He also recalls a situation where a young woman established a common-law relationship with a man who murdered her father.

Police estimate that 95% of the offences in White River are alcohol related.⁴ These include the problems of break and enter, theft and vandalism. Destruction of public facilities such as the school and the wash houses has been a major concern.

There is general consensus among informants from on and off the reserve that sobriety averages 10% to 15%. Descriptions of drinking behaviour on this reserve are typical of accounts concerning many native Indian communities: binge drinking or drinking parties accompany periods of relative prosperity and the availability of alcohol (e.g., after the men receive their cheques from fire fighting). Alcohol is sometimes made on the

⁴An offence is considered by police to be "alcohol related" when, in the opinion of the arresting officer, the accused was under the influence of alcohol at the time of the offence.

reserve and is commonly flown in with residents returning from a trip outside the reserve. Only a few "safe houses", where alcohol is not consumed by the resident families, are identified by social workers.

Many sources noted that the problem of gasoline sniffing for its intoxicating effects was prevalent in the past. This activity was largely associated with youth who would steal gasoline from the fuel compound. In 1984, an 11 year old boy died as a result of this pastime.⁵ The problem is apparently less prevalent now; however, child neglect and a general lack of supervision remain a serious concern among child welfare officials.

Community Response

The White River band administration's response to the problems of alcohol and crime has been largely one of increased reliance on external resources. In 1986, the band demanded 24 hour policing to combat the problems in its community. Directives from the B.C. Attorney General subsequently resulted in a situation where the police, who previously visited this community weekly or bi-weekly, now provide policing on a 24 hour basis.⁶ One police official describes the situation as "almost a police state."

⁵To illustrate further the tragedy on this reserve, this child had recently recovered from a stabbing which narrowly missed his heart. The perpetrator was his 15 year old sister.

⁶Bad weather sometimes prevents continuous policing.

On and off-reserve informants agree that the general unwillingness of community members to deal personally with community problems partly reflects their fear of reprisal or ostracism. According to various government workers, a community based child protection committee operated briefly in the past, but dissolved because of intimidation by band members. Presently, one community member coordinates and supervises community work service placements for offenders sentenced by the court; however, previous arrangements with other community supervisors failed due to their refusal or reluctance to report contract violations and to testify in court.⁷

Several informants noted that some social agency personnel on and off the reserve are also reluctant to become seriously involved in assisting the community with its crime and social problems. The participation of some professionals is prevented by fear; in fact, two individuals admitted they have refused overnight visits to this community whenever possible. In contrast, two police officers contend that reports of violence in White River are largely exaggerated.

At present, some police officials feel that community members rely primarily on the criminal justice system to deal with what police consider to be "social problems," i.e., offences resulting from the abuse of alcohol. Yet the criminal justice system has not proven to be a satisfactory solution.

⁷The present community work service supervisor is a member of a "safe house". She is identified by outsiders as one of the few residents motivated to effect positive community change.

Police statistics reveal that less than one quarter of offences result in a charge (RCMP Operational Statistics Reporting System, December 12, 1986). For matters which could lead to court, offenders are expected to finance their own travel arrangements to the nearest town where court is held every two weeks. The incidental cost of airfare for pre-existing chartered flights, when available, is \$96.00. There is no accommodation for those awaiting court appearances, and White River residents have been "black listed" from local hotels following a number of destructive drinking parties. In spite of these difficulties, those individuals who do not make it to court may be picked up and detained on a warrant for failing to appear. Completion of the criminal justice process is often no more acceptable; the provincial court has been petitioned twice by White River residents and the neighbouring town council for excessive leniency. On one occasion, White River band administrators were apparently told by court officials to refrain from interference in the administration of justice.

Two representatives of the B.C. Native Policing Commission expressed the position (in interview) that crime in White River is largely a community problem, not a police one. Police have considered involving community members as native special constables, guards and matrons, but no residents qualify for this position.⁸ Various agencies have promoted community-based crime prevention efforts such as auxiliary policing and local

⁸One senior RCMP officer claims that none of the potential candidates for these positions would pass the security clearance.

support groups; however, according to local police, such initiatives do not have the requisite support of community residents: in the words of one police officer, "as soon as the outside group leaves the solution falls to pieces".

Community dependence on the criminal justice system is also reflected by the band's election of an intoxicant bylaw pursuant to the Indian Act. Sixty-five percent of the voting population voted by secret ballot in favour of the bylaw which would make White River a "dry" reserve. Unfortunately, previous test cases resulted in dismissals due to a legal technicality in the Indian Act. Subsequent federal amendments have occurred and the bylaw is again in place, awaiting further test cases. It is expected that an initial case that was prosecuted will be appealed to a higher court on constitutional grounds.

Non-resident informants were pessimistic about the potential positive effects of the intoxicant bylaw. Most feel that legislation alone will not deter individuals from drinking - that the decision to stop drinking must be based upon personal motivation. The fact that drinking as a way of life has continued even after voters pledged their support for the legislation supports this view.

The real significance of the vote, however, should not be overlooked. White River band members have expressed the view that all is not well in their community. Their gesture may well represent a desire for social change; however, their approach may indicate they do not feel strong enough as a community to do

it alone.

Social and Cultural Environment

The social conditions of the White River reserve are generally poor. Most of the houses are not equipped with plumbing, septic services or electricity. Diesel is flown in for the three generators that service the school, teacherages, store, recreation centre and the chief's house. Two water wells supply six wash houses with laundry and showers.⁹ Residential heating is primarily by wood.

Health

An inadequate diet can be attributed to unavailability of vegetables and dairy products, coupled with the consumption of alcohol. The White River diet is based on wild meats and grains.¹⁰ Fresh produce and dairy products are available intermittently at two or three times the "normal" cost due to air freight expenses.¹¹

Gun wounds have been rare in the recent past, perhaps because of increased police presence and intervention. Remaining

⁹At the time of my visit only one of the six wash house laundry facilities was functional. The others had been incapacitated by vandals.

¹⁰The reserve lands are agriculturally unsound due to perma frost. A few attempts at gardening particular vegetables were discouraged by vandals.

¹¹White River store sells milk at a loss as this commodity is seen as a necessity for infants.

is the problem of teenage pregnancies resulting from violence.

Various health and education officials express the opinion that a large number of White River residents are in some way "handicapped." The allegation deserves serious attention; however, it is difficult to separate and identify the effects of alcoholism, gas sniffing, poor diet, poor maternal diet, and fetal alcohol syndrome.¹²

Education

The White River community has had a federally operated school run by Catholic nuns since 1962. After their departure in 1978, the school was the target of considerable vandalism. Absenteeism was very high and the Catholic teaching staff were the recipients of physical threats. These circumstances forced intermittent closures of the school until 1982, when new facilities and three new teaching positions were established.

Prior to 1984-85, students who progressed beyond grade 7 had to leave the reserve to attend the boarding home program in the closest town or city. None of the children lasted more than six weeks in this setting. As a consequence, the curriculum was reorganized on the premise that White River children would not

¹²Some social and health personnel are also considering the possibility that genetic factors are inputs in behaviour. Historically, the community developed through family unions especially of first cousins. It is important to note that any link between behavioural concerns and such genetic factors is based more upon speculation than empirical support; however, this viewpoint is mentioned here since belief in the validity of genetic determinants could have serious implications for crime prevention.

attend school outside their community.

Only one White River band member has completed grade 12. He is the son of the reserve post master and is now band manager.¹³ A couple of residents have upgraded their education to the grade 10 level but generally educational levels are low. At the time of writing, the nearest satellite college was planning to survey the White River residents to determine community interest in pursuing upgrading and special training programs.

The school attendance pattern today remains irregular. In part, this reflects lack of parental support for the school or education process. As of May 1986, at least 11 of the 20 senior class students had dropped out. Teachers estimate that at least one third of the parents are supportive of the school, and some will assist their children with homework. Yet school attendance of these children may also be irregular due to seasonal trapping or hunting activities in which children sometimes accompany their parents.

The attendance patterns of White River children was a major factor in the organization of the local school system. The grade system is no longer used as it is not considered relevant.¹⁴ Students are performing well below provincial grade standards

¹³Neither of this young man's parents are themselves band members, although they have resided on the reserve for many years, operating a small business.

¹⁴The usual grade system has been replaced by four classes: primary, intermediate, special needs and seniors.

for equivalent ages. With present attendance patterns, a White River student would likely have to be in school until his or her mid-20's to complete grade 12. Progress is further impeded by the general lack of exposure to academic material in the home and by the necessity of approaching English in the classroom as a second dialect.

In addition to altering the grade system, the reorganization of the school included the establishment of an education committee that makes decisions concerning the school and its programs. Due to the general lack of administrative skills in the community, this function has been assumed by the band council.

A "community" school emphasis has also been pursued through the inclusion of cultural activities in the curriculum. The "Sekani awareness" program allows students the opportunity to pursue traditional activities, particularly trapping, with their families. Activities such as traditional handicraft work are completed and graded as well. In addition, Sekani language instruction is provided in school by a community resident.

Teachers hope that the cultural component in the school will restore pride in the Sekani cultural heritage. It seems there are few traces of traditional culture remaining in the community: Sekani religion has been replaced by Catholicism, shamanism by modern medicine, English has replaced the Sekani language and many traditional festivities and pastimes no longer

occur.¹⁵

Sharing remains a prevalent value in the community today; however, social service workers note that some of the residents feel exploited by others. The school is attempting to provide a forum in which to explore the former Sekani identity and balance it with the new.

Social Services

There is very little social service development in White River. Perhaps the greatest area of development is in the area of recreation: two years ago a new recreation complex was built, providing a gymnasium, satellite dish and television. There is an ice rink and organized male hockey team, but no other organized recreational activities. Other leisure activities include baseball, snowshoeing, boating and motorcycling. The youth generally plan recreational events spontaneously since the village is quite small, but there is a marked absence of scheduled educational, cultural or recreational activities for the general population. The only community organizations identified during the course of interviews were the hockey team and a trappers' association.

