First Nations Leadership Development within a Saskatchewan Context

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ABSTRACT

The Saskatchewan First Nations leadership development study is essentially a continuation of my previous research on First Nations leadership and spirituality (2002). The purpose of this study was to explore First Nations leadership and leadership development in Saskatchewan within the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organizational context. To accomplish this, the study involved an extensive literature review on Indigenous and Western leadership and leadership development theories. Further, an examination of four established and prominent North American Indigenous leadership development programs was conducted to gain further understanding of Indigenous leadership. In addition, 10 First Nations leaders from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations participated in in-depth interviews.

Qualitative inquiry was chosen for this study because qualitative research methods were congruent with First Nations methods of sharing and preserving information. In-depth interviews with semi-structured questions were conducted to obtain information on Saskatchewan First Nations leadership and leadership development. All but one participant agreed to the use of an audio taped interview. Once the interviews were complete, Atlas-ti, a computer software program, was used to assist in the coding, categorizing, and thematic emergence process.

The four Aboriginal leadership development programs that were examined were University of Arizona's Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy, Pennsylvania State's American Indian Leadership Program, Banff Centre's Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program, and the Aboriginal Leadership

Institute Incorporated, located in Winnipeg. These programs strived to remain current and were involved in research initiatives. Moreover, they all attempted to incorporate First Nations culture, history, and issues alongside Western leadership skills, training, and education. They evolved, adapted, and were sensitive to change and innovation in leadership development. First Nations leadership development programs, like those studied, are valuable because they unite Aboriginal leadership for the purpose of personal and professional growth.

The First Nations leaders that participated in this study shared personal and professional leadership and leadership development experiences and philosophy. The leaders indicated that being a First Nations leader was challenging because it continuously contended with two fundamentally different cultures – Western and First Nations. In addition, First Nations poverty, lack of funding, residential school effects, addictions, among other things, made leadership difficult. Because First Nations leadership is physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually taxing, many of the Chiefs cited internal rather than material satisfaction. Moreover, these leaders were often motivated by a cause and the desire for collective well-being and positive change. Family, community members, other leaders, Elders, and the 'Creator' were acknowledged as sources of strength and inspiration.

The First Nations leaders who participated in the study perceived leadership development as a life-long process of formal and informal learning experiences. Consequently, many of the leaders indicated that leadership development began in childhood with individual and family development. The leaders described a First Nations leadership development program that was flexible (able to work in community,

tribal, and provincial settings), cognizant of First Nations culture, needs, and issues, and aware of current and innovative leadership practices. First Nations leadership development should also incorporate Western knowledge, skills, and education.

This First Nations leadership investigation has provided invaluable insight into the values, beliefs, worldview, and philosophies that entail and ultimately constitute Indigenous leadership and leadership development. Studies that focus on Indigenous leadership development ultimately have significant implications for theory, research, fundamental, and practical applications for learning organizations.

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I have shared this journey with my family. With my husband Pat, I have walked through many struggles and joys in life – we experienced this event together. Cole and Shawkay, my children and precious gifts from God, are my inspiration and light. The never-ending love and prayers from my parents (Marjorie and Allan Paquachan) has been a constant but rarely acknowledged source of strength – thanks Mom and Dad. Moreover, I value the confidence that friends and family had in my ability to meet and accomplish this challenge.

Finally, this dissertation would not have come to fruition without the advice and guidance of a respected friend and the generosity of ten First Nations leaders. Their stories, wisdom, and humility have enriched this experience and have made this research possible. This study has truly been a community effort.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my grandmothers, Helen Paquachan and Marjorie Kayseas. Through their selfless and courageous actions, I have learned to embrace all life has to offer – the sorrows and the joys. They were women who endured so much and mothers who never stopped giving. I know that you are here in spirit to share this experience with us.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

The Context

> *"The situation in Canada in which individuals have disengaged themselves from public life because of the perception that governments are incapable of acting as positive agents of social change." (Gregg, 2002, p. 47)*

This statement immediately attracted my attention because it expressed one of the primary reasons I have pursued the study of First Nations leadership – social change for First Nations people. As a First Nations educator, I have a keen interest in Aboriginal education, and over the years have felt frustration with the high drop out rate of First Nations students. In 2001, 48% off-reserve (Statistics Canada, 2003), and according to a 2003 Indian and Northern Affairs survey, 29.6% on-reserve (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2003) Aboriginal youth did not complete their secondary schooling.

As my investigation started and gained momentum the following questions emerged over and over again: "Why are First Nations children 'disengaging' or dropping out of school? Are adults and whole communities also 'disengaging'? Do First Nations people perceive themselves as 'incapable of acting as positive agents of educational or social change'? How does one start change that is healthy and long-lasting, and change that shifts the value and belief system? How can one spark and motivate First Nations people to re-engage and become actively involved in both economic and social well-being?

Gregg (as cited in Berg, 2003, p. 47) warned that if Canadians disconnect from government, ethical consideration, liberty, and ultimately our democracy would be lost.

Losing democracy, in my opinion, would mean the loss of freedom. First Nations people have lost many freedoms over the last 200 years through overwhelming circumstances. It is time to re-engage and become whole as individuals, as communities, and as a nation.

The more I investigated the First Nations high school graduation rate, the more I came to understand that the condition was systemic. Many First Nations students are living amongst the symptoms of greater societal problems like poverty and oppression. For this reason my study had to go beyond the formal schooling of First Nations students. My exploration of literature led me to theories of leadership, spirituality, change, trust, and adaptation. First Nations education is directly and indirectly influenced by many outside forces – the home, the community, and provincial and federal political and financial legislation. Education does not operate in a vacuum, but experiences the pressures and changes of society and the world. As a result, it is in relationship with the negative and positive outside and inside pressures that teaching and learning should begin.

The universe is founded and functions on relationships. For example, Ruby Payne (1998) commented, “When students who have been in poverty (and have successfully made it into middle class) are asked how they made the journey, the answer nine times out of ten has to do with a relationship – a teacher, counsellor, or coach who made a suggestion or took an interest in them as individuals” (p. 143). Payne contended that educators could build relationships by making deposits into a student’s “emotional bank” (Covey, 1989) in the form of appreciation, acceptance, respect, understanding, and assisting in the identification of life options and resources

(Payne, 1998, pp. 143-144). Intentional relationship building inside and outside an organization is a step toward building effective organizations in the 21st century.

The concept that creation and the cosmos are interconnected is not new to First Nations people. Interconnectedness is fundamental to First Nations and indeed worldwide Indigenous philosophy. Consequently, one can now succeed in making the connection between success in First Nations education and the effectiveness of First Nations leadership, among other things. Literature exploration, my experience, and my passions led me to examine First Nations leadership, and then First Nations leadership development, as a critical and essential change agent for First Nations communities.

If First Nations leaders can act as catalysts to move First Nations people to become actively engaged in creating positive and healthy changes in their communities, education will inevitably be affected. First Nations people have to move to a new centre, one that incorporates and takes advantage of old and new worldviews. First Nations leaders also have to promote, initiate, implement, and eventually evaluate this change. I have come to believe that change, like research, begins with asking "Why?" "So what?" and "How?"

Leadership is difficult to capture in one study, in one definition, and in one person. It remains illusive to those who study and research it because it is multidimensional. Leadership is analogous to the concept of crystallization as presented by Janesick (2000):

> The concept of crystallization [is] part of the postmodern project. Crystallization recognizes the many facets of any given approach to the social world as a fact of life. The image of crystallization replaces that of the land surveyor and the triangle. We move on from plane geometry to the new physics. The crystal combines 'symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of

> approach. Crystals grow, change, and alter, but we are not amphorous' (Richardson, 1994, p. 522). What we see when we view a crystal, for example, depends on how we view it, how we hold it up to the light or not. Richardson continues, 'Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know'. (p. 392)

Crystals, like leaders, are perceived as being strong, attractive, and brilliant – because of this they are valued. Moreover, crystals are reflective of the light, much like effective leadership reflects the values and beliefs of the people they represent.

When venturing into the realm of leadership there is much to learn. As Bass (1995) commented:

> The study of leadership rivals in age the emergence of civilization, which shaped its leaders as much as it was shaped by them. From its infancy, the study of history has been the study of leaders – what they did and why they did it. (p. 50)

Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) added to the ambiguity and to the complexity:

> Leadership cannot be touched, smelled, or tasted but can be understood by how it is seen, heard, thought, and felt. Leadership is therefore, a socially constructed phenomenon, and it is very real … People interpret their perceptions and draw meaning from them. (pp. 16-17)

The disturbing fact is that it is hard to arrive at a solid conclusion in leadership studies. What I have learned and concluded today may not be what I will learn and conclude tomorrow. Furthermore, someone may ask different questions relating to First Nations leadership development, or duplicate the study, have different findings, and, as a result, arrive at drastically different conclusions. That is as it should be. Learning, like time and change, should not be static, but in constant motion, filled with anticipation, uncertainty, and a sense of excitement. Learning should be tantalizing and tempting. This study has filled me with the anticipation, the excitement, the uncertainty, and, I will add, the frustration of discovery. With this in mind, it comes as no surprise that I

started the investigation with questions relating to First Nations educational success rates and ended with questions relating to First Nations leadership development.

In western culture, leadership has changed significantly over time. Authoritarianism and hierarchical leadership has slowly shifted to lateral and more complex forms of leadership. Leadership no longer is the responsibility of one person; it has become the responsibility of many.

In many cases, leadership has led to a fuller utilization of people's strengths, abilities, and skills. Darth (1998) elaborated:

> The change in leadership this time may involve erasing altogether the distinction between leaders and followers. In the not-too-distant future, leadership may be understood as a process that plays out in reciprocal actions. By this I mean that people work together, in whatever roles of authority and power they may have, will be thought of as reciprocating partners in determining what makes sense, how to adapt to change, what is a useful direction – the guiding vision, that is, formerly provided by an individual leader. (p. 407)

The geese metaphor best describes this form of leadership. The v-formation of geese is led by one particular goose until that goose becomes fatigued, at which time another goose takes over. This motion is repeated continually until the destination is reached and the goal obtained. Leadership has come to involve more people, and its stresses, responsibilities, and victories are shared rather than experienced by a solitary person. In this context, community, collaboration, collegiality, and shared decision-making are important leadership attributes. Leadership has shifted from "I" to "we."

The changing form of leadership does not minimize the importance of leaders. Leaders are initiators and keepers of vision. They stabilize and solidify an organization. Without effective and efficient leadership, an organization may experience division, toxicity, and a lack of honest communication (Frost, 2003). My previous research

(Ottmann, 2002) on First Nations leadership and spirituality revealed that many Saskatchewan First Nations people desired more direction, unity, and accountability from their leaders. Interest in leadership development in some form for aspiring and existing leaders was also expressed in my previous study.

Since leaders are important in organizations, the next question becomes, "How are leaders developed?" Leadership development is not new. Historically, First Nations cultures, as with other cultures throughout the world, have incorporated strategies and protocol for leadership development. In some First Nations tribes, leaders were hereditary; in others leaders were chosen by Elders. In both cases, leaders were selected, educated, and groomed, sometimes from adolescence, to become leaders. These leaders essentially became what Robert Greenleaf (1977) described as "servant leaders." They were servants of and were accountable to the people.

The concept and practice of leadership development can be as ambiguous and perhaps as allusive as the concept and practice of leadership. Darth (1998) contended:

> It is clear that the meaning of leadership development depends on what we take leadership and development to be. From a point of view that sees leadership as a shared meaning-making process, leadership becomes development of reciprocal relations toward a greater integration of difference. So leadership development is not, as it is in the individual case, development of people we take to be leaders; rather, it is development of the process of shared meaning making. It is a multipersonal rather than a personal phenomenon. (pp. 429-430)

Since leadership is "multipersonal" and depends on the relationship and interaction of people belonging to a particular group, and established groups have a particular culture, one can conclude that leadership has a strong connection to culture. Culture is outwardly expressed through actions and behaviour, and behaviour is determined by collective values and beliefs that have been individually espoused. The leadership

process is a perpetual negotiation of "meaning-making," of values and beliefs. During this time, the following question should be asked frequently: "What matters to us?" Effective leadership, values leadership, or moral leadership occurs when individual and collective values and beliefs are in alignment (Covey, 1989). Leadership is not a solitary process, but one that involves the interaction of people, therein inviting complexity, degrees of struggle, commitment, and negotiation. Fullan (2001) warned:

> How to foster large numbers of leaders in all areas of society is a system question more worrisome today than ever before. If leadership does not become more attractive, doable, and exciting, public and private institutions will deteriorate. If the experience of rank-and-file members of the organization does not improve, there will not be a pool of potential leaders to cultivate. A classic chicken-and-egg problem. Good leaders foster good leadership at other levels. Leadership at other levels produces a steady stream of future leaders for the system as a whole. (p. 10)

This quote states the study's problem, or reason for researching leadership development. Organizations of every kind are experiencing leadership crisis. There is a need for good leaders, for more leaders. Furthermore, Burkhardt and Zimmerman-Oster, (1999) posited, "In short, we have the need and the means to develop leaders for our nation's future if we can recognize and act on the opportunity to do so" (p. 9). There is a need to continue formally and informally developing First Nations leaders for the future of the First Nations people and for the future of our nation.

Recently First Nations people have been in our nation's spotlight. First Nations rapid population growth, land claims, business ventures, residential school compensations, and poverty levels, among other things, have caused mainstream society to look and listen. The response from the general public to First Nations issues has ranged from fear and concern to excitement and anticipation of change. Crisis breeds opportunity, and it is time to move from George Stanley's (1992) perception of First

Nations peoples as the “Indian Problem” to focusing on solutions based on partnerships between two cultures. To accomplish this task, First Nations and Western leadership have to become engaged and committed to personal, professional, and ‘Nation’ development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the concept and theory of First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development in Saskatchewan within the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) organizational context. To gain further understanding of existing leadership programs within North America, a review of four First Nations leadership development programs was constructed. The study was qualitative and naturalistic in nature. A former FSIN chief of staff was consulted to help in the selection process for the interviews. The ultimate research goal was to create a model of First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan by using the information gained from the literature, documents, and in-depth interviews. At this stage of the research, First Nations leadership development was limited to conceptual models used to execute First Nations leadership development programs.

This study is in response to findings unearthed in the thesis conducted by Ottmann (2002). Based on a re-examination of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Government of Canada, 1997), from a Saskatchewan perspective, the thesis results indicated that First Nations people were interested in leadership development. Extensive, in-depth, long-term First Nations leadership development is not currently available in Saskatchewan. This study will contribute to the virtually non-existent body of knowledge surrounding First Nations leadership development, and to the creation of a First

Nations leadership development model. The hope is that this model will aid organizations, academic or otherwise, in establishing First Nations leadership development programs.

The Research Questions

The questions that guided the study were:

1. What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs?
2. What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders?
3. According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?

Definitions

I did not attempt to define concepts and terms in this section because of the complexity and diversity within and between Western and First Nations cultures. Difference in worldview and circumstance (e.g. crisis) may elicit varying leadership responses, practices and responsibilities. Furthermore, along with the environment and our world, leadership is a concept that is constantly evolving, therefore, restricting it to one definition would not reflect its fluidity. Acknowledging the many faces and evolutionary character of leadership is a postmodern attribute – there is no one answer or the answer depends on the circumstance.

In his study on American Indian leadership, Begay (1997) contributes to the complexity of indigenous leadership studies by examining the influence that language has on leadership behaviour. For instance, the translation of *Ogeechitda*, the Ojibwa word for leader, means the *head one*, while the translation of the Mojave word for leader, *Bebadahan*, is a *magical person*, a person of charisma, almost a God. The Cherokee translation of *Adagewudi* is *beloved one*. Each word evokes a different responsibility and denotes a collective leadership value. Language, culture, and traditions, among other things, determine the essence and distinctiveness of leadership. Findings such as these, contribute to the elusiveness of leadership.

With all this said, I did find the need to differentiate leadership education and leadership training from leadership development. Leadership development refers to the long-term process of building of leadership capacity. Berg (2003) clarified:

> Leadership development is progressive in nature and views leadership as an active, dynamic process in relation with others. The concept encompasses the components of leader development, leadership education, and leadership training. Leadership education is that part of leadership development centering upon education in the conceptual frameworks and meaning of leadership. This education includes the historical and theoretical constructs of leadership. Leadership training is that part of leadership development emphasizing the building of competence in the skills directly related to making leadership operational. (pp. 13-14).

In other words, leadership development encompasses leadership education and training. It is more process than event oriented. I would hope that terms and concepts would become clear as the study unfolds.

Assumptions

In this study, the following assumptions were made:

1. First Nations people desire community and societal change and increased leadership development.
2. Colleges, universities, and First Nations organizations and businesses have the general educational mandate and capacity to meet the need for increased First Nations leadership development.
3. Leadership capacity may be developed in individuals, making leadership development a viable endeavour.
4. The questions asked of interviewees were comprehensive, reliable, and valid to determine concepts of leadership and leadership development.
5. The perceptions of the participants of this study regarding First Nations leadership and leadership development reflected their ideals and reality at the time of the study.
6. The data collection procedure and analysis was conducted with the researcher's skills, knowledge, and experience. My positionality (values, beliefs, background) was identified. Interpretation and analysis from a researcher with different skills, knowledge, and experience might have produced different results.
7. The quality of the relationship developed between the researcher and the participants limited the study; the level of trust and co-operation that was achieved determined the quality of the results.

8. The First Nations leaders chosen have knowledge and wisdom concerning First Nations leadership and were representative of Saskatchewan First Nations culture and beliefs.

Delimitations

Four developed First Nations leadership programs (Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Centre, Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, Aboriginal Leadership Institute Incorporated, and Policy from Arizona University and American Indian Leadership Program from Pennsylvania State University) were examined.

This study was delimited to 10 leaders varying in age, experience, linguistic origins and background from the FSIN organization. These leaders were chosen to participate in in-depth interviews. The intent of the group discussion was to validate the findings and to provide a forum for the participants to work together in creating a First Nations leadership development model that could be utilized and implemented in an educational and business setting. The interview data was obtained by interviewing leaders who were affiliated with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

Limitations

The study had the following limitations:

1. My ability as a researcher to adequately interpret the participants' responses in relation to leadership and leadership development.
2. The time factor. Participants were restricted by time. This may have affected the quality of reflection on leadership and leadership development concepts.

3. The participants were affiliated with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) organization; therefore, their knowledge and experience with leadership and leadership development may be confined to the ideals and realities of that one particular organization.
4. The research was specific to Saskatchewan's First Nations leaders and leadership. As a result, findings may not be congruent with similar studies on First Nations leadership development conducted outside Saskatchewan. The diversity of beliefs and worldview among First Nations people throughout Canada and Indigenous people throughout the world may hinder applicability of findings.
5. This independent study followed university protocol (University of Saskatchewan).
6. My "positionality" (experiences, values, and beliefs) influenced the interpretation and analysis of the data.
7. As the researcher, I may not have conveyed the many discoveries that emerged from the data.
8. This is by no means a comprehensive examination of First Nations leaders and First Nations leadership development. The diversity and complexity of First Nations people and of the study of leadership and leadership development prohibits an all-inclusive, thoroughly in-depth study in this area of research.

Significance of the Study

The study is in response to the results from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) analysis thesis conducted by Ottmann (2002). The thesis results, from a

Saskatchewan perspective, indicated that many First Nations people who participated at RCAP hearings encouraged leadership development in some form for their leaders. Extensive, in-depth, long-term First Nations leadership development is not currently available in Saskatchewan. This study will contribute to the virtually non-existent body of knowledge surrounding First Nations leadership development, and possibly to the creation of a First Nations leadership development program.

The study is significant in the following ways:

1. My previous study (Ottmann, 2002) indicated through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Saskatchewan transcripts that a majority of First Nations people valued leadership accountability, treaty and inherent rights, unity and vision. Many people alluded to the implementation and practice of First Nations leadership development to strengthen existing and future leaders. This study emerged from the theme of leadership development. Consequently, this study will contribute to the development of First Nations leadership.
2. Along with increased awareness and emergence of First Nations leadership development, it is hoped that there will be an increase in First Nations leadership development programs in educational and business institutions. With information gained from the document, it is the hope that First Nations leadership would continue to initiate second order change in their communities.
3. The study will contribute to the limited but ever increasing literature and studies on First Nations leadership.
4. Although the study is specific to First Nations leadership development, the study will contribute to the overall conceptual framework of leadership development.

5. This study brought together 10 leaders associated with FSIN to talk about First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development. These leaders varied in age, experience, knowledge, worldview, language (Cree, Saulteaux, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Dene, Assiniboine), and location. The intentional discussion of First Nations leadership development by these leaders disclosed valuable information, and may inspire or re-inspire and support these leaders.
6. This study will contribute to the development of First Nations leadership development theory. In turn, this theory can be used for discussion, planning, and implementation.

Biographical Background

My personal experience, education, and working background have led me to the study of leaders, leadership, and now leadership development. I am a Saulteaux person who grew up in a Saskatchewan First Nation. Like the leaders in this study, I have had many formal and informal leadership learning opportunities, and my primary means of encouragement and inspiration came from my parents and my own family. As a child, I listened and watched my parents in their personal and professional leadership roles. After 30 years, my mom continues to be a school bus driver and, after 18 years, my dad continues to serve our First Nation as Chief. My parents, like my grandparents, have always valued formal and informal education and they continuously encouraged their children, and now grandchildren, to pursue and achieve educational success. They are people who see opportunities for learning and growth in every (positive and negative) experience. Repeatedly and consistently, I have seen my parents model the personal and professional leadership attributes of authenticity, dedication, commitment,

persistence, adversity, and integrity. Because of my parents, I have developed an interest in education and in leadership that began in childhood. Years later, I have come to realize through reflection the lifelong and significant impact that my parents and grandparents have had on my personal and professional being.

Over the years, I had the privilege of observing and working alongside people in business, politics, and educational fields who displayed, in my opinion, exemplary leadership skills. These people were very real; there was nothing counterfeit about them. They carried themselves with confidence, were honest, and seemed to know how to deal with difficult situations by instinct. They also held tremendous roles and responsibilities, and they seemed to welcome the opportunities to take the challenges that came with their positions. All these leaders appeared to be internally motivated and were able to stand firm during difficult times. They were not always right, they were not always strong, but they learned from their mistakes and they were able to pick themselves up and move on after a nasty fall. My curiosity about leaders and their development began with inquisitive observation during my childhood and has evolved over time. My Master's thesis, and now my Ph.D. dissertation, provided the necessary motivation and forum to research an interest and a passion. Ironically, rather than satisfy my curiosity, my research on leadership has sparked more questions and more interest.

The more I venture into leadership studies, the more I realize there is so much more to learn. One does not acquire a full understanding of leadership in one research project. The concept is too large, ever changing, too ambiguous to capture and contain. Rather than an event, as it is presented in this dissertation, one can devote a lifetime to

the study of leadership. Furthermore, one should not limit leadership to a study, or restrict it to research. Research is effective when it is practiced and when it is lived. This theory-practice connection is called praxis; I call it wisdom. The praxis connection requires conscientious effort, creativity, experience, reflection, higher-level thinking, practice, and persistence. In my opinion, such life application develops personal and professional capacity.

It is my hope that the findings and conclusions presented on First Nations leadership development will encourage aspiring First Nations leaders, and inspire or re-inspire and support existing First Nations leaders. I also hope that First Nations leaders will continue to positively affect First Nations communities, especially the lives of First Nations children and their education. My desire is to see more First Nations children take advantage of educational opportunities and experience educational success, and to perceive education as the key to freedom. Nelson Mandela stated this idea profoundly: "Educating ourselves [is] a way to give ourselves the most powerful weapon for freedom" (as cited in Winfrey, 2001, p. 224).

The poet and author Maya Angelou once said during a television interview that in devoting her life to the study of wisdom, over time she has become perceived as wise by other people. In Angelou's pursuit of wisdom, she has become wise. Another saying goes, "You are what you think." In other words, thought precedes behaviour. In studying leadership, I hope that I become more effective as a leader, not so much in a larger sense, but in a personal sense.

Outline of the Dissertation

In chapter two, the review of general, then more specifically, First Nations leadership and leadership development literature is presented. In addition, the relationship that leadership has with change, adaptation, and trust is investigated. The conceptual framework for this study can also be found in chapter two. Chapter three introduces First Nations philosophy and worldview, historical First Nations leadership, the Indian Act, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organization. Chapter four elaborates on the qualitative research design that is essentially a naturalistic orientation using in-depth interviewing as data collection procedures; whereas, chapter five presents information on the four First Nations leadership development programs that were examined. Next, chapter six reveals the analysis and conclusion of the research findings. Finally, the study ends in chapter seven with an overall summary.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Leadership is important and essential in every culture because it is about people. Leaders, both human and those found in nature, serve to direct, to guide, and to unite in times of change and in times of stability. The manner or style in which leaders serve, direct, and unite varies and is unique to the individual and to the group. Leadership is an expression of power, but ultimately it is guided by an explicit and implicit value base and an underlying philosophy. In this study, leadership is examined within a general then a First Nations context.

This literature review is an investigation of leadership and its relationship with change, adaptation, values, and trust. Leaders play a vital role in the change and adaptation process; they have the power to inhibit or encourage both the change and adaptation process. It is inevitable that leaders encounter challenges – one is the ability to differentiate technical from adaptive responses to problems. Technical and adaptive responses require knowledge, skill, and experience. Personal development is equally important as general knowledge and skill leadership education. For instance, values provide leaders with guidance and strength, and trust establishes relationship and commitment between leaders and their communities. This chapter presents the leader – trust connection and the importance of establishing meaningful relationships with people. The chapter ends with a general review of leadership development theory and leadership development program progression.

Literature on leadership has both an organization and a business orientation. More and more, leadership concepts transcend business organizations and can be utilized and transferred to any setting. Consequently, for the purposes of this review, the terms community and organization are used interchangeably. They both involve people – their beliefs, their values, and their dreams.

Leadership – An Essential Organizational and Community Element

Every organization, whether it is a bureaucratic or a learning organization, requires effective and competent leadership. Leadership determines the course of the organization; it unites, encourages, and inspires. Russ-Eft and Brennan (2001) commented:

> Leadership has always been essential to human society. No human organization can survive long without it. In every culture and every historical period, leadership has played a vital role in the coherence and survival of the group. This universal need for leadership derives from the uncertainties and dangers inherent in the human condition … Leaders provide models for possibilities within a situation and untapped resources within themselves. (p. 80)

Fairholm (1991) equated leadership as follows:

> Leadership involves a concern for human aspects of group relationships. Leaders are people with a desire to protect the dignity of others. Leaders are said to have a 'high touch' style. Leadership involves concentration on the development of stakeholders. Leaders are people with exceptional maturity. (p. 13)

Ellsworth (2002) explained the leadership role:

> When a leader sets out to create an atmosphere of purpose-centred, value-based, mutually beneficial responsibilities, the moral aspirations and behaviour of both the leader and the led are raised to higher levels. The result, Burns explains, has 'a transforming effect on both … It is this dynamic process of transformation that ultimately makes leadership moral.' (p. 334)

Effective leaders understand that if meaningful purpose is left unrealized, it will lead to latent motivations that can create frustration and alienation (Ellsworth, p. 330). Ultimately, meaning and purpose will result in motivation and commitment. Ellsworth further explained the importance of leadership:

> The leader is responsible for providing this direction – for creating a certain harmony among the realities of the marketplace and the firm's defining characteristics – its purpose, mission, strategies, goals, and values. Without a purpose that fosters coherence and concord among the firm's raison d'être, strategy, and values, discord will reign within the firm. A [people]-focused purpose makes this harmony possible. (p. 328)

In this context, the perception is that leaders with diverse expertise and responsibilities construct an organization.

Russ-Eft and Brennan (2001) discovered in the analysis of 100 studies that the only characteristic of effective leaders that is universal is "vision." They concluded, "Effective leaders help to establish a vision, set standards for performance, and create a focus and a direction for organizational efforts" (p. 79). In their own study, Russ-Eft and Brennan identified five characteristics and 17 competencies for effective leadership. The five effective leadership characteristics included: 1) Creating a compelling future; 2) Letting the customer drive the organization; 3) Involving every mind; 4) Managing work horizontally; and 5) Building personal credibility. The 17 competencies were subcategories of the five characteristics. Russ-Eft and Brennan's findings were similar to Klemp's (2001) results. Klemp identified the four following effective leadership competencies: 1) Tell (giving direction); 2) Sell (influencing others); 3) Initiate (making things happen); and 4) Relate (building relationships). Collins (2001) also presented five levels of "great" leadership. These included: 1) First who … Then what (setting a vision and strategy); 2) Confront the brutal facts (yet never lose faith); 3) The hedgehog

concept (simplicity within three circles – What is your passion? Where do you excel? and, What drives your economic engine?); 4) Culture of discipline (no need for hierarchy and bureaucracy); and 5) Technology accelerators. On the same note, Raven (2001) connected an organization's capacity "to learn in ways which go far beyond the learning of individuals" (p. 15) to leading, to inventing, to putting others at ease, and to communicating. Effective, competent, and great leadership is even more important in a knowledge economy comprised of learning organizations that recognize, accept, harness, and utilize the energy and power of chaos. In this environment, leaders are innovative and energized by prospect of change.

Some researchers argue that organizations rise and fall with leadership (Anderson, 1998; Collins, 2001). Historically, and in some current circumstances, those who chose to be leaders faced tremendous pressures because they, along with society, perceived themselves as "lone soldiers," people who could stand on their own and take responsibility for organizational and societal problems and issues. Heifetz (1994) expressed his concern with this concept:

> Today we face crisis in leadership in many areas of public and private life. Yet we misconceive the nature of these leadership crises. We attribute our problems too readily to our politicians and executives, as if they were the cause of them. We frequently use them as scapegoats. Although people in authority may not be a ready source of answers, rarely are they the source of our pains. Pinning the blame on authority provides us with a simple accounting for our predicaments … Yet our current crisis may have more to do with the scale, interdependence, and perceived uncontrollability of modern economic and political life. The paucity of leadership may perpetuate our quandaries, but seldom is it the basis for them. (p. 2)

The pressure and unrealistic expectations people place on leaders may be one of the reasons for our current shortage in quality leaders. Heifetz (1994) challenged society to change its perception and understanding of leadership, and to choose leaders who are

going to challenge outdated or unhealthy understandings, beliefs, and values. He continued:

> In a crisis we tend to look for the wrong kind of leadership. We call for someone with answers, decision, strength, and a map of the future, someone who knows where we ought to be going – in short, someone who can make hard problems simple … Instead of looking for saviours, we should be calling for leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions – problems that require us to learn in new ways … Making progress on problems demands not just someone who provides answers from on high but changes in our attitudes, behaviour, and values. To meet challenges such as these, we need a different idea of leadership and a new social contract that promote our adaptive capacities, rather than inappropriate expectations of authority. We need to reconceive and revitalize our civic life and the meaning of citizenship. (p. 2)

This statement challenges people to become involved in leadership. It also challenges them to "think for themselves." Further, the statement challenges people to take ownership of their victories and challenges. It is during the most difficult times that dialogue, where people are acknowledged and all voices are heard, be encouraged by leadership.

Change

Webster's New World Dictionary has devoted 39 lines to defining change. One aspect of this definition reads, "To cause to become different; alter; transform; convert" (p. 234). The change process has increasingly become a topic of interest among organizations and academia. Change is the essential ingredient of adaptation. It can either be resisted or it can be welcomed. Resistance takes a lot of time, concentration, physical, and emotional energy. In the end, the force of change may be too great, and the battle is lost. More and more, however, change is being perceived in a positive

light. Bennis and Slater (1998) suggested, “The remarkable aspect of our generation is its commitment to change in thought and action” (p. 122).

Change can occur through external and internal forces. It can be short-term (first-order change) or long-lasting (second-order) change (Fullan, 1991). What motivates people to embrace second-order change? Kotter and Cohen (2002) discovered:

> People change what they do less because they are given analysis that shifts their thinking than because they are shown a truth that influences their feelings … In an age of turbulence, when you handle this reality well, you win. Handle it poorly, and it can drive you crazy, cost a great deal of money, and cause a lot of pain. (pp. 1-2)

In other words, change in individual and organizational behaviour, values, and beliefs will not occur unless one’s feelings are affected. After much research, Kotter and Cohen argued, “The key to this behavioural shift, so clear in successful transformations, is less about analysis and thinking and more about seeing and feeling” (p. 179). Their motto became, “We see, we feel, we change” (p. 179). Our sensory system plays a huge part in changing behaviour. Feelings of anger, false-pride, pessimism, arrogance, cynicism, panic, exhaustion, insecurity, and anxiety undermine change; whereas, faith, trust, optimism, urgency, reality-based pride, passion, excitement, hope, and enthusiasm facilitate the change process. This is definitely a unique and thought-provoking perspective of change.

Technology has rapidly changed our world, and it continues changing our global experience and reality with “neck-breaking” speed. The intensity of change has been, and continues to be, dramatic and all encompassing. In the beginning there were predictions that computer technology would bring about more leisure time. Instead, the

pace of life has increased, leaving little time for much needed leisure and reflection. Computer technology has decreased communication time and has allowed people to have instantaneous and copious amounts of information readily available. Consequently this has been called the Information Age or the Knowledge Economy. Knowledge management has become increasingly important and necessary in any type of organization. Huseman and Goodman (1999) provided the following definition of knowledge: "Knowledge is information laden with experience, truth, judgement, intuition, and values; a unique combination that allows individuals and organizations to access new situations and manage change" (p. 107). Experience, truth, judgement, intuition, and values are the five elements of knowledge. They determine how knowledge comes to be, what it brings, and how it should be handled. Huseman and Goodman differentiated knowledge and information. They believed that "knowledge exists in communities and is codified in rare documents" (p. 107), and "information is a message" (p. 106). In other words, knowledge encompasses information.

How does an organization become a knowledge organization? Huseman and Goodman (1999) provided a strategic model for conceptualizing and leveraging knowledge. They identified four phases of the organizational vision. In a knowledge organization the vision provides the organization with direction, and it also establishes what knowledge should be fed back into the organization. The four phases of knowledge are: identifying and capturing knowledge; valuing and prioritizing knowledge; sharing and leveraging knowledge; and creation and connection of new knowledge. Ultimately, knowledge should benefit both the organization and the individual. Huseman and Goodman warned, "No matter what the ultimate goal of a

knowledge initiative is, leadership is ultimately responsible for creating the set of circumstances that fosters success" (p. 209). A knowledge organization requires "a unique approach to leadership" (p. 209). It requires leaders to understand the relationship between knowledge and leadership. The knowledge organization is still developing and evolving. In essence, the knowledge organization is one that embraces and is exhilarated by change, and is not afraid to take risks. An effective leader initiates, implements, and guides change. An effective leader adapts with change, and in turn, helps others to adapt.

Adaptation

The concept of adaptability is one that is gaining increasing recognition (Bennis & Slater, 1998; Conger, Spreitzer, & Lawler, 1999; Fulmer, 2000; Haeckel, 1999; Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Adaptation is evident in nature. Plants and animals need to adapt in order to survive the ever-changing elements and circumstances. On a microscopic scale, but still one that may have dramatic or devastating effects, germ cells mutate for survival, creating diseases that eventually become resistant to conventional prescriptions. Adaptation is a learning process where identification and implementation of change occurs.

Adaptation is a biological metaphor that deals with more than the coping and survival of living systems. In the adaptive state, living systems seek equilibrium, and they respond to outside stress by striving for balance. The state of equilibrium is achieved through trial and error; this is a process of discovery that often requires a new way of being and doing. Adaptation requires a large amount of time, commitment, and effort to learn new ways of existing and being. In this sense, adaptation can be likened

to a paradigm shift because of the dramatic evolution and movement that occurs as a result of an increased sense of awareness and understanding.

Social adaptation touches the core of individual being. It forces individuals to examine not only their behaviour, but the motivators of behaviour – values and beliefs. Heifetz (1994) described social adaptation as:

> Developing the organizational and cultural capacity to meet problems successfully according to our values and purposes. And when there are conflicts in our values and purposes, which happen frequently, the clarification and integration of competing values itself becomes adaptive work. (p. 3)

Adaptation does not imply accepting the status quo, or resigning to a new and bad situation. It is also more than coping. It provides a purpose for being. Social adaptation encourages reflection, resilience, and tolerance. Heifetz (1994) stated:

> By improving their ability to reflect, strengthening their tolerance for frustration, and understanding their own blind spots and patterns of resistance to facing problems, they improve their general adaptive capacity for future challenge. (p. 5)

According to Heifetz, policy experts exemplify adaptation: they help communities interpret and analyze problems. The overall premise is to face problems rather than neglect them.

How does a leader deal with change? Fulmer (2000) indicated that leaders today are experiencing high levels of stress because they are trying to understand the ever-changing world around them, and that they are experiencing tension because they are misinterpreting what they are seeing on the horizon (p. 19) because they are relying on their past experiences (p. 9). He identified four reasons for the increasing "frustration and confusion about what [leaders] are seeing on the horizon" (p. 19): 1) a jungle of concepts – leaders are confined and restricted by language, 2) a tendency to focus on symptoms rather than the cause, 3) a tendency to see the symptoms in isolation

rather than within the context of its environment – fragmented rather than holistically, and 4) the human quality of screening information: a selective process that can ultimately lead to further problems (p. 19). In order to move beyond the illusion we create and the frustration we experience to see the "horizon" clearly, Fulmer advocated adaptability.

Haeckel (1999) argued that adaptability goes beyond flexibility, agility, and responsiveness. To be truly adaptive an organization "must challenge long-established concepts of leadership, strategy, and responsibility" (p. 4). Haeckel stated:

> An organization must have a fundamentally new structure; it must manage information in a particular way; it must be managed as a system; and the leaders and employees must commit themselves to very different behaviours and responsibilities. Traditional organizations cannot just add adaptiveness to their current set of capabilities. They must become adaptive organizations. (pp. 2-3)

Haeckel encouraged organizations to become sense-and-respond organizations. Sense and responsive organizations assume that change is unpredictable, and the goal is to become adaptive rather than efficient. The organization should be open, aware, and responsive to external and internal stimuli. This type of organization would not be hierarchal but would be more lateral. In order to be recognized as an adaptive organization, Haeckel believed that an organization may have to change more than its organizational structure; it may have to change beliefs and values that have been embedded in the organization for some time.