An even greater lack of counselling or professional services seems to reflect a general lack of community organization and a fear of intimidation and ostracism. Another impediment lies in

¹⁵White River residents enjoyed substantial contact with their southern neighbours before the waterway access was cut off.

the low educational levels of community members and the difficulty in attracting qualified professionals to the harsh environment of White River.

At the time of field work, the only band employee involved in social case work was the alcohol counsellor. This non-native individual, who holds a Master's degree in education, was initially hired by telephone for the position of band manager. This arrangement was made so that he could join his wife, the federal nurse in White River, thereby providing some stability in the community's professional community.¹⁶ The band manager became the alcohol counsellor after discovering a portion of the band's budget that was reserved for that position. To avoid losing this funding, the band manager agreed to accept the alcohol counsellor position, vacating the administrative position for a band member. At the time of the interview, the alcohol counsellor claimed to have 10 volunteer clients on his case load.¹⁷

Besides the band alcohol and drug program, all other social services are provided by outside agencies. A federally employed nurse resides in the community, while the others, including social workers, a federal social development worker, welfare administrator and probation officer visit the reserve

¹⁶Staff turn-over is fairly high in this isolated community. For example, the 1986-87 school year required a replacement of all three teaching staff.

¹⁷Subsequent to my field work, I learned that the alcohol counsellor had accepted a position as a teacher. It is not known whether the position of alcohol counsellor has been filled.

periodically.

One problem with these "fly in services," is the general lack of community involvement, support and cooperation. Social service workers are faced with the dilemma of dealing with child protection matters without available resources. Foster care placements outside of the community have broken down because of gross incompatibilities; for example, children have offended foster parents by placing toilet paper in their garbage (they don't know how to use the flush toilets) and have not conformed to white conceptions of time. Many White River residents are apparently reluctant to cooperate with child protection workers and there is a lack of foster placement options in the community. Thus, there may be no alternatives for many of these children.

Another difficulty with external support systems relates to the reliance on non-native professionals to define native problems. The intent here is certainly not to undermine the efforts and talents of any informants involved in the delivery of social service or criminal justice service to this community; rather, the point is that it is difficult to fully appreciate native community values, perceptions and needs on the basis of short intermittent visits.¹⁸ In addition, the reality of social service work in northern B.C. is that staffing often involves a high turnover of relatively inexperienced professionals with

¹⁸The problem of incongruent values is also relevant to on-reserve professional employees who do not share the same race and culture.

fewer available resources and services to draw upon. Combined, all of these factors do not seem conducive to the high availability, high quality support this community seems to need.

The Economic Environment

Social assistance is the economic basis of the White River community; the program administrator estimates that 90% of the population is supported by welfare. In some cases, trapping proceeds augment the family income; however, this activity is not pursued by a majority of residents.¹⁹ Many of the young people have no motivation to trap, while some do not have the opportunity or successful role models. The snow-mobile replaced the dog-sled as a valuable aid for trappers in the 1960s but is now widely used for recreational purposes. Prohibitive fuel costs of \$7.00 per gallon prevent more widespread use of the snow-mobile.

The White River reserve operates on a cash economy. There is no bank in the community and the band's accountants are located in the nearest urban centre. The White River band operated store, established to augment the traditional lifestyle, is not earning a profit. The White River store manager has established a credit system whereby residents can sign over their cheques and purchase goods on credit. With the high cost of food and other goods, it is not surprising that the store has difficulty

¹⁹Only one resident traps on a full-time basis, earning approximately \$30,000.00 per annum.

collecting its debts from welfare customers.

There is some wage labour at White River. Men are employed seasonally, fire fighting in B.C. Hydro projects. Federally funded employment projects have provided jobs for some in construction and maintenance. Very few full-time jobs are held by band members. In addition to the band administrator, there is a community health representative, two maintenance workers, two store employees and two teaching aids. The community sawmill does not provide wage labour, but does supply lumber for the construction of homes.

Lack of river access has precluded the possibilities of finding work south of White River. Instead, the band administration and Department of Indian Affairs (also known as DIA) are seeking means of job creation within the community. The potential for establishing a community guiding business is presently receiving consideration. If the proposed road access to White River materializes and/or if the nearby mining proposal develops, and White River's own airstrip is upgraded, tours and related enterprises including a motel and White River rafting business can be considered. Road access may also provide an outlet for timber although the reserve land base is quite small. Finally, the band manager plans to propose that several White River residents be trained and employed as a special response fire fighting team for the northern region.

Knowledge and skills are required for most forms of economic development, and deficits in these areas are the community's

primary obstacles. For instance, the Chief has indicated he would like to establish a successful guiding enterprise in the community, but he notes that a large scale operation would require bookings from the U.S. While he points out that his band members have great difficulty coping in urban centres, he is also familiar with the difficulty of recruiting qualified resource persons to his community. Such difficulties are likely to plague any major economic proposals.

The Political Environment

One government official familiar with the White River reserve has suggested that "there is no tangible government structure" in the community. Nevertheless, this informant concedes that the situation has improved in the recent past with the construction of a new band office in 1984 and the establishment of the band administrator's position at that time.

The Chief is the object of increasing criticism from outside agency personnel who feel he provides no real leadership. He has also been criticized by outsiders for his role in drinking and supplying alcohol to the community following business trips.

The Chief has advised at least one outsider that he does not really wish to be Chief at all, but that no other community residents are prepared to assume his position. Under the White River constitution, elections are to be held bi-annually; however, there has been no election in several years. Government

officials have inferred that White River residents are not sufficiently dissatisfied with their leaders to request an election.

The White River band was a former member of the Carrier/Sekani tribal council but has recently transferred membership to the Kaska/Dene council. The latter group is said to be more in line with White River cultural traditions.

At present, the community does not seem intensely involved with their tribal council although the latter is apparently assisting with land claims and economic development proposals. Members of other cultural native groups have described the Sekani as an independent people who do not tend to take a communitarian approach to decision-making and problem solving.

Because it does not have a local bank account, the White River band does not have legislative control over its revenue. This is not of real significance since the band has virtually no revenue. Housing is within control of the band administration which is reportedly doing a "good job" in this regard. Similarly, the community is responsible for the operation of the store and the maintenance of the airstrip and the water supply.

White River has agreed to assume responsibility for the welfare administration position in the near future; however, it seems that this idea originated from the non-native alcohol counsellor. DIA is attempting to fulfill its present policy of relinquishing control of other services such as the school, but

government representatives claim that the band has resisted this plan. According to one government official, there is no financial benefit for the community to retain control of the school.

Political control of White River, then, is largely external; decisions about the day-to-day lives of residents are made by individuals from DIA, medical services, RCMP, the school and other social service agencies. With the exception of one native special constable responsible for community liaison in crime prevention programs,²⁰ and the current social assistance administrator, none of these key positions are held by native Indian persons.

It should not be under-emphasized that many active social and criminal justice agency representatives are currently encouraging community-based economic and social initiatives. In June 1987, DIA sponsored a two week awareness workshop. A number of non-native and native resource persons attended to speak about topics including: criminal justice programs, community-based intervention programs, community support groups, alcohol abuse, the Kaska/Dene Tribal council, the role of Chief and council, elders councils and election procedures. Many of the workshops represented a "how to" approach for those residents who may wish to initiate community change.

Unfortunately, community participation in community decisions is low and the motivation to initiate change or even

²⁰this officer is Cree and not a member of the Sekani band.

publicly identify problem areas appears lacking. As a consequence, it is difficult to know whether any "outside" initiatives are really in this community's best interests.

Community Development

This thesis uses the term community development synonymously with institutional completeness. Community development implies "processes" that are largely the focus of this investigation.

Examination of community development in White River reveals immediate flaws in the applicability of Gerber's (1977, 1979) measures to this situation. Investigations of White River's social, economic and political circumstances have resulted in descriptions of limited community development.

Gerber's (1977, 1979) conception of economic development included the existence of full-time employment in Indian enterprises. The existence of a few full-time jobs and an essentially non-profit store does not depict the general welfare economy of White River. Similarly, Gerber's measure of community development considered political aspects including the presence of a band council, band administrator and education committee. In accordance with these criteria, White River scores high; however, even cursory scrutiny reveals that leadership is relatively weak and the political structure is ill-defined.

Social service development received little attention by Gerber but was adapted from her work to a study of crime in

rural and northern communities (see Kueneman et al., 1986). Again, this area remains relatively undeveloped in White River; the only counselling program available in the community is the alcohol and drug program. This service was not initiated on the basis of community interest or commitment. The social control and social service functions, with the exception of the school, are performed primarily by off-reserve professionals; thus, the service is often intermittent.

Gerber's (1977) own research concluded that community development is more easily accomplished in large populations. The lack of "people resources" to initiate and maintain development is certainly a problem in White River. The isolation of the community further limits or prohibits many of the development options, particularly economic initiatives.

Personal Resources

Remoteness has also resulted in a general lack of skills for coping or competing within mainstream society. There are very few opportunities for employment or education in integrated settings. Most residents who leave the reserve have difficulty in adjusting and return after a short period of time. A few informants noted that some of the "bright ones" leave the community and do not return.

Summary

The White River reserve is characterized by high levels of reported personal and property crime. There is a corresponding high incidence of binge drinking and generally poor social conditions.

At first glance, White River appears to represent Gerber's (1977, 1979) conception of a pluralistic community; that is, the community is adapting to changing conditions by developing group (community) resources, rather than emphasizing experience with mainstream society. A closer analysis, however, suggests that White River might best be described as inert, which Gerber describes as lacking in both group and personal resources. In this analysis, the development of political and economic structures is acknowledged but are assessed as relatively weak in meeting the needs of community members. Interestingly, Hyde and LaPrairie's (1987) study predicts high levels of crime in pluralistic communities and low levels of crime in inert reserves.