Fulmer (2001) purported three critical elements of an adaptable organization: leadership, learning, and understanding the potentially rugged "landscape" (p. 29). Learning in a changing environment is constant and expected. Fulmer posited, "Leadership on a rugged landscape seems to require constantly working to shape an

environment where change always is possible and is usually occurring. But it is an environment that also is finely balanced between surprise and order" (p. 229). In this environment, leadership is required to acknowledge that change occurs in the environment, and it requires the leader and the organization to function on the "edge" of chaos and stability. Amazing and exciting breakthroughs can happen when leaders shift an organization or community "to the edge." Fulmer listed the following 10 activities that leaders can emphasize in the midst of "constant and significant change":

1. Build and manage a network of personal relationships with the community and outside the community;
2. Study the landscape and look for patterns;
3. Set high expectations;
4. Get out of the way; trust in people's abilities;
5. Be available;
6. Choose the measure on which to focus;
7. Communicate a direction;
8. Be decisive;
9. Prepare a successor;
10. Act with urgency and energy. (p. 230)

The intent is for leaders and organizations to expect and embrace change, and for leaders, along with their organizations, to grow. It means seeing the "horizon" for what it is and for what it could be. This orientation of leadership is less authoritarian, less rigid, but is more facilitative and more flexible.

Technical and Adaptive Leadership

Leadership brings with it many rewards and many hazards. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) asked, "Why and how is leadership dangerous? How can you respond to these dangers? And how can you keep your spirit alive when the going gets tough?" (p. 2). Questions such as these dispel romanticism that some may attach to leadership, and they may also discourage some from taking a leadership role. So where is the benefit in

leadership? Heifetz and Linsky continued, “Leadership is worth the risk because the goals extend beyond material gain or personal advancement. By making the lives of people around you better, leadership provides meaning in life. It creates purpose” (p. 3).

The satisfaction of leadership comes in the sharing and the giving of wisdom, knowledge, experience, values, presence, heart, and in one’s ability to raise difficult and unsettling questions – questions that jar people to look at hard truths with the intent of changing behaviour, beliefs, or values. This is adaptive leadership. The adaptive aspect of leadership forces people to question their values, beliefs, and habits that they may have held for a lifetime. It may require dramatic change in perspective, but the change that emerges is long lasting and ultimately more beneficial for the community. This sounds tantalizing, but adaptive leadership can be extremely dangerous because it does not “skim the surface” or look for “band-aide” solutions for issues that require deeper reflection and surgical intervention. Heifetz (1994) elaborated:

> Rather than fulfilling the expectations for answers, one provides questions; rather than protecting people from outside threat, one lets people feel the threat in order to stimulate adaptation; instead of orienting people to their current roles, one disorients people so that new role relationships develop; rather than quelling conflict, one generates it; instead of maintaining norms, one challenges them. (p. 126)

In spite of the leadership risk, the impact of adaptive leadership can last a lifetime, if not generations.

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002) leadership is a normative concept with two prominent orientations. First, they stressed that “leadership means influencing the community to follow the leader’s vision” (p. 15). In this perspective, people look to the leader for guidance. Prominence and dominance are elements of leadership; therefore,

there is danger of leadership abuse. In the second orientation, leaders influence the community "to face its problems" (p. 15). Heifetz (1994) believed that a leader's accomplishment should be measured by his/her ability to elevate people, and by his/her progress in dealing with problems that are stifling organizational or community growth. Leaders who recognize that there are problems and issues that have to be addressed on different levels and with different approaches may contribute greatly to his/her community or organization.

Heifetz and Linsky (2002) listed two kinds of approaches to tackling problems – technical and adaptive. Technical problems require the application of "current know-how," and authorities do the work. Problems are recognized from experience and through knowledge. Learning is not required. Adaptive challenges require much more time, patience, and effort. In the adaptive dimension, people are expected to learn new ways, and it is the people, not just the authorities, that work in discovering the solution. Reflection and introspective examination are key exercises in the adaptive dimension.

The process of discovery is not without turmoil. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) commented:

> There's a proportionate relationship between the risk and adaptive change: the deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be, and thus, the greater the danger to those who lead. For this reason, people often try to avoid dangers, either consciously or subconsciously, by treating an adaptive challenge as if it were a technical one. (p. 14)

Implementing a technical approach to an adaptive problem is the recipe for leadership and community or organizational failure. People do not progress in positive, healthy ways if problems are not given the proper time, patience, and attention.

Adaptive challenges require leaders to strategize and think analytically about the most caring and effective way to initiate the change process. Before initiating the adaptive process, leaders should know the ripeness of the issue. Generally, an issue is ripe when there is a generalized sense of urgency shared not just by one but by many factions within the community. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) suggested the following four guiding questions that aide in determining the "ripeness" of an issue:

1) What other concerns occupy the people who need to be engaged? The more issues, the more difficult it would be to stay focused; therefore, more time might be needed.

2) How deeply are people affected by the problem? A sense of urgency, sensitivity, and taste of reality will give an issue wings.

3) How much do people need to learn? The more people need to learn, the less the urgency to change; hence, the education process is critical.

4) What are the senior authority figures saying about the issue? Authority figures accelerate the ripening process. It is important to get them on board and committed to the issue.

The ripening process is about being aware, being ready for the optimal time, and waiting for the alignment of time, opportunity, people, and resources to ensure a smoother, less resistant change process.

Once ripeness has been determined and established, Heifetz (1994) identified five guiding principles in successful adaptive work. First, identify the adaptive challenge by asking the question, "What is the gap between aspirations and reality? Once this is answered, attention can be given to the specific issues created by that gap.

A leader must diagnose the situation in light of the values at stake, and expose the issues that come with it. Adaptive change takes more time, effort, and energy because it touches and may threaten values. During this process it is imperative for a leader to shift from authoritative solutions to managing people's adaptive problem solving processes.

The second principle (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) is to regulate the level of distress caused by confronting the issues. It is important to keep the level of distress within a tolerable range for doing adaptive work. Using the pressure cooker analogy, heat and pressure need to be applied but not so much so as to blow up the vessel. In addition, a leader needs to pace the rate of adaptation and give structure to the process. Pacing allows time for processing and growth. If painful issues are exposed too quickly, people may resist and sabotage the challenge. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) explained:

> Pacing is a means to prepare people for tackling hard questions, a tactic used in a larger strategy of facing issues. Pacing might resemble work avoidance because both can involve deception. But the deception associated with pacing is a temporary tactic while seeking opportunities to turn parts of the work over to people as they demonstrate their readiness. (p. 164)

More damage can be done if the adaptation process moves too quickly. A leader must gauge people's capacity to "engage the issues and learn" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 100). It may be necessary to "lower the heat" and wait for processing to occur before proceeding. In adaptive work timing is everything. Throughout the process leaders must be creative and open to improvisation in the midst of new information and unpredictable behaviour.

The third principle (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) is keeping attention focused on relevant issues. To keep the process from straying, a leader may present a sequence of

problems demanding attention. Because the answers do not come from the leader, the leader has to manage and accept the risk involved. To add depth and dimension a leader should present challenges in terms of realities of problems. In other words, the leader may ask, "What are the realities associated with the problem?" At this point, leaders should focus attention on ripening issues, bringing them to maturation, and not stress-reducing distractions. Repeatedly, leaders should identify which issues can currently engage attention, and while directing attention to them, counteract work avoidance mechanisms like denial, scapegoating, externalizing the enemy, pretending the problem is technical, or attacking individuals rather than issues. In other words, the leader's role is to keep the organization focused on the "issue at hand" and to "keep out the noise."

The fourth principle (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) stresses that the responsibility for problems must remain with the primary stakeholders. Once the issues are identified, the work must be given back to the people, but at a rate that they can stand. Intuition, experience, knowledge, and networking all help a leader in assessing the pace and the depth of the process. The leader needs to place and develop responsibility by putting the pressure on the people with the problem. The leader in this process is not omnipotent, all wise and all knowing, but he/she is a facilitator who is actively learning and growing along with the organization. Traditional expectations of authority and basis of trust do not function very well in the adaptive learning process.

The fifth principle (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002) encourages leaders to protect voices of leadership without authority. Both a community and an organization are filled with people who have various leadership qualities and strengths. There are few

"positional" leaders (leaders given authority through title), but there may be many unofficial but just as powerful leaders within an organization. Heifetz felt that "positional" leaders should provide a forum for people in an organization who are less visible, with no formal leadership status, and leaders who raise hard questions and generate distress. These people have great potential to help the process, and direct attention to the internal contradictions found within the organization's society. Because they may have more access to other individuals within the organization, these individuals often will have latitude to provoke rethinking that authorities do not have. "Official" leadership should utilize key people within the organization during adaptive work.

The goal of adaptive work is to increase resiliency, to be able to tolerate more pressure, to be able to confront and deal with tough issues, and to become independent of authority, or to become empowered as individuals and as a group. The strength in adaptation lies in the collective, social learning that is experienced so that a new equilibrium is reached – a new centre, a new balance. In essence, adaptation is a process of perpetual mutation.

Trust

If you trust people, it's because you believe they have ongoing characteristics that permit you to trust them. All human relationships are built on trust, and the more trust that is there, the more productive the relationship can be. James E. Burke, Former Chairman of Johnson & Johnson (as cited in Shtogren, 1999, p. 65)

Before a leader can experience success with adaptive change, he/she has to establish a relationship based on trust. People who have negatively experienced bureaucracy, authoritarian leadership, or both may have little or no trust in their

leadership. Since the Indian Act in 1876, many First Nations people have had negative experiences in relation to the federal government and their leaders. In cases of mistrust, leadership may have the challenge of restoring trust. Fulmer (2000) explained, "Trust is tough because it is always linked to vulnerability, conflict, and ambiguity" (p. 167). Vulnerability is a prerequisite of trust – this is a difficult place to start for some people. Next, conflict may be the result of being open and honest. At this point it is important to recognize that conflict may be a healthy sign of a growing, maturing relationship. Finally, ambiguity is the result of two people seeing things differently. The goal is to acknowledge and negotiate the ambiguity. Honest communication is vital in every phase of establishing trust. The process takes time, dedication, and patience while a "new track record" is being established.

The idea that a leader should make it a goal to establish and maintain a trust relationship with his/her organization is gaining increasing importance; however it is not a new concept. Historically, many leaders have known that trust formed the foundation that leads to individual and collective motivation and unity within a group. Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) explained:

> Trust is one of the most valuable, and vulnerable, assets of an organization. When people trust one another, they can work through disagreements – both personal and professional – successfully in the context of the greater fabric of the organization. With trust, employees and leaders work with purpose toward company goals. Over the long term, trust may be the single most determinant of a company's success. But trust can (and does) melt away in an instant. (pp. 4-5)

Trust is the cornerstone of any community and organization. It determines the overall success and health of a community. Frost (2003) warned, "Truth may be one of the first casualties of war, but trust is one of the first certainties to disappear when someone gets

hurt" (p. 21). Leaders have to be aware that there needs to be balance of relationship building within and outside a community. Often, leaders may invest all their time and energy into people outside the organization while relationships inside the organization are slowly eroding and suffering. Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) stressed:

> As a leader you can sustain trust. The basic tenets of trust are universal, but, in the internal context of organizational leadership, trust has a set of characteristics and enablers that differ substantially from other areas.… Inside an organization, there is less of a buffer zone then there is when you're working with an outside client. Interactions are more constant and immediate … Inside an organization, little is forgotten, especially when you are in a highly visible leadership role. Even less is forgiven. (p. 5)

Those who are close to an individual or group have the greatest potential for causing pain because they are in a position of trust. Individuals place their trust in leaders who represent their beliefs and values.

Developing trusting relationships is important, but exactly what is trust and how can it be developed? Frost (2003) believed, "Trust is about having confidence in the effectiveness of our own intentions and actions, toward ourselves as well as others" (p. 211). Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) identified three kinds of trust. First, strategic trust deals with people's belief in the organization's goals, strategies, and mission. People trust that the organization is doing and striving for the right things, and that the organization will succeed. Second, organizational trust encompasses the trust one holds in the decision making process and the "way things are being done" (p. 6). It is a belief that the organization is all it purports to be. In other words, there is an alignment in belief and action, or the organization or leader "walks the talk." Finally, personal trust is reciprocal in nature. People trust leadership, and leadership trusts the

people. Personal trust lies much closer to the heart of individuals; therefore, it takes more time to build, and less time to destroy. It is more sensitive in nature.

If lack of trust is an issue, Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) believed the following questions could help a leader evaluate the problem:

> What changes would have to take place organizationally and structurally, in order to get real trusted relationships? Who would have to change their behaviours? What would communication between individuals look like? Would people interact differently, argue differently, resolve conflicts differently than they do now? How easily or likely would it be for those changes to occur? What role would you or others have to play? (p. 16)

These questions may reveal painful truths about the organization and its trust level. If they do, then the leaders must use the adaptive rather than the technical process. But, where is the starting point of this kind of adaptive work? Galford and Seibold Drapeau articulated, "In order to get a handle of trust inside, you need to develop some form of 360-degree, multidimensional perspective on the way trust manifests itself in the leadership group. Or doesn't" (p. 18). This statement again signifies the importance of leadership. The evidence of trust, or the lack of trust, in an organization may be the reflection of the level of trust leadership holds. For this reason, Frost (2003) stressed, "Leaders and their organizations play a vital role in restoring links and rekindling expectations …" (p. 212). Frost captured the vital role leadership has in the healing process.

An organization can adapt to change and trust in leadership's guidance during turbulent times with more stability, more certainty, and less doubt when trust is healthy and thriving. The motivation is intrinsic and enduring. But, when trust has been destroyed the goal would be to repair and rebuild trust relationships. When this happens, Frost (2003) noted, "Trust begins when leaders make themselves vulnerable to

others, and transparent in their handling of the processes that they are engaging in, to help repair the damage done" (p. 212). Frost added, "Rebuilding trust occurs in work environments where information is shared openly, and where people know what the limits to sharing are and why they exist" (p. 212). Frost believed that all too often organizations "err on the side of secrecy" (p. 212). Withholding knowledge and information signifies lack of trust and may be a misuse of power.

Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) listed seven steps that are essential in the rebuilding of trust. The seven steps include:

1. Recognize the intensity of the loss of trust: its breadth and depth.
2. Examine where the breach occurred, and where the damage was done. Further, examine the personal trust elements (credibility, reliability, intimacy, and self-interest) and organizational trust elements (aspirations, abilities, actions, articulation, alignment, resistance).
3. Place [problem] out there: fast!
4. Acknowledge its impact on the individual, the group, and/or the organization at large. Conduct one, or a series, of town meetings just to let people sound off; offer an anonymous posting board or Q & A phone line, and discuss what's showing up. Monitor community message boards, and call individuals who you believe to be candid. Meet with key influencers in the organization who are not part of your regular circle and let them hear what you're hearing. Finally, ask them if your interpretation of the problem is correct.
5. Identify as precisely as possible what you'll be doing in an attempt to rebuild; set goals and articulate changes that will be made.
6. Reflect carefully on whether progress is being made and what else needs to be done.
7. Repeat the process several times.

This process can be implemented in a small or large organizational setting. For example, FSIN is working on identifying and repairing the trust relationship between First Nations people and the Saskatoon police force. FSIN has exposed the problems, a series of group and organizational meetings have occurred, and a telephone hotline (Barnsley, 2000) has been established. Problems have been identified, and some hard individual, organizational, and societal truths have appeared and continue to appear.

The rebuilding of trust is an adaptive, time-consuming process. Leaders who have earned trust from people in their organization will experience greater organizational cohesiveness, stability, and unity in times of turbulence.

According to Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002), an organization based on trust can be recognized by the evidence of five elements. First, the display of individual and organizational aspirations is apparent. People are focused on wanting to do great things and working beyond organization's expectations: this is the motivational aspect – the desire. Second, people recognize that they are able to do great things. Third, people realize that they are doing great things – they are "acting" their individual and organizational values and beliefs. Fourth, everyone in the organization is in alignment; they are all moving in the same direction. Fifth, people in the organization are able to articulate the previous four points. W. E. Fulmer (2000) warned, "Articulated values are meaningless, however, unless they are consistently reflected in hard decisions" (p. 245). Finally, organizational aspirations, abilities, actions, alignment, and articulation are all united against resistance. Galford and Seibold Drapeau (2002) believed that resistance is natural, inevitable, and perennial. Resistance, in their opinion, stems from scepticism of sincerity of actions or statements, fear of negative consequences, and frustration from being micro- or macro-managed. In addition, resistance involves the perception of being under-utilized, under-valued, and under-leveraged. An embedded *we-they* attitude may be found in non-trusting organizations. To combat resistance, Galford and Seibold Drapeau suggested that leaders need to over-deliver over time. Leaders need to develop new track records and follow through on promises.

Building trust requires wisdom, vulnerability, honesty, openness, and humility from leadership. It takes a bold and courageous leader to step into a trust relationship. Badaracco (2002) perceived trust as a "fine piece of crystal. It is hard to create, very valuable, and quite fragile" (p. 27). He continued by warning leaders to "give their trust carefully and don't treat it like loose change" (p. 27). Successful adaptation requires trust that is reciprocal between leaders and their organizations or communities.

Summary

This literature review has introduced and expanded upon the specific elements of effective leadership – adaptation, trust – in relation to change. Next, an extensive examination of Heifetz (1994) and Heifetz and Linsky's (2002) work on leadership and the adaptive and technical approach to issues and problems was discussed. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) believed that leaders should learn to differentiate between technical and adaptive challenges. The technical approach requires less time and energy, and very little, if any, learning is expected. Leadership is more directive, more authoritarian, and more managerial in the technical approach. On the other hand, adaptive challenges demand more time, more effort, and more learning from the people. Those in leadership positions have the authority to control the speed at which change and learning occurs, and have more of a facilitative function. Heifetz and Linsky stressed that organizations and communities cannot experience significant positive change and growth until problems and issues are addressed in adaptive ways. This means facing hard truths and possibly letting go of some long-held values and beliefs. The adaptive process starts with an individual and then a collective internal examination of unhealthy

values and beliefs that contribute to the problem or issue. The goal of adaptive work is community or "organizational" learning and growth.

From the adaptive dimension, trust was introduced and investigated. I have discovered that before adaptive work can be initiated and before it can be successful, a leader should have earned the trust of the people. For a leader to establish trust with his/her community, he/she should work at building relationships, being credible and reliable, and exhibit integrity. Trust is founded on truth and honesty. Once trust is earned, people are more willing to go through the struggle of adaptive work, and they may be more resilient to change. One question remains: How can the concepts of change, adaptation, and trust be applied to First Nations leadership?

First Nations and Change

The rapid change that would accompany European contact with North America was unprecedented for the First Nations people who had occupied the land for thousands of years. Because of the changing, unpredictable nature of the universe and the environment, First Nations people have been familiar with the change and adaptation process; however, the effects of unilateral federal legislation and colonization was change that was unfamiliar and resulted in the detriment of the people and their way of life. People who were proud, with an established way of life, were forced to become subservient to a generally unsympathetic dominant culture. In a shockingly small amount of time, First Nations people's lives became monitored, confined, and restricted by foreign standards. Timeless migrating lifestyles were eliminated, boundaries were set, customs, traditions and ceremonies were made illegal, language was made shameful, and children were taken from caring communities. In

addition, traditional roles changed. Leadership roles became defined and monitored by the federal government. Consequently, the power and meaning changed, and over time, in many First Nations communities, Elders' roles and responsibilities diminished. Because of colonization, a culture was interrupted, generations of lives were shattered, many were lost, and identities were stolen.

In times of accelerated change, leadership is an integral and crucial element in determining outcomes (Fullan, 1991, p. 144). Today, First Nations people are again experiencing "life-altering" change - this time for the better. First Nations people are exercising their "voice" to regain control of their lives and their destiny. Dynamic, aggressive, yet culturally sensitive leaders are emerging among First Nations people with the intent of embracing change and using it to the advantage of the people. These leaders are being noticed and taken seriously as they bring First Nations issues and challenges to Canadian awareness. The leaders who represent the First Nations people are urging Native communities across Canada to unite. They are calling attention to inherent rights, treaties, injustices, and a better, healthier way of life. In essence, the spirit of First Nations people is awakening with the help of leadership and spirituality. Leadership, after all, entails "mission, direction, inspiration" (Fullan, 1991, p. 157), and the opportunity to stimulate change.

First Nations Leadership and the Adaptation Challenge

One theme that emerged from the research conducted for my thesis, *First Nations Leadership and Spirituality with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: A Saskatchewan Perspective* (Ottmann, 2002), was the desire of many First Nations people to have more leaders represent the values and beliefs of their communities rather

than those of a bureaucratic organization. In addition, First Nations people were interested in people who were developed and educated to be leaders. The participants were indirectly referring to leadership development. In this context, the following question emerged: What would constitute First Nations leadership development? Who would be involved? How would it be implemented and evaluated? These questions were not answered or discussed by the participants of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Government of Canada, 1997).

Prior to the implementation of the *Indian Act of 1876* (Government of Canada, 2003), First Nations leaders were chosen by historic traditional means. For instance, an Elder, a group of Elders, or the people, identified future leaders, or leadership was inherited. The thread of commonality among all First Nations people is that First Nations leaders were the "voice" of their communities. Berkhofer (1978) elaborated, "Chiefs, whether the position was inherited or achieved, possessed authority on the basis of influence and continued efficacy more than upon power and hierarchy" (p. 121). Historical First Nations Chiefs reflected the values and beliefs of the people until the federal government unilaterally implemented the *Indian Act* of 1876. The lives of First Nations people dramatically changed with the implementation of this one document. Of course, other events contributed to the drastic change in the lives of First Nations people – disease, the signing of treaties, vanishing food sources – but the *Indian Act* was a detrimental blow.

The *Indian Act* disabled and constricted First Nations people and their leadership by regulating their behaviour and their lives. Through this legislation, the federal government deemed themselves "guardians" – a parental, paternalistic role. In

time, the *Indian Act* (Government of Canada, 2003) had lasting psychological impact not only on the First Nations people, but also on the federal workers (e.g. Indian Agents) who internalized and executed their parental role in a restrictive and authoritarian manner. In this context, First Nations people were perceived and treated as children.

The Indian Act significantly changed First Nations leadership by legally forcing First Nations communities to choose their Chiefs through alien means – elections. Immediately, the elections caused division within families and communities, and because they were held every two years, people were not given time to unite and heal. Damaging new political factions emerged within First Nations communities between those who chose to recognize the traditional leader and those who chose to embrace the elected leader. Berkhofer (1978) posited, "Traditional native governments based as they generally were upon local autonomy and consensus rather than hierarchy and force appeared particularly fertile ground for increasing factional division in [the] changing times" (p. 123). Elected leaders' loyalties were divided and were accountable to two very different entities – their own people, their culture, and worldview, and the federal government, bureaucracy, and foreign standards. Berkhofer explained the struggle First Nations leaders endured after Indian Agents took control:

> The histories we do possess reveal that most tribal societies changed in order to survive under altered conditions and that adaptation produced internal conflict within the society about the methods of survival. Leaders and factions formed about the various strategies of survival and change. Modifications therefore occurred in Indian political systems for internal as well as external reasons. The basic divisions and strategies in the past provide the background of the factionalism that disunites Indian leaders and their followers today. (p. 120)

The factions still exist, and First Nations leaders are still challenged with balancing First Nations and federal responsibilities. The internal and external conflict that has resulted since the Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003) has laid the foundation for First Nations leadership as the focus shifted from gemeinschaft 'we' to a geselschaft 'I' orientation.

Along with imposing elections, the federal government unilaterally mandated and enforced another drastic measure – residential schools. Children were, by law, required to attend school until the age of 16. In response to this law, First Nations children were taken from their families at a very young age and forced to attend residential schools. Suddenly, people who were still reeling from the restrictive physical and psychological effects of reserve creation were faced with another externally imposed sanction. Residential school was a positive experience for some First Nations children, but for many, the experience was fraught with loneliness, trauma, and many forms of abuses. Collectively, First Nations people are still working through the resulting pain. The residential school experience has left a searing mark on many generations.

First Nations people have experienced change in very dramatic, sometimes painful ways. Today's pains include fetal alcohol syndrome, diabetes, poverty, low educational success rates, alcoholism, drug abuse, physical and emotional trauma. For some time many First Nations leaders, but more often the federal government, attempted to deal with the frustrations and problems of First Nations people through technical solutions. Slowly, steps toward more adaptive solutions have been implemented.

Increasingly, First Nations people are seeking justice and healing, but in order for this to happen, the injustice and pain has to be exposed (sometimes what is exposed is unbearable). More and more, First Nations people are beginning to confront system rather than symptomatic issues like residential school abuses and generational poverty. Healing centres are emerging and wellness conferences are being conducted. First Nations leaders at the local, provincial, and national level are seeking to understand the problems and issues facing their people, and they are boldly addressing them. First Nations leaders are responding to the call for renewal and change. More and more they are addressing personal and organizational issues of accountability and trust, and many First Nations leaders continue to work hard for collective adaptive change.

What is the role of First Nations leaders in the current adaptive process? The role First Nations leaders play in the change process is vital. They can implement the aforementioned principles of adaptive leaders. They can encourage people to rebuild homes, communities, and nations. They can help their communities connect the past to the present, and the present to the future. They can ask questions and help look for solutions. A First Nation leader can begin a personal healing journey and invite others to undertake personal development that encourages overall well-being. In the movie *Smoke Signals* (Miramax Films, 1999) Thomas Builds-the-Fire asks at the end of the movie, “What happens when we forgive our fathers?” It was not until my daughter asked what that meant did I begin to contemplate the answer. What happens when we forgive our possibly domineering, abusive, negligent, oppressive fathers? Freedom. I was shaken with this realization. An adaptive leader asks such questions. They ask questions that appear to be so simple, but potentially they have a jarring effect.

Last summer I had a glimpse of a First Nations healing conference called the *Eleventh Annual Rising Above Conference* held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The conference addressed sexual abuse, family violence, substance abuse, suicide, low self-esteem, and the residential school experience of First Nations people. The conference was organized by First Nations people and the keynote speakers were First Nations people from across Canada. In addition, First Nations counsellors with Masters degrees in counselling held healing and therapy sessions. These counsellors made themselves available to anyone who needed help. I was humbled to see many people united in a healing journey. These people were in the midst of a painful yet ultimately healing individual and collective adaptive process. One Saskatchewan Chief attended the conference. I learned that he not only encouraged people from his community to attend, but he ensured that transportation and accommodation was provided. This leader is actively guiding his people through the adaptive change process and, consequently, is exhibiting a powerful example.

In 1990, Manitoba Grand Chief Phil Fontaine, courageously revealed his personal residential school abuse experience during an annual AFN assembly of Canadian Chiefs in the Yukon (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1990a). He recalls the event:

> It struck me, that we would never be able to figure out a clear vision unless we dealt with some of the big issues in our collective past, and one of them was the issue of residential schools and the abuse of countless people. It was a highly sensitive, personal and, for many people, shameful experience. (Christian, 2003)

His story shocked many people. He took a tremendous risk because the announcement could have negatively impacted his political career. Instead, it did the opposite. Phil

Fontaine's confession initiated further exposure of residential school abuses. His confession gave First Nations people the permission and the courage to speak about the crime and the far-reaching negative effects. Phil Fontaine later helped establish the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. This foundation provides First Nations communities who are dealing with emotional and physical abuses that have stemmed from residential schools with financial, material, and human resources. Through his actions, Phil Fontaine has exhibited characteristics of a strong adaptive First Nations leader.

There is a long line of adaptive and inspiring First Nations leaders. Elijah Harper, an elected Liberal MP for Manitoba's Churchill riding, surprisingly blocked the passage of the Meech Lake Accord in 1990 with quiet dignity (Comeau, 1993). Harper initiated a societal adaptive movement. For a moment, many Canadians were poised in listening to First Nations issues. Further, from March 11 to September 26, 1990, during the Oka confrontation (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1990b), AFN Chief Ovide Mercredi asked First Nations leaders and First Nations people throughout Canada to be open to more passive means of conflict resolution. He courageously took the role of peacemaker. Mercredi's task was dangerous because, at the time, he was working against popular First Nations opinion. The anger that First Nations people throughout Canada felt for decades, if not for centuries, was concentrated and erupted in Kanasetake (Oka), Quebec. Ovide Mercredi (Mercredi & Turpel, 1993) helped diffuse a situation that could have been even more explosive and violent. Past AFN Chief, Matthew CoonCome worked hard to expose the sub-standard living conditions on and off reserves for Aboriginal people across Canada to the international community. CoonCome's work was in no way easy because he was taking First Nations issues into

the global arena. He attempted to expose another side of Canadian society (Durban News, 2001). First Nations leaders are forcing Canadian society to face some hard truths and confronting some hard issues such as addictions (e.g. crystal methamphetamine) and residential and physical abuse (FSIN, 2005), and the pressure is fluctuating, at times to points of explosion as it did in Oka, Quebec.

First Nations people believe that all things are interconnected, and if one part of the creation suffers, all will be affected in one way or another. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1998), in the *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, passionately declared:

> We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outsider agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside [his/her country] can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds. (pp. 187-204)

First Nations people are a part of Canadian society, and if one part of society is marginalized, neglected, or suffering, the whole of society is weakened. Adaptive work should be done within the First Nations communities, but it should not be limited to them. Canadian society should take an active role in the adaptive challenge First Nations people are facing. If one believes all of creation is interconnected, then it is extremely difficult to solve a societal problem in isolation.

How does one incorporate the adaptive learning process into First Nations leadership? As with most things in life, leaders can be taught the skills and principles of adaptive leadership. For centuries, First Nations people have understood the order of the universe, the order underlying chaos, and people's role in the cosmos. Adaptability was an active part of this knowledge. In recent history, that understanding and knowledge was minimized, but it was not erased.

First Nations leadership development should include historical teachings and traditional stories from a First Nations perspective to establish meaning and purpose, and to maintain a connection to the people. Traditional First Nations elements can then be incorporated in a modern setting. They too can and will adapt. As mentioned, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of, and implementing structures and programs that encourage, learning and adaptation. Through time, experience and maturity settles and strengthens both.

Leadership Development

This section attempts to answer, "Why implement leadership development programs?" Warren Bennis (as cited in Gibber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000) concluded, "Over the past few years, there has been an explosion of interest in leadership development. Companies have recognized the shortage of talented managers, the importance of building their bench strength, and the need to widen perspectives in order to compete globally" (p. xiii). With the onset of technology and instantaneous communications our world is shrinking and becoming more competitive. The tension to anticipate and to keep up with change is felt in every segment of society, including business and education. More and more, organizations that were once recognized as independent from each other are looking to each other for answers. Schools are looking to business for management strategies and businesses are looking to schools to gain understanding about the aspect of care in an organization. Leadership development programs are being developed in response to the impending leadership shortage, and, more importantly, for organizational survival on many levels. There is a need to cultivate leaders to help ensure organizational survival and strength.

The following was discovered in a study of over 350 companies conducted in 1998 by Warren Bennis and Linkage Incorporated (a company devoted to leadership development):

- Nearly all respondents recognize the need to create internal bench strength, yet less than 44% have a formal process for nominating or developing high-potential employees.
- Companies that do successfully build their high-potential employees use structured leadership development systems.
- The programs that make a difference include some or all of three critical components: formal training, 360-degree feedback, and most importantly, exposure to senior executives, including mentoring programs (Gibber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000, p. xiv).

Of the top eight companies, Bennis and Linkage Inc. found that the key features of leadership development involved action learning, cross functional rotations, 360-degree feedback, exposure to senior executives, external coaching, global rotations, exposure to strategic data, formal mentoring, informal mentoring, internal case studies, executive MBA degrees, accelerated promotion, and conferences (p. xiv).

The companies studied by Bennis-Linkage had a well-developed and structured leadership development program. More often than not, the leadership development program included a leadership development model, management support, systematic training, and action learning. The Bennis and Linkage study discovered that action learning was the most popular way of leadership development. Action learning provided the “fastest and the most lasting learning” (p. xvi) and in action learning

"people are engaged in finding real solutions to real problems" (p. xvi). The foundation of leadership development from an organizational approach is to develop a learning community, and an organization committed to on-going learning.

From analysis of their findings, Bennis and Linkage (Gibber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000) developed a six-phase approach to leadership development. In phase one, an organization should become engaged in self-diagnosis. This may mean assessing its standing with other organizations, listing its strengths and weaknesses, and developing a rationale for developing a leadership program. In phase two, assessment tools are used to help individuals and groups understand who they are from the inside out. Assessment data is used to develop the leadership development program, and is later used by individuals and groups for reflection and critical discussions. Phase three entails establishing the program design. The program design is specific to the organization. Learning journals, assessment centres, and simulations are just a few examples of program design elements. Phase four encompasses program implementation. Action learning teams are popular in implementing phase four. At some point, Bennis and Linkage felt that programs must answer the following questions: What is a doable project that still expands thinking? How do we set senior management's expectations for the business values that learning will produce? How do learning action teams stay together as 'learning groups' over time? (p. xxi). Phase five relates to on-the-job support. This involves classroom transference into the job. Feedback, coaching, and mentoring are examples of "on-the-job" support and ensure the effectiveness of leadership development programs. Finally, phase six is evaluation. Evaluation is identified as the capstone, or "the point at which an organization can gain

insight on how to revise and strengthen a program, eliminate barriers to its reinforcement and use in the field, and connect the intervention back to the original goals to measure success" (1998, p. xxii). The six phases have been extracted from the leadership development programs of successful companies. These programs are evolving and changing to meet the needs of the organization and changing in response to external environment.

The investment in leadership development demands individual and organizational time, energy, thought, commitment, and money. Is it worthwhile? Bennis and Linkage (Gibber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000) answer this question with a resounding, "YES!" (p. xxii). Well-developed leadership development initiatives "have had significant influences on the culture of the organizations" (p. xxii). Leadership development programs equip individuals within the organization. As a result, the organization is placed in a position not only for survival but for resilience and for success. Bennis and Linkage (Gibber, Carter, & Goldsmith, 2000) state the benefits of leadership development and the tracking of it in the following quote:

> The shift in culture may have eased an important organizational transition, helped anticipate pressures of globalization, or toughened an organization to compete. The value of the shifts, in terms of improved decision-making, more attractive recruiting, or better solutions, needs to be understood and tracked. (p. xxii)

It is to be remembered that leadership development is not a current phenomenon. But current globalization and instantaneous communication have made the awareness, understanding, and attainment of leadership development universal and cross-cultural. Increasingly, we are learning as one on an international level.

What is leadership development? Sindell and Hoang (2001) believed that everyone has leadership abilities and skills (p. 1). Some of these abilities and skills are innate, and others need development and require capacity building. From Sindell and Hoang's perspective, "leadership development is a transition-oriented process that involves practice, feedback, and self-awareness" (p. 1). The authors continued by stressing that "developing your own leadership skills creates a foundation of skill sets and behaviours that result in your being more effective at work" (p. 1). The eventual result of leadership development is short- and long-term individual and organizational success. Again, the idea that leadership development is a process is stressed. Sindell and Hoang declared that "leadership development is not a program or one shot training process" and that "it takes into account how your organization functions, what it rewards, and what it values" (p. 2). Sindell and Hoang posited that effective leadership development performs the following four functions:

1) Empowers employees to develop skills and competencies. Employees with a "leadership perspective" identify professional goals and develop a plan to attain those goals.
2) Acts as a powerful retention tool. Leadership development creates a link between employees and their organization because of the investment made in employees. Employees increase their skill sets and marketability. The increase in marketability does not necessarily translate into increased attrition. Rather, developed employees are happy employees. Many employees, however, quit because of their managers, not because of the organization. Leadership development helps managers manage more effectively.
3) Provides the foundation for succession planning and for training the next generation of organizational leaders.
4) Focuses on how managers lead, develop, and partner with their employees. The outcome of effective leadership development is that employees feel engaged in the work they are doing, are able to make decisions that affect their work, and are clear about not just how to do their job but why their job is important to the rest of the organization. (p. 2)

The authors posited that leaders should be knowledgeable about their internal and external values, beliefs, and their relation to the environment. Leaders should be able to move knowledge into action, then positive results. Second, leaders should become adept at strategic thinking. They should "create a vision and balance short- and long-term goals to attain that vision" (p. 1). Third, leaders should continually strive at becoming effective communicators. In this instance, values, beliefs, vision, and goals are communicated verbally and non-verbally (modelling). Next, leaders should make time to reflect and develop self-awareness. An internal awareness and understanding will provide direction, meaning, purpose, and resolve in times of crisis. Finally, leaders should find value in developing meaningful relationships. They should also continue the cycle of leadership development by developing aspiring leaders. Leadership can be found in all organizational levels. As a result, the responsibility of achieving the organization's goals is shared. Consequently, individual empowerment and ownership is created.

The following story written by McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) wonderfully portrays the complexity and yet the fundamental simplicity of developing leaders.

The Manager and the Sage

"Is experience the best teacher?" the bright young manager asked the sage. "Can I develop as a leader from experience?"

"Some people have said that experience is the best teacher," replied the sage. "But some experiences don't teach."

"So experience is not the best teacher?"

"Not exactly that," said the sage. "It is just that not every experience offers important leadership lessons."

"So where do I learn? What experiences will be helpful to me?"

"It is the experiences that challenge you that are developmental," the sage responded, "the experiences that stretch you, that force you to develop new abilities if you are going to survive and succeed."

"Oh, I get it," said the manager. "When I am really pushed to my limits by an experience, I will learn. Is that it?"

"Not exactly," the sage said. "Challenge is important. Our limits need to be tested. But even when we are challenged we don't necessarily learn."

"So," the manager said, looking a bit puzzled, "you mean that I can have the right kind of experiences – challenging experiences – and still not learn?"

"That's right," the sage responded. "You only grow from challenging experiences when you have the ability to learn from them. Not everyone does. As T. S. Eliot once reminded us, 'Some people have the experience and miss the meaning.' There are some people who learn hand over fist from a challenging experience. Others learn little, if anything. Growth is not automatic."

"I think I'm getting it," said the manager. "I have to have experiences that challenge me plus I have to have the ability to learn from them if I am going to develop. Is that it?"