Lockhart's (1985) proposed scheme for examining community processes provides a useful framework by which to consider and describe the community of White River. In the absence of established indicators to measure the concepts of social vitality, economic viability and political efficacy, analysis is somewhat intuitive. Nevertheless, the White River reserve clearly presents itself as lacking in social vitality, economic

viability and political efficacy. These impressions are supported by the high rate of welfare dependency, the ill-defined political structure and the lack of success or interest in community problem-solving. At present, the community relies almost entirely on outside agencies for social services and social control. Delivery of service has not been effective in reducing crime, and services are generally not met with community involvement, support or cooperation. A few community residents have initiated positive change, but many such efforts are not supported by their peers.

The problem of economic dependence is obviously exacerbated by the physical isolation of the White River reserve. Flooding of the traditional waterway has affected not only social patterns, but employment opportunities as well. In addition, education levels are low and most residents are not prepared to cope in mainstream society if they so wish. One criminal justice worker reflected upon the tragedy for the White River children, noting that "they have nothing to look forward to, so life is cheap."

CHAPTER VI

THE SPIRIT LAKE RESERVE COMMUNITY

The Spirit Lake Band has been located at its present site since 1880 (Doe II). Situated 15 kilometers from a large town in the B.C. interior, the community owns 4,100 acres of land. Access is fast and easy since the reserve borders a major highway. There is no transit system - residents must rely on motor vehicles.

The on-reserve population statistic provided by band personnel is 250. DIA statistics for 1986 give the band population as 275, 178 of whom live on reserve. Of the total population, just over half (54%) are male. Thirty-one percent of the total population span the ages 15 to 29, while 19% of the total male population is represented in this age group (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1986).

Crime, Alcohol and Other Social Problems

Spirit Lake was formerly a community with high levels of crime; in fact, one Shuswap informant estimates that the reserve once registered one of the highest crime rates in British Columbia. This informant recalls the 1950s and 1960s when community dances were predictably accompanied by drunkenness and violence. Suicides¹ were said to be frequent, as were accidents and shootings.

¹Only one suicide in recent times is recalled.

Criminal justice personnel and Spirit Lake residents related that the crime rate in Spirit Lake has declined over the past ten years. This reserve is now considered by police officials to have a "moderate" crime problem as compared with other Indian reserves in B.C.

Police statistics suggest an incidence of criminal activity lower than expected. During the first six months of 1986, RCM Police recorded four (actual) assaults, five thefts and possessions of stolen property, two weapons offences and four "other" criminal code offences. On the basis of the Canadian national average of 6.8 violent offences per 1,000 (see Hyde and LaPrairie, 1987: 27), the violent offence rate of Spirit Lake can be estimated at four times higher. The property offence rate is statistically lower, while the "other" category is close to the Canadian average.² The apparent under-representation of actual offences in the police statistics can be explained by two factors: first, there is considerable "informal diversion," which does not include police intervention; second, the police statistics do not include arrests which occur off-reserve, especially in the neighbouring town where youths attend school.

There is consensus among informants on and off-reserve that Spirit Lake's violent crime is primarily family related. Two murders have occurred in the past two years and each involved domestic circumstances. Property crime in Spirit Lake typically involves thefts, auto theft, mischief and break and enter.

²Official crime rate data are of limited utility here due to the small reserve population.

Criminal justice workers and band personnel note that these offences are committed predominantly by youth. Another crime problem affecting the community concerns a group of chronic alcoholics, most of whom are from Spirit Lake but now live on the streets in town. Police and band members explained that these street alcoholics are highly visible and are, therefore, the subject of alcohol related arrests.³

Informants agree that criminal activity in Spirit Lake is largely alcohol related. The present sobriety rate is estimated at 50% to 60% of the population. According to the alcohol counsellor, who is also a band member, drinking follows the binge pattern and is restricted to weekends for many who are employed.

Band personnel interviewed also consider drugs to be a problem among youth. Marihuana, hashish and LSD have been used in the community and there have been some incidents of sniffing gasoline. The use of cocaine is currently receiving the concern and attention of band administrators and staff.

Spirit Lake counselling staff recognize the neglect of children as a problem in their community: "neglect is a problem even in sobriety." Parents are said to be "doing things for themselves, not their kids." In particular, several informants suggested that children are often left unattended while parents spend considerable time in the town mall and bingo hall.

³This problem affects the community only indirectly and is not considered here in great detail.

Provincial social services' staff investigate child welfare complaints periodically. Social workers as well as native informants, on and off the reserve, describe parental control as fairly weak, as is community cohesion.

The Community Response

Spirit Lake band members recall when, eight to ten years ago, "hardly anyone was sober".⁴ The community health representative (a band member) responded by completing a six week alcoholics anonymous counsellor training program in Vancouver. She and another Spirit Lake resident then initiated an AA program in their own community. The alcohol counsellor recalls that there was little community support for the AA program, even five years after its inception. The present alcohol counsellor was among the first band members to commit herself to sobriety and she remembers when there was "lots of pressure to drink." In her view, it was the perception of "hitting bottom" that led to the eventual decisions of many individuals to quit drinking. During the past five years, increasing numbers of community members have achieved sobriety and the situation is described locally as "steadily getting better.". Observations of concomitant reduction in crime lend credence to the position that alcohol and crime are closely related in this community.

⁴"Sober" is defined in "Alcoholics Anonymous" terms as a "non-drinking" lifestyle. Total abstinence is emphasized, although "sobriety" implies commitment rather than achievement.

There is general consensus among native and non-native informants that the present sobriety rate at Spirit Lake is about 60%. Spirit Lake seeks new commitments to this life style through a number of community based counselling services based upon an "Indianized" version of Alcoholics Anonymous. Local initiatives are also in place to deal with crime, particularly delinquency. A social development committee sometimes deals with individual problems; alternatively, the Chief and council may intervene in criminal matters and make arrangements for youth offenders to compensate the community by performing such work service as assisting elders, community clean-up and helping with local events. Finally, child welfare and protection are addressed at the local level through community placements with extended family.

Legal assistance and court appearances occur in town. Criminal justice informants confirm local claims that the Spirit Lake band administration handles many of the less serious criminal matters without resort to the formal justice system, but they do request assistance when they are "fed up" with an individual. The relationships of Spirit Lake band employees with outside agency personnel are generally described by both parties as positive.

Social and Cultural Environment

As in White River, most houses in the Spirit Lake reserve appear quite run down. Many homes have been renovated recently but the changes were said to provide only a "band-aid" solution. In spite of these deficiencies, only a few of the houses are "condemned" and most are serviced with water, electricity and septic tanks.

The community clearly reflects some poverty as many B.C. Indian reserves undoubtedly do. The health and diet of those on welfare is typically affected by a lack of fresh food and vegetables.

Many residents periodically live in the city for employment or other reasons. Most of the band employees reside off-reserve, and the Chief has resided in town for a period of time as well. Proximity to town and to other Shuswap bands encourages visiting and intermarriage. Many Shuswap residents are related to members of High Meadow and other bands.

With the exception of preschoolers, who may attend nursery school on reserve, all children attend school in town. A home school coordinator is employed by the band to assist students with the educational process. She notes that the integrated school setting provides difficulties for some students who have lower self-esteem among non-native people. Some students feel embarrassed by the visible presence of the alcoholic street people originally from their community. In spite of these

problems, however, the home school coordinator cites a drop out rate of approximately six percent, and she notes that many of these students eventually return to complete high school.

Education is an obvious priority among Spirit Lake residents. Band records indicate that while the average education is estimated at grade 9 to 10, the majority of residents aged 20 to 28 have completed grade 12. Some have attended private schools in the Lower Mainland or the northern interior, where the quality of education is considered superior. In 1985-86, eight students were enrolled in post-secondary institutions and 17 had submitted applications for the following year. Students are presently attending or have completed such post-secondary programs as law, accounting, business management, teaching, aviation, social work and early childhood education. Unfortunately, the home school coordinator, who arranges funding from DIA, has recently faced news of cutbacks in educational support, particularly college preparatory courses and occupational programs.

While all Shuswap speakers are said to speak English as well, the Shuswap language is not spoken by a majority of the young people. Language training is now provided by the school system, which offers instruction in two local native languages.

A re-articulation or revitalization of Indian culture is taking place at the community level.⁵ Increased participation in -----

⁵A Shuswap historian describes the increase of cultural activities as a "re-articulation" of traditional ways, pointing out that Shuswap culture was never obsolete. The Shuswap, like

cultural activities over the past three to four years appears to be taking the place, in part, of alcohol and drugs. Cultural activities include traditional drumming, singing and dancing, scheduled two evenings per week. An annual powwow provides opportunities for Indian dancing and drumming and encourages the participation of neighbouring bands.

There are four sweat lodges at Spirit Lake. Very generally, sweats provide physical cleansing and/or spiritual purification for participants who gather around a pit of extremely hot rocks in the dark humid enclosure of the lodge.

The emphasis on native spiritualism is also seen in the increase of traditional religious practices such as blessing with sage. One young woman expressed her surprise when those in attendance at her grandmother's funeral participated in a traditional Indian ritual and then spoke in Shuswap. This generally devout Catholic community is seeing other rituals of native religion, such as drumming in the Catholic church. This is believed to be in response to the young people who are increasingly rejecting Catholicism; nevertheless, a young band member admitted that "many people here are not proud of their culture."

Many of the elders of Spirit Lake are involved in teaching cultural activities to the young people. In general, there is much respect for the elders in Spirit Lake. The value of their

⁵(cont'd) other native cultural groups, also promote a degree of "pan-Indianism," which portrays a global image of Indian as "good".

contribution to the community is recognized by the implicit rule that elders must be represented on all community committees.

Social Services

In spite of Spirit Lake's proximity to town, most social services are provided within the community. For example, a community health representative is employed on reserve and a doctor visits twice weekly. The social development committee, comprised of the band's social worker, alcohol counsellor, community health representative and home school coordinator, deal with many social issues in the community. A number of programs have been established to address the problems of alcoholism. These include individual counselling, Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon and Alateen.⁶ Marriage counselling is also offered, while cultural activities are provided both for the general Spirit Lake population and exclusively for teens. There appears to be a present emphasis on addressing youth problems in Spirit Lake.

Recreational facilities include a hockey rink, gymnasium and playground. There are numerous structured activities such as sports events involving community agencies including the RCMP. A summer youth worker was hired to coordinate a variety of youth activities ranging from cultural events to camping trips. There is also abundant opportunity to participate in events outside of the community, including powwows hosted by other Indian

⁶Some participants also choose to attend additional AA meetings in town.

communities.

Economic Environment

The Spirit Lake band has no major debts and enjoys some revenue from its business enterprises. While there is little affluence in this community, many of the band members are employed. Community welfare records indicate that welfare dependency is less than 15% and is located primarily among those considered handicapped or unemployable.⁷

Several band members are employed by the band in professional and technical positions. These include: band administrator, social worker, alcohol and drug counsellor, home school coordinator, agricultural foreman, home-maker, and carpenter apprentice. The band prefers to hire local residents but occasionally hires non-native people to perform specialized functions until band members receive the required training.⁸

Several band owned enterprises provide employment and/or revenue. Agriculture (hay) is a primary industry and is currently the subject of economic development plans. The band also owns a house-moving enterprise, a camp site and leased land.

⁷Some single parents supporting young children may be classified as "unemployable."

⁸These positions may include housing coordinator and bookkeeper.

Accessibility to employment opportunities off reserve is an obvious advantage for Spirit Lake residents. The band administration is also actively involved in creating community employment opportunities through the use of various government programs and grants. Several summer students are hired by these means.⁹

In spite of Spirit Lake's emphasis on developing economic opportunities, progress is made difficult by the small population base and legal status. With respect to the latter, the band possesses land appropriate for retail development; however, the reserve status of the property discourages investors.¹⁰

The Political Environment

The Spirit Lake community has been described as "politically strife ridden." Criticism has been aimed primarily at the Chief and council who form the band administration.

Informants outside Spirit Lake believe that a primary source of political friction stems from the "unilateral" or "autocratic leadership style" of the administration. Community members are allegedly seldom involved in decision-making, and the

⁹The band is also interested in hiring resource persons to conduct projects beneficial to the community. For example, a historian was recently hired under a heritage fund grant to research the community's log buildings.

¹⁰Investor reluctance stems primarily from the inability to repossess property located on reserve land under federal jurisdiction.

administration is accused of failing to respond appropriately to community needs. A particularly sensitive issue is the perceived lack of adequate attention to the problems of youth.

Another source of friction is said to exist between the band's professional staff and the general community members. One informant has suggested that there appears to be a rift between the administration and the educated people versus the non-educated. Whatever the exact nature of these "factions," it is apparent that the ideological differences are affecting community relations on this reserve.

The Chief herself is the subject of personal criticism, not only for her leadership style, but for her behaviour. Observers noted that she adheres to accepted administration norms while on-reserve but is known to drink in town. Yet, in spite of these criticisms, the Chief is generally regarded as a bright and capable leader.

The Shuswap Tribal Council

The Shuswap Tribal Council allows its 17 member bands to pool resources to achieve a better quality of life. The council was established in the 1970s, following six months of demonstrations responding to the growing dependence on government agencies. The maximum number of discretionary programs was subsequently transferred by DIA to the bands, and in 1982, all Shuswap bands became members of the tribal council. Presently, the council works to record and perpetuate the

history, language and culture of the Shuswap people.¹¹

Spirit Lake is a member of this tribal council that emphasizes communitarian values among the bands. The impetus for some of the social and economic gains in Spirit Lake should, therefore, be ascribed to this larger political unit.

Self-government

Although not prosperous economically, the band does have control over its enterprises and revenues. The band also administers its welfare program and is presently negotiating for control over the child welfare system. There are also rumours of expanding the band operated educational program beyond the pre-school level.

Social Control

The band council has assumed some responsibility for social control in Spirit Lake. Mid-week parties have been prohibited and bootleggers are not permitted on the reserve. The social development committee also functions to maintain control and, as previously mentioned, the Chief and council sometimes intervene directly in criminal matters.

¹¹The Shuswap declaration reads to this effect.

Community Development

The Spirit Lake reserve appears to enjoy relatively high levels of community development.¹² There is a functional band administration, a variety of employment opportunities are available with the band administration or its business enterprises, and social services to address the related problems of alcohol and crime are in place.

In spite of the obvious social and economic development, and political organization, some informants describe a general lack of cohesion among members, and point to the existing political "factions". Economic opportunities are also fairly limited and there is a general low standard of living on this reserve. These considerations suggest the relevance of considering how well existing structures meet the needs of community members. For the purposes of describing a particular community, it is important that aspects of development be examined qualitatively.

Spirit Lake's proximity to an alternative value system in town likely affects community development processes. Employment or career options off-reserve may also influence community employment and other development needs. Finally, the small band size and fluctuating reserve population limits available "people

¹²Spirit Lake meets all of Gerber's criteria for institutional completeness except for the existence of on-reserve schooling and a school committee. This investigation confirmed the existence of control of band revenues, on-reserve employment, full-time on-reserve employment, Indian owned enterprises, a band council, band administration, farming, residents employed in professional, managerial and technical positions and residents involved in adult education.

power" for development initiatives.

Personal Resources

The personal resources¹³ of Spirit Lake are substantial: education is attained in an integrated setting and many band members are employed off-reserve. Community development is enhanced by personal resources in that many educated members now apply their skills as band employees. Alternatively, some band members choose to participate primarily in mainstream society or are not afforded employment opportunities in Spirit Lake.

Summary

The Spirit Lake reserve is presently characterized by moderate levels of crime and alcohol and drug abuse. Individuals within and outside this community recall a high incidence of alcoholism and alcohol related violence in the past, and note an increasing stabilization of these factors over the past ten years.

Concurrent with the above changes is the development of community-based initiatives to address social problems. A number of services and mechanisms are now in place to deal with alcohol

¹³The reader is reminded that Gerber (1977, 1979) used this term to describe personal attributes that encourage or enhance prospects for migrating from reserves. "External contact" implies fewer value implications and is probably a more suitable term in this context; however, for purposes of discussion, Gerber's variable label is retained here.

abuse and criminal behaviour. The community is also facing increased exposure to traditional cultural and pan-Indian activities. These findings support Kueneman et al's (1986) contention that native crime is inversely related to resource development, and McCaskill's (1985) suggestion that community (native) crime decreases as cultural revitalization increases.

An application of Gerber's (1977, 1979) typology to the circumstances of Spirit Lake would likely result in a classification of this community as "municipal"; in other words, the community is developing internally as well as gaining parallel experience in mainstream society. Assuming a municipal status, then, it is interesting to note that Spirit Lake is not experiencing the high levels of crime predicted in Hyde and LaPrairie's (1987) analysis. In fact, the development of group and personal resources has reportedly coincided with a decline in crime.

In the case of Spirit Lake, social, economic and political circumstances are undoubtedly affected by the urban proximity of the reserve. Lockhart's (1985) typology, which he applied to northern hinterland contexts, is not entirely relevant here. For example, the economic viability of Spirit Lake must be considered in conjunction with the availability of economic opportunities outside the community. Nevertheless, exploration of social, economic and political processes along the lines suggested by Lockhart (1985) provides a useful framework for discussing community conditions contributing to the production

or suppression of crime. Several informants have described a "fragmented" political system stemming from the existence of "factions", and from a lack of resident participation in decision-making. These observations suggest a lack of political efficacy as outlined by Lockhart (1985). It is reasonable to expect that these processes may impact on this community's ability to manage its own affairs.

The urban proximity of Spirit Lake has contributed to its relatively high levels of personal resource development; that is, many band members possess the skills to participate in mainstream society. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that some tension exists among groups with different value orientations. In turn, this apparent heterogeneity may well impact on a community's ability to exercise social control of its members.

CHAPTER VII

THE HIGH MEADOW RESERVE COMMUNITY

The community of High Meadow is located 50 kilometers from the same town that borders Spirit Lake. There are several reserves included within approximately 10,000 acres; however, at least 90% of the band members reside in the same reserve with the remaining members living on two nearby reserves.¹ The community is accessed by road, two-thirds of which is rough gravel and the remaining paved. There is no public transport system, but most residents have access to a vehicle. There is telephone service to residents.

Locally, the on-reserve population is recorded at 449. As of December 1986, DIA recorded 358 on-reserve band members, with slightly more than half (.54) being male.² Twenty-nine percent of the band population was between the ages of 15 and 29 – males in this age group comprise 17% of the total population.

Crime, Alcohol and Other Social Problems

Various B.C. RCM Police members interviewed agreed that High Meadow enjoys a low incidence of criminal activity relative to

¹Although legally these reserves are separate, socially and politically they are unified; thus, they are collectively referred to here as the High Meadow Reserve community.

²The great discrepancy in population may be accounted for by the birth of new band members, by the return of off-reserve residents and by the residence of non-band members in the community.

other reserve communities in B.C. During the first six months of 1987 the RCMP confirmed four reports of property crime (thefts). There were no reported offences against persons for this same period. While some offences are not reported to the police, the RCMP advise that crime reporting in this community has increased in recent years, reflecting an improved relationship with criminal justice agencies.

Residents recall that reserve life ten years ago was characterized by frequent drunkenness, accidents, suicides and violence.³ One member notes that he was physically "scarred-up" as a result of his former lifestyle. His description suggests that behavioural patterns in the 1960s and 1970s were very different from those in High Meadow today; for example, he admitted he treated women with no respect in those days. In his words: "If I wanted one, I would take her."