"Not exactly," the sage replied. "We don't learn or grow in a vacuum. Most of us are part of a larger group or organization. Sometimes we have the good fortune of receiving feedback and support for our growth; sometimes we don't. We need to get feedback from others and take the time to reflect on our experiences. Feedback and reflection allow us to assess how we are doing, what's working, and how we need to change. We also need acceptance, advice, and encouragement from others and support from our organizations if we expect to grow. We cannot simply do it all alone."

"Let me see if I understand. When I avail myself of challenging experiences, when I take seriously learning from those experiences, and when I get support and feedback from key people in my company, I can learn the important leadership lessons I need. Right?"

"Right," declared the sage. "As far as it goes. But there is still the question of what develops in leadership development."

"What do you mean?"

"There are some things that are developmental and things that appear to be hardwired and innate. IQ, for example and certain personality characteristics appear to be set by the time we are adults, remain consistent over time, and provide some limits to our development. But there are certain skills and capacities that can be developed."

"It all seems so complicated," the manager replied.

"It is a bit complicated. Being stretched and challenged is not easy. Diversity and adversity are keys to growth, and both challenge us. None of us likes to operate out of our comfort zone. And it takes time. Years, in fact. And a lot of pieces have to fit together: challenging experiences, organizational support, individual readiness. We used to think it was easier, that single events were developmental – a single event of training for example. But that understanding was inadequate. Development happens over time as part of a process or a system. There is still a lot we don't know about how leaders develop. But we have learned a lot and we are learning more all the time. And the good news is that we can learn and grow and change."

"Thanks," said the young manager. "Thanks for your time and your insights. I think I understand. Given all that you've said, it's becoming clear that I must understand development in a longer time frame, requiring several elements to support it and having different outcomes in different contexts."

"I do think you understand," said the sage. "Good luck on your journey."

Leadership development is comprised of many people, elements, conditions, commitments converging, diverging, and re-converging over time. It is not an event, but a process, a journey. The terms "process" and "journey" have repeatedly – to the point of overuse – been used to describe long-term meaningful and lasting learning events. In spite of overuse of the terms, the transition from theory into practice is less apparent. The "quick-fix," "in and out" workshop is no longer a viable avenue for effective leadership development programs. Effective leadership development, leadership processes, and leadership journeys require reflection, and in a fast-paced world filled with noise and interruptions of all kinds, little time is given to meaningful and quality reflection, and if there is time taken for critical reflection, what is the frequency or quantity of the reflection?

McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) from the Centre for Creative Leadership (CCL) defined leadership development "as the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. Leadership roles and processes are those that enable groups of people to work together in productive and meaningful ways" (p. 4). CCL's leadership development definition encompasses the awareness of one's individual capacity, the ability and effectiveness of one to be accomplished in a variety of leadership roles and capacities, and the ability to expand leadership capacities. For CCL, awareness, capacity, and learning are the keys to successful leadership development. Further, in CCL's perspective, leaders should recognize and capitalize on developmental experiences. As the sage warned, we do not

learn from all experiences. A leader should discern, reflect upon, and then take advantage of valuable learning experiences.

According to CCL (McCauley, Moxley, & Van Veslor, 1998), learning experiences that enable leadership development are comprised of individual and collective assessments, challenges, and support for growth. Assessment data provides the individual with feedback and, inevitably, understanding on how well they are currently performing. Questions such as: "*What am I doing well? Where do we need to improve? What are others' view of me? How do my behaviours impact others? How am I doing relative to my goals? What is important to me?*" (p. 9) are answered. The assessment process takes the individual from the inside-looking-out to an outside-looking-in situation. Its value is found in the "unfreezing of one's current understanding of self, to facilitate movement toward a broader and more complex understanding" (p. 10). Feedback, critical self-reflection, and capitalizing on a learning opportunity are the basis of assessment data. With exercises that promote these practices, an individual develops a benchmark for future development.

Assessment can be both formal and informal. CCL (McCauley, Moxley, & Van Veslor, 1998) cite formal assessments to include "performance appraisals, customer evaluations, 360-degree feedback, organizational surveys that measure employee satisfaction with managers, and assessments and recommendations from consultants" (p. 10) whereas informal assessments are less structured and may include "asking a colleague for feedback, observing others' reactions to one's ideas or actions, being repeatedly sought out to help with certain kinds of problems, or getting unsolicited feedback from the boss" (p. 10). Psychological inventories, journaling, the monitoring

of internal states, reflection on decision processes, and the analysis of mistakes are examples of self-assessment exercises. Openness to constructive criticism, willingness to improve, and honesty are prerequisites to the assessment process.

Challenge is another integral element of the leadership development process. Challenge entails moving out of one's comfort zone. McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) warned, "As long as conditions don't change, people feel no need to move beyond their comfort zone to develop new strengths.… comfort is truly the enemy of growth and continued effectiveness" (p. 11). Choice is the deciding factor in challenge. One must choose to step out of the familiar, choose to expand or develop new capacities and abilities, choose to move one's whole being into a situation of greater growth by impending success or failure, choose to take time to reflect and communicate meaningfully with key people, choose to step into the unknown, or choose to remain stagnant and unfamiliar with the person that one could become.

Challenge, like assessment, has to be purposefully embedded in an organization. McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) explained:

> The element of challenge serves the dual purpose of motivating development and providing the opportunity to develop. Challenging situations motivate by capitalizing on one's own need for mastery. So long as the outcomes of the situation matter to people, they are motivated to work toward successfully meeting the challenge. This means becoming competent in new situations, achieving difficult goals, managing conflicts, and easing the pain of failure. Mastering challenges requires putting energy into developing skills and abilities, understanding complex situations, and reshaping how one thinks. (p. 14)

In terms of the challenge of leadership, the authors declared:

> People don't develop the capacity for leadership without being in the throes of the challenge of leadership. Participating in leadership roles and processes is often the very source of the challenges needed for leadership development. Leadership roles and processes are full of novelty, conflict, and

> disappointments. In other words, leadership itself is a challenge that is developmental. Leading is, in and of itself, learning by doing. (p. 14)

In other words, potential leaders have to be given leadership responsibilities if they are to develop leadership capacity and to grow as leaders. Knowledge without experience, theory without practice, is not effective and is somewhat meaningless. The leadership development program that CCL supports and implements is a process that incorporates elements of the challenge of experience, leadership theory, critical reflection, assessment data, and support. The program is not an event, but is available throughout the career of aspiring and experienced leaders. Overall, leadership challenge is essentially valuing difficult situations and viewing them as potential learning opportunities.

Providing support for people in various leadership roles in organizations will cultivate motivation, a sense of self-efficacy, and purpose. McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) believed that "support also serves as a social cue that puts a positive valence on where people are currently and on the direction in which they are moving. They sense, 'If other people support me in doing this, it must be valuable to do' " (p. 16). Establishing support mechanisms such as a mentors' program or cross-group sharing provide people with an available leader whose prime role is to listen, to affirm, and to share his/her experience and knowledge. Learning and growing is the goal of organizational support programs. Again, support mechanisms should be mandated if they are to flourish and be effective.

McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor (1998) criticized organizations who perceive leadership development as an event and who do not take a systemic view. Leadership development should be on-going, the foundation should be personal

development, and this is "never complete" (p. 25). Training, education, and multi-rated feedback components such as a 360-degree assessment tool are only parts of a whole and should be used as interconnected, critical pieces of a greater whole.

There are essentially two components to the CCL (McCauley, Moxley, & Van Veslor, 1998) developmental model – developmental experiences and the developmental process. The leadership developmental process brings together a variety of developmental experiences and the ability to learn from these experiences. The ability to learn from experience is an individual ability and personal response. McCauley, Moxley, and Van Veslor elaborated: "The ability to learn is a complex combination of motivational factors, personality factors, and learning tactics" (p. 7). The authors explained, "Developmental experiences and the ability to learn have a direct impact on each other. Being engaged in a developmental experience can enhance a person's ability to learn, and being able to learn can lead to experiences that are more developmental" (p. 7). Practice in the examination of mistakes, constructive feedback measures, and support from colleagues are important developmental experiences. Flexibility and the desire and need to learn from expected and unexpected developmental experiences contribute to the success of the on-going leadership developmental process. The authors surmised:

> Any leadership development process is embedded in a particular organizational context: the organization's business strategy, its culture, and the various systems and processes within the organization. This context shapes the leadership development process – how it is focused, how well-integrated and systemic it is, and who is responsible for it." (p. 8)

This quote stresses the importance of actively and purposely incorporating leadership development into an organization's planning, policies, value system, and culture.

Repeatedly, leadership authors have identified the importance of effective and efficient leadership (Collins, 2001; Ellsworth, 2002; Fairholm, 1991; Fullan, 2001; Heifetz & Linsky; 2002; Heifetz, 1994; Maxwell, 1998). As a result, leadership development has become an ever-increasing function and element of an organization bent on succeeding in the long run. With the increasing importance of leaders and leadership development come a host of questions. Fulmer and Goldsmith (2001) voiced some of the questions that arose:

> How do the exemplary organizations select and groom their leaders? What are the processes that transform managers into leaders – leaders who can make the decisions and set the strategies that will be victorious in the arena in which there are no second chances? Which are the companies that are designing, managing, and delivering world-class leadership programs today? (p. 3)

In today's world, leadership development has gained prominence and has been viewed as the key to success for many emerging and successful organizations (e.g. General Electric, Motorola, Abbott Laboratories, Barclays Global Investors, as cited in Boshyk, 2002). It has demanded commitment in the form of money, thought, time, and energy. Successful leadership development, as with a successful organization, challenges groups to function "on the edge." This concept resonates with chaos and complexity theory. From this vantage point, groups can continually analyse experience and existing data to better determine and anticipate the future. In this scenario, there is no place for complacency and prolonged comfort but anticipation and exhilaration from perpetual discovery.

Over time, like everything in our world, leadership development has changed and evolved according to the needs of society. Fulmer and Goldsmith (2001) posited:

> Today's leadership development programs are designed to provide participants with a variety of experiences that broaden their perspectives, skills, flexibility,

> and overall effectiveness. Included are experiences that enhance understanding, respect, and value for cultural differences; that foster greater creativity and help leaders think "out of the box," create a broader, more systemic view of organizations and their issues, and explore non-traditional approaches to problem-solving. Some programs incorporate physical challenges that foster risk-taking, require decisions and actions in unpredictable and ambiguous situations, and force mutual interdependence and shifts in roles and responsibilities. Debriefing of all these experiences, discussions, and lessons is extensive. Executives must identify what they have learned and what insights those learnings have provided. (pp. 3-4)

Leadership development has changed along with the idea and expression of leadership. Leadership is increasingly perceived as involving many people with differing yet equally important roles and responsibilities. Success of the organization depends on the degree of interconnectedness. In other words, the organization is no longer fragmented and managed in a top-down fashion, but learning, communication, and collaboration in lateral management is greatly encouraged and increasingly practiced. The aforementioned geese metaphor captures this form of leadership. Geese in flight form a "V" to create a draft that makes flight over long distances more manageable. Geese also take turns taking the lead role since those in the front do more work and exert more energy. In essence, leadership is shared and the load is equally distributed. A lot can be learned from the art and science of nature. Effective leadership involves effective communication and interaction with members of the organization. Over time, there has been a significant shift from top-down interaction to lateral interaction.

Leadership development programs have to incorporate exercises that involve internal examination. This comes with the understanding that one's tacit and espoused values and belief system influence one's behaviour. Fulmer and Goldman (2001) continued to outline the new role of leadership development:

> There may be a need to unlearn some assumptions, beliefs, and conclusions that underpin the leader's current behaviour. It is only when a leader realizes that these paradigms are barriers that he or she can begin to acquire the knowledge and experience that will lead to new beliefs and conclusions and ultimately to new, more productive behaviours. (p. 4)

Leadership development has gradually embraced the idea that solid leadership begins with an internal review of one's values and belief systems.

An internal examination of one's tacit knowledge and the origins of values and belief is an essential beginning in leadership development. These values and beliefs directly influence individual behaviour which will eventually influence organizational culture in a negative or positive manner. The fragmentation or disassociation of inner and outer self, emotions from behaviour, and individual needs from production are being replaced with an understanding and increasing acceptance of the fact that there is a profound and undeniable connection between our internal and external being.

The education and development of leaders are becoming an interest to all the stakeholders of an organization as leaders, draped in varying roles and responsibilities, are inherent at many organizational levels. These leaders desire strategies, skills, and knowledge that are practical and can be implemented immediately. Fulmer and Goldsmith (2001) stated:

> There is a growing demand that executive education should result in immediate actions that leaders can take to improve company performance. To accomplish this, corporate representatives are far more active in the education of their leaders. (p. 4)

To experience success, leadership development should be a process rather than an event, and learning should be its foundation. In many cases, individual and organizational learning have been the keys to individual and organizational success. Fulmer and Goldsmith (2001) believed that "learning is the only source of sustainable

competitive advantage" (p. 2). Learning leads to awareness, to understanding, and to the equipping of leaders. Increasingly, because of the rapid change that our world is experiencing, individuals, leaders, and organizations have to learn and understand the change process.

Leadership development programs should be unique to an organization. Each organization – educational, health or business – is characterized by a unique set of circumstances, people, and environments. Fulmer and Goldsmith (2001) contended:

> If the leadership development process is to be an effective part of the change process, it must be aligned with all the strategic objectives of the organization. Successful leadership development initiatives have gone to great lengths to understand and help implement overall corporate strategy. Only by aligning with corporate strategy will new leaders be prepared to meet new business challenges and market constraints. (p. 8)

It is unrealistic to develop and implement one leadership development program that would be successful for every organization.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1. The conceptual framework is an interpretive summarization of the leadership and leadership development literature that was explored for this study. As depicted in the diagram, leadership (L) begins with the individual (I), and leadership development (LD) is a comprised of formal and informal learning opportunities that are deliberately sought or are serendipitous in nature. The diagram acknowledges the inextricable interconnectedness and fluidness of the concepts being investigated. It is analogous to a live microscopic cell. Cells are in constant motion, they have a definite shell, and inside that shell are the elements that constitute the overall unit. The strength and health of the

cell is determined by the quality of the connections or relationships between the elements within the unit and the ability to maintain both internal and external awareness. It is an example of science and art in union.

Leadership is a process that is experienced, shared, and somewhat distributed between individuals in a community or an organization and takes advantage of individuals' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the community. In this context, leadership is flexible and receptive to adaptation as it strategically moves between individual leaders and community members. For individual and organizational survival, the goal is to shift from weakened to stronger positions. Basically, leadership is as much an individual as it is a community process.

Leadership development is an important component if personal and community growth is to occur; it too strengthens or weakens the structure. Leadership development involves a lifelong commitment to learning about one's internal and external environment. An understanding of one's collective history, of one's cultural values and beliefs systems, and the unveiling of tactic knowledge that inevitably influence perceptions and behaviour, will strengthen leadership as will an awareness of past, present, and future external or environmental circumstances. Because it involves self-knowledge and understanding of personal values, beliefs, and history, leadership is a 'heart' issue and process – it comes from within. Deliberate, active, continuous leadership development, formal and informal, determines leadership growth, capacity, and effectiveness. The conceptual framework has evolved as the literature review progressed, and once developed, has guided the study.

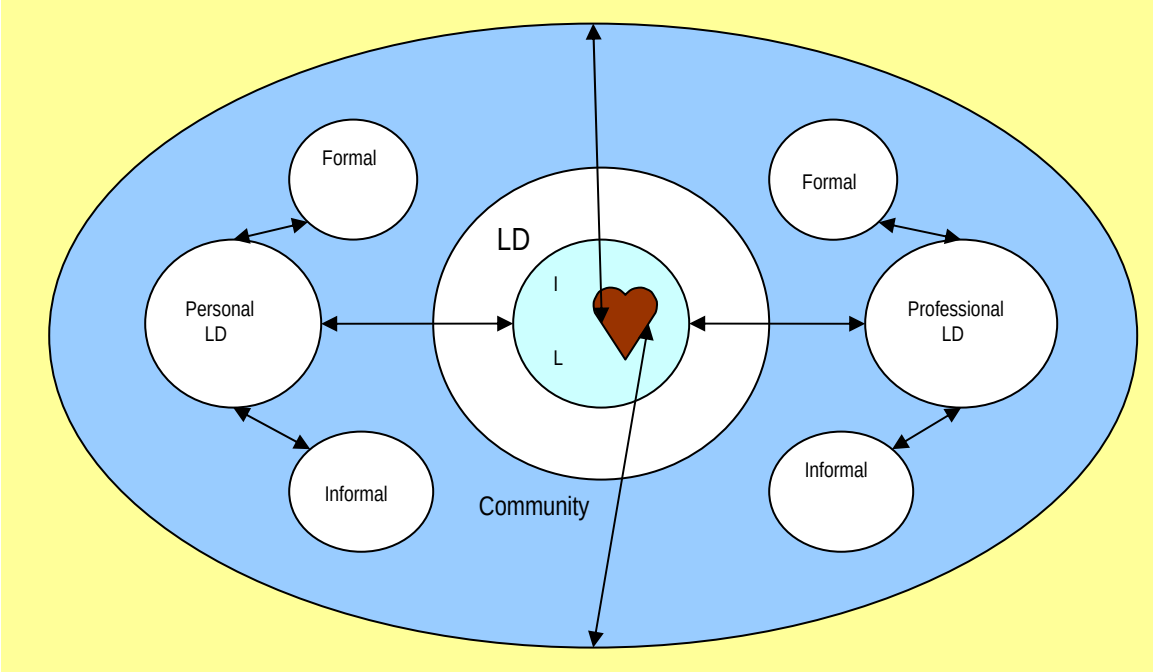

***Figure 1*: Leadership Development Conceptual Framework**

Conclusion

Like most explorations, the exploration of leadership literature has not been altogether predictable. There have been many necessary detours. These detours added dimension to leadership and leadership development philosophies and I took them because they were in one way or another connected to the First Nations experience. Because of the limited amount of literature on indigenous leadership, I began with a general search on leadership and leadership development. During this investigation, I encountered literature on change, trust, adaptation, the knowledge economy, learning communities, action learning, culture, organizational, critical, chaos and complexity theories. This literature study confirmed that leadership cannot be contained or isolated from all the aforementioned concepts, but it is in relationship with all of them. I also

concluded that if I continued (and I will) the search I would discover more detours because leadership and leadership development is as old and as complex as humanity.

CHAPTER THREE

Culture and Organizational Background

This chapter provides a brief overview of First Nations worldview because it directly and indirectly influences First Nations people and their organizations on many levels. Next, historical First Nations leadership is presented before proceeding on to the impact that the Indian Act had on First Nations governance and leadership. After providing the historical cultural and political information, contextual information on the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nation's (FSIN) historical roots, and current organizational structure and goals is provided.

First Nations Philosophy and Worldview

At this time it would be appropriate to provide an overview of First Nations worldview and philosophy because it influences and frames First Nations epistemology and ontology. It also identifies and defines my positionality as the researcher. First Nations people are diverse in languages, customs, traditions, worldviews, and location. However, similarities in beliefs, values, worldview, and philosophies unite First Nations people throughout North America.

Most First Nations people believe that all of creation, seen and unseen, is interconnected. Essentially, all things are seen as related, and there is a personal connection and relationship to all things. Because things are connected and interconnected there is significance to everything large and small. Chief Seattle (as cited in Jeffers, 1991) said, "This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it. Whatever we

do to the web, we do to ourselves" (p. 20). Consequently, harmony is continually sought and all of creation is valued and essentially revered because of the inextricable interconnectedness of our universe. There is a belief that even the slightest event, action, or thought may have tremendous repercussions. In this respect, First Nations philosophy and chaos theory are interestingly similar.

Cajete (1999) used the term "Native science" to encompass First Nations philosophy and worldview. He cited the following characteristics of Native science: Native science integrates a spiritual orientation; dynamic multidimensional harmony is a perpetual state of the universe; humanity has an important role in the perpetuation of the natural process of the world; every "thing" is animate and has spirit; the history of relationship must be respected with regard to places, plants, animals, and natural phenomena; there are basic relationships, patterns, and cycles in the world that need to be understood; and acting in the world must be sanctioned through ritual and ceremony (pp. 64-65). On a similar note, Leroy Little Bear commented, "Aboriginal philosophy is being holistic and cyclical or repetitive, generalist, process-oriented, and firmly grounded in a particular place (2002, p. 78)." The relationship between the cosmos and the world is essential to life.

The Lakota Medicine Wheel teaches emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual balance. On the Medicine Wheel, the *North* represents wisdom and provides strength and endurance; the *East* represents knowledge and provides peace and light; the *South* represents innocence and provides warmth; and the *West* represents introspection and provides rain (Saskatchewan Health Education, Medical Services Branch, 1986). Reflection and intentional behaviour are embedded in the Medicine

Wheel. The Medicine Wheel is a powerful tool that can be used in multiple settings, including organizational structure and organizational learning. The elements of wisdom, knowledge, innocence, and introspection found in the Medicine Wheel are essential for individual and organizational health and growth.

Increasingly, First Nations organizations are implementing First Nations values and beliefs as organizational foundations. For example, *Practising the Law of Circular Interaction* (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations [FSIN], 1990) is a First Nations environmental and conservation manual that is based on six fundamental principles of Saskatchewan First Nations (Saulteaux, Cree, Dene, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and Assiniboine). According to the authors, the six principles are: 1) Mother earth is a living and viable entity; 2) First Nations values and nature are revered; 3) All life forms are interrelated; 4) First Nations believe in the stewardship of mother earth; 5) First Nations interact culturally and socially with plant and animal life; 6) The future of mother earth and mankind are connected. The First Nations principles encourage a holistic, multidimensional approach to and foster sensitive awareness of creation.

If creation is interconnected then reciprocity has a natural and important role in the holistic design of our surroundings. Cajete (1999) believed that "celebration of renewal and understanding relationships and responsibilities where reciprocity is of great importance" (p. 80) is essential for individual, community, and societal health. In the four seasons, as emphasized in the Medicine Wheel, there is vitality of life, maturity, death, and renewal. Cajete encouraged North American society along with individual organizations to move from the state of death, out of the cold, into a state of renewed relationships. Since European contact, First Nations people have attempted to

establish and maintain a relationship based on equality and respect with the "newcomers," the federal and provincial governments (Miller, 2000). Further, Cajete discovered that "there is no word for education, or science, or art in most Indigenous languages. 'Coming to know' is the best translation for education in most Native traditions. 'Coming to know' is a process that happens in many ways" (p. 78). The goal of my research is 'coming to know' First Nations leadership development.

Historical First Nations Leadership

Traditionally First Nations leaders were not elected but "emerged from natural order and laws of nature as people who attracted followers" and traditional selection criteria (Irwin, 1992, p. 10). Malloch believed that "leaders emerged from among those who demonstrated exceptional skill and understanding grounded in their experience of life and the natural order" (as cited in Irwin, p. 10). Manuel and Posluns (1974) emphasized the importance of language and leadership entailing both the worldly and spiritual realm of existence:

> It is the people who make or break a leader. If he is giving voice to their souls they endow him with that status; if he fails to speak their minds he is forced out; if he encircles the people with confused zeal by running after every concern but their own, he may be tolerated but never respected or admired. (p. 10)

Manuel and Posluns (1974) stressed that "a leader who stands no taller than the rest of his people stands in the centre of a circle and speaks the voice of the minds and souls he hears around him" (p. 10). Because of the all-encompassing influence, ability, role, and responsibilities of traditional leaders, Deloria and Lytle (as cited in Jules, 1999) noted, "Many non-Indians concluded that chiefs had some mystical, but absolute power over other members of the tribe" (p. 10). It is evident that traditional First Nations leadership

required the leader to be aware of the visible and invisible forces, the earth and the cosmos.

Begay (1997) discovered that culture and language greatly influence leadership. From his study, one can surmise that because of the diversity that language and traditions create amongst First Nations people throughout North America, First Nations leadership practices cannot be easily generalized. Begay compiled the titles used for leadership and their translation in relation to leadership roles and responsibilities from 15 different tribes. The findings presented different perspectives of leadership. The leadership roles and expectations ranged from (and can be compared to) authoritative, to transformational, to servant leadership. For instance, the Apache title for leader is *Nantan,* which is translated to *somebody who is boss, or somebody who tells you what to do.* Begay noted that it is important for the Apache leader to have the proper knowledge and traits to lead and oversee the people during particular activities such as hunting. Cornell and Kalt, (as cited in Begay, 1997) added that an Apache leader should be "convincing – able to exercise charismatic attraction – and to exhibit intelligence" (p. 44). Oratorical ability was, and still is, valued among the Apache people.

Naataani is the Navajo word which means *planner* or *thinking with them*. The Navajo people believed that leaders are endowed with four gifts specific to leadership. These included: 1) lightning located in the left hand, representing authority, 2) winter thunder and light located in the palm of the right hand and tongue, representing honest speech, 3) sunlight located in the eyes, representing vision, and 4) rainbow, which

represents short and long-range planning (Begay, 1997). The definition also suggested collaborative, shared decision making.

The titles and definitions introduced by Begay (1997) offer insight into the values of each tribe; values which are then reflected by the leader. The translation of *Ogeechitda*, the Ojibwa word for leader, means the *head one*, while the translation of the Mojave word for leader, *Bebadahan*, is a *magical person*, a person of charisma, almost a God. The Cherokee translation of *Adagewudi* is *beloved one*. It is clear from these examples that the title given to First Nations leaders defines the role and expectations of leadership within their culture. Despite the differences in leadership roles, Begay (1997) managed to connect the definitions in the following five ways:

> First, Native meanings of leader do not necessarily imply the accumulation of wealth (property and goods). Rather, there is an emphasis on position and role. Second, Native leadership terminology implies a proactive approach with the use of terms like "to direct" and "leads the people." Third, a Native leader works with the people, rather than commanding or having power over them. Fourth, there is the recognition that leadership has male and female aspects. Fifth, the religious and spiritual aspects of leadership are important. (pp. 43-44)

Begay also noted:

> Cultural mandates are explicitly established through knowledge, skills, and abilities demanded of Native leaders. These leadership demands give insight into the tribe's political and social organization and institutional structure. And, since these definitions affect Native leadership identity, they have implications for how current Native leaders should be trained and suggested curriculum offerings. (p. 44)

Overall, culture and language play a major role in defining the expectations and roles of First Nations leadership, and since both culture and language have been significantly changed or, in some cases weakened, in the recent past with federally imposed legislation such as the Indian Act of 1876 (Government of Canada, 2003), historical First Nations leadership practices have too been changed to reflect the "foreign"

legislation. It is important not to generalize First Nations leadership; however, it would be beneficial for a leader to understand the differences and commonalities in leadership among various First Nations.

According to Begay (1997), along with knowledge and understanding of how language and culture influences leadership, First Nations leaders today should possess certain characteristics, and be aware of the content and context of leadership performance. The content of leadership performance refers to a leader advocacy of First Nations sovereignty and inherent rights. Overall, Begay concluded that a successful leader excels in the following nine areas: 1) advocating for Native sovereignty and rights, 2) having excellent communication skills, 3) establishing an effective and efficient system of tribal government operation, 4) maintaining integrity, 5) maintaining a reliable support network, 6) understanding and use of culture, 7) exhibiting admirable qualities of leadership, 8) being aware of the people, and 9) achieving development (p. 131). Begay strongly believed that leadership education in the area of characteristics, context and content is required to help First Nations leaders become more knowledgeable, effective, and efficient.

Cajete described historic Indigenous leadership as being "for the good of the people" and being intrinsically connected to the community (2000, p. 91). He wrote:

> Individuals become intimately conditioned to the nature of "right" or successful relationship, and the integrity of each individual as found in the complete expression of community. This understanding of relationships in tribal communities traditionally formed the foundation for the development of extraordinary leaders. In Indigenous communities, individuals rose to positions of leadership based on their service to the people. Indeed, to be of service to one's people was a major goal of every adult member of a tribe. (p. 90)

Cajete continued:

> Leadership in and of itself was never a goal of Indigenous education but rather a result of the way of living in community and striving toward being complete.… reciprocity, support, benefit, purpose, and vision … combined with an ingrained love for one's people and orientation to act for the good of the people formed the foundation for the expression and development of leaders. Leadership was a role that had to be earned and it was earned by achieving a level of integrity that was irreproachable. Ultimately, Indigenous leadership was about commitment to the nurturing of a healthy community and enriching the cultural tradition of one's own people. (p. 90)

Whatever the language connotation, according to Cajete (2000), historic Indigenous leadership was for and about the community. It was about a leader caring and loving the people in his or her community, and about leaders using their imaginations and creativity to gather and move the people "together to find their life" (p. 90).

The Indian Act

The Indian Act of 1876 (Government of Canada, 2003), which was legislated by the federal government of Canada, changed the lives of First Nations people because all-encompassing limitations and regulations were imposed. The British North America Act of 1867 stated that "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" (Isaac, 1995, p. 170) was the responsibility of the federal government. This broad statute led to the jurisdictional "administrative mechanism" (Carr-Stewart, 2003) called the Indian Act. The Indian Act begins with defining the federal government's responsibilities. For example, it defines "band" as a "body of Indians: a) for whose use and benefit in common, lands, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, have been set apart before, on or after September 4, 1951; b) for whose use and benefit in common, moneys are held by Her Majesty, or; c) declared by the Governor in Council to be a band for the purposes of this Act" (Government of Canada, 2003). An Indian is simply "a person

who pursuant to this Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian" (Government of Canada, 2003). With the implementation of the Indian Act, Canada's federal government literally became the guardians of the affairs of "Indians" in their entirety.

Historically First Nations governance and leadership was changed as a result of the Indian Act. In the beginning of the document, the "elector" is defined as a person who is "registered on a Band List, is of the full age of eighteen years, and is not disqualified from voting at band elections" (Government of Canada, 2003). Later, in Section 74 (1), the Act declared, "Whenever he deems it advisable for the good government of a band, the Minister may declare by order that after a day to be named therein the council of the band, consisting of a chief and councillors, shall be selected by elections to be held in accordance with this." Subsection (2) states, "Unless otherwise ordered by the Minister, the council of a band in respect of which an order has been made under the subsection (1) shall consist of one chief, and one councillor for every 100 members of the band, but the number of councillors shall not be less than two nor more than twelve and no band shall have more that one chief." Subsection 78 (1) limits chief and council terms to two years. The Act continued by describing the detailed nature of the election process and the powers of the chief and council in office. The Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003) was created without the involvement or consultation of First Nations people, hence, the foreign nature of the document for First Nations people.

It is clear that historical First Nations governance or leadership was not taken into consideration when The Indian Act was devised. The elections that were suddenly

held every two years in close-knit communities would have been a drastic change in First Nations communities that had hereditary Chiefs. The implementation of a foreign election system described in the Indian Act of 1876 would have contributed to the confusion and division that communities and families were experiencing because of the overwhelming changes of the time. The Indian Act continues to influence and regulate the life of First Nations people 128 years later, but change is in 'the air' as First Nations people are increasingly insisting on participating in the legislative decisions that determine their destiny.

First Nations Leadership

On a local, national, and international level, First Nations leadership is being recognized as a force with which to be reckoned (P 1, 1:121, 728). On the same note, this leadership is also being criticized and scrutinized; hence, it is important to understand and examine historical and current First Nations leadership, and, more specifically, the elements of effective First Nations leadership. For many reasons, First Nations people are increasingly demanding and expecting more from their leaders. Saskatchewan's First Nations people, through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People's hearings, indicated the following:

1) Leadership should return to being accountable to the people rather than to the Department of Indian Affairs. The means of accountability included establishing effective communication, trust, unity, and direction for the people.
2) A leader should have knowledge of, and actively strive for, self-government and should actively defend inherent and treaty rights.

3) Although First Nations leadership changed dramatically because of treaties, the *Indian Act*, and reserve creation, examples of positive leadership are frequently highlighted.
4) Leadership education, especially for the youth, is essential for strong, effective leadership in the future. (Ottmann, 2002, p. 109)

Saskatchewan's First Nations people expressed their desire for existing and future First Nations leaders to acquire leadership education. Historically, in most tribes, First Nations leaders were chosen, trained, and educated to lead. Consequently, these leaders had the support of their people on many levels. Today there is a desire for a community-oriented leader. This is a leader that would help to initiate and implement positive change that would result in sustained stability.

Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations History

The detailed history of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) organization along with the vision and goals can be found in the *2002 FSIN Annual Report* (FSIN, 2002), and the following is a summarization and interpretation of the information found in the public report.

FSIN's history actually began in Ontario after World War I (WWI). The treaties exempted First Nations people from becoming involved in Great Britain's conflicts. Nevertheless, when WWI erupted, many First Nations people enlisted. For many, the overseas service was the first experience beyond the strict control of the Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003); it was their first taste of freedom and equality, albeit in dire circumstances. Sadly, First Nations veterans returned from serving their country and commonwealth without veterans' benefits, without accolades, without celebration,

and without recognized honour. Instead, they returned to poverty and to the familiar but unwelcome restrictions of the Indian Act. The First Nations veterans' feelings of discontent about the decrepit state of First Nations living conditions increased and intensified after their return from overseas service. Consequently, First Nations politics evolved on a scale different from traditional First Nations politics.

After WWI, Lieutenant Fredrick Loft, a Mohawk from Ontario, addressed the Privy Council and the King of England about the problems with which First Nations people throughout Canada were faced on a daily basis. Loft was encouraged by the Privy Council and the king to organize his cause. As a result, in 1919 Loft established the Indian League of Canada, located in Ontario. After its constitution was approved, the first goal of the Indian League was to protect the rights of all First Nations people in Canada (FSIN, 2002).

In 1921, a Saskatchewan reserve, Thunderchild First Nation, hosted the Annual Congress of the Indian League of Canada (FSIN, 2002). One of the delegates in attendance was John Tootoosis of Poundmaker First Nation. The Annual Congress meeting stimulated political involvement and action among those First Nations people who attended. In 1929, under the leadership and persistence of John Tootoosis, the Indian League of Canada welcomed a regional Treaty 6 organization called the League of Indians of Western Canada. John Tootoosis became the first president. The goal of the first League of Indians of Western Canada was to address land and residential school issues. Ironically, 73 years later, these are still major concerns.

During this time, Pasqua, Piapot, and Muscowpetung First Nation bands in the Treaty Four area united to form an organization called Allied Bands (FSIN, 2002). The

organization's primary goal was to bring changes to the Soldier Settlement Act, which ensured land to all returning veterans, including First Nations veterans. However, the land that was allocated to the First Nations veterans came from existing reserve lands. In other words, they were being allocated land that already belonged to them and to their communities, and they were being forced to take land away from their people. The Allied Bands' mandate to change the Soldier Settlement Act soon became a larger, broader mandate of protecting treaty rights, lands, and resources, and improving education for First Nations people. The Allied Bands also joined forces with other Fort Qu'Appelle bands to form the Saskatchewan Treaty Protection Association which changed its name to Protective Association for Indians and Their Treaties in 1933.

In 1943, in addition to the existing First Nations organizations, a new Saskatchewan First Nations group emerged (FSIN, 2002). The Association of Saskatchewan Indians was started by Joe Dreaver. This association soon became the largest in Saskatchewan. Essentially, the goals and mandates of each organization were the same. Then in 1946, Saskatchewan Premier T. C. Douglas encouraged the First Nations organizations to amalgamate to form a single, stronger organization (FSIN, 2002). A meeting was held at Duck Lake to discuss the possible amalgamation. Later that year at a second meeting held in Saskatoon, the existing First Nations organizations joined forces to form the Union of Saskatchewan Indians. John Tootoosis was elected President and John Gambler was elected Vice-President.

The newly formed Union of Saskatchewan Indians identified six goals: 1) The protection of Treaties and Treaty Rights; 2) The fostering of progress in economic, educational, and social endeavours of First Nations people; 3) Co-operation with civil

and religious authorities; 4) Constructive criticism and thorough discussion on all matters; 5) The adherence to democratic procedure; and 6) The promotion of respect and tolerance for all people (FSIN, 2002). Two more name changes were in store for the Union of Saskatchewan Indians. In 1958, it became the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSI), and on April 16, 1982, FSI became the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN).

Since its inception, FSIN has changed its name many times; however, the organizational goals have changed very little. FSIN remains committed to protecting Saskatchewan treaties. Even though it is not stated, this goal could be likened to the FSIN vision statement. The FSIN 2002 Annual Report stated:

> Today, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) remains committed to the spirit and intent of the Treaties and to breathing life into the solemn Treaty promises that were made. First Nations continue to work toward a process that will give definitive legal effect to the Treaties in the hope this relationship will continue to serve as the foundation for an enduring and positive partnership with the Crown. (p. 75)

Since its conception, FSIN has gained momentum and strength. It has unified and served as the political voice of Saskatchewan First Nations for the past 44 years. Because of this, FSIN has been acclaimed as the strongest Aboriginal organization in Canada.

FSIN persistently continues to protect First Nations Treaties and inherent rights. Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 are located in Saskatchewan. The treaties are important to Saskatchewan First Nations because they represent a solemn union and agreement between two sovereign nations (FSIN, 2002). The treaties were sealed in the presence of the Creator. The Chiefs who agreed and signed the treaties took into consideration past ancestors, those present, and future generations. Apparently, the treaty Chiefs

knew their contribution would undoubtedly affect future generations. Reflection, prayer, and dialogue were essential to the process. Both past and present FSIN leadership believe that the treaty agreements signify First Nations sovereignty, and the implementation of the treaties will help in improving the economic and social health of First Nations people. FSIN, and many First Nations people, remain connected to the past because of the impact it has on the present and the future. The FSIN 2002 Annual Report declared:

> Many of the culture and traditions of First Nations people in Saskatchewan flow from the teachings and practices of our forefathers and Elders of today. Our forefathers entered into Treaties with the Crown with the intention of establishing mutually beneficial arrangements between the Crown and First Nations. The Chiefs and Headmen who negotiated the Treaties also had the wisdom and forethought to provide for our generation and those yet to come. (p. 75)

Essentially, the treaties would take the guardianship responsibility legislated in the Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003) from the federal government returning the responsibility for the future back on First Nations people. Using the treaties as their foundation, First Nations people have sought self-determination and self-government since the implementation of the Indian Act (1876). FSIN remains committed to the treaties. The treaties, along with First Nations worldview, form the foundation of this First Nations organization.