The last serious incident of personal crime involving police intervention occurred in 1979. Shots were fired into some houses, but there were no injuries. Since the mid-1970s increasing numbers of High Meadow residents have given up alcohol. There are corresponding observations of a decrease in the amount and the seriousness of crime. Off-reserve informants suggest credibility in the band administration's claims of 95% sobriety within the community today.

³No actual suicides were recorded in 1987 by the B.C. Coroner's office for any of the Indian reserves in this study. It should be noted, however, that the B.C. coroner classifies as suicides, those deaths in which a note is left. Of course, this procedure results in massive under-reporting of suicides in official statistics.

There is a small core group of youth who are drinking and taking drugs, apparently beyond parental or band control. In addition to this problem, community counselling staff say they are also addressing the problems of emotionally neglected children - many sober parents have replaced former lifestyles with ones involving bingo and shopping malls. There is also a prevalence of negative attitudes, a lack of incentive to work and residual guilt feelings. A few residents have reportedly attempted suicide. Social service and band personnel indicate that sobriety has not completely eradicated the social problems on this reserve; they are continuing to assist individuals and families in the aftermath of alcoholism and violence. One reserve counsellor notes that "youth are suffering the after-effects of alcoholism - negative thinking and low self-esteem." This counsellor also noted that some of the newly-sober parents "still act drunk - yelling at their kids...."

Community Response

Changes in the lifestyles and behaviours associated with alcohol use began in 1972 when the Chief's wife decided to quit drinking because of the negative effects of alcoholism on her family. Several months later the Chief also stopped drinking. A 1987 ethnographer has tracked the events contributing to what that author terms the "sobriety movement" (Doe I, 1987).⁴

⁴In order to protect confidentiality, neither the work nor the author are identified here; however, her research has

The Chief of High Meadow, with the assistance of his wife, used the powers of the band office and enlisted the aid of outside agencies and businesses to promote sobriety. Through the use of marked bills, bootleggers were identified and arrested. Band members spending their social assistance cheques on alcohol were issued vouchers that could be exchanged for food, clothing or other necessities at local businesses.⁵ Residents breaking the law were confronted and offered the alternatives of either seeking treatment or facing band sanctions, including possible loss of employment or the laying of charges. Newly sober individuals were rewarded with employment opportunities or home renovations (Doe I, 1987). By-laws prohibiting drinking have not been enacted.

The Chief and his wife initially encountered extreme resistance on the part of residents and the Catholic Church; nevertheless, the band membership chose to re-elect the Chief on two occasions during the midst of this conflict. According to Doe I (1987), the community was in a state of readiness for new leadership and social change. By 1981, an estimated 70% of the population had given up alcohol and in the next four years this figure rose to 90%.

⁴(cont'd) contributed significantly to this thesis by providing a detailed examination of High Meadow in the process of recovery.

⁵This intervention resulted from the band's take-over of the social assistance program in the mid-1970's. The Chief's wife became the program administrator.

The belief that the motivation to quit drinking must come from within the individual is prevalent in High Meadow. Many individuals described the notion of "hitting bottom" as the motivation for making the decision to give up drinking. One resident described the process whereby the community achieved sobriety as "a miracle." Another felt the reserve was "chosen by God."

The community's response to contemporary crime and social problems combines local initiatives and outside intervention. The band council sometimes intervenes directly in interpersonal conflicts; alternatively, an intervention committee similar to the one in Spirit Lake deals with these matters.⁶ Outside agencies report a high degree of cooperation from band council and residents who sometimes seek formal intervention. In the case of child protection, the band's social development worker generally places children at risk in extended family residences or other families within the community. The local social service agency responsible for child protection reports that no interventions (child apprehensions) were required in the past year; in fact, this government agency has placed children from other reserve communities into foster homes in the High Meadow reserve. Native and non-native informants from within and outside the reserve note that there is some reliance on formal

⁶The membership of the intervention committee has fluctuated, but generally involves various band administration employees and council members. Local interventions have been somewhat controversial. For example, the band has avoided reporting some instances of sexual abuse in favour of holding open meetings with family members and the offender, a practice which has drawn criticism from some outside professionals.

social control agencies in criminal matters; moreover, community members are often involved in discussions with criminal justice agencies regarding family members or friends.

The Social and Cultural Environment

There are no real signs of prosperity in High Meadow; generally, the houses appear old and somewhat rundown with no new construction occurring in the past four years. All but three or four homes are serviced with water, electricity and septic tanks. Some nutritional problems have resulted from a welfare economy.

There is a growing emphasis on education among High Meadow residents: most youth now graduate from high school⁷ and at least five band members hold university degrees. Students have either completed or are presently attending programs in native education (teaching), graduate studies in education, mechanics, heavy duty equipment operation and extended care.

One of the first High Meadow residents to commit to sobriety describes the school as "the centre of our community." The band took over operation of the school in 1975, in the initial phases of the community's conversion to sobriety. The school then became the forum for parents to meet in a supportive environment.

⁷The school principal reported no dropouts among students in 1986-87.

The band's school currently provides grades 1 to 10 classes. Grades 11 and 12 students attend public school in town.⁸ Community control over the school enables the integration of significant culturally related material into the curriculum; for example, 300 minutes per week are devoted to language training⁹ and traditional activities including elder pipe ceremonies, buckskin crafts and beadwork. The "Shuswap room", modelled upon a traditional Shuswap subterranean dwelling, is the centre of much cultural activity in the school.

The expression of traditional Shuswap culture and pan-Indian spirituality is seen not only in the school system, but in the community at large. There are seven sweats in High Meadow: these are used for cleansing purposes as well as for ceremonial, spiritual purification.¹⁰ Sweats have also found favour among many in High Meadow's predominantly Catholic community; in fact, the Catholic priest has built a sweat for his own use.¹¹ In addition, community members participate in Indian powwows and pipe ceremonies. Cultural activities in High Meadow have to a great extent replaced the drinking lifestyle – band members

⁸An estimated 20% of students attend school off-reserve.

⁹English is the primary language in High Meadow; however, most residents over age 40 speak Shuswap, while the younger band members understand their native language.

¹⁰Ceremonial sweats are sometimes planned to provide group support to an individual suffering emotional, spiritual or other difficulties.

¹¹Although Catholicism is the predominant religion in High Meadow, there are a number of Born Again Christians as well as a group of individuals who practice pan-Indian spirituality including the ceremonial sweats.

adhere to the conviction that alcohol and cultural activities do not mix (Doe I).

Social Services

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has provided the forum for emotional and social support during and following the movement towards sobriety. The self-help, and group support aspects of AA are inherent in High Meadow "sharing sessions" that provide group support by encouraging the expression of negative feelings through talking and crying. The emphasis on "sharing" has been suggested as a unique application of the traditional AA program (Doe I, 1987). Sharing sessions are also scheduled regularly in the school and are an integral part of other community support groups.

The High Meadow band employs a part-time alcohol counsellor and part-time youth counsellor to work in conjunction with the social development worker. These individuals have recognized the need to address the problems of youth, and are directing much of their energies towards the development of programs to promote positive family interaction. Another locally developed social initiative occurred in response to the recognition that negative attitudes and emotions did not change with sobriety. A series of personal development training sessions was established for local band members and now operates independently as a non-profit organization for use by the general public.¹²

¹²Personal development sessions are provided in such areas as basic and intensive personal training; leadership training; family, youth and elders training; cultural and alcohol

Participation in local service clubs and organizations characterized the community of High Meadow prior to the initial phases of community sobriety.¹³ It has been suggested that a pre-existing "sense of community" and participation in community groups contributed to High Meadow's success in achieving and maintaining sobriety (Doe I, 1987). One individual estimates that 24 local organizations or groups exist within High Meadow today.

Recreational opportunities are abundant at High Meadow. Facilities include a rodeo ground and gymnasium, and there are a variety of organized sports events within and outside the community. Special events are held in honor of groups, including youths and elders. A band newsletter publishes upcoming events. According to one band employee, "everyone feels they have a role here."

High Meadow band members devote considerable time promoting sobriety in other native Indian communities. A two part video produced by the band has received wide distribution across North America. Accounts of the recovery of High Meadow have been covered by various television, newspaper and other media sources.¹⁴

¹²(cont'd) awareness trainings. These sessions employ group therapy based upon the philosophy of "Lifespring".

¹³In the 1970's these included a hockey team, a weight watcher's group and the rodeo club (Doe I, 1987).

¹⁴At the time of my visit, a prominent American television network crew was investigating and reporting on the recovery of High Meadow.

Community members travel to other native communities to promote a community-based approach to alcohol recovery; similarly, they receive a wide variety of guests from other areas.¹⁵ It is evident that sobriety is a widely held value in High Meadow.

The Economic Environment

The social development worker in High Meadow estimates the welfare dependency in this community to be 80%. Most of the employed residents work for the band school, or the band administration. Positions held by High Meadow band members include: school principal, teachers, teachers' aids, community health representative, alcohol counsellor, youth worker, social development worker, journeyman carpenter and heavy duty mechanic. The logging industry provides seasonal work for some residents; generally, however, the distance to town deters most from commuting regularly for purposes of employment.

Economic development was identified as the goal prior to the community becoming sober; however, band leaders felt that sobriety must precede any economic initiatives. Economic development began in the mid-1970s and has increased with the numbers of sober residents. The band currently operates agricultural and horticultural projects, a sow farm and a sawmill. Several individuals are employed by these enterprises;

¹⁵An annual AA round-up, held at High Meadow, involves participants from across Canada and the United States.

however, some of the businesses have suffered significant financial losses while the success of others has been only marginal. A non-native economic development officer, who resides off-reserve, is employed by the band.

During the early 1980s High Meadow incurred a debt of nearly a half million dollars. This situation resulted from the use of government funds for purposes not permitted by the Department of Indian Affairs. The band has since hired an accountant and High Meadow is in the last year of its financial recovery plan. In spite of past heavy financial losses, the High Meadow band is actively pursuing additional economic initiatives.