FSIN has worked hard in promoting and ensuring quality education. In 1972, the *Indian Control of Education* was implemented (FSIN, 2002). The policy paper replaced the residential school system with locally controlled band schools. To meet the unique educational needs of First Nations students, the FSIN established the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College (now called the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre), the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, the Saskatchewan Indian Equity

Foundation, and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies. Because of the emergence of educational organizations such as these, it is apparent that FSIN values education.

In October 19, 1982, FSIN signed a charter known as the Convention Act (FSIN, 2002). The Convention Act changed the FSIN from a non-profit organization to a "true federation." This change also gave the Chiefs control of the executive and administrative functions of First Nations government at the band, tribal council, and provincial level. The Convention Act also outlined the existing governing structure of FSIN. The principle structure of FSIN consisted of Chiefs-in-Assembly, a Senate, an Elders Council, an Executive, an Executive Council, and a First Nations Government Commission. Other components of the structure included: an Auditor General, a Treasury Board, and five Commissions; Lands and Resources, Economic and Community Development, Education and Training, Health and Social Development, and Justice.

Since 1983, FSIN has held regular Legislative Assembly meetings to collectively discuss issues with the Chiefs and the people they represent. Overall, as of 2004, FSIN represents 74 Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine, Dene, and Sioux (Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota) First Nations, 110 000 First Nations people, and is governed by Chiefs-in-Assembly (FSIN, 2004). Since 1958, FSIN has had 11 leaders (Alphonse Bird being the current Grand Chief). Four Vice-Chiefs are elected in staggered four-year terms. The Vice-Chiefs are responsible for specific portfolios. Although FSIN attempts to utilize First Nations philosophy and worldview, it has adopted Western bureaucracy and structure. FSIN is essentially structured as a hierarchy and functions

as a bureaucratic organization. Perhaps this was done to achieve federal and provincial acceptance and to implement a structure that is currently rather than historically familiar.

Recently, FSIN has gained provincial and national recognition and concern due to Saskatchewan First Nations rapid increase in population. In *Saskatchewan and Aboriginal Peoples in the 21st Century: Social, Economic and Political Changes and Challenges* (FSIN, 1997), FSIN reported, on a national level, "The estimated national increase, in partner with changes in fertility and mortality rates, is projected to produce by 2015 an increase of 379,000 over the current 500,000 registered Indian population" (p. 10). Saskatchewan First Nations population is rising faster than any other First Nations population in Canada. The FSIN report continued:

> More than growing numbers explain the anxiety these projections raise among the Indian population. Even if it were just a question of numbers, that would be problem enough. How does a minority get its concerns addressed? Where all things are equal, the minority might act (or attempt to act) as a bloc in voting, or more generally in giving its support. The history of Canadian federalism provides examples enough to illustrate this strategy. But with regard to Canada's First Nations population, all things most definitely are not equal. Discrimination, dependency and deprivation have produced a politically passive Indian population that requires leadership if the concerns of the minority are to be addressed through political pressure. (pp. 10-11)

The extreme increase in First Nations population has brought public attention to the leadership of FSIN and to the social and economic problems of Saskatchewan First Nations.

A collective awareness regarding First Nations people - their history, treaties, social and economic situation – has been awakened because of the decreasing general population and increasing First Nations populations. A majority of First Nations people

live in poverty. In Saskatoon and in Regina, 60% of First Nations people live in poverty (Saskatoon Communities for Children and Community – University Institute for Social Research, 2000 – 2001); the situation is worse in First Nations reserves. Providing economic opportunities and getting First Nations people involved in the business sector seems to be a general goal of FSIN and the province of Saskatchewan. Former Grand Chief of FSIN (1994-1998), Blaine Favel (1997) commented:

> As First Nations leaders, we want to begin to tackle the issue of the economic gap, to create meaningful and long-term employment for Aboriginal people; and address the need for fuller participation in the political and other institutions of this province and the federal government. These are challenging goals and we will not achieve them alone. (p. 144)

FSIN is open to establishing partnerships with the provincial and federal governments and the business sector in order to build a strong, healthy, united future. Former Chief Favel concluded the 1997 Report (FSIN, 1997) by identifying the following four challenges for FSIN and their partners: 1) Developing First Nations business, employment, and education strategies as they relate to the corporate sector; 2) Developing First Nations business, employment, and education strategies as they relate to government partners; 3) Developing First Nations employment and education strategies as they relate to organized labour; and 4) Improving training and education opportunities for First Nations (pp. 144-145). As in times of first contact between First Nations governments and European governments, people will have to work together as partners in order to peacefully co-exist (Miller, 2000). FSIN is in a position to bridge the gap between First Nations people and the dominant society.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations is a young organization. FSIN was created by leaders who had a vision for a better future for First Nations people.

FSIN was created by First Nations leaders who had knowledge and experience of historical First Nations governance protocol and process. In a chaotic situation, these First Nations leaders had to put the characteristics of complexity theory into practice. They had to exercise adaptability, cohesiveness, be self-organizing, and gain wisdom of the new and ever-changing environment. For First Nations people, life changed quickly and under unpleasant circumstances. As a result, past and present First Nations leaders have had to acquire knowledge and experience in a foreign way of structuring and operating a political organization. FSIN has exhibited the characteristics of a complex adaptive organization.

FSIN's organizational structure is hierarchical rather than lateral (FSIN, 2002). Perhaps this organizational structure was designed to gain recognition and credibility from mainstream organizations, and from the provincial and federal governments. Perhaps it is the evidence of the federal government's sweeping and continual influence over First Nations organizations. FSIN has had to gain and prove its credibility and recognition from its people. In the beginning, FSIN assembly meetings were small and the provincial Chiefs did not take them seriously. Things have changed. The FSIN organization has gained local, provincial, national, and international recognition. The assembly meetings are now filled with the young and old alike (FSIN, 2005).

From the contact and discussions that I have had with FSIN leadership and other individuals within the organization, FSIN operates more as a lateral organization (P 3, 1:232, 1177). The Chiefs within the organization are increasingly expected to lead as servants of the people, much like historical First Nations leaders, and they are to do so with humility and honesty. More and more, FSIN Grand-Chief and Vice-Chiefs are

expected to make themselves accessible, to be transparent, and to be visible. My Master's (Ottmann, 2002) research findings indicated that Saskatchewan First Nations people desired the following from their leaders: accountability and commitment to the people; initiatives and behaviour that promote and establish unity, direction, and trust; effective and on-going communication; knowledge of and commitment to self-government; continued advocacy for inherent and treaty rights; and, sustained personal and professional development. Increasingly, the people and their leaders are gaining strength and momentum.

Through financial difficulties, accusations, dissent, and many struggles, FSIN continues to survive. To survive, it has had to evolve and learn as an organization. In the pursuit of justice it has attracted and gained the support and dedication of many "great" people. As an organization, FSIN has grown, self-organized, and changed according to the needs of the people it serves and with the times.

CHAPTER FOUR

Research and Design

Some time ago we finished a complex 1,000 piece puzzle. "We" consisted of my children, myself, my dad, and from time to time whoever felt compelled to contribute their time and patience. My dad spent hours hunched over the coffee table working on the puzzle. Sometimes he would be rewarded with one or two pieces for two hours of patience and concentration. He said that it was a tough puzzle, but he refused to give up on it. He also said that he looked forward to visiting so he could work on the puzzle. Unlike my dad, at times I would become so frustrated with the search that was involved with the puzzle that I would leave it for weeks at a time. The task would become too overwhelming and excruciatingly slow.

Piece by piece the puzzle fell into place, and after five months the puzzle was finally finished. To all our amazement, none of the pieces were lost over the five months the puzzle lay on the coffee table. It was moved from the coffee table more than once to another part of the house because the coffee table was needed. When the final piece was placed, we all sat back and looked at the puzzle with huge smiles. My dad shook his head and said, "Finally, it is finished!" I am sure we all felt a deep sense of satisfaction but also sadness that the process, the journey, was now complete – it was now over. I felt a tinge of sadness because the puzzle brought us together for a cause, and now the time had lapsed - the project was finished. I thought the completed puzzle scene looked beautiful in spite of all the lines. It sat on our coffee table for weeks. I would run my hand over the scene, marvelling at the feel and amazed at how the

beautiful picture finally came together. The dismantling of the puzzle was difficult, but it was necessary for the creation of something new.

The process of devising a methodology for my dissertation undertook a process similar to finishing a puzzle. I read all that I could on philosophies of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and method techniques. This task should have made things clearer, but it only added to the process more complex. I did not know how to piece together all the information, and I did not know if the information would fit together at all because I was drawn to bits and pieces from different paradigms and disciplines. Many times I felt overwhelmed and frustrated, but I knew that somehow the pieces would come together if I persisted, even if the process was tedious.

Research Design and Methodology

> To assert that something has method is to claim that there is an order, a regularity, obscure though it may be, which underlies an apparent disorder, thus rendering it meaningful. Method is the attribute which distinguishes research activity from mere observation and speculation.
>
> When adversaries argue about the nature of the world or the best approach to some particular human endeavour, we typically find ourselves evaluating their perspective claims by examining the methods they use to reach their conclusions. There are few subjects that generate as much passion among scientists as arguments over method. (Schulman, 1988, p. 3)

Shulman asserted that the method should fit the purpose of the research. Lather (1991, p. 7) identified four approaches to research: 1) a positivist frame through which to describe and predict behaviours, 2) an interpretive frame through which to understand meanings, 3) a critical theory frame through which to promote emancipation and empowerment, and 4) a deconstructionist frame through which to redefine concepts.

Research design involves a critical decision making process. The choice

begins with two legitimate paradigms of systematic inquiry: 1) a rationalistic paradigm which embraces logical-positivist views and deductive thinking, and 2) a naturalistic paradigm, which embraces phenomenological views and inductive thinking to seek knowledge and understanding of social and organizational phenomena (Owens, 1982). Ultimately, there is no one best method. The best method depends on the nature of one's research objectives, attributes of the phenomena under consideration, and the constraints of the situation (Palys, 1992, p. 368). However, it is of prime importance that the research perspective match the purposes of the research conducted (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lather, 1991; Shulman, 1998).

In this chapter the method and research orientation selected for this project is outlined. The design and the rules of rigour to which the study adhered are discussed. The research questions are presented and an overview of methods selected to help answer the questions is given. Qualitative research and qualitative interviewing methods are defined and elaborated. Next, data collection procedures and data analysis theory and techniques are presented. Lastly, ethical dimensions pertaining to this study are discussed.

The Purpose and the Question

The purpose of the study was to explore and ascertain the meaning of First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development using a qualititative design. The study will involve individual in-depth interviews with leaders from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) organization. The goal was to create a model of First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan by using the information gained from the literature, documents, and in-depth interviews. At this stage

of the research, First Nations leadership development will be limited to conceptual models used to execute First Nations leadership development programs in North America.

The guiding questions are:

1. What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs?
2. What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders?
3. According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?

The study, interviewing, and analysis, was qualitative and naturalistic in nature.

Naturalistic Orientation

Naturalistic research is situated within the naturalistic paradigm. "It is a postpositivistic inquiry that is based on the view that the 'real world' that we encounter 'out there' is such a dynamic system that all of the parts are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other parts" (Owens, 1982, p. 6). Further, "There are multiple realities ... Individuals are conceptualized as active agents in constructing and making sense of the realities they encounter" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 239). The real world is highly subjective and requires interpreting rather than measuring (Merriam, 1998). In this paradigm, the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable. Basic assumptions or beliefs underlying naturalistic research described by Lincoln and Guba and Owens included: (1) realities are multiple and constructed and therefore must be studied holistically; (2) there is an interactive relationship between the inquirer and the

object of study, each influencing the other; (3) the investigator strives to develop an idiographic body of knowledge from which to derive a hypothesis about the individual case; (4) entities reflect mutual simultaneous shaping; therefore, distinguishing between cause and effect is impossible; (5) inquiries are value-bound as influenced by the inquirer, by choice of research paradigm, by the substantive theory that frames the study, by the choice of methods, and by the values inherent in the social and conceptual context; (6) naturalistic study utilizes an inductive approach, that is, theory is "grounded" and emerges from the data; (7) qualitative methods are the methods of choice; and (8) research design is emergent rather than predetermined. Owens stated, "Naturalistic paradigm ... is essentially based upon inductive thinking and is associated with phenomenological views of 'knowing' and 'understanding' social and organizational phenomena" (p. 10).

The investigation of the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of the researcher is an important part of the research process. Ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises are altogether called a "paradigm" or an interpretive framework. Paradigms are a "basic set of beliefs that guides action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Because ontology, epistemology, and methodology are brought together under one umbrella, they should be interconnected and should invariably flow constructively and philosophically. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) believed:

> The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis). That is, the researcher collects empirical materials bearing on the question and then analyses and writes about them. (p. 18)

It becomes clear that methodology is only one aspect of a research process that is

complex, interconnected, and is designed, among other things, to flow philosophically.

Glesne (1999) posited, "The research methods you choose says something about your views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and your perspective on the nature of reality or ontology" (p. 4). "Ontology is the concern about whether the world exists, and if so, in what form.... Because we cannot experience the world directly (unfiltered through our senses), we will never know for sure what the world really is.... It is a matter of belief ..." (Potter, 1996, p. 36). The ontological assumption for naturalistic inquiry is that there are multiple realities and truths that are individually constructed. Glesne commented, "To understand the nature of constructed realities, qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions. The researchers seek out the variety of perspectives; they do not try to reduce the multiple perspectives into a norm" (p. 5).

Epistemology seeks to understand the relationship between the researcher and the known. Walker and Evers (1999) explained, "Epistemology is the study of the nature, scope, and applicability of knowledge" (p. 40). Basically, epistemology examines "ways of knowing." The epistemological assumptions underlying naturalistic inquiry is that values influence any investigation and there is an emphasis on creating rather than discovering. Lastly, the methodology seeks to understand how one knows the world or gains knowledge of it (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Naturalistic methodology is characteristic of a design that is emerging, sampling that is purposeful, and analysis that is inductive (e.g., hermeneutical, phenomenological, and structuralist methods).

The researcher's values and beliefs influence every aspect of the research process. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) contended that the researcher speaks from a particular gender, class, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective (p. 18). Denzin and Lincoln stated, "Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community that configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act" (p. 18). Wolcott (1994) added:

> Good bias not only helps us get our work done; by lending focus, it is essential to the performance of any research. In the total absence of bias a researcher would be unable even to leave the office to set off in the direction of a potential research site. Bad bias then is a matter of excess, like bad air crowding out good. In the case of qualitative research, bias becomes excessive to whatever extent it exerts undue influence on the consequences of inquiry. In the extreme, conclusions may be foreordained without investigations of any kind ... bias should stimulate inquiry without interfering in the investigation. That surely requires art. The critical step is to understand that bias itself is not the problem. One's purposes and assumptions need to be made explicit and used judiciously to give meaning and focus to the study. (p. 165)

My background, beliefs, and values on the topic were revealed in the attempt to identify and contain my 'positionality' as researcher and author. I conducted this study from an emit (insider) perspective because, like the participants, I am a First Nations person originally from Saskatchewan and I have an understanding of, and personal and professional interest in, Saskatchewan First Nations organizations and Aboriginal history. Finally, a journal was kept to record ideas, feelings, and thoughts on the progression of the study.

First Nations Voice

Aboriginal "voice" and perspective were generally lacking in research on First Nations people prior to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), which was completed in 1994. Hamelin, one of the researchers from RCAP commented, "The

result of separate development and lack of dialogue has been the creation of political and economic systems that ignore concepts inherent in Aboriginal cultures" (Government of Canada, 1997, p. 35). Stevenson, on the other hand, pointed out "the imbalance in power that existed between the two and the willful imposition of non-Aboriginal discourse in colonial relationships, which continue to shape behaviour even when the overt symbols of oppression have been removed" (p. 35). Brant, Castellano, and Hawkes (Government of Canada, 1997) believed that despite recent efforts to correct Native history, "the motivations, perceptions, societal relations and adaptations to change as defined by Aboriginal people themselves" (p. 36) have been overlooked. The Commission made it a priority to give "voice" to First Nations peoples by seeking out their opinions, knowledge, and expertise on First Nations affairs. This study hopes to do the same.

Another theme that occurred throughout the RCAP hearings was the "necessity of parallel development" (Government of Canada, 1997, p. 36) between cultures. Hamelin explained the concept:

> There is symbolism in the train that enhances its value – added by using two rails that are independent yet associated for the task. Writers will think of independent canoes moving along the same body of water without colliding. Still others will envision a dog sled team on the tundra, each animal using its own track to jointly pull the sled. These metaphors imply that the mutual regime would include both independent and communal traits. (pp. 36-37)

Rather than "indigenize" the research, the Commission decided to utilize the idea of parallel cultures and development. The idea embraced co-existence and celebration of diversity rather than assimilation.

As aforementioned, this study is qualitative in nature. Although it is difficult to confine qualitative research to one definition because of its complexity, Denzin and

Lincoln (2000) presented a "generic" definition of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials ... that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p. 3)

My objective was to understand First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development in a holistic manner and from different perspectives. From this, I presented recommendations regarding First Nations leadership development once sufficient understanding and information had been obtained, compiled, and analysed.

Qualitative inquiry is adequate for a study of this type for numerous reasons. First, qualitative research methods tend to be "flexible, interactive, and continuous, rather than locked in stone" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 43). First Nations peoples transmit knowledge, values, and culture orally; therefore, a less structured manner of collecting data is conducive to the familiar First Nations means of sharing information. Further, as mentioned, First Nations people perceive their surroundings as a whole. Alasuutari (1995) believed that "in [qualitative analysis], the data are often considered as a totality; they are thought to shed light on a structure of a singular whole" (p. 11). Hence, in consideration of First Nation philosophy, a qualitative research process is sufficient for this study.

Research Design

The study was designed to be in harmony with the principles and characteristics of qualitative research. Elements of critical theory and praxis that are attributed to cultural studies can also be found throughout the study. Merriam (1998) asserted, "From a purist position, method and paradigm are inextricably linked" (p. 3). In other words, naturalistic methodology leads to naturalistic methods.

Morse (1994) believed that the credibility of research could be found in the truth that is extracted. Truth is achieved when unconcealment is achieved (p. 130). Morse referred to "Ricoeur's idea that truth of the text may be regarded as the world it unfolds. A phenomenological researcher can recognize that his or her description of interpretation is correct because the reflective process awakens an inner impulse" (p. 130). Validity has become a somewhat vague term due to the ongoing debate between quantitative and qualitative research. The definition and boundaries of validity have expanded in qualitative research. Nevertheless, it still has to be addressed in some manner in research studies. In this study, validity will be attained by, among other things, crosschecking with member checks and audit trails. The participants will be given the transcripts for verification and confirmation. The naturalistic approach will provide the study with rich, descriptive, and a generous amount of information required for the analysis of First Nations leadership development in Saskatchewan.

McMillan (2000) explained, "The participants … are selected because they have lived the experiences being investigated, are willing to share their thoughts about the experiences, and can articulate their conscience experiences" (p. 269). Denzin and

Lincoln (1998a) recommended six participants for a phenomenological study. These suggestions influence the size of the participant selection. FSIN represents the majority (74 First Nations) of First Nations reserves within Saskatchewan, and has many leaders within its organization. To meet the above suggestions, the study was limited to 10 leaders.

My role as the researcher was to facilitate the participants through the process. The study was done with the understanding that I as the researcher did impact and influence the study directly and indirectly through my previous experience, values, and beliefs. In other words, my "positionality" influenced the study in some manner. However, I attempted to limit the conscious influence of my values and beliefs through audit and member and committee checks. I agree with Newton's (2001) comment: "There are opportunities for abuse, but an ethical research facilitator stimulates, but does not impose beliefs." I proposed to take the role of 'ethical research facilitator'.

Participant Selection

"Criterion-based sampling requires that one establish the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the investigation: one then finds a sample that matches these criteria" (Merriam, 1998, p. 48). Criterion-based sampling, along with a combined strategy that synthesizes typical case selection and reputational-case selection, will be implemented. In typical case selection, "the researcher develops a profile of attributes possessed in an average case then seeks an instance in this case" (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984, p. 81). In reputational-case selection, experienced experts are called upon to recommend a sample (Goetz & Lecompte). For this study, a former FSIN chief of staff was asked to help in the selection of 10 leaders

that fit the criteria. Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003) suggested as well that chosen participants are well informed and knowledgeable (p. 238). The FSIN employee that I asked to help in selection has worked for FSIN for over 10 years. She is familiar with the organization and has worked for, and with, past and current FSIN leaders.

Site Selection

Merriam (1998) defined a case study as "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (p. xiv). The unit of study, in this instance, was the FSIN leadership development phenomena, which occurs within the organizational context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Literature and documents on First Nations leadership development was studied within a North American context, and First Nations leadership from the FSIN organization provided information on current First Nations leadership development in Saskatchewan. These leaders also contributed their understandings on prospective First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan.

Data Collection Techniques

Qualitative data is "a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 1). Thick description emerges from qualitative method which "conveys very much the web of interrelated contextual factors ... associated with the situation under study" (Owens, 1982, p. 295). The qualitative researcher should be a storyteller (Wolcott, 1994). "To be able to tell a story well is critical" (p. 17) in qualitative research and the story must be grounded in experience. Pitman and Maxwell (1992) believed that a qualitative study must include the following five components of data collection: writing extensive

notes, developing a regular procedure for rewriting and indexing, tracking and noting researcher bias, conducting early analysis, and using multiple sources of evidence.

Data collection techniques that are characteristic of qualitative research were employed in this study. Data from the participants was gained through two in-depth interviews (60 to 90 minutes long for each session). With participant's permission, each session was audio tape-recorded. To add to the verbal interview data, I also observed the participants during individual interviews, and I visited the work places of most of the participants. In addition, I examined documents related to the study, took field notes, and kept a reflective journal on the whole research process.

Qualitative Interviewing

In this study, from an epistemological perspective, qualitative interviewing and research is not based on the positivist philosophy of "objective quantifiable data, with the prediction and control of the behaviour of others as the goal" (Kvale, 1996, p. 11). Seidman (1998) posited:

> As a method of inquiry, interviewing is most consistent with people's ability to make meaning through language. It affirms the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration. Finally, it is deeply satisfying to researchers who are interested in others' stories. (p. 7)

Kvale noted that there is a shift in qualitative research that focuses more on obtaining an "understanding by means of conversations with the human beings understood" (p. 11). Basically, Kvale defined interviewing as "conversations that have a structure and a purpose" (p. 6). He elaborated by stating that "*inter view* is the interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest" (p. 14). Intense listening and careful questioning are important in this process. The researcher may be in

control by defining the situation, by choosing the topic and the questions. During the interview itself, open-ended questions and probing are used to entice meaning, clarity, and depth (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991).

The metaphors of a miner and of a traveller that Kvale (1996) used to describe interviewing are contrasting, appropriate, and vivid. The miner metaphor sees the interviewer as a person who unearths valuable, uncontaminated information that can then be used for the quantifying of "essential meaning" (p. 3). Knowledge of "pure experiences" (p. 3) is given to the interviewer providing the questions are not leading. On the other hand, the traveller metaphor sees the interviewer as a traveller on a journey in an unknown, foreign land. The traveller gains insight, knowledge, and familiarity with the land and the people through immersion and conversation. A goal of the researcher is to be depicted as both miner and traveller in a quest to unearth valuable information in an unknown land.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) listed specific approaches to hearing data. They included: topical oral histories, life histories, evaluation interviews, and focus groups. The topical oral history seeks to explain a particular historical event or era, usually through narration. Life histories are usually told through stories or narration. They deal with experiences and feelings during specific stages of life and time. Helling, Watson, and Frank (as cited in Rubin and Rubin) determined that life histories "interpret the past and make it acceptable, and important" (p. 27). Next, evaluation interviews examine projects or programs. Finally, focus group interviews consist of a group of people who discuss "changes of a shared impression" (p. 27). Elements from the interview approaches, with exception of a focus group, can be found in this study.

In-Depth Interviewing

I chose to implement in-depth interviewing as a method of data collection. Seidman (1998) stated that interviewing method combines life history interviewing and focused, in-depth interviewing informed by assumptions. The interview process began with open-ended questions. As the researcher, I was to be guided by the responses. The goal was to have the participants "reconstruct" their experience within the topic under study – leadership and leadership development. Within a cultural domain, Alasuutari (1995) recommended a humanistic method of interviewing. Specifically, he suggested the in-depth interview "in which interviewee and interviewer become 'peers' or 'companions'.... One wants to get to the internal truth, to break the 'happiness barrier'" (p. 52). Seidman elaborated:

> At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Being interested in others is the key to some of the basic assumptions underlying interviewing technique. It requires that we interviewers keep our egos in check ... At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth ... Schultz (1967) says that it is never possible to understand another perfectly, because to do so would mean that we had entered into the other's stream of consciousness and experienced what he or she had. If we could do that we would be that other person. (p. 3)

This statement encourages researchers to be active interviewers in the sense that Holstein and Gubruim (1995) argued, "All interviews are interpretively active, implicating meaning-making practices on the part of both interviewers and respondents" (p. 4). The intent was to be collaborative during the interview for the purpose of attaining meaning and understanding. However, there is an assumption in in-depth interviewing. Seidman contended, "A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the

way they carry out that experience" (p. 3). As the researcher, I assumed that the meaning the participants brought to First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development was based on their experience, and that they "live out" and defended this meaning on a daily basis through their interactions, actions and behaviour.

Interview Process

Seidman's (1998) series of interviews was employed in this study. Seidman recommended separate interviews that are approximately 60 to 90 minutes long, spaced three days to one week apart. Seidman also warned that interviewers stay away from conducting one interview as it places the interviewer on "thin contextual ice" (p. 11). The separation of the interviews allows the interviewer and participant to "plumb" the experience and to place it into context. The researcher and participant should set aside some time to reflect on and analyze interview sessions.

As previously mentioned, the study began with unstructured, open-ended interviews. Fontana and Frey (2000) stated, "Unstructured interviewing can provide a greater breadth of data than any other type, given its qualitative nature" (p. 652). The first session began with asking general semi-structured questions relating to the participant's personal and professional experience concerning First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development.

Although structured interviews are less flexible, offer little variation and deviation from the question, and the interviewer controls the pace and time allotted for the interview, they were used as the interview process progressed. As the interview proceeded and as themes emerged, the second interview became increasingly guided and

structured; specific questions related to First Nations leadership and leadership development were asked.

Each of the interviews had a purpose. Interview one established the context of the participants' experience. The questions were broad and focused on life history. In this study, I moved from broad to specific questions on knowledge of First Nations leadership history, along with personal and professional experience relating to First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development. Interview two allowed participants to reconstruct the details of their experience within the context in which it occured. At this point, I asked questions that were more structured and specific, but that allowed for flexibility and for the participant to direct the interview. Interview two also encouraged the participants to reflect on the meaning that their experience held for them.

Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of deriving meaning from the data collected during the study (Strauss, 1987). Seidel's (1998) qualitative data analysis approach to analyse the interviews was used in this study. Seidel's qualitative data analysis contains three elements that work together in a concentric relationship: noticing, collecting, and thinking about interesting things. Seidel cited the following characteristics that are specific to the qualitative data analysis process:

1) Iterative and Progressive: The process is iterative and progressive because it is a cycle that keeps repeating. In principle the process is an infinite spiral.
2) Recursive: The process is recursive because one part can call you back to a previous part.

> 3) Holographic: The process is holographic in that each step in the process contains the entire process. For example, when you first *notice* things you are already mentally *collecting* and *thinking* about those things. (p. 2)

Seidel's qualitative analysis process is analogous to piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. The pieces are there for the researcher to arrange into a picture, abstract, or realistic.

The first stage of data analysis acquaints the researcher with data. In the second stage (labelling and indexing), data will be inspected for patterns and themes. The goal will be to identify data categories. Again, data will be indexed, coded, and classified so that reflection on the research questions can be accomplished. Wolcott (1994) proposed 10 elements of data analysis: 1) highlight the findings; 2) display the findings; 3) follow and report "systematic" fieldwork; 4) flesh out whatever analytical framework guided the data collection; 5) identify patterned regularities in the data; 6) compare with another case; 7) evaluate; 8) contextualize in a broader analytical framework; 9) critique the research process; and 10) propose a design for the study (pp. 29-35). Janesick (2000) explained, "The purpose of these disciplined approaches to analysis is, of course, to describe and explain the essence of experience and meaning in participants' lives" (p. 391).

In this study, qualitative analysis was an inductive process. Analytic induction is a process conducive to qualitative research. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) defined analytic induction as "the process of inferring themes and patterns from an examination of data" (p. 753). Janesick suggested that Moustakis' approach of inductive analysis is a "helpful" process of analysis. Moustakis (as cited in Janesick, 2000) identified five

phases in inductive analysis:

> First, immersion in the setting starts the inductive process. Second, the incubation process allows for thinking, becoming aware of nuance and meaning in the setting, and capturing intuitive insights, to achieve understanding. Third, there is a phase of illumination that allows for expanding awareness. Fourth, and most understandably, is a phase of explication that includes description and explanation to capture the experience of individuals in the study. Finally, creative synthesis enables the researcher to synthesize and bring together as a whole the individual's story, including the meaning of the lived experience. These phases are similar to what the choreographer registers through the stages of preparation, exploration, and illumination. (p. 391)

The analysis process also requires a balance between interpretation and description (Patton, 1990). In addition, Janesick (2000) stressed, "Thick description makes thick interpretation" (p. 391), and "analysis and interpretation effectively balance description" (p. 391). The analysis process requires careful thought, reflection, examination, and time from the researcher in order to gain understanding and meaning that is respectful of and does justice to the participants who were open and honest enough to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns.

An integral aspect of qualitative analysis is coding. Ryan and Bernard (1998) stated, "Coding is the heart and soul of whole-text analysis" (p. 780). Coding is grouping the responses into categories of similar themes, concepts, or ideas. Coding requires that the words be examined in the context of categories. It "forces you to look at each detail, each quote, to see what it adds to your understanding" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 251). Coding also demands that the researcher judge the data (Ryan & Bernard, 1998, p. 780). The tasks that are associated with coding are "sampling, identifying themes, building codebooks, marking texts, constructing models (relationships among codes), and testing these models against empirical data" (p. 780).

Once the coding was complete, the information was compared and contrasted, and I

asked the following questions: “Are the concepts or themes related?” or “Can they be united under one theme?” At this point, it was my responsibility to redefine concepts and themes “and link them together to create a clear description or explanation of a culture or topic” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 251).

For the final report, I used the themes to explain the study clearly and meaningfully. Rubin and Rubin (1995) also recommended considering the implication of the findings. How does one’s results compare to and differ from other research findings and theories? Rubin and Rubin challenged researchers to ask, “So what?” before writing the final report. It is at this point I reflected on the importance and value of the data interpretation. After all, interpretation is the “threshold in thinking and writing at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analysis and begins to probe into what should be made of them” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 36). Effective and constructive recommendations, implications, and conclusions were extracted from the analysed, reflected, and interpreted data.

Establishing Validity - Trustworthiness

Validity refers to the degree of confidence that can be placed upon the findings of a study. The term “validity” has become somewhat vague since qualitative research has become more established within the research realm. Quantitative research has set long established criteria for determining validity. On the other hand, validity in qualitative research is determined by different, yet similar, means. Owens (1982) argued, “Because of the assumptions about the nature of reality and ways of understanding that reality in the naturalistic paradigm, the traditional concern for objectivity, validity, and reliability have little relevance for the design of naturalistic

research" (p. 10). Emerging criteria for quantitative research is essentially relational. This criteria recognizes and validates "relationships between the inquirer and those who participate in the inquiry" (Lincoln, 1995, p. 278). Community and "neighbourliness" characterizes relational criteria. Lincoln presented eight qualitative, relational criteria: 1) Standards for judging quality in the inquiry community, 2) Positionality, 3) Community as arbiter of quality, 4) Voice, 5) Critical subjectivity, 6) Reciprocity, 7) Sacredness, and 8) Sharing the prerequisites of privilege. These eight criteria were considered during the study, along with the cautions that Lincoln listed regarding the criteria: 1) Specific criteria might apply to specific kinds or classes of research, 2) Some of the criteria may be applicable at a certain stage of the inquiry but less applicable at another, 3) Virtually all of these criteria are relational, 4) "Naturalistic/constructivist paradigm effectively brought about the irrelevance of the distinction between ontology and epistemology, so does this paradigm and interpretive social science in general bring about the collapse of the distinctions between standards, rigor, and quality criteria and the formerly separate consideration of research ethics?" (p. 286).

The criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability along with corresponding empirical procedures were used to affirm the trustworthiness of the study. The use of participant observation, detailed and rich description from interpretive research, group reflection, identification of researcher "positionality", inclusion of typicality or modal category (Merriam, 1998, p. 211), peer examination, member checks, and an external audit trail contributed to the trustworthiness of this study.

Credibility. Credibility entails the plausibility and "fairness" of the study.

Prolonged engagement at the site, persistent observation, "multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories each satisfies the criterion of triangulation" (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 303). Seeking corroboration from participants, interview, observation techniques, and document analysis aided in adding credibility to the study. Researcher "positionality" was lessened through (identification of my background, experience, values, and beliefs) journal reflection, member checks, and peer debriefing.

Transferability. Transferability is found in the "context-embeddedness" of a study. Leininger (1995) commented, "It is the researcher's responsibility to establish whether this criterion can be met in a similar context while preserving the original findings from a study" (p. 107). The exploratory nature of this study precluded any claims of generalization or transferability to other contexts. I aspired to provide richness in observation and thickness of description that allowed the readers to formulate their own interpretations and make personal judgements regarding transferability to other contexts with which they are familiar.

Dependability. Dependability "seeks means for taking into account both factors of instability and design induced change" (Lincoln & Guba, 1994, p. 299). It refers to the stability and "catalytic authenticity" of the study. Merriam (1998, pp. 206-207) suggested that the researcher increase dependability by: 1) the identification of the researcher's position, 2) triangulation, and 3) implementing an audit trail. Dependability for this study was sought through these means.

Confirmability. Confirmability assesses the accuracy of the data rather than the objectivity of the inquirer (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Leininger (1995) explained, "Confirmability means obtaining direct and often repeated affirmations of what the

researcher has heard, seen, or experienced with respect to the phenomena under study" (p. 105). I maintained an audit trail that "delineates all methodological steps and decision points and which provides access to all data in their raw and process stages" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 248). Peer and member checks were also conducted.

As one can see, the methods used for establishing trustworthiness overlap, in some cases, to meet the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Research Ethics

It is important to consider and address the ethics or moral implications of a study. The Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (Medical Research Council of Canada, 1998) outlines the following guidelines for human research: 1) Respect for human dignity, 2) Respect for free and informed consent, 3) Respect for vulnerable persons, 4) Respect for privacy and confidentiality, 5) Respect for justice and inclusiveness, 6) Balancing harms and benefits, 7) Minimizing harm, 8) Maximizing benefit (pp. 5-6).

I implemented these criteria throughout this study and used the information gained with dignity and respect for the individuals who have shared information. Likewise, I adhered to stringent guidelines to ensure that "appropriate respect is given to the cultures, languages, knowledge, and values of Aboriginal people, and to the standards used by Aboriginal peoples to legitimate knowledge" (Government of Canada, 1997, p. 29). Informed consent was obtained by all individuals who participated in the research. Participants were also be provided with information regarding the purpose and nature of research activities.

As the researcher, I wanted to ensure that the historical interpretation, or misinterpretation, of Aboriginal history would not be repeated. RCAP discovered the following:

> In the past, research concerning Aboriginal peoples has usually been initiated outside the Aboriginal community and carried out by non-Aboriginal personnel. Aboriginal people have had almost no opportunity to correct misinformation or to challenge ethnocentric and racist interpretations. Consequently, the existing body of research, which normally provides a reference point for new research, must be open to reassessment. (RCAP, p. 29)

As RCAP researchers indicate, if future studies keep Aboriginal dignity and respect intact, the future of Aboriginal research is bright. As with the RCAP study, the goal of this study is to achieve greater dimension, depth, meaning, and understanding of Aboriginal peoples.

This chapter gave insight into this study's methods of design, rationale, analysis and interpretation. Naturalistic inquiry and qualitative interviewing techniques were chosen because I felt that they best suited the First Nations culture and means of communication. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) stressed, "The same document or record can be analyzed from different perspectives and for different purposes" (p. 363). That being the case, it is important to remember as one reads the remainder of this study that I examined the data for the purpose of answering the guiding questions, and that I have interpreted the data from one perspective. Others could analyze and interpret interview transcripts for different purposes, or use an entirely different research approach (e.g., quantitative inquiry). From my perspective, as the researcher, the qualitative research techniques and tools chosen for this study were adequate and feasible in extracting and gaining meaningful, important information on First Nations leadership development.

Summary

The creation of the methodology for a research project has been a large and difficult endeavour. The literature on qualitative methodology is vast, and often created confusion and frustration rather than clarity. This chapter was designed to meet the purpose of the study and to provide philosophical methodology and methods that would help in answering the research question. Janesick (2000) contended that the research is guided by the question; the question is essentially the backbone and the foundation of the study. The study utilized qualitiative methodology and in-depth interviewing to satisfy the purpose and answer the questions.

I was drawn to the "action" aspect and cultural dimension of praxis and critical theory. Critical theory captured my attention because it exposes power and oppression and encourages empowerment and action. Tierney (1993) contended:

> The critical theorists struggle to uncover ideological constraints and overthrow them. Rejecting a singular version of truth where all must conform to particular attitudes, a critical analyst argues that human solidarity must be based on the concept of difference. At first, such assumption appears contradictory. How can we create solidarity within community if we are all different? What then is it that ties all of us together? Unity comes from acceptance of difference and the willingness to engage one another in dialogue about it. It also comes from communities' willingness to come to terms with the lives of those who have been silenced. Rather than make minority individuals conform to the established norms, we bring into the question those norms and see how they might be reinterpreted given the needs of particular groups. In this light, the purpose of community is to develop the conditions for empowerment where individuals may accept and honour one another's differences, rather than merely tolerate them or assume that those individuals who are "different" ought in some way to conform to the norm. The implications here stand in direct opposition to many of the assumptions of the modernist tradition. (p. 130)

I intended to recognize and highlight First Nations leadership and First Nations

leadership development. The knowledge and experiential understandings came from First Nations leaders rather than members of the dominant culture. The hope is that empowerment and praxis for First Nations leadership development will occur as a result of the study.

The study was restricted by delimitations, limitations, and assumptions. The research was delimited to First Nations leaders of Saskatchewan and the study of First Nations leadership development in North America because of the limited literature and research on the topic. Although attempts were made to bracket my positionality, it is realistic to state that my perspectives, beliefs, and values have potentially directly and indirectly influenced the study in some way. These influences and biases are identified at the end of the study. Finally, the study was limited by the quality of the relationship developed between the researcher and the participants; the level of trust and co-operation that was achieved determined the quality of the results. It was assumed that the First Nations leaders chosen were "experts" on First Nations leadership and were representative of Saskatchewan First Nations culture and beliefs.

In terms of data collection, Merriam (1998) determined the following assumptions:

1) In-depth interviewing may have unanticipated long-term effects … Painful, debilitating memories may surface in an interview, even if the topic appears routine or benign. However, an interview may improve the condition of respondents when, for example, they are asked to review the successes or are stimulated to act positively in their own behalf.

2) Observations were conducted with ethical concerns in mind. Participant observation raised questions for both the researcher and for those being studied. Observation brought changes in the activity rendering it atypical, and/or participants became accustomed to the researcher's presence. The concern was that criminal activity might occur.

3) Documents were used with scrutiny and are used in an aggregate and anonymous form.

4) Ethical procedures were followed.

Although this was a difficult task, I attempted to act as *a bricoleur* in the sense that the study demanded "a Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4). Denzin and Lincoln stated:

> The interpretive *bricoleur* produces *a bricolage* – that is, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation. The solution *bricolage* which is the result of the *bricoleur's* method is an emergent construction that changes and takes new forms as different tools, methods, and techniques of representation are added to the puzzle … Cultural studies [are *bricolage]*. Its choice of practice, that is, pragmatic, strategic and self-reflexive. (p. 4)

The *bricoleur* perspective fits well with qualitative research as it reflects the act of piecing together information as does a quilt-maker, or as one piecing together a puzzle.

CHAPTER FIVE

First Nations Leadership Development Programs

Introduction

This chapter investigates the following research question: What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs? When researching First Nations leadership development, it is critical that an understanding of prominent First Nations leadership development programs is gained. Many First Nations leadership education and training programs exist, but there are few programs that focus on leadership development. To answer these questions, I decided to investigate Canadian and American indigenous leadership development programs that were well established and those that had delivered leadership development for over ten years.

After some investigation, I discovered that the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy (Arizona Native Nations) offered by the University of Arizona and the American Indian Leadership Program (Penn State's Program) offered by Pennsylvania State University were long-standing structured American leadership development programs. In a Canadian context, there is the Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program (The Banff Centre). It delivers a program much like the Native Nations Institute from Arizona. Although it was only five years old, the Aboriginal Leadership Institute Incorporated (the Winnipeg program) located in Winnipeg was examined to provide an additional Canadian perspective. Overall, each of these programs approaches First Nations leadership

development from a different perspective, but all require financial, time, and intellectual commitment.

In this section, the First Nations leadership programs offered at the Banff Centre, University of Arizona, Penn State University, and the Winnipeg program are described. These programs were primarily investigated because they are have a director, board, and faculty that are committed to the structure, content, and integrity of leadership development programs. In addition, the programs continue to survive and thrive. They are also long-standing (with the exception of the Winnipeg program), and as a result, have gained familiarity and credibility with, and support from, North American Aboriginal leadership and academic and business organizations.

While examining the Banff Centre, Arizona Native Nations, Penn State, and the Winnipeg program many questions emerged: At what point does a Native leader take a leadership developmental program? How much time and expense is reasonable? Who should administer the program? What are relevant Indigenous and general issues? How should the programs be promoted, and to whom? Sufficient and intentional planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation are necessary components of a First Nations leadership developmental program. Furthermore, to increase success, a First Nations leadership developmental program needs to be meaningful and purposeful.

Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program

Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program, a non-profit leadership development program, celebrated its 30th year of providing leadership management programs in 2003. The Banff Centre is located within the serene surroundings of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. An Aboriginal Director in partnership

with an Aboriginal Program Council manages Banff's Centre's program. The Aboriginal Program Council is comprised of "prominent, respected Aboriginal leaders from across Canada and the United States" (The Banff Centre, 2003). The Banff Centre is guided by the following principle:

> All our programs must enhance the leadership and management of Aboriginal Nations by using a consultative approach for program design, development, and delivery. We are committed to providing unique, maximum impact, practical learning methods and experiences as well as building the capacitates of Aboriginal leaders and management who need to move their organizations and communities forward into the 21st century of Aboriginal self-determination and self-reliance. (The Banff Centre, p. i)

As the quote states, Banff Centre's approach to delivering their leadership development program is consultative. The director and faculty are available throughout the year for specific consultation, but scheduled five-day leadership and management programs are offered at the Banff Centre throughout the year. Banff Centre has established the following philosophy:

> The future of Aboriginal Nations, their governments and communities in North America depends on leaders' and managers' abilities to create and direct change, and the ability of non-Aboriginal governments and the private sector to understand and assist with this change. The nature and quality of Aboriginal leadership and the political reality of Aboriginal self-determination and land negotiations lie at the heart of all Aboriginal and Leadership Management programs. (The Banff Centre, p. i)

This statement stresses the importance of leaders' ability to "create and direct change" and the importance of establishing relationships with non-Aboriginal organizations. Trust would have to be established before partnerships of change between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leadership and their organizations are created.

Although the Centre can bring leadership programs to other locations, it encourages leaders to attend the programs in Banff for cost reduction, but more

importantly, to have leaders experience a ‘sacred place’ as well as ‘the Banff experience’. A participant elaborated:

> [This] is a sacred place. It is very sacred to the Blackfoot, and it isn’t just the Blackfoot who used this area; the Kootney were also trading or hunting through here, the Stoney, Cree, Métis, and Iroquois have been here on occasion. But, the Blackfoot have a long history here, and we often use Blackfoot Elders in our programs. (P 12, 1:437, 2178)

A participant described the ‘Banff experience’ in the following manner:

> So the other component at the Banff Centre along with the arts … [is] the mountain culture. It’s a centre for conferences, and then there is leadership development.… Mountain cultures mandate had broadened to include the study of glaciers and how that affects rivers and water, to also including Indigenous cultures … and certainly there is room to explore North American Indigenous cultures. So we use mountain climber exercises in our program. We have these professional facilitators, and you might actually climb the side of a hill, or mountain, or poles, or trees while you are harnessed up on these wires. It is pushing yourself, leaders have to be risk takers and so it allows you to experience that. It also might be outdoor mountaineering where you might have a problem to solve. You might have to use maps or compasses, and so on, and work as a team and strategically plan and decide how to approach the situation because there is only so much time to get it done. So, we use mountain culture processes, we use artistic processes, and what the leadership development world does. We bring that all together for the Banff experience. We try to share some of the latest ideas in the non-Aboriginal leadership world and tie it into Aboriginal situation, context, issues, and experiences. (P 12, 1:437; 2178)

This environment is not only conducive to personal reflection but also a variety of challenging multi-sensory outdoor leadership and teambuilding exercises. While at Banff, the Director believes that participants have more time to reflect and learn personal and professional development concepts and skills, interact with nature and other leaders, rejuvenate from a demanding schedule because they are less likely to be interrupted.

As shown in Figure 2, the Banff’s leadership development program emphasizes capacity building and nation building. The program offers general leadership skills and

education training, then progresses to stressing lifelong learning, accountability and commitment, excellence, wellness, and honouring diversity. As the circle tightens, the program recognizes the importance of balancing and incorporating the spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional elements of self into the program. Overall, the program moves from general organizational leadership skills and education training to personal leadership development. The program acknowledges that effective leadership development programs incorporate both organizational and personal leadership development.

Participants are awarded the "Certificate of Aboriginal Leadership, Management and Governance Excellence" after completing three compulsive courses (Revitalizing Nationhood 1; Practising Aboriginal Sovereignty; Revitalizing Nationhood 2; Establishing Culturally Appropriate Institutions for Contemporary Aboriginal Governments; and, Revitalizing Nationhood 3; Nation Building; Realizing the Dream Through Strategic Planning) and three out of six optional programs (Best Practices in Aboriginal Business and Economic Development; Negotiation Skills Training; Indigenous Women in Leadership; Facilitation Skills and Team Building for Aboriginal Leaders; Aboriginal Board Governance Development; and, Aboriginal Leadership and Management Development). Since 2000, 14 people have been awarded a certificate.

Banff Centre is a provincially recognized as a continuing education facility. A participant explained:

> Now it isn't a post-secondary recognized degree, because this is continuing education. The Banff Centre is post-secondary continuing education institute set up by provincial charter. So, we help artists, leaders, mountain culture people, all people in their career. It isn't people after a degree; they already have their degree or have been in the work force for many years. They come to our

> programs for some continuing education. It is like catching up or learning new ideas. (P 12, 1:442, 2208)

This accreditation may attract people who value formal recognition for completing programs at the Banff Centre.

The five-day Banff Centre program costs are offset by corporate sponsorship because the Centre understands the financial challenges that many First Nations organizations experience. According to the Director, the value in attending a leadership development program is in developing a competitive edge through personal and professional growth. The interviewee posited:

> I certainly realize that First Nations and Aboriginal communities have a struggle with funding people to go to our programs so that is why we look at corporate sponsorship. I think part of the problem is that a lot of people don't really view going to the programs as professional development. I think a lot of people think of the Banff Centre programs as a conference. They think that they can either go to the Banff Centre or go to a conference when in fact, if you have ever attended one of our programs, you can see that it is a far different experience – it is engaging. It is taking ideas and having a chance to discuss them deeply and reflect you as a leader, and the community issues you have to deal with. It's working with these tools or models we have. I think that you have to understand that this is professional development, an investment in yourself and also for your community. I guess there is always a risk because this happens in the non-profit, in the non-aboriginal world.… But really, investment in people and in their education is a necessity. You can't lead and manage in a modern economy in a modern world without those skills. Take the example of the people you are dealing with, our community leaders; when they are sitting across the table or in meetings with companies or government officials or at negotiating tables, you can bet that the people that they are dealing with are very well educated, have a lot of management and leadership skills, and a team behind them that can fill in the gaps. So, we shouldn't be at a disadvantage in our communities and the way to equalize that is to invest in professional development in our communities.
>
> We work with people who are already in their career so we try to get them on an even keel. We provide enough leadership and management on a broad basis to round out a leader. It is about building your community, nation building, establishing good institutions and policies, and then individual leadership capacity building. I, as a good manager, need to know how to plan strategically and budget and do performance measures. If I have a basic understanding of those skills then you can go on your own and read about it because you now have a basic understanding about it. Just continue to attend

> more professional development classes, they don't all have to be at the Banff Centre, but I am just saying that I think we try to provide a role in helping our community leaders to be good leaders. (P 12, 1:453, 2274)

From this perspective, lifelong learning is a valuable and necessary asset to effective leadership. It is the responsibility for community leaders to grow and evolve in their leadership skills, training, and education. First Nations communities will positively benefit from leaders who are pro-active in their leadership development.

The interviewee indicated that leaders who are adept at promoting 'conversation' in the environments and organizations in which they belong would have more success in creating unity. He explained:

> We have to have a conversation. When I talk about board governance and decision-making, I always talk about the idea of having a conversation, of never jumping to a decision too quick, and leaders being facilitators. You have to facilitate a discussion because if you jump to a conclusion too quickly some of the people are going to buy out and they are going to feel that they were left out and they aren't going to buy in, which means it isn't a legitimate decision or solution or negotiated settlement. The way you get there is to allow conversation to happen. (P 12, 1:479, 2333)

Banff Centre provides many opportunities for conversation between the participants and faculty during the week. Leaders are presented with theory, research, case studies, practical exercises, and applications to stimulate thought and dialogue.

Banff Centre strengths can be found in the sacred, serene location, the international faculty, scholarship and certification, evolved and developed programming, and the balance in Aboriginal and Western teachings. In some cases, the five to seven day commitment and the cost may prevent some leaders from attending the program. In an attempt to move from a short-term to a long-term leadership development facility, the Banff Centre program has recently developed procedures in

two of their optional programs to maintain communication and continue relationships after program completion. Leadership development programs that implement

Figure 2: **Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program Model**
From: www.banffcentre.ca/departments/leadership/aboriginal.asp

follow-up procedures acknowledge that leadership development is a long-term process. The leadership certificate provides an additional incentive to pursue leadership development over six programs and encourages further growth. Altogether, over 30

years, the Banff program has evolved from numerous individual programs (over 20 at one point) to more specific and refined programs. It continues to adapt and strengthen its programming and faculty in response to the ever-changing needs of Aboriginal leadership.

American Indian Leadership Program

The American Indian Leadership Program is located in Penn State's College of Education in the Education Policy Studies department. A graduate program came into existence in the summer of 1970 with an initial enrolment of 17 Indian graduate students from across the United States. The program is heralded by the founders as "one the oldest and most successful programs of its kind" (American Indian Leadership Program, 2003). Since 1970, 176 students from across North America have participated in the program. The intent of Penn State's Program is to develop American and Alaskan Indian educational leaders who are equipped for the workforce in a knowledgeable and practical sense.

The central aim of the American Indian Leadership Program is "the training of qualified leaders for service to Indian nations" and "the objectives are consistent with the goals of the Indian Education Act and the needs of the American Indian communities nationwide" (American Indian Leadership Program, 2003). The program functions on the following four objectives:

- To develop individual leadership that will be able to support intellectual development, create positive change, function in complex environments, and help to define and shape the future of American Indians and Alaska Natives and their communities.
- To provide education for the development of qualified leaders, planners, and administrators for tribal or public schools serving Indian children, and other organizations, colleges, institutions or government agencies concerned with the education of Indian people.

- To provide high-level training for managers qualified to develop and administer specialized programs in education that would better serve the unique needs of exceptional Indian children.
- To provide training in educational research and evaluation in Indian education with an emphasis on community development and policy analysis. (American Indian Leadership Program, 2003)

The Penn State Program requires that the program candidates must be "American Indian or Alaska Native" and that they "demonstrate dedication to the improvement of educational opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives, and commit to serve in an administrative role in Indian education" (American Indian Leadership, 2003). Penn State's Program has a specific focus, and it is not to create an "Indigenous" leadership program, but an American or Alaskan Indian leadership program; there are both advantages and disadvantages to this approach. The focus on American Indian leaders allows faculty to be specific on skills, knowledge, and training, but it also limits the experience for the participants.

Penn State has determined that the graduates of the program will be:

- Administrators of contract schools, Indian community colleges, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, other tribal or public schools serving Indian children.
- Administrators in organizations, institutions, or government agencies concerned with the education of Indian people.
- Educational planners for tribal organizations, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, state and federal Indian educational organizations serving American Indian and Alaska Native students. (American Indian Leadership Program, 2003)

Again, the graduate outcome statement indicates that Penn State's focus is on educational leadership and issues of American Indian people and not Indigenous people from other parts of the world.

Penn State acknowledged that there are other Indian leadership programs, but claims the program does the following:

> A unique mix of location, quality of academic programs and commitment of faculty, proximity to the nation's capital, support from the Indian Student Association, and focused exploration in a special Indian education seminar, have combined to foster real leadership. In fact, more than 80 percent of the Indian students who have entered the AILP have graduated, compared to the 50 percent average nationwide.
>
> While on campus, the Indian student is challenged to excel academically, think independently, and become a problem-solver who is unafraid to re-examine old assumptions and look at systems critically. Graduates are expected to step up to a higher level of service in Indian education, joining other "Penn Staters" who are leading the way throughout the U.S. (American Indian Leadership Program, 2003)

Graduates are expected to put into practice the knowledge and experience they have gained from Penn State's Program into an educational setting.

The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy (NNI)

The Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy is located in the University of Arizona and is a part of the research and outreach unit of the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy and the Harvard Project on Indian Economic Development. Arizona's Native Nations and the Harvard Project are collaborative leadership institutions. In addition, Arizona's Native Nations operates in consultation with an International Advisory Council, made up of professionals, educators, and "tribal citizens" from the United States and Canada. The Native Nations Institute strives to establish collaborative relationships with "Native nations and organizations to advance nation-building processes, analyze policy operations, promote strategic thinking, and develop solutions to difficult governance and development problems" (Native Nations Institute of Leadership, Management, and Policy [NNI], 2003). Arizona's Native Nations focus differs from Penn State's. Arizona's goal is to strengthen the community through social and economic development that includes governance and nation-building education and training. Unlike the education orientation of Penn State, Arizona's

Native Nations Institute has a business orientation. The Arizona Program claims that the program "serves as a self-determination, development, self-governance resource" (NNI, 2003). Further, unlike Penn State which restricts its enrolment to American and Alaskan Indians, Native Nations offers the program to Indigenous people in the United States, Canada, and internationally.

The purpose of the Native Nations Institute "is to provide Native nations with comprehensive, professional training, and developmental programs of the highest quality designed specifically to meet the educational needs of Indigenous leadership and management, and to provide these nations and other policymakers with outstanding policy analysis and basic research presented in usable form" (NNI, 2003). The goal of Native Nations is "to make an enduring, practical contribution to the effort of indigenous nations to improve the economic and social well-being of their peoples and regain effective control of their own futures" (NNI, 2003). From these declarations ("developmental programs," "economic and social well-being of their peoples and regain effective control of their own futures"), it appears that the Arizona Program provides a program that is available to international Indigenous peoples, and is holistic in that it uses a nation or community approach and incorporates both the economic and social aspects of communities. Therein lies the connection with the Indigenous philosophy of interconnectedness and holistic perspective on creation and life.

The Arizona Program addresses nation-building and its challenges in the following manner:

- Leadership and management programs to train present and future leaders.
- Policy analysis on issues of critical importance to Indigenous nations.
- Basic research on the foundations of self-determined economic and community development.

- Collaborative relationships with native nations and organizations. (NNI, 2003)

It is through the collaboration between the Harvard Project and Arizona's Native Nations Institute that the term "nation building" has become well known. It is a term that is positive and progressive, and it promotes community, strength, and pride. Native Nations Institute attempts to incorporate and blend First Nations philosophy, values, and beliefs with current economic and social research. It attempts to provide leaders and communities with theoretical knowledge, practical experience, strategies, and skills that will assist First Nations leaders and their communities to become self-sufficient, healthy, and to function successfully in the post-modern and ever-changing technological world.

Arizona's leadership and management program is designed for current and future Indigenous leaders, and the program is a "research-based education designed to respond directly to the demands of nation-building" (NNI, 2003). The program encompasses:

- Executive education for senior Native leaders and managers via day-long to week-long intensive sessions,
- Development of case-based curricular materials in governance and economic and community development, and
- Leadership and entrepreneurship training for Native youth.

The curricular focus of the program includes four elements. First, nation building is a critical area of the program. Nation building is defined as "the construction of effective self-governance institutions that are a foundation for sustainable development, community health, and successful political action." The next curriculum element is strategic thinking and policy which involves "the tools needed to make informed, strategic policy decisions." Administration and management is another curriculum

aspect. Leaders are taught the "nuts and bolts of getting things done" in the administration and management curriculum portion. Finally, external relations are examined and discussed. This includes the "construction of productive relationships with central government, state, and provincial governments, and other constituencies." Participants are given the opportunity to choose the focus and length of study. The Arizona Program makes itself available for individual or group programs.

Along with leadership and management studies, the Arizona Program offers policy analysis. The Native Nations Institute organization states:

> Indigenous nations today wrestle with the classic problems of contemporary societies: how to build effective, sovereign governments; how to develop vigorous economies that fit their circumstances and their cultures; how to solve difficult social problems; how to achieve their objectives in interactions with other governments, and how to manage environment and natural resources, among others. Such concerns present major policy challenges for Native nations, yet Native leaders often lack the time, resources, and personnel necessary to analyze such issues adequately. (NNI, 2003)

Native Nations utilizes university resources and the experience and knowledge of "Indian Country" to analyse the challenges First Nations leaders and communities encounter through rigorous research and analysis.

The Arizona Program has created a leadership and management program that recognizes the importance of economic and social development of First Nations leaders and their communities. The program appears to be holistic in nature and it is cognizant of the time and financial constraints of First Nations leaders. Finally, Arizona's Native Nations leadership development program utilizes state-of-the-art communication technology to administer the program in short or long segments.

Aboriginal Leadership Institute Incorporated

I decided to add a fairly new Aboriginal leadership program as an indicator of growth and increasing interest in leadership development of Aboriginal leaders. In 2000, the Aboriginal Leadership Institute Incorporated, located in Winnipeg, became incorporated as a non-profit organization. This leadership organization is staffed and managed by "Aboriginal people and directed by a volunteer Board of Directors reflecting the diversity of Canada's Aboriginal community." The Winnipeg Program's founding principle states: "While some people are born to leadership, most of us only acquire over time the experience, education, skills, and qualities characteristic of strong community leaders. The Aboriginal Leadership Institute Inc. helps develop these leadership attributes" (Aboriginal Leadership Institute Incorporated [ALII], 2004, p. i). The Winnipeg Program functions on 'cooperative alliances' and partnerships created with government, Canadian and American university faculty, public and private consultants, and sponsors. The program also aims at providing "advocacy and research capabilities to Aboriginal organizations, communities, and individuals" (ALII, 2004, p. 3).

The goal of the Winnipeg Program is to increase the overall leadership capacity of Aboriginal leaders, including youth, by offering courses and learning experiences that are engaging, practical, and relevant. Private consultants and university faculty deliver two-day and 16-day courses annually. Foundational programs presented by the Winnipeg Program are as follows: financial management and accountability; strategic planning; governance and nation building; media training; negotiation and dispute resolution; and, 'How Ottawa Works'. Most of these programs progress to an advanced

program. "Cutting edge" research, case studies and "hands-on" approach to learning is implemented in the programs. As with the preceding programs, the cost of attending the Aboriginal Leadership Institute is partially or fully offset by public and private sponsors.

Compared to Penn State, Arizona's Native Nations, and Banff Centre, the Aboriginal Leadership Institute Inc. is a new leadership program. It offers leadership training, skills, and knowledge in one or two-day sessions. Along with reducing cost through sponsorship, time away from work has also been reduced. There is an overall professional orientation to the leadership development approach with no mention of personal development. In addition, it appears that the programs are relatively short term and 'event' rather than process oriented.

Conclusion

The programs offered at the all four institutions are valuable programs for First Nations leaders; however, there are some considerations. The two Canadian leadership organizations delivered their programs from different perspectives. The Banff Centre program is short-term, the six courses are held over five intensive days, and they do offer consultative services to Aboriginal leaders and organizations. Embedded in the program are values investigation exercises and time to process and reflect on personal and professional development information. Like Banff Centre, the Winnipeg Program provides leadership skills, training, and education, but over one or two days. Unlike Banff Centre, the Winnipeg Program is not as multi-sensory, and reflective, nor is it located in a serene, picturesque environment away from noise and busyness. Banff Centre strives to instil an innovative holistic learning 'Banff experience' for

participants, and the Winnipeg Program prides itself on using ‘cutting-edge’ research and information. Overall, they strive to provide a holistic and multi-sensory approach to Aboriginal personal and professional leadership development; whereas, the Aboriginal Leadership Institute focuses on professional leadership education and training.

On the American scene, Penn State limits its enrolment to American Indian people, whereas Arizona targets Indigenous people throughout the world. Limiting the program has the benefit of a customized program and curriculum, but it does exclude Indigenous people who are interested in the program. The Penn State Program has a definite start and finish, while Arizona, like Banff, offers advertised scheduled, short-term programs. A graduate degree is awarded to participants who successfully complete the Penn State Program. The graduates also become university alumni. It appears that Penn State tracks their graduates. The organization indicated that many of its graduates became prominent community or organizational leaders. Because the Arizona Program offers week-long sessions, participants may have less of an opportunity to develop valuable relationships. A leader that was interviewed for this study attended the Arizona Native Nations leadership development program after he became Chief, and he indicated that the program had a definite American history and policy orientation. As a result, he found it difficult to follow and, consequently, the program was not as meaningful. So, the ‘Indigenous’ aspect that Arizona advertises is not as inclusive as it seems.

In spite of the challenges, all four leadership development programs are quality Aboriginal leadership programs that strive to meet the challenging needs of First

Nations leaders. They are meeting a growing need and demand for First Nations leadership development. These programs have a relatively balanced First Nations and Western orientation. They encourage Aboriginal leaders to become skilled and adept in 'two worlds.' More and more these programs are becoming interactive, engaging, holistic, and process rather than event oriented. They all strive to be practical, and they introduce relevant theoretical concepts. In addition, all the programs have developed federal, private, and corporate partnerships so they can offer scholarships to offset the cost. The goal of each program is to increase leadership capacity and effectiveness, and experienced and skilled faculty is utilized to deliver the sessions.

These programs have areas that could be strengthened. For instance, only the Winnipeg Program and the Arizona Program encouraged Aboriginal youth involvement. In my previous leadership research (Ottmann, 2002), Saskatchewan First Nations youth expressed the need for leadership development. Moreover, all the programs require a leader to leave his/her community to learn leadership skills, training, and education. The extent that the leadership skills, knowledge, and education are transferred and applied in the participants' organization and community is not known. How much does the collective benefit from individual leadership investment? Once short-term programs are completed, a long-term relationship between the leadership development organization and the participant is important for evaluation, information gathering, and data collection. An effective leadership development program incorporates on-going communication after program completion to gather feedback and to provide support. From the information that I gathered I understand that all the

programs are ‘knowledge-seekers’ as they strive to be adaptive and resilient organizations.

Leadership development is an on-going process that requires the continuous practice of internal and external exercises, reflection, and evaluation. Effective leadership development programs contain opportunities for action research or action learning. Boshyk (2002) defined action learning as “learning by what we do by reflecting on it and talking about it” (p. 3). Four principles are characteristic of action learning. First, a leader has to be very clear of the task or problem. In this situation, the problems and the setting are familiar, and the challenge is to connect theory with practice. Second, “Reflecting in how actions are carried out, and not only on what is to be done” (p. 5). Here, participants work on problems that are familiar, but in an unfamiliar setting. The problem is transferred to another organization. Third, in times of crisis, deep reflection on what one knows is valuable. Revans (as cited in Boshyk, 2002) contended:

> Lasting behavioural change is more likely to follow the re-interpretation of past experiences than the acquisition of fresh knowledge … it is in re-reading what is already scribbled on the cortical slate that leads to changes in behaviour, rather than in copying out new messages upon it … such re-interpretations of past experience, being necessarily subjective, complex and ill-structured, are more likely to be intelligible through exchanges with other managers themselves anxious to learn by re-ordering their own perceptions than through discussions with non-managers (including teachers of management subjects) not exposed to real risk in responsible action. (pp. 5-6)

Participants work on problems that are unfamiliar and apply it to their organization. It is in dialogue with other leaders on problems experienced in the past that change is more likely to be made and the repetition of mistakes are less likely to occur. Finally, the fourth principle encompasses one’s self-knowledge. At this level, both problems

and setting are unfamiliar. The leader is in unfamiliar territory personally and professionally. It is this situation that he/she learns about his/her abilities (strengths and weaknesses) and capacity as a leader. This is where the most learning occurs personally and professionally. In addition, this is where second-order change happens.

The level of action learning that the four Aboriginal programs that I examined in this study implement was limited (Boshyk, 2002). Action learning programs demand long-term relationships, flexible and individualized programming, and quality dialogue. A First Nations leadership program should include the principles of action learning because it is synonymous with historical First Nations philosophy of balance and interconnectedness. In addition, a leadership development program should go beyond skills and education training, and provide opportunity for personal development along with intensive investigation of problems and issues that exist in their communities and organizations. Banff Centre, Penn State, Arizona's Native Nations, and Winnipeg's Aboriginal Leadership Institute are short-term programs that bring aspiring and current leaders together. Again, "What is the extent of the relationship of the Aboriginal leaders after the program is finished?" On another note, the programs' strengths were found in the connection they had with academic organizations, the access that they had to research, current data and knowledge of leadership development.

What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs? The First Nations leadership development programs that I examined in this chapter acknowledged and celebrated First Nations culture, traditions, and history. They recognized the diversity of Aboriginal peoples but focused on the commonalities and shared history to strengthen the programs and to encourage a

sense of community in the programs. To a large degree, the programs incorporated Western knowledge, skills, and education so leaders could gain understanding and perhaps an 'edge' in negotiations and transactions outside their communities. The programs were short and intensive, with the exception of Penn State's graduate program, essentially making them event rather than process oriented. The Banff Centre deliberately attempted to deliver a program that was holistic, with elements of both personal and professional development, whereas the other programs primarily focus was on professional development. All the programs continually sought and utilized effective Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal faculty, and all had Aboriginal directors. Altogether, these programs attempted to highlight First Nations philosophy and worldview as program models. The models were basically holistic and interactive in nature.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of the Notion of First Nations Leadership and Leadership Development

RCAP Findings

The findings that emerged in my previous research (2002) on First Nations leadership progressed to this study on First Nations leadership development. In the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) hearings held in Saskatchewan, many First Nations people expressed frustrations with the social and economic conditions in their communities. In the same study, some people also conveyed their interest in First Nations leadership and their development. In spite of the First Nations leadership criticisms, First Nations people in Saskatchewan were optimistic, hopeful, and proud of the accomplishments made in business and education. They felt, to a large extent, that the future of First Nations people would be determined by First Nations people, the 'grassroots', and delivered by their leaders.

In my 2002 leadership study (Ottmann, 2002), the First Nations youth indicated that they wanted some form of leadership development since they were leaders of the future. Other people expressed the importance of providing and supporting leadership with education that is grounded in both First Nations traditions and in Western knowledge. Altogether, these findings indicated the importance of effective First Nations leadership for Saskatchewan communities and lead to the current research on First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development from a leader's perspective, and to the question, "What are First Nations leaders' perceptions and experiences about leadership and development?"

Introduction

This section examines the following research questions: "What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders?" and, "According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?" I interviewed 10 First Nations leaders who were members of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. These leaders assisted in the development and contribution of scholarly knowledge of First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development. In recognition of First Nations diversity in Saskatchewan, a leader from each of the five linguistic groups (Dene, Cree, Dakota, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine) was chosen. There was also a representation of individuals from the north and south, along with a mix of new and experienced leaders. The range of 'political leadership' experience ranged from approximately six to 40 years. It is important to note that many of the participants had, and continue to hold, numerous leadership roles (e.g. sports, business, education) prior to being elected as chief.

The interviewees were all male, but four female leaders were recommended by an FSIN representative, and all four were contacted, however because of time and scheduling issues, they were unable to participate. After hesitating, one woman leader remarked that they could be easily identified because of the small number of female First Nations leaders in Saskatchewan. In addition, I discovered, shortly before my study, that First Nations women leaders across Canada were asked to participate in a national study on Aboriginal women leaders. This was possibly the reason some women seemed perplexed when I approached with them about my study. These factors

may have contributed to the decision not to participate in another study.

First Nations women did not only question the intention of researchers and academics, I got the impression that many First Nations people are growing weary with researchers and the lack of visible and practical applications of research. In this study, one leader stated in frustration:

> We are not happy with the amount of studies on First Nations people. Many studies have been done on our people. Specifically, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was undertaken with very little, if no, implementation that could make a major difference or a change. We have probably been one of the most studied people on this earth, and we still have little real ability to implement our Treaties or create a better way of life for people in our communities. We are still dealing with the same situations and, if not, things are worsening because of the amount of births. The demands on programs and services are increasing without any real increase in those budgets. (P 3, 1:264)

The reluctance by First Nations people to participate in research may be a trust issue, but also frustration with the lack of concrete benefits to First Nations people as a collective from research. These leaders believe that research on First Nations people would result in direct and collective, rather than indirect and individual, ramifications for First Nations communities. With this in mind, I am fortunate to have had willing participants.

Overall, I asked eight semi-structured questions over two interview sessions to develop conclusions to the primary research questions. With the help of Atlas-ti, a qualitative software program, themes from the leader's reflections and comments were extrapolated. Although I interpreted and systematically analysed the leaders' interviews, it was essential to the integrity of the First Nations orientation of the study that I present the entirety of an answer to a question, or at least, the portion that conveyed the essence and intent of a leader's response. Oral tradition and storytelling is

still prevalent in many First Nations communities. Many of the participants had excellent storytelling skills and, as a result, the extra time required to conduct an interview of this form was welcomed. The stories and long exerts that were inserted throughout the document add depth, thick description, and credibility to the findings.

First Nations Leaders on Leadership

To elicit personal and professional perceptions and experiences of First Nations leadership in Saskatchewan I asked the following semi-structured questions:

1. What were the events and circumstances that led to your decision to become a leader; and, who were the people that influenced your decision to become a leader?
2. Describe an instance when First Nations leadership was demonstrated in an extraordinary manner. This may have been an instance that has left a lasting impact on your life and decision to pursue leadership.
3. Describe successes and frustrations you have experienced as a leader. With the knowledge and experience that you have acquired as a leader, how would you prepare an aspiring First Nations leader?
4. In your opinion, what are the similarities and differences between First Nations leadership and Western leadership? How do you envision First Nations leadership to appear in the future? Explain the relationship it would have with First Nations people and dominant society.

These questions guided the discussion and leaders were given the freedom to focus on areas of passion and interest.

Inspiration and Encouragement

Although the experiences and backgrounds of the leaders were diverse, common experiences and perceptions of leadership emerged. When asked about the people that inspired and encouraged the leaders all of them identified a family member or family members. Family members, whether they were parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles were extremely influential in the lives of the leaders. Often, individuals from the participants' family offered time, support, encouragement, advice, and prayers. More often than none, family members recognized leadership qualities that the participants themselves could sometimes not identify. Ultimately, these were people whom the participants respected, admired, and aspired to emulate because of values and behaviours that they consistently exemplified. One participant shared the following:

> When my uncle was working with the band would take me along with him to chief's meetings. He brought me to my first FSIN assembly in about 1997 or 1998. I remember coming down with one of our councillors to Saskatoon when they had the FSIN assembly at the Delta Bessborough. He made it a point to expose me to those types of things – where leaders were. And, I think I mentioned in our first interview, I didn't have a clue as to whether I was a good leader or not, I couldn't say that I knew I was going to be a chief one day or that I knew that I had aspirations ever since I was young because I never did. My uncle or somebody must have seen something in me, they might have seen potential. I think a lot of it was informal. Nurturing and growing, giving you the opportunity to grow as a leader and be in a leadership role, even though it wasn't a chief's role or a council role, there was always a role in the office. (P 1, 1:98, 79-641)

Another participant learned from his grandparents' work ethic and his conviction to stand and speak for their beliefs and values:

> I think a reason was the kindness of my grandmother, my dad's mom. She really took us under her wing when we needed her. Her mother, my great-grandmother, used to cut hay and bail with the men when she was a young girl. In those stories is a message, to not just women, but to youth and a whole community. We don't have to stick with the stereotypical leadership roles. Youth and women can run for First Nations leadership or play significant roles

> in communities and really help to lead the way when it comes to community leadership. My grandfather was a successful farmer. He made a goal in a tough industry and worked tirelessly. He worked for about 12-18 hours a day. He took time for his farm operation, his family, and voiced his opinion when it came to decision making for the farm and for the best interests of the children … I lived with and learned from him. I had an opportunity to look at the best side of both of them. My grandparents and other people in the community inspired me to help do my part and make a change and difference. That is why I chose to run when I did. (P 3, 1:224, 1135)

The stories of people significant to the participants were often profound and extraordinary. As the following story depicts, childhood experiences often left a significant impact on the lives of the interviewees, and they often shaped the lives of the Chiefs and helped determine values, beliefs, and actions:

> I was raised by my grandparents on a reserve. I had to take part in whatever my grandfather was doing, that included ceremonies. I basically had to go along with him, and during that short period of time (he passed away when I was 10 years old) he taught me a lot about responsibility and understanding who we are as First Nations people and individuals, and our place within the Creator's creation. From those stories and by listening to his advice, thoughts, and teachings, I learned a lot. Even though I was young I learned responsibility … I had to ensure that everything was looked after in the house. When he passed away my grandmother taught me a lot up until she passed. Through our experiences I learned from her… she fought for what she believed in. She would say, "Always speak your mind and never be afraid to stand up for what you believe in. People have a hard time dealing with the truth..."
>
> My [leadership] style has been moulded by her teachings … She would say, "It's an everyday job, doing what you can to earn another day" and "Continue to strive for a better tomorrow and give thanks for today." She made me promise that I would continue on with my education and that I would graduate from high school. She promised me that she would be at my graduation and that [education] would be my key to the future. She always believed that in some capacity, some way or another, I would be in a leadership or would be part of something where decisions had to be made. Both my grandfather and grandmother always told me that your path is already set for you but it is a matter of you recognizing it and moving forward with it. So, I think I have come to realize this now. I see it now, what my role is.… when I think back, I didn't recognize it then but I recognize it today. My life was influenced by them. (P 4, 1:302, 1553)

A mother was a positive and sustaining force in the life of this participant:

> It was my mom that really helped a lot, because my dad died at a very early age, I think I was 17. So, it was mom that really did a lot of praying, coaxing, nurturing and directing. She would always tell me not to drink, all the usual messages you know, like stay in school and try to get your grade 12. My mom did a lot and she was a stable force for sure. She had to basically raise six kids by herself after my dad died. She did a really good job because three of them became RCMP members. We weren't really a rich family on the reserve, we were poor really. It was a typical life on the reserve but that drove me and others to do something. We never realized we were poor. We hunted, fished, trapped, emptied slop pails, melted snow in the wintertime on the wood stove, and we hauled wood. It was a way of life. It was a great life, a really good life. We never had vehicles so we never left the reserve. Things like the Indian Summer Games and the Indian Winter Games were something I loved because that was the only time I got to leave the reserve to go and travel to meet other people. It drives you and motivates you to say that things can be better. It taught me the value of hard work and saving money, and if you wanted something, you had better work for it. (P 5, 1:356, 1753)

As a child, this participant observed leadership roles and responsibilities that his family exhibited. From his perspective, they seized opportunities, provided stability, and valued work:

> Some of the people that probably influenced me were my own parents or my aunt and uncle that raised me. They had an attitude that there are things that need to get done, so let's get them done. It was that type of thing, no sitting around and wasting your time doing nothing. If there is anything, my entire family was probably a bit like that – a little type A personality. One auntie worked in [our area] for almost 30 years before she retired. My uncle hunted, trapped, and fished every season. My other aunt worked 30 years at the health centre. We were lucky in a sense that most of my family were go-getters. In a small community back then it was hard to get jobs but they were able to secure some jobs. So, I guess the influence would be: "You can't sit around because things need to be done attitude." (P 7, 1: 498, 2458)

In circumstances and surroundings that were, at times, very harsh and unforgiving, all the participants were fortunate enough to have had people who believed in them, and people who consistently exemplified values and behaviours that they admired. At times, the encouragers deliberately sought the participant. An Elder participant

explained, “I am gifted with it and they just reinforced it, my dad and the Elders. I did get some hard lessons though” (P 9, 1:660, 3556). The analysis of the interviews confirmed the importance of family. Family members or a family member, consciously or unconsciously, provided the participants with enough inspiration and motivation to pursue leadership. They helped instil confidence, determination, and courage needed to assume positions of influence. This information stressed the importance of family, and more importantly, the power a family member has on a child.