The Political Environment

Since the two year election system was introduced in High Meadow in 1971, the present chief has served all but four years.¹⁶ The strength of his leadership is evident by the significant positive changes in the community since his election; in particular, the conversion to sobriety. Virtually all informants referred to the personal qualities of the band chief and his wife in relation to the sobriety movement.

Although some non-natives occupy key positions in the High Meadow administration, the band prefers to utilize local

¹⁶The present Chief was first elected into office in 1973. In 1983, the Chief and his wife, the social development worker, decided to rest from their official responsibilities. The chief was re-elected in 1985 and his wife resumed her former position as well.

residents.¹⁷ The intervention committee continues to operate in response to incidents of drinking or other inappropriate behaviour, but the membership of this committee changes from time to time. Sanctions are imposed by this committee as are other responses including the use of sharing sessions, or social service referrals.¹⁸

The responsibility for social control in this community appears to rest with the Chief. There is historical precedent to indicate that the people have long relied on "strict chieftainship". This notion has been linked to the success of the sobriety movement (Doe I, 1987). Also of significance is the long held belief that a chief should not drink.

There is some disagreement in High Meadow as to whether the family should assume more responsibility for the problems of youth. This position is advocated by the band administration; however, band representatives feel that many parents are reluctant to discipline their children. One informant suggests that High Meadow residents have become dependent upon their band leaders to administer their day-to-day lives, just as community members once relied on the Department of Indian Affairs to fulfill this function. It is important to note, however, that the governing style of the High Meadow administration encourages the participation of band members in community affairs; for

¹⁷For example, one of the first individuals to become sober was hired as the housing coordinator and is now the school principal.

¹⁸Other general controls are in place. These include the prohibition against bootleggers and a curfew for youth.

example, members gain power through the administration of various local service clubs and organizations.

Like the Spirit Lake band, the High Meadow Indian band is a member of the Shuswap Tribal Council. The Council is presently lobbying for a bigger voice, and is providing assistance in land claims.

Self-government

The increase in sober community membership corresponded with increased local government activities. The band assumed responsibility for the social assistance program in 1973. Within the next two years, the band had control over housing and the school. Economic development initiatives and housing construction occurred rapidly. It is perhaps not surprising that financial difficulties resulted.

One local informant described the positive effects associated with the decreased dependence on Indian Affairs. He noted that since DIA took over the schools, housing and provided "everything we needed...people started to believe they couldn't do anything". He describes how the regaining of local control increased self-esteem. According to the school principal, the school, which was the object of considerable vandalism while under DIA control, has gained the respect of students, who now regard it as their own.

The relatively poor economic circumstances of High Meadow suggest that, for this community, control over economic matters

may be more important than actual economic prosperity. This community has seemingly experienced the positive effects of its "freedom to fail" (Driben and Trudeau, 1983).

Community Development

High Meadow appears to enjoy high levels of community development. High Meadow meets all of Gerber's criteria for institutional completeness except for the existence of a federal school; however, the presence of a band operated school would meet this condition. Investigation confirmed the existence of the remaining criteria relating to self-government, school committee, employment, Indian-owned enterprises, band council and administration, farming, employment and professional, managerial and technical positions and involvement in adult education. The efficacy of leaders and the administrative structure attests to the quality of development, as does the variety of locally established social services. Economic development exists to a lesser degree - there are relatively few employment opportunities and band businesses have suffered financial losses.

The revitalization of Shuswap and Pan-Indian cultural traditions also represent an area of substantial community development. Indications are that High Meadow is emphasizing social and cultural development with economic initiatives being of lesser importance.

Personal Resources

High Meadow residents are increasingly gaining skills for participating in mainstream society. All senior high school students (grades 11 and 12) attend school off-reserve and there is a growing interest in post-secondary education. Few residents commute regularly to off-reserve jobs although there is seasonal off-reserve employment in the logging industry.

The relative isolation from urban contact inhibits the development of personal resources in this community. It is also this distance which facilitates community development.

Summary

The High Meadow reserve community is renowned for its achievement of collective sobriety. Formally plagued by high rates of alcohol related violence, the community now boasts a low incidence of criminal activity.

The sobriety movement in High Meadow has been attributed in part to the personal strength of its leaders. In spite of initial majority resistance to their actions, the Chief and his wife persisted in discouraging drinking by using the powers invested in the band office, and by soliciting the assistance of outside agencies, businesses, and individuals.

The case of High Meadow lends credence to Lockhart's (1985) suggestion that "political efficacy" within a community may be

related to the ability of a community to manage its own affairs. The people of High Meadow appear to enjoy widespread acceptance of their leadership and general administrative structure, which has apparently met with substantial success in addressing community problems. In addition, residents and outsiders agree that "social vitality" (Lockhart, 1985) – in their words – "a sense of community" or "social cohesion" has also played an important role in this community's recovery from alcoholism and crime.

The importance of "economic viability" to the recovery of High Meadow is secondary to social and political influences. Reserve members remain generally poor and highly dependent on government for financial support. Yet, control over band funds and services coincided with the growing rejection of alcohol, and may indeed have represented a necessary component of this process. In turn, the regaining of control over community affairs has produced a renewed appreciation for cultural activities and native spirituality.

The acquisition of community (group) resources has played an important role in the recovery of High Meadow. In particular, the community has in place a myriad of social services and support groups to assist individuals. Although the community scores very high on Gerber's (1977, 1979) measure of institutional completeness, there is also at least moderate development of personal resources, particularly through higher education levels. This would suggest that the community is

developing municipally, (along both lines) although it appears that community development is certainly emphasized over involvement in mainstream society. Whether this reserve is classified as municipal or pluralistic in accordance with Gerber's (1977, 1979) model, the circumstances of High Meadow are not predicted by Hyde and LaPrairie's (1987) analysis, which connects both these styles of adaptation to crime problems.

High Meadow's rural location has likely facilitated community development. In addition, this factor may well have enhanced the social cohesion evident in this community today.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The three subject communities studied here were chosen because of their differential crime rates. Information presented in the three preceding chapters has revealed marked variations among the White River, Spirit Lake and High Meadow reserves on a number of community characteristics.

The findings reviewed here are based primarily on a number of interviews conducted within and outside the subject communities. The study has relied upon consensus of opinion which lends credibility to claims about crime conditions within the particular communities studied here. The intent of the thesis was to explore the variability among three communities with different crime problems, thus providing direction or focus for further research.

Of particular interest to the researcher is the applicability of the structural/conflict and traditional social organization perspectives to understanding criminality in these communities. In order to assess the relevance of these approaches comparatively across communities, a number of content areas were defined prior to the research process. In spite of these guidelines, however, interviews were often unstructured, remaining open to the subjective opinions and areas of interest defined by informants. This approach contributes to the exploratory objective of the research.

This chapter highlights the significant findings of the thesis. For analytic and organizational purposes, the summary conforms to the schematic breakdown of characteristics described in the Methods chapter and presented in each community chapter.

Findings are then discussed in relation to the major theoretical positions advanced to explain the disproportionate involvement of natives in the criminal justice system. While the research has focussed primarily on the structural/conflict and traditional social organization approaches, the other major perspectives outlined in Chapter I will be briefly addressed in relation to the data.

Crime and Other Social Problems

The reserve communities selected for this study differ in the extent and type of crime reported there. High Meadow has virtually no violent crime and very little property crime in relation to the other communities. Spirit Lake has moderate levels of violent and property crime, while White River has comparatively high rates in both crime categories.

The estimated sobriety rate for White River, Spirit Lake and High Meadow are 20%, 60% and 95% respectively. This finding supports the observation that much or most native crime is alcohol related. Of course, the procedure of estimating "sobriety" is problematic in that it presupposes a common definition; nevertheless, the figures provide at least a crude

comparison of how individuals within and outside these particular communities perceive the extent of alcohol use on the reserves.

It is important to differentiate alcohol use as a correlate rather than a cause of crime in these communities. Although a decrease in alcohol consumption has reportedly resulted in a concomitant decrease in crime, the relationship is apparently not direct. The community level of analysis taken here has permitted an examination of the factors which seem to encourage or discourage Indian drinking and, in turn, crime. Drinking is thus viewed as symptomatic of community conditions. *Wesley*

Child abuse and neglect is also reported to occur with proportionately greater frequency in the communities with higher crime rates. Child welfare is said to be a serious concern in White River. Child neglect is reported to be problematic in High Meadow, but more so in Spirit Lake. Again, no statistics were available. This information is based primarily on the impression of Child Welfare and other officials. It should be noted that the actual incidence of child abuse and neglect may well be obscured by the comparative ability of each community to deal with the problem without reference to outside agencies. *Child*

It is perhaps not surprising that reports of various social problems covary with the crime rates in these communities.

Crime, alcoholism¹ and child abuse/neglect may all be regarded

¹This term is used here to denote problematic drinking. The writer does not infer the presence of alcoholism from the described drinking patterns; rather, community members

as symptomatic of community breakdown or disorganization
(Shkilnyk, 1985).

P. Ryan 1/1/82

The Community Response

The efficacy of community response to crime and deviance in the subject reserves varies with the extent that these problems exist. White River, characterized by high rates of crime and drinking, has no real community-based mechanisms to address these behaviours. Community members are reluctant to become involved in social interventions; instead, they rely almost ^{US} exclusively on formal (outside) agencies for social control. On the other hand, Spirit Lake and High Meadow, with moderate to low crime rates, respectively, have local services in place to assist or punish individuals who exhibit unacceptable behaviour. High Meadow's social service network is more highly developed than that of Spirit Lake; moreover, High Meadow residents are reportedly more involved in social and criminal justice interventions generally.