Inspiration from other Leaders

In addition to family, the participants identified First Nations leaders as having positive influence on their lives. Providing examples of extraordinary leadership did not pose any difficulty for any of the leaders. For one participant, an extraordinary display of leadership happened during the 1991 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Conference when a First Nations national leader revealed he was abused at residential school as a child. Some leaders ridiculed the AFN leader because they felt that he had chosen the wrong forum to expose the abuse. Other leaders commended the AFN leader for the display of courage and conviction needed to address an issue that had been suppressed for too long. The national leader recognized that this crime had not only happened to him, but to many First Nations people across Canada. The participant expressed the admiration and inspiration that he has gained from the AFN leader’s actions:

> If he could do it, so could I. This is one of the major motivations for me.… his heart was in the right place. There are political animals all over the world but he is a politician and he really takes it from the heart. He is really sincere in his duties and jobs and he realizes that he can’t fix everything, but at least he can

> start. So, he is one of my major influences because I watched and listened to him a lot. (P 2, 1:172, 948)

Another participant acknowledged the original First Nations activists and lobbyists. At a time when First Nations issues and people were seemingly insignificant to society, the First Nations leaders of the early 1900s had to be bold and outspoken in order to be heard. This participant shared the following:

> I think one of the courageous leadership acts I have seen was probably during the constitutional acts when Dave Ahenekew was our leader, along with Jim Sinclair from the Métis society. [Sinclair] was representing Métis across Canada in the heavy negotiating around the 1982 constitutional talks when the entrenchment of Section 35, Section 25 and 15, and the non-derogation clause were introduced. All of those were issues of discussion, and at the end of the conference … we got something rather than nothing at all. In the closing remarks, Dave Ahenekew took a strip off some Premiers and the Prime Minister. This was one of the major episodes that I have seen in my political career, and it intrigued me into what I am doing today.
>
> [Ahenekew] wasn't afraid, and he stood up to people. Dave was very bold, very outspoken, as was Jim Sinclair. I used to watch it and think about it, and then I said, "To get my message across, that is the way I am going to be. I may be banished by the government but at least I will be recognized for who I am and what I am made of and not afraid of." So those are some instances that were major motivators, the whole constitutional process. (P 2, 1:176, 965)

Although, in some instances, First Nations leaders on a provincial and national level were not as accessible, as this participant shared, they were heard:

> I remember I got a Christmas gift from my cousin. It was a radio and at night, I would pick up a Saskatoon station and during the news you would hear about the FSIN. I can't remember any of the names. I had no idea who the people were or what they were about, I was only about 10 or 11 at the time. (P 7, 1:497, 2458)

Another participant explained the determination to attend tribal and provincial conferences:

> I think I used to just hear about them and a bunch of people would just get together and I think it just [interested] me that people were getting together and I would go … I used to catch a ride, some were class trips, but I somehow managed to be at them. (P 4, 1:319, 1583)

The importance of being visible and available as a leader cannot be over emphasized because one never knows who is watching and the extent that their lives would be influenced. Leaders leave a lasting positive or negative impression on people through their visibility or absence. In the following reflection, the participant described the significance of leaders 'coming together' and promoting healthy community events:

> I remember growing up and witnessing a lot of our leaders coming together, our Chief and our key members coming together in the community, and older people really taking over and filling in where parents may not have filled in through sports programs or community events, or fair days. Our community was very focused on building a strong sports and recreation network. There was a lot of attention paid to competitive sports and leadership really promoted, not just through financial resources, but they took the time to encourage young people to be active, and they took part in different athletic activities with us. (P 3, 1:247, 1282)

As indicated above, people in positions of leadership play an integral role in the formation of future leaders and in the support of existing leadership. It is evident that leaders are closely watched and heard by people of all ages.

Elders and Leaders

Gregory Cajete (1999) defined Elders as "respected as carriers of Native knowledge, wisdom, and experience. Therefore, they are utilized as the first line teachers, facilitators, and guides in learning of Native science" (p. 71). They are held in esteem and are respected members of all First Nations communities. Throughout the interviews, the Chiefs often referred to Elders' guidance, knowledge, wisdom, perseverance, and prayers. It was apparent that the Elders had a direct and indirect influence on the First Nations leaders that participated in the study. Besides inspiring leaders, Elders identify, seek, teach, and mentor leaders. All of the participants relied,

to some degree, on the strength and support from Elders inside and outside their community. The teachings and lessons that Elders shared were meaningful and invaluable to the leaders. All the participants expressed a deep respect for Elders, and many shared stories of Elders' convictions and influence in their lives. In some instances, Elders not only had a relationship with leadership, but they were in leadership roles. One leader shared:

> An individual that I listened to because of his principles and how he conducted himself when it came to our issues and way of life was our late senator John Totoosis. When I went to Treaty and sovereignty forums and gatherings, I would listen to him and to the way he talked. He was serious about making sure there was no jeopardizing who we were as First Nations people. There was absolutely no compromising who we are and what we stand for. Every time he spoke, he made it very clear that our language, our culture, our ceremonies, our treaties, our inherent rights should not be compromised, and that we are a sovereign nation, we have self-government and shouldn't be involved in a provincial government or federal politics. [He said] that we have to be strong in our position, that we are a nation within a nation, and we are going to be recognized by others. I look at those teachings and his [leadership] style. (P 4, 1:303, 1553)

Elders' ability to sustain First Nations people was immensely appreciated and admired by the leaders in this study. One leader commented, "It is amazing that our old people still look after us because that was a catalyst to bring people together and light a fire under leadership to do something, so that is what we did" (P 5, 1:388, 1857). Elders continue to play an active role with First Nations leadership.

Motivation for Leadership

Reluctance

Initially, some of the participants I interviewed were reluctant to take on leadership responsibilities, and were humbled by the position and the confidence that people had in their abilities and in their character. One leader shared this sentiment:

> So maybe I didn't want to become involved. I figured I had my own life to deal with, my own life to live, and I can't even live that properly sometimes, so how was I supposed to manage a tribe, a nation of people. But I'm glad, I'm glad that there were people over the course of my life that actually said, "Yeah you'll make a good leader you should try." They actually had to talk me into going for and being a Chief because I was happy. (P 1, 1:8, 49)

All the participants did not aspire to become First Nations leaders, they did not dream as children of become Chiefs or leaders. After reflecting, this participant determined the following:

> Basically, it was to bring about change and to come back and make a contribution. I wanted to be around home and it was just something that evolved. I never planned to become a [Chief] when I was a kid, it just happened. Right place at the right time but also doing the best you can with the position you are in and helping people – people recognize that. (P 5, 1:363, 1747)

Many of the participants recognized the tremendous responsibilities that accompanied leadership and were sometimes sceptical of their ability to lead people. At an early age and through observation, this participant recognized the importance of effective leadership, especially during crisis, because of the example that his uncle exhibited:

> I grew up and was never the leader of a crowd or one of the clowns in the classroom. I would keep my head down and do what I had to do; I would follow friends and groups of people but was never pushed into a leadership position. I never really thought about it when I was younger. All I remember seeing was the way my aunts and uncles worked, whether it was mainstream economy at the time (the video store or in the schools), but also the traditional pursuits that most of my other relatives had. With my uncle, who raised us, it was just a matter of getting up, and as we did things people would follow. You see decisions being made in a crisis situation, and for me, that was defining. If you are going to be in a position where you have to make decisions you better be prepared. I shied away from being a leader for many years because I thought I could really screw things up. As you grow up you just have to keep on watching and observing and appreciate what good leaders can get done and what leadership does.
>
> For me, there was a bit of a defining moment. It was a real ugly crisis situation where one or two people had to step up, take control and get things done. (P 7, 1:504, 533; 2494-2638)

For some of the participants, the initial reluctance ‘to be a leader of people’ exhibited humility and respect for the leadership position.

Destiny – Born Leaders

After their initial reluctance with leadership dissipated, the participants accepted and embraced leadership when they came to the understanding that they were a part of something larger. Some felt that they were chosen to lead at a specific time and for a specific purpose. One leader remembered an Elder’s beckoning: “He specifically called me over when he wanted to talk to me” (P 8, 1:603, 3111). Another leader commented, “It just happened. So, even though I know this position is very important, I don’t think it defines me. It happened and I am here, so my attitude is to just get things done” (P 7, 1:515, 2548). While another explained, “I was told as a young boy that I was a leader. I considered myself a leader, not a politician” (P 9, 1:659, 3544). Most of the participants felt that they were at the right place at the right time, and that they were destined for the role, even if it was only for a certain period in time. This leader shared his personal experience with leadership:

> I didn’t choose my path, I didn’t choose to run … but at the end of the day I was shown something, I was put on that path. I don’t know what tomorrow is going to bring, but I deal with today. People ask [what] I am planning, but I don’t plan anything. I deal with today. I have what I am working on today … I get through and deal with today, and that has been my style. People ask if I am stressed out dealing with [things] but I say ‘no’ because it’s business. I didn’t look for [this]; it presented itself. (P 4, 1:355, 1693)

For these leaders, an opportunity was presented, a series of events aligned themselves in such a manner that made a path clear, and a person or people were there to make obvious, to confirm, and to guide the participant to a destined leadership role. Most of the leaders felt that leadership had a definite spiritual dimension and because it did, it

should not be taken lightly as “people are being affected by it” and ultimately the leader will be held accountable to the Creator. It should be mentioned that most of the leaders felt that the position they held was temporary and they would readily ‘pass the torch’ when the time came. They would be looking for the next opportunity to present itself when the time came for change.

Cause and Conviction

Along with the encouragement from significant others to take on leadership roles, came an internal motivation often generated by a cause, or a conviction with a strong personal connection. In other words, frustration, or conviction to a cause, gave leadership meaning and importance to the position. The idea that the participant could make a difference on a larger scale contributed to the decision to take on the leadership role. However, one Chief stated, “No one time incident or event triggered the decision to become a Chief. It was a process of evolution.” In all these cases, leadership was a choice, one that was determined over time and, in some instances, one where cause and conviction fuelled the desire.

The cause that flamed leadership sometimes stemmed from personal circumstances. Without enticement, one leader began the interview with the following statement:

> I guess the biggest personal influence in my whole life was dealing with the whole issue of being abandoned. I went to residential school and I was sexually abused between the age of 5-11 and it was something I kept very secret for years and years until about eight years ago. I have held it inside of me, but I have dealt with it through therapy. I have broken the news to my wife and to my family, and that is a major breakthrough for me. You asked a question about motivation and the motivation is surviving the ordeal and dealing with the issue at hand. That is a big motivator and a sad thing in my heart. There is still that little boy in me, and it comes out every once and a while when I go back to those issues.… I always want to give my wife and children a hug and kiss, but

> it's hard. Yes, [healing] is coming through therapy, traditional healing, and counselling through a therapist. So in this day and age, that is my biggest motivation.
>
> The government has put me into that situation and that is my motivator and there are thousands of people that went through that and I never want to see that happen to anyone. So I could honestly say that my motivator is what happened to me and the whole issue of abandonment.
>
> "What is my ambition?" It's to be a part of, and to have a say, rather than being left out of the loop. We are always sitting on the outside looking in, and I really feel that I am a leader, and I like to represent our people because many of our people have low self-esteem and they just don't defend themselves. Minorities are looked down at and it comes back to authority. I am sick of being looked down at. Why can't I be apart of that authority and use it in a better way than it was used on me?
>
> Engagement of individuals, communities, and families with institutions and government is important. If we do not engage with them, the government at all levels have to engage themselves with us as ordinary people. … People talk about empowerment. As an individual, could I empower them? No, I can't.… My [ambition] is to represent, talk, and defend people in a process of which we were never a part of, and we have to be part of that system. We are in the 21st century now and it is about time we become a part of it. Leaders make important decisions that effect individuals, families and communities. (P 2, 1:153, 876)

For the interviewee, the leadership goal was to raise awareness and help in the prevention of sexual and physical abuse in First Nations communities. He wanted First Nations individuals and communities to become engaged and assertive when using their voice. Once exposed, his conviction grew and silence was no longer an option.

The cause that leaders promoted was typically an affliction that harmed and inhibited the well-being of First Nations people, such as fetal alcohol syndrome. In the midst of overwhelming issues and responsibilities, First Nations leaders typically promoted a cause that was close to their heart. A contribution to the greater good of First Nations people was the hope. A leader described his internal motivation and his desire to instil change:

> One of the things I wanted to make sure to do while I am in this position is not just to collect a salary and reap the benefit of being in this position but to focus

> on trying to get things done in many different areas and pick on a cause as well. That is where FASD has been a huge push of ours. I take that on as a bit of a personal cause. In the end, looking at it internally, I want to look back at the short time that I will be in this position and see if we got something done. My internal motivation is making life better, if I can, or improving opportunity … you can't do everything from this position, there is only so much that the local chief and council can do. I just want to say that, "Yes, I provided that opportunity and I am responsible to provide options … to get things done, and to improve quality of life." (P 7, 1:521, 2578)

All the interviewed leaders wanted to improve the overall quality of life for their people. As the following leader declared, some leaders also wanted to change the misconceptions that the public had of First Nations people:

> While growing up on the reserve, going to town was a big thing – it was culture shock, and coming to the University of Regina right after grade 12 was still a culture shock. I can remember as a young kid in school, I was driven by the fact that I wanted to dispel the belief that Indians were dumb, stupid, drunk, and lazy. I took it upon myself to prove to my white friends that we are good at things and excelled in sports and school. I know we are different, but I tried my best just to show them that we are not the stereotypical Indian people. I went out of my way, even in grade two and three, to be the fastest in writing or whatever. It was just something I took upon myself just to show people not to stereotype us, to change society and their attitudes toward First Nations people. I don't know where I got that from, maybe from my mom or dad, but just from going to that white school I wanted to show them. I am trying to break down that stereotype and that myth about us because we are not that stereotypical Indian – that is not us anymore. (P 5, 1:369, 1765)

As revealed in their comments, the causes that motivated these leaders were often very large social issues and problems, and required the help and commitment of many people if it was to change.

Representation and Voice

Overall, the participants had many reasons to pursue leadership. Among other things, the participants wanted to be the voice of their people, to help right wrongs, to raise awareness, to improve social and economic conditions, to create partnerships with governments and in other segments of society, to help create and implement new forms

of governance, to foster and encourage self-governance, to promote the original intent of the treaties and inherent rights, and to restore health and well-being in First Nations people and their communities. Whatever the reason, the terms 'voice' and 'representation' were mentioned and alluded to repeatedly. The leader in the following quote explained that his motivation to lead began with the desire to be the voice of people who's "issues go unheard." He then progressed to specific issues that First Nations people in Saskatchewan experienced. He commented:

> I think the events that made me look at taking a run at First Nations leadership … was the fact that so many First Nations issues go unheard.… We need to be involved in decision making at a provincial level in Saskatchewan. The FSIN is a significant advocate of Treaty rights issues, to accessing lands and resources both from a perspective of traditional use and land use in general, and working on things that are still important to the Elders and communities. Also, urban issues and urban centres (Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and North Battleford) are areas of concern in First Nations leadership. I think the largest thing in my recollection of wanting to get involved was, "Well what about the people who are living off reserve? Do they have a say in what happens on their reserve? Do we have a say when it comes to decision making of the resources that are allocated to First Nations communities?" Our people fall through the cracks so many times in urban centers on housing programs, on social programs, and voting on civic and provincial elections.
>
> We need to recognize that we have a stake in the political process and a lot of the concerns are voiced at the community level, and First Nations leaders are faced with the task of having to try and service some of their concerns and issues while trying to provide support programs in urban centres where their members also live.
>
> I think when John Corbiere [1999] took his band to court on his ability to participate in voting. He said that he had a responsibility to ensure that some of his issues were being considered when it came to decision making in the community, when it came to leadership and what type of rights the people have off reserve. It has opened up a whole host of issues. I think, what I wanted to take on at that time was, "Where do First Nations people fit in the whole scheme of things when it came to their rights and their access to the programs and services that every Canadian, that most Canadians, have been granted through Treaty?" (P 3, 1:212, 1128)

This quote shows that there are many issues and they are all equally complex, pressing and important. The Chief passionately continued:

> We are put in a position where we have to fight for everything, including being involved in different employment initiatives in Saskatchewan. Housing – all of these things are barriers because of a lack of resources and our people don't have a whole lot of money. I think we need to do a lot of work in terms of getting some questions answered, especially when it comes to the department of Indian Affairs and its mandate to improve the lives of First Nations people. But their mandate, according to some of the recent statements by the Minister was, "I only have responsibility for the First Nations people who live on reserve." It is certainly another unanswered question on Canadian federal policy when it comes to First Nations citizens. I think we should be citizens plus in Canada, not citizens minus. Those are the circumstances we are in. We have a lot of unanswered questions from various federal ministers. So far, the "Honour of the Crown" has not been upheld.
>
> I think another significant reason I ran was the needed to establish a common ground, and some respect of where we come from. I think First Nations youth today are faced with so many challenges that they just want to be able to go to school free from harm and be able to learn and get an education and be able to be proud of themselves and their heritage. The other challenge I think we have is to meet the need to the educational requirements of First Nations people in Saskatchewan. I think the next big challenge is the question regarding the lack of funding for First Nations students going on to post-secondary. We have said that education is the buffalo of today, and with that education we are able to be competitive. We are able to live in a society, where we thrive in two worlds, respecting our culture while learning the cunning of the whiteman, and where we respect the spirit and intent of Treaty promises. Our Treaties stipulate that education and post-secondary education is a treaty right "for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow." Basically, the reasons I ran was to create a better way of life no matter where people live, no matter if it is on or off reserve.
>
> There is a lack of resources and infrastructure in housing. We are living in third world conditions in many First Nations communities. Housing and infrastructure was and is an outstanding issue when it comes to the way it is funded and resourced. There is a lack of adequate land base under the current Indian Act system and many First Nations who haven't entered into Treaty Land Entitlement agreements are still living in circumstances of poverty. [Farming] just isn't sustainable. There has to be a continued effort and getting more economic programming to communities. Those are my reasons for being in leadership. (P 3, 1:212, 1128)

From this quote, one can conclude that First Nations leaders have many difficult challenges, but the resolve for change was strong. This leader passionately shared the following personal experience:

> I don't know how many times we left the reserve to come to the city to deal with [my grandmother's] health … Within one year, I went to four different high schools because I was too embarrassed to go back. In that time, I had a chip on my shoulder because of the way my grandmother was treated and I felt early on that people shouldn't be treated like this.… So when I became Chief, I made sure that everyone was looked after, that the Elders were looked after. I brought up experiences with the councillors, and I told them straight out, "Here is what I have seen and it's not going to be like that. Here is how we are going to do business." (P 4, 1:313, 1565)

Personal fortitude led this leader to demand and cause change. He was determined not have other Elders go through the pain and struggle that his grandmother experienced. Different ways of thinking and doing in First Nations communities will lead to different ways of being. Reflection and meditation on past experiences often brings clarity and direction. In this instance, clarity has led to resolve a change in his community.

Internal Motivation

The preceding sections on leadership motivation, should help in dispelling the misconception that that all First Nations leaders are first and foremost motivated by money. Some leaders chose to address this misconception. One leader shared:

> I worked for the FSIN for 10 years and I used to get a [large] salary, plus travel. I went home and I went down … in salary, so it isn't the money that is the motive here, it's me representing people; people that can't speak for themselves or communities that can't speak for themselves. At the end of the day when I say things, many people congratulate me and when I get that pat on the back, I know I am doing and saying the right thing. (P 2, 1:164, 924)

A veteran leader was more specific:

> I am not sure how they got into their positions but I know the one individual that ran in this last election was asked by Elders … and we didn't have any money to support him. So, he was basically going in on his own and was limited to the resources he had. That is another thing, if you want to be a leader, you have to do it on your own. (P 8, 1:621, 325)

Another participant explained the situation that many First Nations leaders find themselves in:

> Well you have to be able to withstand all of that and have dedication because there is nothing there to benefit from anyway. I spent all 40 years in Indian politics and it was illegal for chiefs to contribute to pension plans. So, I sit here right now with no pension plan, and we use our own vehicles. There is not much incentive on the side of making a living.
>
> Oh yes, you have to be committed to these things I am talking about. I can't go and take a government job because if I do then I will undo my whole life history. (P 9, 1:678, 3703)

Some of the participants felt that compared to leaders in other segments of society, the financial benefits are 'few and far between' for First Nations leaders. As these leaders mentioned, because of the Indian Act, First Nations Chiefs across Canada could not contribute to a pension fund and campaign money came from people who are already in financial struggle. Since, external motivations such as material attainment and financial security were not motivational factors, many of these First Nations leaders were driven and sustained by internal motivators. It appeared that a leader's capacity was enlarged because the desire to lead came from within. The consequences of internal motivation were rewarding on another level. One leader exclaimed, "We have staying power like no one else has, and they don't understand why. It really depends where you gather your strength from, your family, your community, your people, and your beliefs. You have to ask yourself, 'What difference do I want to make?'" (P 10, 2:36, 109)

Challenges and Frustrations

Education

One of the biggest challenges for the participants in this study encompassed educational issues. One leader stressed, "We have a huge opportunity in education to

influence major changes" (P 9, 1:683, 3721). Although they acknowledged and celebrated the increased academic success of First Nations people, most of the participants expressed concern with the high student drop-out rate. Leaders felt that elementary and secondary school systems could foster understanding for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal students by presenting an accurate, and balanced representation of First Nations people – their history and culture. Recognizing First Nations contributions to the establishment and growth of Canadian culture in the classroom may lead to greater student confidence and self-esteem which, in turn, may positively influence academic achievement and success. One leader declared:

> I think that in whatever medium we can use to teach it, we should teach it. I think that we have to get back and do a better job in getting our message out, in getting our kids to understand and to learn about our story. A lot of our kids don't even know the creation stories or who we are. (P 4, 1:349, 1669)

The concerns in the educational realm did not stop with elementary and secondary curriculum. Some of the leaders were concerned with the loss of 'social capital'. According to some of the participants, people who attained post-secondary success, in general, did not return to their communities to share acquired expertise and knowledge in re-building a nation. Some leaders believed they understood the reasoning behind the decision to work outside the First Nations community. Because of funding restraints, it was difficult to financially compete with other organizations and agencies in luring educated First Nations people back to their communities. This leader expressed his concern:

> I think we need to take an inventory of what we do have in terms of educated people, where they are living, what we are contributing to in terms of their involvement with their respective communities. Can they assist our communities? [They should ask], "How can we lend a hand and use our

> expertise in our community?" and "How can we give that back to the community?"
>
> I think that is another challenge we have yet to figure out. We need to leverage our human resources. We need to invest money, time and energy in creating an educated workforce. Getting the benefits flowing back to the home communities is a challenge we must take on. (P 3, 1:290, 1483)

The participants indicated that the challenges that encompass First Nations education are enormous. Leaders discussed the challenges related to early childhood education, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. Most agreed that educational success was essential to individual growth, but hoped that First Nations communities would also benefit from the educational success of their members.

Perceptions of Society

Changing the perceptions and misconceptions of society was considered an enormous challenge for these First Nations leaders. They were frustrated with discrimination, injustice, inequality, racism, and the attitude of indifference to First Nations issues. One leader described the disadvantage in which many First Nations children begin life:

> As we speak in this country we are citizens minus and we should be treated as citizens plus. Citizens plus comes with the rights and responsibilities, our First Nations have to govern with full responsibility of our affairs. We can lead by creating a better way of life through educational, political, and social development. Right now, it doesn't seem like Canada truly wants to honour that path. (P 3, 1:267, 1354)

This leader believed that self-government and self-determination would increase individual and community capacity and perhaps elevate First Nations people to 'citizens plus'. Another leader explained the generational and oppressive effects of colonization. He was concerned the internalization of societal misconceptions by First Nations youth.

He lamented:

> We are still facing a lot of colonization and oppression as First Nations people and we have really suffered a lot in the last 500 years, and people don't understand that. Thank goodness for our Elders that kept their language and ceremonies going. That is a big source of inspiration, and just hanging on to those things just gives you your pride and dignity. If more of our young people can get that! They feel so bad about themselves because we are, in terms of society, a burden. Society thinks we get everything free from the taxpayers or this country, and our young people pick up that negative energy and those negative feelings. As a result, they don't feel good about who they are or where they came from because we have been lost because of [injustices] like residential schools. I am not going to keep blaming those things, but that is just the reality. (P 5, 1:372, 1783)

As the preceding quote suggested, First Nations leadership greatly admired the fortitude of their Elders, and their ability to withstand overwhelming circumstances on a consistent basis. Fortunately, many of these leaders had an Elder, an older family member that they could look to for encouragement and inspiration:

> But we will keep doing as much as we can, and right now we are commissioning our own study of the resources and asking, "What is water resource and forestry? What is out there?"
>
> We are doing a study of the minerals, uranium, and everything to do with resources. We have to know who is developing and exploiting it, what the value is, what we get and what we don't. Is there not a duty to consult with us before you go into our backyard? So, we will do this and it will cause a lot of waves because people don't want us to know. (P 7, 1:574, 2901)

This leader was frustrated with the general show of non-confidence and the lack of respect that some people in society display. Increasingly, most of the Chiefs believed that First Nations organizations are taking matters 'into their own hands' and making decisions that are determining their destiny. One leader indicated that their organization was collecting data and conducting their own research with the goal of understanding their communities from their own perspective.

Indian Affairs – The Political and Financial Challenges

Overwhelmingly, the leaders identified the working relationship with the Department of Indian Affairs as the largest frustration and challenge. Some of the participants explained that because of the relationship that evolved into a 'guardian-ward' association in the last 200 years, and because of the numerous unilateral legislations that have inhibited First Nations people from experiencing many freedoms and exerting independence, many First Nations people and their leaders have grown to not trust Indian Affairs. Some leaders were concerned with the dependence and lack of ambition that the 'guardian-ward' relationship has, over time, engrained in some First Nations people. Leaders felt First Nations people were under-funded, under-resourced, and over-exposed to bureaucracy.

Because worldviews, goals, and objectives of First Nations people drastically differ from the philosophical foundations of a bureaucratic organization, many leaders found it a challenge to reconcile Canadian government culture with their own worldview. The people would question their leader's intentions and loyalty if it appeared that they were placing more value on Indian Affairs initiatives and objectives than the initiatives and objectives of their own people. One leader described the dilemma and criticism that many First Nations leaders encountered after they were elected. He purported:

> We have a leadership style and it's out there somewhere, but I think just because we've been bombarded with non-First Nations values for so long, it's been pushed down or it's been put away somewhere…but it's there. The kind of leadership we have today is [not our] version of leadership, not really our own. … We have to go back in history and look at our leaders and how our leadership was… I think for lack of a better word we're Indian Affairs leaders, we're Indian Affairs chiefs. That was a comment that came from an Elder.… An Elder said we elect our chiefs on a Friday and Monday morning they start

> working for Indian Affairs. Because, basically, that's what we're pushing is a lot of Indian Affairs paperwork. So, basically, some people see us as being nothing more than Indian Affairs chiefs…that we're under the control and guidance of Indian Affairs…that they tell us what to do. I think we're more than that. (P 1, 1:25, 121)

Once elected, some of the participants felt they were working with contradicting and opposing forces – Indian Affairs and First Nations people. The goal of all the interviewed leaders was to ensure the voice of the people they represented was heard over the voice of Indian Affairs.

Often the interviewees worked tirelessly on advocating increased funding to address the needs of the people in their communities. Although, members who lived off reserve could vote for their Chief, they were not eligible for many of the benefits that on-reserve members experienced because Indian Affairs restricted funding to the on-reserve population. One participant expressed the frustration of the relentless negotiation process, and his desire for the official recognition of First Nations across Canada as governments:

> The frustrating thing in life is all the proposals and negotiating that is done with Indian Affairs. You negotiate and negotiate and at the end of the day, Indian Affairs will say no to you, so that is the frustration. There are 674 chiefs across this country that experience that, for example, getting new housing or renovations, expecting to get money for your youth and Elders and so on, then you get turned down. If Indian communities were funded based on their needs, it would be a totally different story. But we aren't funded based on our needs … The department of Indian Affairs and the government of this country have to recognize us as government, and we have to work on a government on government basis. (P 2, 1:179, 983)

This leader reiterated the frustration with under-funding, restrictive policies, and the financial situation that leaders sometimes inherit:

> A lot of leaders before my time and 20-30 years ago, weren't confused, they wanted to do the right thing. Indian Affairs have all these policies in place; you can do this, you can't do that. Communities were never funded based on their

> needs.… In regards to accountability and transparency, a lot of the chiefs today are trying to be accountable as much as possible with the resources they get … There are a lot of unfunded areas ... but, with the policies that departments have it is impossible. They are starting out in deficit before they even start. (P2, 1: 206, 1089)

The following quote described the extent in which the 1876 Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003) continues to regulate the First Nations people economically and socially, and the sporadic progress of First Nations initiatives because of the frequent change in Ministers of Indian Affairs:

> I think one of the largest mistakes ever made was the creation of the Indian Act. Lands were set aside and [the Indian Act] makes it extremely difficult for a community to get financing to build roads and houses, to provide infrastructure to their members.
>
> The continuing lack of movement of the Minister of Indian Affairs and the continuing change of the Ministers of Indian Affairs, the 'flavour of the month' so to speak, makes if difficult for our people. What is important for First Nations communities? We don't have any long-term commitment for First Nations communities because the relationship changes every time the Minister of Indian Affairs changes. The last time we had the Minister of Indian Affairs on economic development, creating healthy communities and programs for children in the communities, and highlighting education and capital requirements. We have now, in the last five or six months, have had two different Ministers of Indian Affairs. What is the next priority? We are still having to deal with the same financing tools, which are basically none, to sustain our communities. (P 3, 1: 263, 1342)

A frequent change in Ministers with varying knowledge, experience, and commitment to First Nations people does not help in establishing trusting relationships. One participant stated:

> First Nations leaders are feeling very discouraged about the challenges that lie in the future. There is lack of resources and lack of training for employees in many band offices. These professionals have to provide a certain level of care with the limited amount of program dollars that are available. It just doesn't meet the demand. (P 3, 1: 288, 1465).

With dire educational, health, and economic concerns in some First Nations communities, and the lack of support and funding to address those issues, First Nations

leaders are often forced to wait in frustration. Moreover, as a participant communicated, because of its nature, bureaucracy has the tendency to test and wear at a person:

> I am frustrated with the system because [the system] moves so slow, and frustrated with the amount of power and control Indian Affairs has, and sometimes with our own people because they are motivated by what is in it for them.… We have to keep trying to educate our own chiefs and vice-chiefs on the importance of breaking out of that mode. You don't just have to tinker with the little programs they offer you from Indian Affairs because there are bigger things here called inherent and Treaty rights and self-determination as indigenous people. Thinking about the bigger picture and getting our people to see that was very frustrating because a lot of our leaders would just focus on what they can get out of the Indian Affairs system and then say, "Let's work on that new program," and that was it. They spend all their time administering a little program! (P 5, 1:394, 1905)

The leaders that were a part of this study experienced frustration when progress was limited to Indian Affairs programs and mandates, and explained that Indian Affairs did not encourage or fund initiatives developed by First Nations governments. Apparently, there were repercussions for 'thinking outside the box'. One leader felt that Indian Affairs had no tolerance for ideas that his organization generated. He shared:

> We are limited because we don't have a lot of leeway dollars to do things. We are funded by a CFA and the government is telling us our objectives and telling us to write a report on how we did that. So we are given a mandate and we have to stick to that mandate…period. If we do anything outside of that, even if it is an excellent idea, we get penalized. When we talk about that they get intimidated. So funding will be chocked off and there will be pressure to not do stuff. (P 7, 1:575-569; 2877-2907)

These First Nations leaders desired to be a part of meaningful decision making and to consistently be active participants in helping to determining the destiny of their communities, in addition to being recognized as viable governments.

Dependency

Many leaders were worried that their people, especially young people, have internalized, without a challenge, stereotypical perceptions of Aboriginal people. Some leaders attributed the 'dependency mentality' to generational experiences of overt and unilateral legislative restrictions by the federal government. One leader explained the generational cycle and the difficulty in changing thought and behaviour patterns and replacing them with healthy alternatives – ones that will lead to independence and well-being:

> We are so co-dependent, and where did that co-dependency come from? It has been put on us for years. In the past, we were so co-dependent on Indian agents. We had to run to the Indian agent to kill a cow, to leave the reserve, and that mentality is still in our community. But, it has shifted from Indian Affairs to the Chief and Council. That co-dependency is still there and the self-esteem is very low in the communities. Then you ask the question, "How do we change that?" It is totally up to individuals what they want in life. You don't live on welfare all your life. It's a personal choice that people make … How do you get out of that? That is an issue.… I have went through that in my life, I made choices to drink, to use drugs, to sober up, to decide where I want to go and what I want to be. No one made those choices for me, I did it on my own.
>
> You can't really criticize some people for being responsible. How could you be responsible if you don't have a home, if you weren't taught to work or have a job?… It is that home, a loving family and community, if you don't have that, that sense of responsibility doesn't come. You could say, "We have to have responsibility." What if you haven't had it in your upbringing?… That is the thing about Indian Affairs mentality; you can't farm or work or go anywhere. That mentality is still there. (P 2, 1:189 -199, 1047)

The permit system, along with other restrictive policies, has contributed to many internal and external boundaries that First Nations people have experienced. This leader suggested that generational attitudes and lifestyles take time to change, but harmful conditions perpetuate when children and adults are not supported. Moreover, social and economic conditions will not improve if First Nations people continue to be left out of the decision-making process, and not consulted on policies and legislation of

which they are directly affected. An experienced leader asserted, "We are never involved in the design, development or planning of any policy or program. First Nations people aren't directly involved and that has to change" (P 5, 1:395, 1911).

Social and Economic Conditions

The leaders articulated the concern that they had with the social and economic problems that afflicted some of the people in their communities. Participants said they were troubled about the physical and sexual abuses, the addictions, the high level of poverty, and the varying degrees of relational, and physical dysfunctions that they frequently observed. The leaders in this study were not exempt from social and economic pathologies that torment many First Nations people. One leader shared, "There was the crisis and drinking and other bad things that I grew up with that people would probably shriek at, but you had to focus on the good times."

The poverty that many First Nations people experience distressed many of the leaders. One leader explained:

> First Nations in Canada are still expected to live with poor infrastructure and inadequate water, sewer, and housing. Revenue sharing is not on an equal basis when it comes to urban and rural municipalities and First Nations across Canada…. Proper infrastructure and larger investment in First Nations communities continues to be a forgotten aspect.… Today we are still dealing with First Nations poverty levels that are still 62nd and 63rd on the Quality of Life Index when Canada is usually number one in terms of enjoying quality of life and health. There are a lot of challenges, and unfortunately a lot more challenges will arise if there is a lack of cooperation and clear respect for First Nations people in Canada. (P 3, 1:262-288, 1336-1465)

In Saskatchewan's largest cities, 60% of First Nations people live in poverty and on-reserve conditions are no better (Saskatoon Communities for Children and Community – University Institute for Social Research, 2000 – 2001). Many of the interviewees indicated that poverty continues to be one of the largest challenges for First Nations

people and their leaders. One participant explained that, for some people, poverty has lead to unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and, sadly, child prostitution:

> You live it. You don't put Treaties, or inherent rights on the shelf at five o'clock, because there is so much need and poverty amongst our people and you feel that, there is so much pain. You see a child prostitute at 11 years old you see the broken homes. The kids with dysfunctional families are expected to exceed at school when they have a single parent at home who is on drugs or alcohol. This is not a healthy home environment for them. They aren't going to go to school because there is no support system in place.
>
> So, you see all these social dysfunctions and social pain and you can feel it, see it, know it, then you can have greater empathy. We need to start talking about poverty and why we need to have more access to the resources. You feel all this … our unemployment rates are so high. All these things, you have a real connection to it because you lived it too. Who wants to talk self-government? No way! I have to put a tank of gas in my car so I can get to and from school. (P 5: 408-421, 1977- 2067)

It was difficult for this leader to detach oneself from the visible and invisible problems of First Nations people because he had maintained close community relationships. He understood that for people whose daily goal was survival, large, visionary ideas were not important. First Nations leaders 'live' positive and negative experiences with their people because the communities they come from are relatively small; everyone knows everyone, and 'there are many relations'. Therefore, for many of the participants it was difficult to disassociate oneself from the lives, and not experience the pains and joys, of family and friends because interaction happened on a daily basis.