Social and Cultural Environment

low social status linked crime

White River's comparatively poor social conditions supports the commonly held contention that crime is associated with low social status. In this study, the community plagued by high crime is also plagued by poverty, health problems, poor housing

'(cont'd) interviewed regarded it this way.

and low education levels. The distinction between Spirit Lake and High Meadow according to the above criteria is not so clear. Both these communities are obviously affected by poverty, although certainly not to the same extent as in White River. Education appears to be a common value in both communities, with a majority of young people from each reserve completing high school.

A growing revival of cultural pursuits seems to have occurred following a rejection of alcohol in Spirit Lake and High Meadow. Again, this phenomenon is observed in degrees proportionate to the crime problem in each community – an observation also made by McCaskill (1985) in his study of rural and northern communities in Manitoba.

Participation in cultural activities coincides with opportunities in other arenas of community life. These include service organizations, clubs and recreational opportunities. Finally, in the communities studied, crime and other social problems were more problematic in the reserve with comparatively fewer social services.

(community life)

The Economic Environment

The role of economics in producing crime in these reserves is difficult to assess. All of the subject communities are relatively poor; however, of the three reserves, Spirit Lake seems to be experiencing the most economic success. High Meadow,

in spite of its low incidence of crime, has suffered severe financial losses in its economic endeavours. White River has fewer economic enterprises and probably less potential than both of the other reserves.

The very high rates of welfare in High Meadow and White River can be attributed to lack of local development and restricted access to the mainstream economy. While no direct association between economics and crime is suggested, lack of economic opportunities and potential, and the high cost of living in White River undoubtedly results in some feelings of deprivation and despair.

The Political Environment

*Traditional
social organization*

The critical role of community leadership in discouraging criminal behaviour is a common theme among the majority of informants. Strength of leadership at High Meadow is seen by most as a precondition of the process of community sobriety. Alternatively, White River's high rate of alcohol-related offences is attributed by many informants to a lack of leadership within the reserve. The existing crime at Spirit Lake is similarly related to leadership style of the chief and council.

Historical differences between the Sekani and Shuswap may, in part, explain present disparities in leadership between these cultural groups. Chapter V described the pre-contact, social and

political organization of the Sekani as essentially egalitarian, with no Chiefs and no political structure beyond small family groupings. In contrast, the organization of the Shuswap was more complex, characterized by several social divisions with elected as well as hereditary chiefs. The Sekani are also considered by many to be more individualistic in orientation than the Shuswap, who are said to assume a more communitarian approach.

Contemporary differences in the extent to which leadership is exercised in White River, as opposed to High Meadow and Spirit Lake, may therefore be seen as extensions of historical variations in political organization. On a larger scale, these differences might also account for variations in the efficacy of local tribal councils. Variations between the Shuswap communities of Spirit Lake and High Meadow may also be related to the historical differences in leadership in each community. The tradition of strict leadership and the cultural rule that chiefs should not drink have been related to the success of the sobriety movement in High Meadow (Doe I, 1987). Further research is required to determine the extent to which these traditions existed in, or influenced other Shuswap communities.

local management style

Another consideration potentially related to community regulation of crime is local management style. The governing style of the Spirit Lake chief is described as unilateral as opposed to the more participative government of High Meadow. These disparate approaches may have different consequences for external relations and negotiations than for local community

affairs (see Lockhart, 1985). In addition, it should be noted that while management style may be the preference of each chief, the selection is likely affected by a number of factors including the extent of community interest and support, and the consensus of values and opinions.

Self-government

*good -
mark*

When consideration is given to the distinct lack of economic resources in all three of the subject reserves, the relevance of "self-government" becomes questionable. In spite of this reality, however, control over community affairs in general appears to be inversely related to the crime problem in these communities. In fact, the findings of this investigation suggest that this factor is of primary importance for predicting native crime.

White River, which has the highest crime rate in this study, exerts very little control over local affairs. Much of the decision-making for this reserve rests with external sources such as police, health, education and Indian Affairs representatives. Spirit Lake has significantly more local control and significantly less crime. High Meadow chooses to maintain maximum local control and is the only band in this study to operate its own school.

*only
education*
Control of the education process is seen by some High Meadow members as a requisite to achieving and maintaining majority

sobriety. In addition, administration of the social assistance program was an important mechanism in the sobriety movement, while the development of community-based social services has been important to its continuance.

The precedence of self-government over actual economic prosperity in discouraging crime and drunkenness is suggested by the circumstances of High Meadow. The alleged local mismanagement of various economic endeavours resulted in serious financial losses, but was subsequently followed by a period of financial recovery. The continued commitment to sobriety during this time illustrates the importance of local control or the community's "freedom to fail" (Driben and Trudeau, 1985).

Community Development

Community development of social, economic and political structures in the three subject reserves has been examined in some detail. The applicability of Gerber's checklist for institutional completeness was shown to be problematic. According to this model, White River has achieved a high level of community development, comparable to that of High Meadow. In fact, community development in White River must be considered much lower when consideration is given to the effectiveness with which existing structures meet community needs.

The present study suggests that some aspects of community development may be especially relevant to the prevention of

crime. The presence of effective local government has been identified as a requisite to crime prevention in the communities considered here. Kueneman et al's (1986) observation that local resource development is greater in those communities with lower incidence of crime is also supported. Social service resource development seems particularly important, although it should be noted that such development has resulted from an organizational base within these communities.

Lockhart's (1985) analysis of particular community process variables seems to have some applicability to a study of community crime conditions. Social vitality is measured by the extent of communitarian versus individualistic norms. Intuitively, social vitality is the highest in High Meadow and the lowest in White River. High Meadow is consistently described as more cohesive and "closeknit."² Lockhart further examines economic viability in terms of independence from external resources (Lockhart, 1985). As previously noted, this factor does not vary consistently with the crime rate in these communities. Finally, political efficacy is determined by the extent of community participation in the political process (Lockhart, 1985). Here, High Meadow would be considered to have the greatest political efficacy and White River the lowest.

On the basis of established scales for the above criteria, Lockhart proposes a "competency" index, concerning a community's

²In the absence of established indicators, these judgments are made partially on the rather nebulous feelings of informants regarding their "sense of community."

ability to manage its own affairs. An inter-correlated set of indicators required for such analysis is not considered here; nevertheless, the model deserves further analysis in this context. For example, an analysis of whether social vitality and political efficacy predicts crime levels and/or recovery capabilities in native communities could have important implications for crime prevention planning.

Essentially, community development is a reflection of organizational abilities. The process is likely affected by numerous variables, including population size,³ ("people power"), social vitality (Lockhart, 1985) and level of education. Isolation may also promote community development, while urban proximity impedes it.⁴

The reserve communities chosen for this study suggest an association between community development and recovery from crime and alcoholism. White River remains generally unorganized. Spirit Lake is in the process of development; yet, informants advise that Spirit Lake "does not have the same organizational ability" as High Meadow. High Meadow shows comparatively high levels of community development, with an effective political structure in place. Members from both High Meadow and Spirit Lake recall the necessity of overcoming community resistance to change, experienced now in White River. The impetus for change

³Gerber (1977) found that community development was highest in reserves with the largest populations.

⁴Actually, in the case of White River, isolation seems to have impeded local development due to a lack of economic options.

remains unidentified, except for the almost universal feeling that they had "hit bottom".

Personal Resources

The concept of personal resources was operationalized by Gerber (1977, 1979), who chose participation in mainstream society through education and employment as measures. There does not appear to be a direct relationship between involvement in mainstream society and community crime levels in this study. In the case of Spirit Lake, personal resources seem to moderate community development; that is, urban proximity detracts from local development. In both High Meadow and White River, isolation impedes the development of personal resources. In the case of High Meadow, moderate acquisition of personal resources realized through participation in mainstream education systems may have enhanced community development. For White river, the lack of experience with mainstream society has probably limited local development options, especially economic initiatives.

Theories of Native Crime

Social Psychological Theory

Cultural theories that assume native crime results from difficulties adjusting to mainstream society have not been a focus of this investigation. Nevertheless, the implication of social psychological theories – that crime or drinking can be

reduced by assisting individuals in their adjustment - is not supported by the present study. The recovery of both High Meadow and Spirit Lake has involved revitalization of native culture and a restored pride in Indian heritage. In addition, Spirit Lake is more involved in mainstream society than High Meadow but maintains a higher rate of drinking and crime. This observation is incompatible with cultural theory.

Structural Theory

Chapter V's description of the events resulting in white conquest has clearly illustrated considerable disruption of the Sekani and Shuswap cultures. The ensuing drunkenness and violence on the three subject reserves lends credence to a social disorganization thesis, or other structural theories of native drinking and crime. Assuming a social disorganization position, this study raises new questions: Why are some communities recovering from the apparent disorganization while others are not? Are some reserve communities better predisposed to recovery or have the disorganizing effects of white imposition been less severe?

Determining the extent of disorganization turns on the selection of indicators used to define this concept. The disorganization of White River is suggested by such indicators as the lack of traditional lifestyles,⁵ the loss of the Sekani language and the interruption of former social contacts

⁵The traditional subsistence economy has been replaced by one of welfare dependency.

resulting from the construction of the Hydro dam. Community members have not integrated into mainstream society, nor have they adopted mainstream values such as formal education; thus, cultural anomie might be inferred. Given the widespread poverty in this community, consideration can also be given to the theory that drinking occurs to escape from deprivation.

Associated with the decline of crime in High Meadow and Spirit Lake is a corresponding increase in language and cultural revitalization and the control of alcohol. These circumstances were also noted by Wilson (1982), who posited a social disorganization thesis (see also McCaskill, 1985). This apparent cultural reorganization underway in High Meadow and Spirit Lake may be seen as facilitating a new identity to replace the anomic void.