Many of the leaders have encouraged and helped to create forums where difficult issues are discussed openly and honestly. They want to tackle 'secrets' that have acted as barriers to well-being. One leader stated:

> If you can start with putting both feet on the ground and being positive then you can start dealing with issues. We are going to have to talk about a lot of tough things, including sexual abuse because it is one of the things that affects our communities and we are too afraid to talk about it, but we have to be able to talk about it and use it as a learning experience. Why did it occur? So it was a

> system, or something, that was put in our communities to break us up so that we don't stand together. Our people have to understand that because that was the government's agenda, we have to beat it, and use it as a learning experience so that it doesn't happen again. We have to put in place what we used to have in Cree cultures. We used to have people that were designated to watch over the young girls and watch over the young boys so that there was no abuse and so nothing like this occurred. (P 8, 1:610, 3153)

Increasingly, some of the First Nations leaders believed that they were confronting tough issues like sexual abuse with the hope of building healthy communities. One participant shared, "I am starting to see seeds that I have sown take fruit after 11 years of leadership. A lot of time is spent undoing damage caused by society – residential school, drugs, alcohol." He continued, "There is a lot of work and absolutely no end to issues. Many social problems block people from achieving potential. We need to address social problems, or a lot of potential will continue to be wasted" (P 10, 2:17-2:50, 50-153). Another leader concluded:

> We need healthy leaders and we need leaders that are going to take somebody else's kid as their kid. And we need to get to a place where it doesn't matter who gets elected, where we are all family, and we need to go back to what works in each one of our communities because we are all different. We all have our customs, protocol, and process and we need to believe in that. We need to work on making our all people well…. You have multi-generational abuse that just keeps going deeper and deeper. You have kids with parents that are classified as FASD, FASE.… We are going to have more of a problem here because there seems to be no sense of consequence, no sense of responsibility or not caring what people think.
>
> I think that overall there is frustration out there, but who is putting themselves forward and how are they putting themselves forward if they are dealing with that frustration. It is fine to be frustrated and ask, "What's the use?" and walk away. We all have a responsibility. We have a responsibility when we get our education. That is what education is all about. If we want to take the white way of thinking then yes, let's get our education and go on with life and [forget] everyone else. That is not who we are, we are there to help one another, not to compete against one another. There is a lot of jealousy, that is what is happening in our community. It's not alcohol or diabetes, it's jealousy. We need to talk about that, expose that, and bring that out. But, how do you do that without shutting the community down?

> I didn't realize, until not too long ago, my story in life, and where my path was. It is working hard. I have never been afforded the opportunity of taking a short cut. It was a journey, and I may have gone through a tough time, but I didn't look at it as a tough time, I looked at it as a blessing in disguise. I always wondered why we had to be so poor, but I look back today and realize what I have been blessed with – I must have earned that. The Creator has eyes and everything I do I put in the faith of the Creator.
>
> …As tough as it may be I would just [work], and things would always work out. My grandparents always said that if you work today, it will bring a better tomorrow. (P 4, 1: 329-317, 1577)

This participant encouraged First Nations leaders to value and strive to maintain their own physical and mental health. Furthermore, he argued they had to go beyond their personal and physical boundaries to help people in need, and they had to lead for reasons other than personal gain. He acknowledged that some Elders needed help, and that with education came the responsibility to give back to the community. The tough issues that he discussed were fetal alcohol syndrome and jealousy, he stated that both are preventable and caused harm and division in communities.

Time (the past and the present), lack of resources, and funding appear to cause significant barriers to First Nations leaders. On a daily basis, on a personal and professional level, the leaders I interviewed were confronted with large issues, problems, and circumstances that inevitably caused frustration, but not a sense of defeat. One leader affirmed, "We have staying power like no one else has, and they don't understand why. It really depends where you gather your strength from, your family, your community, your people, and your beliefs" (P 9, 1:679, 3709), and another declared, "We are a force to be reckoned with" (P 1, 1:121, 728).

Success – Rewards

Challenges and frustrations are a part of leadership, but so are successes. For the leaders in this study, success was not as predictable and encountered as were frustrations. However, the greater the challenges, the greater the feelings of accomplishment. Many leaders indicated that successes were achieved as a team rather than through individual effort. Consequently, leaders often gave credit to the community for accomplishments.

The organizational structure that most of the leaders strived to execute was lateral rather than hierarchical. In some cases, meetings were held every three months to generate ideas, discuss issues, and create community vision. Members in one community were prepared to meet on a few hours notice because they were actively involved in the decision-making process and often gave final consent to major community initiatives.

One leader referred to the geese flight formation, and the natural distribution of leadership that occurred over long and challenging distances. In circumstances where leaders involved membership, the community shared frustrations and successes. One leader reminisced:

> The people support us and think it's great that we can do this. We knew what we had to do – to think about the big picture and think about what you are trying to accomplish at the other end. Sure there is going to be a few bumps, it is never easy, but once you get to that point, we can turn around and think, "that was a long road" and we can be proud that we stuck to it and didn't back down. It's rewarding to know what you got in the end. (P 1, 1:108, 683)

This leader, along with his membership, was in the process of 'taking a stand' on an issue that they felt was unjust, and together collaborated on a plan. They were united in a cause and were willing to experience the consequences of challenging the system.

Generally, feelings of accomplishment and unity came when First Nations people as a whole collaborated and became 'engaged' in education, business, agriculture, leadership development, and cultural awareness. When asked about successes and accomplishment one leader had a lot to say:

> I think seeing people get engaged, I mean young people. We just had a youth assembly … They asked, "What is the FSIN doing regarding the mandate of Treaties and why is our Treaty right to agriculture not being honoured by the Federal crown? Why are we allowing provincial law and application of provincial law on reserves? Forums like these allow for more grassroots participation from the community and selection of young people. I can say that it's a success of ours if we make sure that we honour and respect our youth through a legislative process that is similar to that of the chiefs.
>
> We have had a number of good programs started under agriculture, like a youth program for 12-19 years olds that encourages kids to get involved in the agricultural field and to promote different skills.
>
> I think the FSIN, or even myself, has been a very important part of vocalizing the rights of people who live on and off reserve, and there have been a number of initiatives that have received greater attention like economic development. We have more involvement with programming and institution building, such as SIIT, and the Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation. The creation of the First Nations Bank of Canada will be the first chartered 'A' bank in all of Canada that will be First Nations owned.
>
> I have a sense of optimism that our people have the capacity to run businesses. I have the sense optimism that our people are thinking more along terms of sustainability, and of creating jobs for other people. I think that optimism is built when you see the numbers of new entrepreneurs growing every year in Saskatchewan and sustaining themselves past … 18 months to two years. A lot of these businesses are actually breaking the mould, sustaining themselves, and bringing up the average of successful entrepreneurs. So that brings me a sense of optimism. We are sending the right message – business plans are paramount and long-term planning of a business is very important when it comes to viability in the business sector.
>
> A lot of what I feel is important, and what makes me feel good, is attending pow-wows and cultural events. I feel good when I go to a pow-wow and hear the beat of a drum, see people dancing, and see the veterans that have fought for this land … I want to qualify that, when I see the veterans that have fought for the land that our ancestors have always occupied, maybe not necessarily for Canada but for the protection of our ways, safety and otherwise. It really inspires me to fight for the rights of First Nations people because of the people who have contributed to how we are living today, even though it isn't perfect.

> There are certainly some freedoms I think we enjoy, which is being proud of who we are, being able to practice our ceremonies, being able to put on cultural events, and seeing more of our young people graduate with degrees. Those are the successes I see. When people really come together, I feel a sense of accomplishment. Young role models in media being recognized for various achievements and being awarded are successes. We attended many award ceremonies in Saskatchewan where we celebrated the success of role models, of people who excelled in different areas including health and education. A lot of these stories are starting to be told. (P 3: 268, 271, 289; 1360-1471)

Despite the numerous barriers that First Nations people encountered, leaders identified accomplishments that have been achieved. The leader in the following statement identified a strategy for maximizing success and the unpredictability of success:

> The frustrations are there because you can have excellent plans and opportunities to make a difference, but you are frustrated by federal and provincial bureaucracy and unwillingness. When you do get a success it is enjoyable, but then you have to maximize your opportunity for success by having all of these initiatives going on at once. Being a one-issue person just won't serve your people right or well enough.… So get as many logs on the fire, or get as many fishing lines in the lake as you can because the odd time one of them will bite! When you do get a success, and you know that the percentage of getting success is minimal, it feels really good. The frustrations are there but you can't let them wear you down, you have to figure out how to increase opportunities for success. (P 7, 1:543, 2686)

Because of the disparity that First Nations experience, some of the participants indicated that First Nations leaders had to be strategic, strong-willed, optimistic, and focused on the results. One leader explained that accomplishments are 'sweet' when they do happen because of the long 'up-hill' battle that preceded the success.

Overall, leaders identified numerous First Nations success. These included: the implementation of inherent rights in Canadian Constitution; increased awareness and emphasis on treaties by First Nations people; ratification of Treaty Land Entitlements and specific claims; growing opportunities and programs that address holistic well-being; and, increased participation and employment of First Nations people in business,

medical, and educational sectors. First Nations leaders were motivated by the overall increased capacity among First Nations people.

Strength

Family

The majority of the leaders indicated that they gained strength and support from their family (wives and children). One man commented, "I absolutely draw it from my family; my wife, and children. You retreat into your family when you need that time away" (P. 7, 1:522, 2584). Many leaders stated that their families provided stability, encouragement, and understanding. One participant felt that his wife was the stronger partner because she had stood by him through the challenges of a demanding position.

As a whole, First Nations leaders spend a considerable amount of time travelling to numerous tribal, FSIN, regional, provincial, and federal meetings. One leader shared his family's concerns:

> I know [my family] does not like me being away all the time. You know, I do a lot of travelling; sometimes I'm not home for nights at a time. I could be gone to Ottawa, or Vancouver. So that's the part my family doesn't like, this includes my wife and children. They don't like the travel part because I'm gone a lot, my wife especially because she worries about me whenever I travel on the highway. … They worry about my personal safety, but they've accepted that I'm a Chief, that I'm a leader, and I have to do this and I think they've accepted it … Since my children understand what it means and what it takes to be a Chief, I think I have their support. Even though it takes me away from my family, I have the support of my family. (P 1, 1:9, 67)

Other leaders indicated that the people they serve rejuvenated them. The majority of the participants had established considerable support from their members. Interestingly, after their first term, four of the leaders were declared Chiefs through acclamation. That

is an amazing feat and an indication that these leaders gained the confidence of their people. This leader stressed:

> I guess I believe in what I am doing because it comes from the people and not me. The plan that I developed here, and the area of responsibility that I have, came from consultation with the leadership and membership. They put the plan in place, they decided what I should be strategically working on here. I believe in them. This is the responsibility that goes with the position. (P 4, 1:321, 1595)

Family, friends, and community members helped leaders to withstand a position with a demanding nature.

Spirituality

Spirituality was a major source of strength for First Nations leaders. Although spiritual expression was personal and varied, many gained internal strength from cultural and traditional beliefs and ceremonies. One participant highlighted the importance of traditional teachings and ceremonies in his life:

> As an individual, health and spirituality are very important and the biggest thing in life is probably the spirituality and the traditional ways of life and customs. I don't run to our Elders when I am in trouble. I visit them and they visit me. I practice our traditional ceremonies within our communities, our sundances and sweat lodges and burials … I get involved because I was taught and raised with it, I grew up with it and I don't dare leave it out of my life. (P 2, 1: 166, 930)

Another leader described the critical and essential role that the Creator had on his leadership:

> First Nations leadership is Creator law. We have to be answerable; we are answerable to the Creator first, and there is fear of [negatively] affecting your kids because you love your kids. It's not, "Is it going to get me elected?" It's, "Here is what the community wants and here is what we have to do." What we do, from my perspective as a First Nations leader, is guided by the ceremonies when seeking direction, it's guided by protocols, by our language, by our youth, by our women, families, and Elders. So, when I look at the difference, it's not money first. I didn't look at it as that … and it's not glory from my perspective. It is a commitment, and it's not just the fact that I am Chief – it's 24/7, 365 commitment. It is the covenant between you and the Creator and that is what

> sets your job description as a leader, and really, everything else doesn't matter. You make decisions that are in the best interest of people and those decisions are what your kids will inherent. (P 4, 1:340, 1342; 1643-1649)

This leader articulated that decisions made today had significant ramifications on future generations. From this perspective, leadership is more than a position, it is a covenant with the Creator; as a result, it should not be taken lightly or be abused. The following quote expanded on this perspective:

> The Elders have always said fear the Creator. You have to know that he is always watching you, everything you do and think, he knows. You better have good things in your heart and say good things to everyone because he is watching. I pray a lot. I believe that the Creator will help you through tough and good times. I believe he is always there and available and accessible. I learned that through my dad and the Elders. (P 8, 1:579, 580; 2930-2936)

The leaders in this study indicated that they depended on their spiritual beliefs for strength. Many of the participants performed traditional ceremonies, spent time learning from the Elders, and often prayed for strength and guidance.

Differences and Similarities between First Nations and Western Leadership

The participants identified more differences than similarities between First Nations and Western leadership. The categories of difference included, but were not limited to, the following: degree of availability and visibility; collective over individual orientation; personal and professional connection to the people, organizational structure and manner of conducting business; and, spirituality.

Availability

According to these leaders, the major difference between First Nations and Western leadership was found in the extent that First Nations leaders made themselves available and accessible to the people. Most First Nations leaders lived with the people

and it was expected that he/she share an array of experiences with the people – to celebrate noteworthy occasions, to mourn with a family, to help in times of crisis. Many answered the phone and had an open-door policy 24 hours a day, and gave what they could (time, their presence, or money) to the situation at hand. A participant described the commitment and dedication required of First Nations leaders in the following quote:

> As a First Nations leader, the difference is…it's a 24 hour job, it's 30 days of the month, and 365 days of the year. A mayor, a reeve, a city councilor, or even an MLA or a MA or a Premier or a Prime Minister don't deal directly with their citizens as does a chief, band staff, or a representative of a tribal council, or FSIN. You are on call 365 days out of the year. No matter who you are or where you are, you are responsible to those people in the community … Nobody knocks on the reeve's door or the RM's, but the chief's door is open 24 hours and my cellphone is always on – that is your job. If you put your name up to run for your community, you better make sure that you are there to represent them. It's that simple. (P 2, 1:192, 1017)

Another leader confirms the 24-hour dedication demanded from First Nations leaders:

> It's being at the office, being visible, and not running away from people or problems. It's 24/7, 365. I had general band meetings every three months…. think about the kids, stay away from alcohol, get involved, and work hard. Just be committed because it is going to be a tough job and people aren't going to reward you.… I think that the difference is Western leaders are protected, you can't get them, they have separated the Western leaders from the people; whereas, First Nations leadership is in your face. (P 4, 1:335, 338; 1619-1643)

As indicated above, First Nations leaders have to contend with an array of problems and issues night and day. Because of this, one interviewee believed that stamina, skills in communication (listening and speaking), mediation, negotiation, and problem solving are tested but developed over time. One leader explained that because of the social conditions that exist in First Nations communities there was a crisis orientation to First Nations leadership. The following statement stresses the importance being visible, knowledgeable, and skilled at working with various levels of government:

> Each First Nation has its community initiatives and concerns of housing, infrastructure and social conditions on the reserve. We [as leaders] have to identify with a lot of those conditions in which our people live in, which is in poverty, and a lack of finances to fund programs for sports, recreation, and culture. Our leadership, very much, functions on a crisis basis, and has to respond to concerns such as housing allocations on a regular basis and departmental funding priorities on an annual basis. Where do the resources come from to respond to the needs of the community under the current relationship?
>
> It is just a world apart from a Canadian politician and leader, or a provincial leader…. The adequacy and the capacity is the clear distinction, not leadership in itself, along with the resources to carry out the wishes of communities.
>
> I think politicians in Ottawa and Regina don't see the everyday issues of, [for instance], Northern Saskatchewan or First Nations communities where the water quality, infrastructure, and housing are very, very poor. A Canadian politician is not dealing with those kinds of issues on a daily basis. Saskatchewan First Nations leaders are always dealing with these situations. They are having to use crisis management and implementing policies from the federal government that are inadequate for First Nations at the local level. They are not getting what they actually need.… Being with our people, the power coming from the people has a bearing on our progress and [individual] leadership style dictates that progress. That is both the reality and the difference. Another thing is hard work. Leadership needs to demonstrate that they are there for the community night and day and there to drive some of the initiatives the community. (P 3, 1:242, 244, 245, 275; 1261-1393)

All of the leaders expressed a genuine desire to help and be a part of the lives of the people. One man shared, "I want to be there to help my people, no matter what. I know that my wife gets upset sometimes when band members phone at two or three in the morning needing a ride and I go to pick them up. I know she gets upset, but she doesn't say anything" (P 8, 1:587, 2978). Leadership like this is not focused on the bottom line, or does not declare or ask, "Here is the decision. What does it mean in numbers? What is the bottom line? What will it cost us? What does public opinion think?" (P 4, 1:340, 1643). Many leaders not only gave their time, but they also gave monetarily. One leader explained:

> I think for a First Nation leader, all the availability requests are all social. For example, people may be starving or they don't have enough food. So a lot of requests that come from my reserve are basically social. I get a woman who calls me about every two weeks who needs food and Pampers for her children and I give her money to cover Pampers and food. (P 1, 1:91, 635)

Another shared:

> It's those little things that mean something. Instead of giving them a brand new house, it's a little thing like taking a quart of milk over or giving them $30 to go to the hospital or for gas. Those are the things that count; it's not the houses or co-signing for a car or helping out. It's the little small things that count. (P 2, 1:193, 1017)

In order to maintain the often-demanding schedule of a First Nations leader, many of the leaders expressed a conviction or a sense of calling – a sense that they were a part of something larger.

Spirituality

Another major difference recognized by the participants was that First Nations leaders were more willing to acknowledge the importance of being spiritual and having a connection to a Creator. One leader stressed the crucial significance of 'Creator law' on leadership. Essentially, First Nations leaders refused to separate their spiritual beliefs from their work (church and state). Meetings, on a band, tribal, or FSIN level began and closed with prayers from Elders, and it was not uncommon for traditional ceremonies to be apart of business, educational, and medical functions. One leader clarified the incorporation of worldview and its spiritual domain in leadership activity:

> The difference is found in how we perceive the world and our spirituality. If you are a First Nations leader, you are not just a leader with the language but one who has a heart, and has values inside that are ingrained. This is a big difference because you are looking after the decisions you make for all of your people, not just for yourself. (P 5, 1:407, 1971)

Spirituality made leadership meaningful, and through its application, the interviewees

obtained guidance and strength.

Collective Orientation

Another difference, according to those interviewed, included the collective rather than individual orientation that First Nations people continue to value:

> I think the biggest difference I have found or seen is collective versus individual. The non-First Nations system is all based on individuals. You as a person, you only, you as a single person [amongst] a million people, you make something of yourself and be better than everybody else. That is the way I see the white system. First Nations people are more collective, we try to look after each other, we try to make sure all of our people's needs are met and we try and look after the collective as opposed to the individual. (P 1, 1:89, 632)

Many of the interviewees described their successes, frustrations, and leadership experiences from a community, or 'we' perspective.

Qualities of Leadership

Throughout the interviews, the leaders identified qualities that they admired, valued, and tried to emulate. According to these leaders, the most important leadership quality was balance, or "walking the talk". This characteristic could also be described as integrity. The participants felt that leaders should strive to be genuine and real, and work at aligning their behaviour with the values they promoted. For instance, if a leader discouraged the abuse of alcohol or drugs, he/she should not abuse alcohol or drugs; or, if he or she values education, then efforts should be made to improve the education system. According to some of the participants, "Walking the talk" began with knowing oneself and progressed, or was synonymous with, the process of knowing 'the people'. Not surprisingly, the journey of self-discovery often led to the collective discovery of First Nations people.

Humility was another quality that was perceived as an extremely important

quality. One leader suggested:

> Be humble, be kind and really mean what you intend to do. People have political plans but if it comes from the heart it is a totally different story. Never try and be better than anyone else, always have equal footing with your people because they put you where you are. That ladder that is climbed takes time to climb up, but once you get to the top and you make a slip there is a long fall to the bottom. The people you bounce off are the ones that put you up there. You have to be very careful, be thankful, and respect who put you there. (P 2, 1: 209; 1107)

For this man, leadership was a position that should not be taken for granted, and it should be kept in perspective. Another leader advised, "I think it is important that you have a certain ethic in the leadership you are trying to exude, but you also have to remain grounded" (P 7, 1:516; 2554). With leadership comes greater influence and power, but these people felt that leaders should not be consumed or defined by the responsibility and power assigned to them by the people. Postional leadership is fragile and prone to change.

Leaders also admired the following characteristics in people: knowledge of culture, traditional language proficiency, conviction, compassion, hard work ethic, honesty, skilled communicator, sense of humour, determined, fair, listener, team-builder, confident, consistent, reflective, respectful, trustworthy, and optimistic. Furthermore, the ability to be proficient in 'two worlds' was valued among the leaders. The interviewees understood that leaders come from diverse experiences, languages, worldviews, and backgrounds, and that they had varying strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some people may be better listeners, and some may be skilled at organization and management, while others are visionary thinkers. It was apparent that, for these leaders, effective leadership was a collaborative, organizational effort rather than an individual endeavour.

Standards and Succession

First Nations leadership across Canada drastically changed with forced implementation of a foreign electoral system that was outlined in the Indian Act (Government of Canada, 2003) of 1867. First Nations leaders suddenly became responsible to the federal government and the Indian Agent became the force and authority in every First Nations community, leaving First Nations leadership with a minor and symbolic existence in the eyes of the federal government. Today, First Nations leaders continue to work toward policy applications of First Nations treaties and inherent rights, and towards maintaining historic values and rights. The leaders in this study wanted to move out of the shadows of the federal government and set new models and standards of leadership. One leader believed that new standards in First Nations leadership began with personal leadership:

> I think we're now setting new standards. You know, I've been going into sweats now for the past five years and getting back into [spirituality] … So that's what I did to help myself to get better, and because I knew my main problem was alcohol, I dealt with it knowing full well that I had to be ready for this when I became chief. I think those are the two areas that I concentrated on – I became sober and I got back into our spiritual traditional ways.
>
> I'm hoping that our young people look at us as leaders and say, "Yeah I want to be a leader" … and if I leave next year having someone say, "He was a good leader because he was spiritual and because he was a [good] person." So those are good qualities that I would like to leave behind.
>
> We are setting standards, rules, and regulations as we go along. I am hoping that because I have been through the system people realize that in order to be a good worker you have to work your way up. I started from the very bottom; I went from helping my wife clean the band office to being a secretary and working up from there.… Coming through administration, I have also done interviews, evaluations, and proposals. I have a lot of that natural experience just by being here. I am hoping that when I leave, it is something the people will take into account when they elect a new leader. (P 1, 1:37, 38, 124; 211-740)

Many of the leaders believed too many people "sit and wait for things to happen" (P 10, 2:33, 91–98). One participant contended:

> The new leadership is about empowering your team and asking, "What do I need to do to my team so they can produce?" As a leader, I have to ask if they need more resources so I can go and find funding, I need to ask if they need more staff so I can try to find the resources to give them that. You have to try to empower your team and delegate responsibilities … All too often our leaders are going into way too much detail when they should be the big thinkers, and the ones thinking about vision and policy. They should be thinking more broadly: How do we fit in the big world?… What it is our community adding to the betterment of all Aboriginals, or all of humanity? They should be making the world a better place rather than talking about how many doorknobs and broken windows need to be fixed in the community for the year? Leaders need to keep that distinct. (P 6, 1:489, 2418)

Many leaders pursued economic and social development beyond historically imposed boundaries, collecting community data, and researching global and Indigenous initiatives with the goal of improving conditions in their communities. One interviewee indicated that his First Nation developed its own election code, and the document has grown from 1 ½ pages to over 14 pages. Locally generated polices set standards for current and future leaders and they set the stage for succession. One leader commented, "I won't be here forever, but I will do my best while I am here by providing a base for the next generation of leaders. It is important to set standards of governance, leadership, fairness, and methods for redress" (P 11, 2:71, 268-274). Another leader hoped that "when leadership changed the hard-earned foundation doesn't crumble" (P 10, 2:33, 91:98). In general, these leaders felt accountability not only for their leadership, but also for future leaders. One person warned, "We cannot think just about today, we have to think about tomorrow, and leave the world with a better quality of life than we've experienced" (P 11, 2:71, 268-274). Altogether, the participants worked hard on creating positive change in leadership and governance, and many hoped that the

momentum that was started will not only be maintained, but also experienced on a larger scale.

Generally, the participants were more than willing to 'pass the torch' of leadership, and they worked on developing organizational structures and policies that could guide succeeding leaders. A leader said, "One of the things, my wife came up with is, 'the sign of a job well done is that when you are gone, they don't miss you.' I don't know where that came from, but if you go and everything falls apart then you didn't do a good enough job" (P 7, 1:545, 2698). This statement suggested that leadership is guided by a people-generated vision, and that leaders are held accountable to the people. If people are involved in the decision-making process and the creation and implementation of vision and policies, they will ensure that the vision and the policies will transfer from leader to leader. Perhaps the following quote will confirm the power of community:

> At least we know that we are always continually going in one direction and so any new chief can't just come in and go on a tangent. That is where our goals, objectives and five-year plan comes in. If I leave tomorrow and someone comes in, that direction will already be there for him or her because the five-year planning and all the goals will be there. So that is where the group norm comes in for you, they set that direction. (P 1, 1:152, 866)

Overall, the participants expected an eventual change in leadership, and when the time came for another leader to step into their position, they were ready to embrace other opportunities and experiences, but hoped that the foundations and policies would strengthen.

First Nations Leaders on Leadership Development

In regards to leadership development, the participants were initially asked the following: "What formal or informal leadership development have you taken over the years? Describe the programs, the experiences, and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the programs." The leaders were interested in First Nations leadership development, but overall, there was not as much detailed information specifically about leadership development as there was about First Nations leadership.

Some of the leaders made reference to historic process of leadership identification. In some cases, and as the following quote described, the procedure of selecting leaders began at a young age and Elders were very much involved in the identification of leaders and in teaching:

> The Elders talked about the old ways and how we used to do things a long time ago. They used to say back then that they could tell which kids, even at early ages, which ones were going to be the spiritual ones and which were going to be the good leaders and hunters. So they started grooming them at a young age and I think we need to get back to that. Even the non-First Nations are already encouraging their children at a young age to decide what to do with their lives, we used to do it the same way.
>
> The spiritual ones used to be matched with a spiritual mentor. In the past, we had a system in place. I think we just need to get back to that.… That is where mentoring thing comes in. Some people might not have what it takes to be a pipe carrier or a spiritual leader, but because they are interested in it, they take that role even though they might not have what it takes. Because we are trying to fill a void, all it takes to be this type of person is to be interested. Sure, you may have a pipe, but maybe that is not what you should be doing. We need to get back to that point where we can pick out who is going to be good at what. (P 1, 1:130, 764)

Another participant shared a similar perception:

> What I see is that every person is born with a gift and some people are born leaders and some people aren't, they have different gifts. No matter how many times you send an individual to leadership courses, it's not going to make them a stronger leader. They will know the pros and cons about leadership or how a leader should be, but they still don't have either the backbone or what it takes to

> be a leader. To me, when you look at Sweetgrass and Big Bear, they were recognized very early on that they were leaders. Once recognized, they were supported and moulded. Not just any person can do that. Once the Elders know who has a gift, and they can then identify that person. They don't say that they are going to make you into [a leader] – it's not that easy. [Certain] people recognize a gift you may have, and if it is a leader within politics, they know who that person is. We may think we are all leaders, and we all are in one way or another, but it may not be "our" cup of tea. (P 4, 1:346, 1657)

According to this statement, historic First Nations leadership began with Elder observation and the intentional search of certain traits, skills, abilities, and personalities in children. Basically, Elders looked for 'God-given' strengths, then worked at nurturing and developing the whole being. Once a leader was identified, then a lifelong mentor and education process began.

Increasingly, First Nations people are working at incorporating their own organizational structures and creating policies that acknowledges First Nations philosophy and worldviews; but it has proven to be challenging. One leader reflected on the hierarchical design of First Nations organizations:

> There is a true desire to organize, to discuss and undertake leadership development but it sometimes clashes with a lot of the social structures that our Elders have taught us about governing ourselves; this is in a circle fashion, respecting the cultures and the ways of the Creator, and conversing in our language. There is so much to look forward to – the building of own institutions, language, culture, and society within Saskatchewan.… Then of course, building a united front in Saskatchewan is also a desire and making it known that First Nations in Saskatchewan have governing processes that work, that are credible, and have a firm vision in place. People in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada should be aware of this. (P 3, 1:231, 1171)

Another leader shared his ideas on the challenges of integrating First Nations philosophy in a modern world:

> Not that you transplant it into the modern, but there might be some strengths there that we can combine. You reconcile the old with the new because no culture has ever stayed static, they have always changed, sometimes due to environment and sometimes due to other situations. We always grow, we didn't

> just sit back and die and freeze in time. All I am saying is let's combine the two and grow. It has always happened and let's keep it happening. (P 6, 1:493, 2430)

This person concluded that change happens, and it is a constant. Generally, cultures and societies had to be adaptive and resilient in order to survive. First Nations people have endured significant change and a test of will in the last 200 years, today, many of the interviewees strived not only to survive in a modern world, but to excel without losing First Nations identity and historic traditions.

Formal Leadership Development

Some leaders identified their post-secondary education when asked about formal leadership development. In this study, all the participants had their high school diploma, two people had a Bachelor of Education degree, two had Business Administration degrees, and one had a Bachelor of Commerce degree. Some of the leaders described the tremendous struggle in achieving their high school diploma and post-secondary education, and they all gave credit to family members and community members who encouraged them to finish. One participant shared:

> [My grandmother] always valued education and in my family there was only one other person, my cousin, who got her degree. Within the boys, I was the only one, the first one. She saw the value in that and believed I needed to be self-sufficient and independent rather than dependent. She said that your independence is going to come from the power you will possess from education and you will always need to (and this is what all the people in my life have told me) be able to balance white education and First Nations education. You need to be able to learn what is on that side so that you can use that together in knowing who you are and who we are as people. (P 4, 1:315, 1571)

This quote confirmed that formal schooling was valued among many First Nations Elders. His grandmother encouraged the participant to learn more about his identity and the identity of his people. All the participants felt that education was a new means of

survival and the key to greater independence and freedom from oppression. Without the unconditional support of key people, the struggle to obtain post-secondary educational success would have been even greater. Another leader explained:

> We were the first grade 12 graduates in the community when the band took over. I, along with one other guy, were the first official graduates from the community. There were about six or eight people in our class, and we were the only two who had enough credits at the time to graduate from school. We were pushed a lot to get things done just because we were the first graduates within the community. We were pushed all the time to get things done, and we were held accountable … and so I felt an obligation to go on.
>
> Almost everyone in that class has post-secondary education. Out of eight people, everyone has taken some sort of post secondary. One or two took some college or technical training ... I think we were pushed as a class because we were the first in the community. There was one guidance councillor who even drove me to Saskatoon after I decided to go to SIAST. There was that type of support as well. (P 7, 1: 508, 2512-2518)

Post-secondary education has helped in preparing First Nations leaders because it developed their understanding of the Western world – of dominant organizational structures, values, and beliefs systems. It has developed and strengthened their capacity to function effectively in two worlds – the First Nations and the Western world.

Overall, two leaders attended formal leadership development programs, and one leader stated that he participated in various personal development programs. One of the Aboriginal leadership development programs was outside the country. The leader who attended this program felt it had merits, but he indicated that the program did not address Canadian policies. He concluded that "we could develop our own" (P 10, 2:4, 15). Another participant attended a Canadian First Nations leadership program. He posited:

> I have attended a session here and there but that was during my time of having this position. I always take the positive side of things because there is something you can learn from it; if 90% of it was lousy then there is probably 10% that you can take. You also factor in the money and time after that, but at the time, you

> just take what you can out of it. I did find the Banff sessions excellent though. They had speakers from different organizations talk about challenges or leadership challenges. There were also some governance training sessions from some boards…. Prior to that … nothing really, other than going to play hockey and learning how to take on a leadership role and have a proper attitude. (P 7, 1:526, 2602-2608)

One leader did seek and implement leadership strategies with the goal of strengthening leadership skills and knowledge in his tribal district. Like this participant, many of the leaders participated in leadership seminars and workshops after they were in a leadership position. Up until that point, there was not a perceived need to attend a program for leadership development.

This leader, as others in the study, indicated that cost and time were factors to participating in programs outside the province. A previous section outlined the financial and bureaucratic frustrations that many First Nations leaders frequently experienced. A First Nations leadership development program would have to be cost-effective and take the time factor into consideration. Interestingly, all of the participants have, at some point in their lives, participated in team sports, and continue to support and value sports. Some leaders felt that team and individual sports taught valuable leadership and life lessons such as collaboration, team-building, goal-setting, dedication, and commitment.

Informal Leadership Development

The participants believed that they experienced more informal, sporadic, and indirect leadership development, and the process often began in childhood. Upon reflecting leadership development, one leader identified listening, observing, and interacting with people as a child:

> As far as any formal leadership training, I have never taken any leadership training. So a lot of stuff that I have learned I have learned mainly from talking to people and interacting with people, talking to leaders. I know when I first started working for the band I had just come out of grade 12 so I had a little bit of that educational background. But as far as leadership, the biggest leadership development was listening at the community meetings we used to have at my great-grandmother's.
>
> I remember I was just a young boy, maybe 10, and actually going over there with my dad and sitting with all these people and listening to all the people talk. I remember sitting around and listening to what they had to say. Sometimes I didn't understand what they were saying but I would sit there and listen to them. One thing I have always heard is that you should always listen to your older people. Some of them may not say the things the right way but there is always a message in what they say. I knew they were meeting for a purpose but, at the time, I never really understood the whole concept. (P 1, 1:95, 641)

Evidently, children who observed people making decisions for their immediate family or community were left with a lasting impression of exemplary or un-commendable leadership, one participant commented:

> It was more of just learning the hard way and observing. I usually never went to people for advice because I thought I would just be wasting their time and felt they had more important things to deal with. I usually just, from power of observation, just figure my way out of things, which is probably [silly].
>
> You respected them for being in a leadership position, because of my early brushes of seeing what people had to do to survive. They hold themselves in a tough position because it's tough and it's a tough position. So you respect all of them and watch how they got things done. You can draw from any one of those leaders of the past, the good and bad. (P 7, 1:528, 534; 2644-2614)

Eventually, when some of the interviewees become leaders, they drew on past experiences and knowledge to assist them in their role, emphasizing the importance of positive role models and the importance of involving youth in leadership forums.

Images of First Nations Leadership Development

The next question that the participants were asked was, "When you hear the phrase First Nations leadership development, what images, concepts, or experiences come to mind?" The answers to this question were somewhat critical, and, in some

cases, led to questions that the leaders themselves wanted answered. One leader declared:

> I have yet to see, and I stand to be corrected, where this is being looked at. Where are the Elders? You have scholars that come in there and tell you. I cannot see, for the life of me, how they think that it has to be PhD or Harvard law students that should be conducting this and telling you about leadership just because they have the credentials. I really don't think they know this. I think they understand in depth what Western leadership is but to say, "This is what First Nations leadership is." I don't think so.
>
> As I said, people are born leaders, and I am not saying that because I am a leader right now. There are people that are born teachers and then there are people that become teachers and you wonder why they are teaching. That is what I am getting at. You send these people out to get leadership training and within their capacity, it may help them with this and that, but my point is that people are identified as leaders or are born to become leaders. The Creator throws people at us every step of the way and then once we get in these capacities then I think that we continue to be moulded by our experience.
>
> You are always learning and that is why I always say it is lifelong learning. I don't care how educated a person is, if they don't have common sense, what good are they because they always have to be told what to do. If you stop telling them what to do then they stop doing things. So to me, I disagree with people who say, "You have to be educated to be a leader." I think it is good, but I have seen a lot of educated people who are chiefs or councillors who … don't do any justice and I have seen people who don't have the education who have done well. (P 4, 1:351, 354, 352; 1669-1681)

As this leader stressed, First Nations leadership development involved more than formal education. One leader said that leadership has to "come from the heart; everything comes from the heart" (P 8, 1:622, 3260). Many of the participants shared the sentiment that the 'heart' was the source of effective leadership. First Nations leadership development has to acknowledge the whole being – physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual. For this reason, one participant suggested the application of the Medicine Wheel as a tool to teach balance and well-being.

Another leader believed, "You have to develop capacity beforehand and during leadership because a political seat is held for a short time" (P 10, 2:2, 5-7). This implies

that leadership is not a position, but a lifelong endeavour that demands certain responsibilities such as expanding capacity. In this sense, leadership can be perceived as a state of knowing and being. Perhaps that was the reason for the critical reaction to this question. There are very personal elements to leadership development, and although there were similarities, these leaders came to leadership from different circumstances and environments. In addition, all the leaders believed that leadership development was a process not an event. Consequently, it could not be confined to a program or recognized by a certificate or degree. With ideas like these, one can better understand the following comment: "I can't see a school where you teach people how to be leaders. Leaders are born" (P 8, 1:618, 3242). Leadership development needs more than a classroom situation to be effective. From this perspective, leadership is a calling.

Elements of First Nations Leadership Development

After describing leadership images, the participants were asked to list elements of a First Nations leadership development program in Saskatchewan. In addition, the following question was asked: What would be the purpose and goal of a First Nations leadership development program in this province? What, if any, relationship would it have with other programs or organizations? The participants had many ideas to this question. The dominant views were that First Nations leadership development should have a strong First Nations and community-based orientation.

One leader felt that leadership development began with parents, therefore leadership development should be available to families and communities. He commented, "How kids are brought up has great influence on the lives of their children

and, in turn, influences the community, and parents determine the qualities that are built into their children" (P 10, 2:55, 175-183). His own parents were very influential in his growth as a leader; they supported his educational endeavours. Although he feared it, when he left home to complete his high school education this participant felt there was never any risk of losing his cultural identity. By leaving his community, he learned how to wear two hats, live in two worlds, and performed different roles in each place. Furthermore, depending on the environment, he learned to be adaptable, and he never felt the need to choose one culture over the other, but felt that he needed to develop his ability to practice and strengthen language fluency and cultural awareness in both instances. Like others, he felt that leadership development was a process, one that began in childhood. This leader stressed the importance of leadership programs that developed families.