At least one informant attributed the successes of Spirit Lake and High Meadow to their progress in developing a new native identity through the process of community development. The reorganization has not involved a return to traditional ways, but a synthesis of Indian and mainstream values.⁶

The question of why High Meadow and Spirit Lake have achieved different levels of recovery and White River none remains difficult to address within a structural-conflict perspective. There is evidence to suggest that White River is experiencing greater, continuing impediments to organization -

⁶One Shuswap informant used the obsolete nature of the slide-rule as an analogy to describe the irrelevance of a purely traditional Indian culture in Shuswap life today.

the lack of waterway access, physical isolation, small land base and low education severely limits economic and social opportunities. Similarly, the urban proximity of Spirit Lake likely hinders internal development and formation of a common identity to some degree.

Social Organization

Social organization theory correctly predicts that the Sekani band experiences greater rates of drunkenness than the Shuswap bands in this study. At the time of white contact, the Sekani were observed within a loose, small group organization, a structure Levy and Kunitz (1974) have related to higher tolerance of flamboyant behaviour, including alcohol use. On the other hand, it is generally believed that the traditional organization of the Shuswap was more complex, and, therefore, less amenable to deviant behaviour. Levy and Kunitz (1974) also found that public drinking was more likely to occur in tribes which emphasized individual prowess and magical powers. It is fair to say that both the Shuswap and the Sekani have emphasized these factors.

Regardless of whether the previously high rates of drinking and crime among the two Shuswap bands can be related to elements of traditional social organization, existing applications of social organization theory do not account for their differential rates of recovery. Yet analysis of historical organizational structures may well enhance understanding about current

organizational processes.

The comparatively strong organizational abilities of the Shuswap may be traced to the relatively complex organization observed around the time of European contact. Clearly there were elected leaders exercising authority within a hierarchical structure. On the other hand, within Sekani society there was an absence of leaders beyond the band level.

The fact that the Shuswap bands in this study are more organized than the Sekani band may thus be related to traditional organizational structures.⁷ It should be recognized that judgments about organizational abilities are determined by mainstream conceptions of organization. The point is that communities which have a long established political structure comparable with contemporary mainstream structures may have a greater potential for recovery from disorganization.

The above findings suggest a synthesis of theories regarding native crime. Social disorganization might contribute to deviance while aspects of traditional social organization may predispose particular communities to these effects. Reserve communities may be more predisposed to recovery if traditional or long-standing organizational structures are more in line with contemporary mainstream structures.

⁷The reader is reminded of the current debate concerning the accuracy of descriptions regarding traditional Sekani culture. Regardless of whether early observations of Sekani culture reflected traditional Sekani society, it is reasonable to expect that current organizational abilities are related to long established, albeit altered, patterns of organization.

Theories Relating to the Criminal Justice System

This research has not examined the role of the criminal justice system in producing deviance within the subject reserves. The role of such factors as discrimination and differential use of legal services is not discounted; however, this thesis has focussed on perceived differences in crime levels based on the views of informants.

At first glance, some support for the over policing explanation of native crime is found here. White River has the highest level of policing in this study, along with the highest crime rate. Although a native special constable responsible for policing of Spirit Lake and High Meadow advises that police presence is approximately equivalent in these communities, it is reasonable to expect a greater degree of police response in Spirit Lake, the reserve closest to a detachment. This factor may, in turn, be reflected in the higher reported rate of crime.

Inconsistent with an over-policing thesis is the fact that the current intense policing situation in White River was established in response to the high crime rate; therefore, this factor cannot reasonably be considered a cause. Further, the differential rate of serious personal offences among these communities minimizes the effects of over-policing.⁸

⁸It is reasonable to assume that serious violent offences are least likely to be influenced by vagaries of reporting proclivities.

Other Theories of Native Crime

Among the explanations offered for the disproportionate rate of native to non-native crime, age and recidivism have received recent attention in the literature (Hawthorn et al., 1958; May, 1982; Minnis, 1963; Muirhead, 1980). With respect to the three communities in this study, the proportions of "high risk" offenders (i.e., 15-29 year old males) do not appear to be significantly different.⁹ The recidivism claim received some confirmation through the very nature of this study; that is, crime is not evenly distributed among the subject communities, but may occur in especially high frequency in a particular reserve. Informants point to some recidivism by individuals or "problem families" in each reserve. It is not known whether the rate of recidivism within each community exceeds the provincial or national rate.¹⁰

As native community crime rates fall in line with, or fall below the national rate, it becomes increasingly difficult to explain crime in terms of minority status models. For example, the argument that features of traditional social organization encourage deviant behaviour is of questionable relevance to a native community that now conforms to the laws and boasts almost complete sobriety. The existence of a deviant subgroup such as

⁹The percentages of 15-29 year old males in White River, Spirit Lake and High Meadow, in 1986, were 14%, 19% and 17% respectively.

¹⁰Given the small population and high frequency of crime, it is reasonable to assume considerable recidivism.

the teenage delinquent group at High Meadow is perhaps best explained in terms of general criminological theories.

McCaskill (1985) has suggested the applicability of social control theory for explaining contemporary native crime. A focus on the development of controls, or immunities against deviance, is compatible with the observations of this research. The positive attitudes toward sobriety, a commitment to a renewal of particular cultural values and traditions, and the establishment of local social services varies across communities in accordance with the crime levels.

Control theory is not incompatible with a social disorganization thesis; in fact, control theory may be regarded as a social psychological extension of the latter (Pfohl, 1985: 161). In this view, the disorganizing effects of rapid social change and white conquest on native communities resulted in a disruption of traditional socialization patterns and internal constraints against deviance. While neither theory adequately addresses why recovery processes have occurred, there is, nonetheless, some suggestion of an association between community reorganization and internalization of values congruent with conformity. The native minority status is perhaps best not ignored: the unique status of these reserve communities may, in fact, facilitate or enhance the process of regaining controls.

CHAPTER IX
IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Criminal Justice Programming

The complexity of issues surrounding each reserve community in this study suggests there is no easy solution to the native crime problem. Differences in social and economic development, as well as community leadership, are apparent in these reserves; however, it is difficult to attribute any single factor to the presence or absence of crime. In spite of this complexity, however, interventions to improve social and economic conditions may be required to improve the standard of living in these communities and to examine long-range effects on crime.¹

It is clear that of the three subject reserves, White River suffers the most severe social deprivation, as indicated by poor health, housing and education levels. Education has been identified as a key element in the recovery successes of the two Shuswap bands, particularly as it relates to the process of community development. One Shuswap informant explained that "education is an extension of the community and the community is an extension of education".

¹Suggestions of government intervention to solve crime problems in native communities are ironic in light of the preceding analysis that attributed contemporary crime problems largely to interventions. The question of non-intervention is a valid one although it poses serious ethical considerations.

There are suggestions that education in White River is impeded by poor diet and substance abuse. Increasing welfare dependency would not provide the answer; however, direct infusion of fresh fruit and vegetables to the diet, and incentives for trapping and gardening may provide some relief. Exposure to other native community role models through "field trip" excursions would also facilitate some education about community development processes, or alternative recovery strategies.

Although economics did not appear to be a primary factor in the recovery of High Meadow, its importance should not be dismissed. Certainly the people of High Meadow have seen evidence of real or potential opportunity through economic initiatives. In the case of White River, physical isolation, lack of local economic options and lack of education reduces real and perceived opportunities. A lack of economic resource persons has been identified as problematic by community leaders. This is an area that could be addressed by government policy.

The findings of this research point to the necessity of promoting local control of social and economic programs (see Weafer, 1986). Further, it would appear that the communities must find their own solutions to community problems. Although this is an area that is especially difficult to address through outside interventions, government policy might assist by providing incentives and increasing opportunities for independence, while reducing government dependence. Considerable

creativity and flexibility in procedure and funding is implied; for example, the structure of community leadership may not conform to existing government expectations, standards of local policing may not meet official requirements, and community criminal justice programming might not comply with existing funding criteria.

Local resistance to community change is a reality which is difficult to address. Again, contact with other native community role models would provide some exposure to alternatives. The success of this situation was evidenced when several High Meadow residents were requested by a B.C. coroner to participate in an inquest into a teenage suicide in a northern interior reserve. The High Meadow residents proposed a number of recommendations including alcohol treatment for band council members, regular RCMP visits and investigations, and education programming. According to a High Meadow resident, the northern community met all of the recommendations and was recovering within one year - contact with High Meadow "gave the community permission to do what it wanted to do."

Implications for Further Research

The complexity of crime, alcoholism and recovery in the three reserves studied here implies that these issues cannot be addressed within a single theoretical perspective. Future research employing a synthesis of theoretical approaches is necessary to address the combination of events and circumstances

contributing to or preventing native crime. Few attempts at such an approach are found in the literature (see, for example, May 1982a).

Research of numerous native communities with different rates of crime is necessary to clarify the importance of community development processes. This study suggests the need to examine such processes qualitatively so that the extent to which existing structures meet the needs of community members may be assessed. In addition, different aspects of community development require investigation in order to examine the relative importance of social, economic and political processes. Lockhart's (1985) concept of introducing indicators to assess and predict aspects of community development deserves further exploration.

The present research identifies local control of community affairs as a primary factor in the prevention of crime within native communities. Future studies are required to confirm or refute the importance of this variable to the successes of other native communities. Longitudinal analysis of particular communities in the process of recovery might illuminate the relevance of this factor, as well as identify other strategies that may be operating to reduce crime in other native communities.

Research to discover what factors may inhibit or encourage community development is also warranted. This study suggests that community development processes, and, more particularly,

the organizational abilities of a native community, may be affected by such factors as: the extent of social disorganization suffered by the community; aspects of traditional social organization; experience with mainstream society; and remoteness. Clarifying the importance of these variables could promote an understanding about the processes that provide the impetus for recovery.

A positive focus for future research efforts is required. Theoretical exercises in victim blaming are unconstructive; however, a focus on structural conflict theory also becomes unproductive when it fails to address the successes of native communities in recovering from crime and alcoholism. As a society, we need to work towards eliminating the exploitation of our native minority. As researchers, we need also to address the particular resources required to assist communities towards recovery, and to be prepared to accept a rejection of our theories.

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