There was a consensus among the leaders that leadership development, in whatever shape, should have a definite First Nations orientation with some Western elements. A participant contemplated and concluded, "In a sense we do have to learn both cultures but then what culture should supersede the other? If there is going to be anything superseding it should be ours, it should be the non-First Nations underneath ours" (P 1, 1:128, 758). Many of the leaders agreed that culture and the presentation of the realistic demands and responsibilities (perhaps in the form of case studies and best practices) should be imbedded in a First Nations leadership program. One leader elaborated:

> Right now, we must pursue the contemporary and professional development of leadership skills for chiefs and councils. But, there is a special role that Chiefs and leaders play in First Nations communities – it is very much a figure head role, a role model. There is a role for leaders to fill in terms of knowing their

> culture, and recapturing that culture in their educational system. Leaders must be professional, diligent, and hard working people. There are a lot challenges a First Nations leader is expected to meet. (P 3, 1:287, 1453)

Many of the participants believed that a First Nations leadership development program should emphasize First Nations traditions, culture, and worldview. The leader, in the following quote, reiterated the idea that leadership development is a process, one which should not be rushed. He felt it should be a forum for examining relationships, and discovering, and perhaps challenging, individual and societal assumptions. He contemplated:

> When I look at these leadership workshops that are going on out there, I think, "What are they geared towards?" Sure, we have to learn how to negotiate, know ways of negotiating, know the constitution, or what laws govern us as First Nations people. But, nothing talks about our law. Nothing talks about the Creator's law. So what kind of leader are we talking about? If it is a political leader, like I said, everybody has a special gift, the Creator blesses us. It is for us to try and recognize what it is we are blessed with. As the Elders will point that out to us, as time goes on, we will eventually see the light.
>
> The Indian Act talks about accountability and responsibility, but it talks about it from Western influence of thinking. Rather than saying let's throw that out, here is what we have to get at: we have to understand our Creator law, our ceremonies. There is a process, a protocol to get to where you want to get, and to do what you have to do. You don't just go out into the bush and shoot a moose, bring it home, and cut it up, there is a process. But people are so conditioned to be busy.… There is a process we have to go through to ensure that things are done right and we will get there when we get there. Slow it down.
>
> There needs to be some time to reflect but we need to get back to understanding the things people never even thought of. What are we teaching kids about the Creator law, about the principle of relationships, and how we are related? How are we teaching people how to love one another, about working with one another, about sin, about jealousy? So where is that? Because that is a big part of what our kids are learning. There is so much that could be taught around that. (P 4, 1:347; 1657-1663)

As this person stressed, a First Nations leadership development program should allow time to reflect and explore answers to tough questions, and opportunities to investigate individual and community First Nations values. Besides the cultural component, many

participants felt that a First Nations leadership program should include information about treaties, inherent rights, governance, federal, provincial, and First Nations mandates and policies, organizational structures, history from a balanced perspective, and First Nations worldviews. Some participants believed that case studies and mentoring would assist a leader on many levels.

Community-Based Leadership Development

Many of the interviewees expressed that First Nations leadership development would be most effective if it was community-based. After all leadership should be a reflection of individual and community values and beliefs (P 10, 2:1, 9:9).

In a community context, the hope was that more people would benefit from the program. As the following account supports, leaders want to learn and grow alongside the people in their community:

> A keen sense of knowing what is achievable from the desired community objectives and wanting to achieve success for the community by listening is important. Our people are more than able to come up with solutions that lead to change and determine how they fit in the world around them. (P 3, 1:272, 1387)

In the following reflection, one participant stated that community-based leadership development required the acknowledgement of the diverse community configuration, and progress depended on the participation of all community members:

> As a leader you have to understand your own values and what is important to you in the world and then you have to align your career with that. Also, the decisions you make on a day-to-day basis have to align with those cultural values. It is the same way with our communities. If we understand our culture, our traditions, and I don't mean going back where it's all about pure traditions and we don't have room for the Catholics and the other Christians in our communities or the youth who are listening to hip-hop or whatever. What I am saying is that we have to have a conversation.
>
> When I talk about board governance and decision making, I always talk about this idea about having a conversation. Never ever jump to a decision too quick, leaders have to be facilitators. You have to facilitate a discussion because if you

> jump to a conclusion too quickly some of the people are going to buy out and they are going to feel that they were left out and they aren't going to buy in, which means it isn't a legitimate decision or solution or negotiated settlement. The way you get there is to allow conversation to happen. Sometimes you are almost at the solution and then it degenerates again, but that is okay, maybe it is meant to happen. When everyone has had the input, and then the agreement is reached, everyone will buy in, everyone will live with it, and everyone will agree with it. That is what I am saying about tradition and cultures as well.
>
> What are the values of a community? We don't want to leave out the young people, we don't want to leave out the old, and we don't want to leave out the Christians or the traditionalists. So what we need to do – and I have been talking about strategic planning as a way to do this, is have community leaders that have community meetings that discuss what we are about, who we are, and where we want to go; you have to set a vision. What I am saying is that our community needs to come together, have a discussion and say, "This is what we are, these are our values, these are our traditions, and this is what we want." It doesn't mean we have to run our modern governance in that same old structure that it used to be. Maybe it would work, maybe it wouldn't, and I am just saying that we should explore that. There are principles, sometimes it is out of our language, or there are concepts about the way we interact, the way we treat each other and make decisions, that is what we draw on and that is what forms the core of who we are. (P 6, 1:476, 478; 2333-2354)

Leaders in this study frequently stated, 'Know who you are; know your people.' Both require intentional reflection, interaction, time, and risk. More and more, First Nations leaders are taking proactive steps in personal and community discovery and well-being.

Personal Development

Many of the leaders supported a personal development component in a leadership development program. One leader remarked, "You can't fix the world if you can't fix yourself, and you can't fix community if you can't fix your family" (P 10:2:57, 188). This leader felt that effective community development began with personal development. From his experience, once personal healing and personal maturity was achieved, people would show greater respect, and would be more willing to listen. He stressed that a leader's "talk should match [his or her] walk." A leader gave the

following example, “If we have a dry reserve, then I should not drink, especially if I was promoting health and well-being” (P 10, 2:14, 44). In other words, leaders should model and live their values and beliefs. Furthermore, he explained that the success experienced in a nurtured family context could be duplicated and multiplied in the community. This leader believed that a commitment in the development of a firm personal foundation would lead to aspirations of community development. In his opinion, people who ignored personal development had greater incidence of experiencing social problems. When this happens, the community loses the benefits of the individual’s skills and talents.

Most of the participants recognized that personal development was not an easy process because it sometimes required intensive individual introspection. Although he agreed with the concept of personal development, one leader expressed the following concern:

> I think that before you get there you would have to have a real trusting relationship. If you start with that they will shy away from it so that could be one of the end products that you get to as well. It could be a component of, but it might not get any [credibility] until it has been around for a while. Some people will also ask if that is really the home for it. But, you could investigate the characteristics of successful leadership and people who have them, and then talk about that as part of an overall program. Once they start internalizing, looking at, and comparing themselves to [successful leaders], then you can go through [in-depth personal development]. It would have to be stealth at this time though, make them think about it and have them make the invitation. (P 7, 1:567, 2859)

One leader believed that it was his responsibility to work on personal issues, so he participated in ‘base training’ and counselling. He shared:

> I can only speak for myself I suppose. Like I was saying earlier, I wanted to do the best job I could and I took the necessary training to do the best job I could. I took four or five different trainings to discover who I was, find out what made me tick, to find my strengths and weaknesses. If things are going to happen then

> it is up to me to get the ball rolling. For me, that is what is important in a leader – you have to be positive no matter what happens. We have to understand things and rise above tough situations.
>
> I often say, "In order to know where you are going, you have to know where you have been." That is what I am telling my people … you have to deal with all this garbage first, and if means dealing with sexual abuse, spousal abuse, any kind of abuse, you've got to talk about it … so that it doesn't happen again. You can always start fresh and eventually get where you want.… It is a learning experience.
>
> The Elders say, "You have to look after yourself first, if you don't look after yourself you can't look after others." If you want to be an effective leader you have to find the tool that will make you an effective, positive leader. (P 8, 1:605,617; 3117-3219)

Some leaders felt that personal development initiatives have only strengthened their leadership, one interviewee said that he was able to acknowledge and eliminate 'triggers' that caused negative responses because of 'base training' and counselling. Others said they have taken the initiative to undergo personal healing, and in doing so, as role models, they encouraged people in their community to grow personally, and perhaps become involved in a healing process.

Logistics of First Nations Leadership Development

The final question that was asked relating to First Nations leadership development was: Is a First Nations leadership development program necessary in our province? Why or why not? If so, who would be the prime stakeholders, and who would be involved as faculty? What are the complications and the benefits of creating a First Nations leadership development program in Saskatchewan? Who would be the students? Where would it be located? What would be the length of the program? What should be the cost for participants? Generally, this question proved to be challenging because it required the participants to think of specific details. When asked this question, one leader responded with more questions:

> Well, where is the money coming from? Who controls and accesses it? Who is the board director and how is it going to be set up? If you are going to have a First Nations governance institute, do you want to set it up with funding from the government and Indian Affairs? Do you want to set it up with your own money? The issues is, "Where is the funding is going to come?" What curriculum will be taught? There is a need for our own First Nations government, there is no question, but if you are going to have a governance institute, you want to start fresh and have independence. It's, "Oh yes we have a million dollars from Indian Affairs this year for this institute, but next year it is cut." If you are going to do something, you need a long-range plan of 5 to 20 years so you can start doing some strategic planning. Maybe First Nations people will have to pay for it themselves, but even then, we don't have the resources. It is a great idea.
>
> Our Elders should teach there, we should teach the Treaties, inherent rights, models of government, and the royal proclamations and their impact on our people. (P 5, 1:423, 2085)

One participant described a regional leadership program for new leaders. Initially, in this program new leaders were given the opportunity to choose topics for a three-day leadership workshop that was delivered by a team of experts. The topics included information on Canadian and First Nations relations, provincial policies and relationships, Treaties, finances, human resource and business planning. This approach proved to be very helpful and the organizers have received positive feedback from the participants.

Most of the leaders believe, a leadership development program should be mobile in the beginning, in partnership with various organizations for financial and relationship reasons, and it should utilize experts from various disciplines, organizations, and sectors. By and large, the suggestion was that a leadership development program was to have a community orientation, and perhaps after relationships, partnerships, and recognition was achieved, then it could progress to a First Nations governance institute. One participant elaborated:

> I think some [leaders] start from a new slate and if there are things we can help to contribute, some focused discussion, or some focused priorities, we can try to help out. I think that community based leadership development is probably more important than any other type of leadership development because it is at the community level where things need to happen and we really have to focus on that. The next level would be, perhaps, a type of governance institute approach where best practices are researched, developments can be researched or some research that could be done on First Nations issues.… I think a governance institute should be multi-disciplinary, not housed within any institution, but coordinated by a ground of institutions so that no one takes ownership; it's at arms length and should take advantage of expertise from all over.
>
> It's almost like the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit [SELU]. SELU does small group sessions in different communities and they can do a big conference, research, and evaluation. So a governance institute has to be able to do several things eventually. It is just a matter of where to start, but in my opinion, you should start at the community level. You may not get there but you might have to start at a regional or district level first by doing sessions with tribal councils or a group of First Nations, gaining the trust of some of the chiefs so they invite you into the community. It may be most important at the community level but you won't just be welcomed in because you are a stranger. So you have to figure out a way to gain trust and some credibility so that you work with some targeted groups of First Nations and then you get the invitation that starts to break down the barriers. (P 7:554, 562; 2764-2823)

One interviewee believed that a mobile community-oriented First Nations leadership development program would encourage leadership to work and learn alongside membership on discovering common values, strengths, and weaknesses. Another participant promoted community exploration of best practices and case studies with the goal of optimizing collective growth. The participant in the following quote described his vision of a leadership development program:

> If you focus the community inward and looking at itself and identifying its successes, weakness, and opportunities, then they turn around externally and give direction on how they want to set it up. They have to look inward first before they can go out. So I think it is critical to do an evaluation, but a bit of an analysis of internal function and how a community gets moving on issues. They have got to be able to see that against the backdrop of how everyone else does it or what are some of the best practices. So they can position themselves on a continuum. They should find out where they are, and map out how to get where they want to be.…You have to use the SWAT analysis to [determine] what are your assets and what are your weaknesses? There is a community development

> model called "Asset Building." Our staff is trained in doing that and we have been doing that in the communities. It is a community development model but you can target it to political audiences. I think that type of thing is a critical thing.
>
> Organizations like ours would ask a [governance] institute to do research for us. (P 7, 1:563, 2829)

The interviewee suggested that First Nation, tribal, and provincial data collection could be a function of a leadership institute. Collecting data and the analysis of community statistics would help members understand their community from a different perspective, and the information obtained could also be utilized for community planning and funding purposes. Although he supported the concept of a First Nations leadership development program, this participant warned, "You really have to be careful as to how you focus it. If you take on too much at the start, it's bound to fail. I think the start of any new government institute has to be focused on one or two things that are more direct and as it grows it can diversify" (P 7, 1:555, 2770).

Conclusion

The Nature of Leadership

Prior to this study, many of the leaders in this study had been interviewed by a variety of sources, from the media to their own people, but, surprisingly, they were never interviewed specifically on their leadership. Hence, this study will make a significant contribution to scholarly work in this area. This study also gave these leaders an opportunity to reflect on and articulate their leadership – some for the first time. The Saskatchewan First Nations Leaders in this study were honest, open, and willing to share personal and professional experiences of leadership, their accounts included many formal and informal, structured and unstructured, predictable and unpredictable experiences that often began in childhood.

The first part of the interview process sought to answer the following primary research question: What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders? In addition, the leaders were asked four semi-structured questions with the goal of discovering the nature of First Nations leadership. Generally, the answers to these questions were descriptive, reflective, and personal. All, but one leader agreed to the use of an audio tape-recorder, and once interviewing began, and the comfort level was reached, fluidity, expression, and description increased.

Although the participants came from diverse backgrounds (language, location, education, circumstances and experiences) commonalities emerged in their answers. Perhaps it was because they shared work, role, and responsibility pressures and the societal experiences of First Nations people were similar. Table 1 presents the most common responses to specific categories.

Overwhelmingly, the participants indicated that family was the major means of encouragement and inspiration. Family members mentioned were spouses, parents, grandparents, aunties, and uncles. Next, Elders and community members provided additional moral support and encouragement. In terms of inspiration, other First Nations leaders were sources of inspiration. These leaders were often seen and heard at gatherings and meetings by the participants over time. Elders, or grandparents, also inspired many of the leaders though words of wisdom and leadership actions.

The participants expressed a general reluctance to take a leadership role, but they were often encouraged by others to lead. Most of the participants had a specific cause that they supported and promoted. Awareness and prevention of causes like fetal alcohol syndrome, sexual abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, child prostitution, and poverty

were believed to be barriers to individual and community growth among First Nations people.

Table 1: First Nations Leadership Responses

First Nations Leadership Responses			
Encouragement	Family	Elders	Community
Inspiration	Family	Leaders	Elders
Motivation	Reluctant	Cause	Rep./Voice/ Improve Conditions
Frustrations	Socio-economic Conditions	Indian Affairs Funding; Resources	Recognition
Challenges	Education	Society	Diversity
Strength	Spouse/Family	Spirituality	People
Success	Unity	Engagement	Accomplishments
Differences	Availability	Collective	Spirituality
New Standards	Value-Behaviour	Policy Org. Structure	Engagement Empowerment

In addition, some leaders felt that it was important to increase and insist on increased representation of First Nations people in society with the goal improving overall social and economic conditions.

There were many frustrations for these leaders. The most common was the low socio-economic conditions that many First Nations people experienced. All the leaders spent some time explaining the untrusting relationship that First Nations organizations had with the Department of Indian Affairs. Many felt that Indian Affairs established a 'glass ceiling' where relationship, collaboration, and First Nations growth and initiatives could only go so far before the federal government discouraged them. Resources and funding restrictions and limitations were a constant source of worry for the leaders. Some of the interviewees stated that the cycle of poverty, among other things, would continue because of the perpetual funding restraints that limited leadership capacity.

Education, in its many forms and levels, appeared to be the greatest challenge for these leaders. There was a general desire to increase academic achievement among First Nations students of all ages, and a desire to instil a curriculum that includes accurate First Nations content. Education was perceived as a liberator to both First Nations people and the general public. Changing the negative perceptions and actions of society appeared to be a challenge for many leaders. There were many examples of initiatives to improve education, partnerships, and relationships that were made with the hope of changing misconceptions and racism. Finally, diversity among First Nations people was mentioned as a challenge. First Nations people are diverse in language, worldviews, values, and beliefs. Finding unity and common ground within diversity proved to be challenging for some leaders.

In this study, First Nations leaders gained strength primarily from their family. All indicated that spiritual beliefs and spiritual expression also provided internal strength to endure the challenges of a physically and emotionally demanding position. Finally, the people were a source of strength for the leaders, and all the leaders felt responsible and obligated to the people.

Generally, leaders indicated that successes were 'fewer and far between' and required a lot of persistence and hard work, but when successes occurred they were wonderful. Community and overall unity of First Nations people were mentioned as notable successes. These are times when leaders and membership, or leaders in collaboration with a group achieved a goal. Observing youth, individuals, and groups engaged and in collaboration to reach a goal or promote a cause, and seeing individuals and communities accomplish personal and professional goals was satisfying for many of

the participants. Overall, the participants rarely identified personal "I" successes, but rather listed "we" successes.

There were significantly more differences than similarities between First Nations and Western leadership mentioned. The leaders indicated that the major difference was accessibility and visibility. Basically, these First Nations leaders made themselves available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Further, the collective and spiritual orientation of First Nations people was perceived as a key difference. These differences signify an overall cultural difference between First Nations and Western leadership.

These leaders wanted to set new standards of leadership. As a result, they were committed to personal and professional development. Essentially, they strived to 'walk the talk' and to reflect their behaviour with their values. In addition, they wanted to create organizational structure and policies for succeeding leadership. To ensure that policies of accountability became the foundations of growth for future leaders, the leaders involved membership in the process. All of the leaders wanted to help in empowering and engaging First Nations people in the policy and legislative process and, in many cases, gave membership the final decision on major initiatives.

Overall, the nature of First Nations leadership in Saskatchewan, as indicated by the participants, was diverse because of differences in regional and community needs, language, and First Nations worldview of each linguistic group. However, First Nations leadership was connected through common roles and responsibilities attributed to being a Chief. First Nations leadership was commonly affected by unilateral legislated relationships with Indian Affairs and common generational socio-economic conditions of First Nations people. First Nations leadership was significantly influenced and essentially

defined by First Nations history, worldviews, and culture. First Nations leaders described tension between First Nations people and Western organizational cultures. The hope of the leaders in this study was to improve overall socio-economic conditions of First Nations people, to encourage greater representation and engagement, and to leave the position with leadership standards and policies that were people-generated. From these interviews, we can conclude that First Nations leadership was physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding. Consequently, these leaders relied on their personal spiritual beliefs, family, and community support for strength.

First Nations Leadership Development

The final question that I asked was, "According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?" Again, four semi-structured questions were asked with the goal of generating conclusions. This question was more complex. Hence, more time for contemplation, for reflection and dialogue was needed. Altogether, information that was gathered from this portion of interviewing was not as substantial.

The leaders participating in this study believed that First Nations leadership development should have First Nations orientation. In other words, it should incorporate, but not be limited to, First Nations history, culture, traditions, worldview, values, and language. Next, a First Nations leadership development program should include the community. Many of the participants felt that individual leadership development is important but meaningless without overall community development. The belief was that individual development positively influenced and encouraged family and community

development. Theoretically, positive personal and professional growth begins at an individual level and radiates outward to larger contexts and environment.

Next, most of the participants recommended that a First Nations leadership development program should be a mobile group of expert facilitators sensitive to community needs. Although a First Nations leadership development incorporates more First Nations content, it should also include Western education, skills, and training. Most leaders believed that it was critical to be adept in a First Nations and Western context for optimal growth and achievement. Finally, a First Nations leadership development program should stress the importance of not only professional development but personal development. The consensus was that value-behaviour alignment for leaders only added to leadership credibility and support. Generally, these leaders took initiative to work on personal issues. They felt that it would strengthen their leadership and that it was an important aspect of the position.

Figure 3 depicts a pictorial description of the leadership development for the leaders in this study. For these leaders, leadership development began in childhood through informal and formal means. As children, these leaders observed and listened while leadership actions and events were happening. Situations like these constituted informal, unpredictable, and unstructured learning. Childhood formal leadership development happened when an Elder or adult took the responsibility to mentor and teach a child about life and specific leadership skills and lessons.

Personal leadership awareness, on the other hand, did not usually happen until adulthood. The majority of the leaders had post-secondary degrees before they became leaders. This education was perceived as an asset because it strengthened and increased

leadership capacity, and it expanded experiences, knowledge, and skill base in a Western context. Significant personal and professional leadership development for all of the leaders began after they obtained the position of Chief. They all felt it was a necessary aspect of a position that serves people. Some leaders took training and counselling to strengthen their personal well-being, and some attended formal leadership development programs. Informal leadership opportunities included interaction and dialogue with other First Nations leaders, Elders, and professionals.

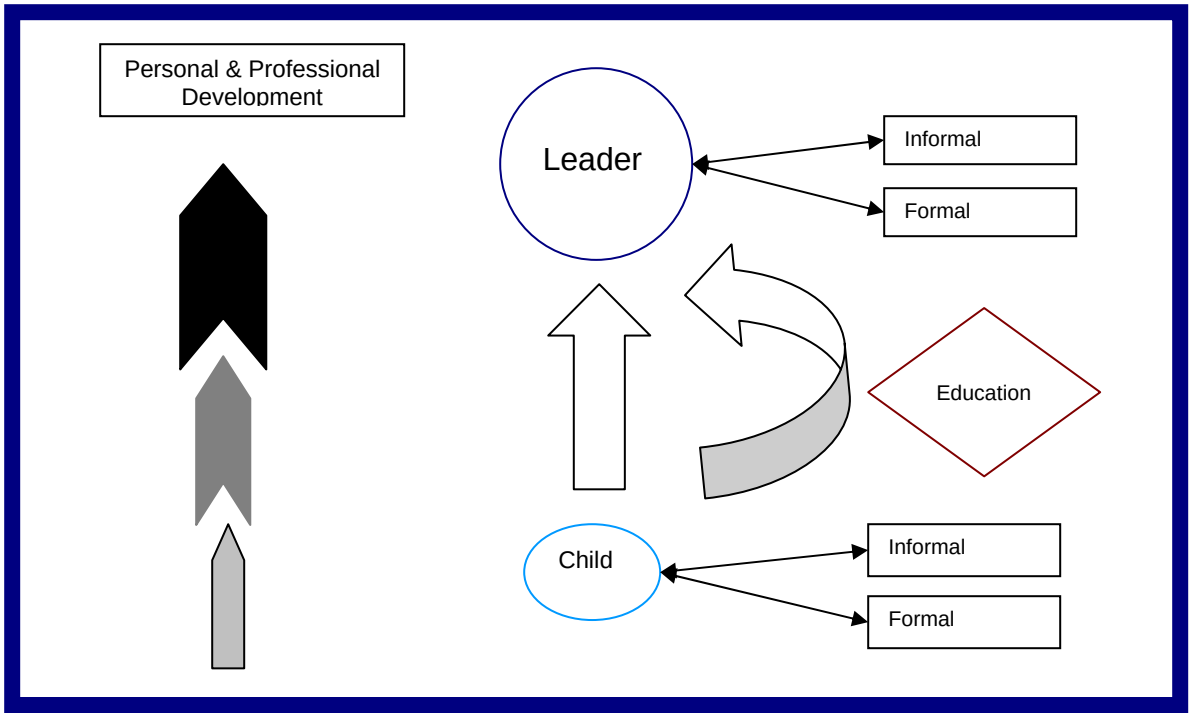

Figure 3: First Nations Leadership Development Model

Over time, as Figure 3 shows, personal and professional development often became increasingly intentional and lead to greater maturity and personal, interpersonal and organizational capacity. Leadership development is a lifelong process of learning. It begins in childhood with numerous informal and formal lessons, and continues the

rest of one's life. With this understanding, it is important to embrace and nurture First Nations children and provide them with experiences and knowledge that will cultivate their innate abilities and talents, improve self-confidence, and expand the boundaries of their world. In this context, child, family, and community development is as important as adult-positional related leadership development. The views of the participants in the study suggested that leadership does not happen in isolation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary and Conclusions

Introduction

In this chapter, the study, the methodology, and the research findings are summarized. Presented also are conclusions and implications for theory, for research, and for First Nations and Western learning organizations. Finally, this document ends with a personal perspective on First Nations leaders and First Nations leadership development.

Summary of the Study

Aboriginal education and First Nations leadership have been my interests for some time. As a result, it seemed logical to conduct an in-depth doctoral study combining these areas of passion. Furthermore, I was encouraged by the results of my Master's research (Ottmann, 2002) on First Nations leadership and spirituality. This previous research indicated that there was an interest in First Nations leadership education. Hence, this current study on First Nations leadership development is an extension of my Master's research. Since the previous research was a document analysis, I could not question, probe, and gain in-depth information, and although the RCAP hearings were engaging and full of information, the document analysis limited me to analysis and interpreting existing text.

It was a privilege to interview prominent Saskatchewan Chiefs and question them about their leadership experience and philosophy. The experience was invigorating and challenging for both the participants and myself as the researcher. The Chiefs were, sometimes for the first time, asked questions on the 'why' and the 'how'

of their leadership, and my interviewing skills were challenged because I had to quickly formulate asks questions that would help reveal their ideas and experiences.

In addition, along with the personal interest I had in First Nations leadership development and education, I discovered a need for First Nations leadership literature at the graduate level and, in general academia. I hope this study will not only contribute to First Nations leadership research and literature, but can be useful in the implementation of First Nations leadership theory and practice in organizations.

As with most research, the results of this study do not appear complex, but the process of discovery was long and, at times, difficult. Interestingly, there were more questions at the end of the study than in the beginning, but that is the fascinating aspect of research and the search for understanding and truth. The lyrics from "Perfect World" written and sung by Cindy Church, Marc Jordan, Murray McClauchlan, and Ian Thomas describes my experience:

> It's what I don't know that fascinates me – all my questions, all my dreams, and the little bit of truth that you might stumble on that ties you over until another one comes along.

The study on First Nations leadership and leadership development began with a series of questions and resulted in 'little bits of truths'. This is essentially a part of a fluid and perpetual process.

The questions that guided the research on First Nations leadership development were:

1. What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs?

2. What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders?
3. According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?

Additional secondary interview questions were created to elicit responses that contributed to the depth and thick description of the study.

The study was qualitative and naturalistic in nature. Naturalistic research is situated within the naturalistic paradigm. "It is a postpositivistic inquiry that is based on the view that the 'real world' that we encounter 'out there' is such a dynamic system that all of the parts are so interrelated that one part inevitably influences the other parts" (Owens, 1982, p. 6). Further, "there are multiple realities ... Individuals are conceptualized as active agents in constructing and making sense of the realities they encounter" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 239). This world is highly subjective and requires interpreting rather than measuring (Merriam, 1998). Naturalistic methodology is characteristic of a design that is emerging, sampling that is purposeful, and analysis that is inductive. In summary, a naturalistic inquiry encourages a holistic approach, relationship, narration, and an emergent-orientation it relates to the First Nations philosophy of story, interconnectedness, and holism.

Criterion-based sampling, along with a combined strategy that synthesizes typical case selection and reputational-case selection, was implemented. In typical case selection, "the researcher develops a profile of attributes possessed in an average case then seeks an instance in this case" (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984, p. 81). To

fulfil the reputation-case selection element of participant selection, a former FSIN chief of staff was asked to help in the selection of leaders for the study. The FSIN employee that I asked to help in selection had worked for FSIN for over 10 years. She was familiar with the organization and had worked for and with numerous past and current FSIN leaders.

In reputational-case selection, experienced experts are called upon to recommend a sample (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984). All 10 First Nations leaders that I interviewed were members of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and had served for at least two terms. In recognition of First Nations diversity in Saskatchewan, leaders from each of the five linguistic groups (Dene, Cree, Dakota, Saulteaux, and Assiniboine) participated, and a balance of individuals residing in northern and southern Saskatchewan, along with a balance of new and experienced leaders participated in the study.

The unit of study, in this instance, is the First Nations leadership development phenomena, which occurs within the organizational context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. With the goal of answering the research questions, I investigated literature and documents on First Nations leadership development within a North American context, and First Nations leadership from the FSIN organization provided information on current First Nations leadership and leadership development in Saskatchewan. The participants also shared ideas on future First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan.

Data from the participants was gained through two in-depth interviews (60 to 90 minutes long for each session). Before interviewing began, I sent the Chiefs the interview questions. This gave them time to reflect and ponder personal and professional perceptions and experiences. Interviewing began with general questions

relating to the participant's personal and professional experience concerning First Nations leadership, and the second session progressed to specific questions relating to First Nations leadership development. With participant's permission, each session was audio tape-recorded. All but one leader agreed to the taping of the interviews. To add to the verbal interview data, I observed the participants during individual interviews, and, in most instances, I conducted the interviews at the participant's workplace. In addition, I continuously examined documents related to the study and took field notes during the research process.

Atlas-ti, a computer software program was used to analyse the transcripts. Coding all the interviews took a considerable amount of thought and time. However, once this was done, Atlas-ti was used to automatically generate a frequency table and summary analysis information that led to First Nations leadership and leadership development themes and conclusions.

Conclusions of the Study

Question 1 – First Nations Leadership Development Programs

Four Aboriginal leadership development programs were investigated – Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program, Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy out of Arizona, American Indian Leadership Program from Penn State University, and Aboriginal Leadership Institute from Winnipeg. The leadership program investigation consisted of two Canadian and two American Aboriginal leadership programs.

The Banff Centre for Aboriginal Leadership is celebrating its 33rd year of operation and Penn State's American Indian Leadership program has now been in

existence for 35 years. University of Arizona's Native Nations Institute was officially founded in 2001 by the Morris K. Udall Foundation. However, this leadership organization is an extension of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development that began in the 1980s. Although Native Nations Institute is a new organization, research and programming on American Indian leadership development had been conducted through the Harvard Project for approximately 20 years. Finally, the second Canadian Aboriginal leadership development program, the Aboriginal Leadership Institute, is located in Winnipeg and was incorporated in 2000.

It was encouraging to discover leadership development programs that served the unique circumstances and needs of Aboriginal leaders. All of these programs sought to utilize current leadership innovations and research. Furthermore, they attempted to incorporate and balance Western and Aboriginal knowledge and philosophies into the curriculum. In each program, strategies to becoming skilled and adept in cultures that, at times, have opposing ideologies and practices were introduced through lecture and interactive, practical modes. The goal of all the programs was to increase leadership knowledge, capacity, and effectiveness, and to encourage Aboriginal leadership to influence their communities in a positive and effective manner.

With the exception of Penn State's Aboriginal Leadership Program, the leadership programs were event rather than process oriented. Penn State is an education graduate degree program that stays in contact with its alumni. Since American Indian students interact and dialogue over a two to three year period in the American Indian Leadership program, they have many opportunities to develop lasting relationships and to delve into Aboriginal leadership through various classes. The remaining programs

were short (two to five days) but intensive, and once the program ended each organization did encourage leadership development over an extended period of time (e.g. Banff's certificate program, and Winnipeg's level beginner and advanced sessions), but long-term active communication and teaching (other than newsletters and advertising) was not an essential part of the program. The short-term intensity of some of the programs may not allow sufficient time for extensive dialogue, reflection and processing of leadership, management, and policy theories and concepts, or contemplation of practical applications. However, Banff's program embeds exercises and time for personal reflection in the five-day program. From my examination, none of the programs intentionally created opportunities for action learning. In other words, after the programs were completed by the participants, the leadership organizations did not intentionally gather information for feedback relating to knowledge implementation, or to examine 'real-time' case studies on an on-going basis.

Two out of the four programs encouraged and involved Aboriginal youth in some capacity. In my previous research on First Nations leadership development (2002), youth were also interested in and wanted to be involved with leadership development. Some of the leaders involved in this current research study indicated that they were positively impacted as children by First Nations leaders, and were encouraged to improve their lives by getting an education and modelling a healthy lifestyle. All of the Chiefs were encouraged to become involved with First Nations leadership by family members or a First Nations leader in their community. Most of the participants attended local, tribal, or provincial Chief's meetings as a youngster. In addition, many of the participants in this study had a mentor or someone that they could

consult for advice and wisdom. These findings are significant for First Nations leadership programs. Involving youth in some capacity (i.e. mentorship and recognition initiatives) in leadership programs would prepare and strengthen future Aboriginal leaders. Stronger leaders would inevitably have a positive impact on First Nations communities and society in general.

Altogether, all the examined First Nations leadership programs strived to remain current and were involved in research initiatives. They utilized and actively sought Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal faculty who were recognized for their expertise in leadership, management, and policy. All the programs had Aboriginal directors and a board that was all or predominantly Aboriginal. The programs evolved, adapted, and were sensitive to change and innovation in leadership development. It would be interesting to discover the impact these programs had on leader's personal and professional philosophy and practice, and the direct and indirect impact leadership development had on community programs such as education. These programs are valuable because they bring together and unite Aboriginal leadership for the purpose of personal and professional growth.

Question 2 – First Nations Leaders in Saskatchewan

Interviewing First Nations leaders on their personal and professional experiences and perspectives on First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development was something that I have wanted to do since my Master's research. For many of the leaders, this was the first time that they have been asked, "Why do you do what you do?" and "What are the factors of success and frustration in your leadership?" First Nations leadership has not been extensively explored in a formal and academic

research context. In my opinion, the study was successful because the leaders willingly provided an honest overview, and a holistic account of First Nations leadership within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organization.

Table 1 summarizes the participants' responses to questions related to encouragement, inspiration, motivation, frustrations, challenges, success, strength, difference, and the standards of leadership. Generally, leaders indicated that family played a significant role in verbally encouraging and inspiring them to set and achieve personal goals that were not necessarily related to positional leadership. All of the participants shared stories of extraordinary examples of leadership and of people they admired for the courage and persistence they displayed.

Elders are important to the personal development of all of the leaders. Interestingly, four of the 10 leaders were raised by their grandparents, and the remainder of the participants had close relationships with an Elder or Elders. They provided the participants with inspiration, support, knowledge, and guidance. The study affirms the valuable and integral role that Elders have in First Nations communities.

According to the leaders in this research, the frustrations that First Nations people had to contend with were numerous. Repeatedly, the participants described and listed the despairing socio-economic conditions that many First Nations people experience. The participants cited poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, prostitution, physical and sexual abuse, health and educational issues as conditions that have to be addressed before collective progress and well-being can be achieved. Aboriginal communities are relatively small and oftentimes the Chief is closely related to people

who experience disparity and, as a result, the leader is emotionally connected to socio-economic and life issues.

The relationship with Indian Affairs was the second area of frustration. The relationship that Indian Affairs has with First Nations people is one that has developed over time and legislated in documents like the Indian Act of 1867 (Government of Canada, 2003). Basically, it is a challenging and complex relationship because it involves two cultures that are oftentimes philosophically and fundamentally contradictory. It appears that the expectations and goals are often different and it is therefore difficult to find a common ground. The federal government's mandate began unilaterally and it has resulted in a tension of two worlds that are continually colliding but are inextricably linked. It has evolved into a vortex of disconnected concepts and actions – intentions, policies, mandates – that are often based on misinterpreted and misunderstood historic obligations. The 'guardian' title legislated by the federal government continues to be a point of contention for First Nations people because federal – First Nations relationship revolves around that concept. Many of the leaders felt that the federal government needed to involve First Nations people in decisions and legislation that determined their destiny. Perhaps with a partnership, the relationship between First Nations people and Indian Affairs will move from one of suspicion and mistrust to one based on equality and trust.

Another common concern shared by the participants was the limited and restricted funding and resources. Leaders identified that they could not address the basic needs of their community using the allocated funding from Indian Affairs. In addition, the off-reserve population was not part of the per-capita distribution even

though they were a part of on-reserve membership. The off-reserve population falls within provincial jurisdiction, however, in many cases, off-reserve members asked the Chiefs for help that could not be given. One Chief stated that it was difficult to run a government that had little chance of moving from a deficit. Other Chiefs indicated that they were trying to create revenue outside government allocation. In spite of these challenges, the Chiefs were hopeful and optimistic, and some of them expressed the belief that changes and healing from generational issues was occurring, albeit too slow for the general population.

Some of the leaders interviewed stressed that First Nations governments needed to be perceived and treated as credible and viable governments and be involved in decisions that affect the people they represent. Some of the leaders talked of changing local, tribal, and provincial organizational structure to reflect First Nations philosophy of equality and harmony, creating a cyclical or lateral organization rather than enforcing an inherited hierarchal structure. More importantly, many of the leaders wanted negotiated agreements, like the Treaties, between federal and First Nations governments to be realized and implemented. Some of participants encouraged governments, agencies, and organizations that cater to Aboriginal people to move beyond the research and recommendations mode to implementation. With the layer of bureaucracy that these leaders contend with on a daily basis, much needed social, economic, health, and educational program initiatives often take a considerable amount of time before they are realized – if they ever are. Leaders were pessimistic in describing some current circumstances (i.e. equality initiatives), but at the same time they were optimistic with

what the future held. Essentially, I perceived this as an exchange, a reluctant dance between despair and hope.

Other challenges that the leaders predominantly mentioned were education, societal misconceptions, and diversity within the First Nations community. Since all of the leaders had completed high school and many of the Chiefs had post-secondary degrees, they promoted education and were conscious of the role and the message they communicated to First Nations youth. The Chiefs all believed that education is one key to individual and community development. Some leaders indicated that they could not compete with urban organizations, and could not afford paying First Nations professionals competitive rates. Some of the participants stated that it was important for their professionals to contribute and share their knowledge and expertise with their communities. Nevertheless, the participants were proud of the educational accomplishments of First Nations people.

The participants identified societal misconceptions, attitudes, and indifference as major challenges. One leader stated that it was a lifelong goal to educate and address the negative and incorrect perceptions non-Aboriginal people had of Aboriginal people. Some leaders were concerned about the discrimination, misunderstandings, and injustices that First Nations youth frequently encountered and they stated that it was their responsibility to help create healthier environments. Many of the interviewees conveyed that change in attitude and understanding could begin in schools with the implementation of a Canadian history that includes First Nations perspectives and accomplishments. Changing negative perceptions of First Nations people is a complex task that involves commitment from both cultures. Increasingly, there are educational

(e.g. Office of the Treaty Commissioner Treaty Curriculum), business (e.g. increase of Aboriginal entrepreneurial ventures), and justice issues (e.g. policing) that have gained attention. The tough issues, such as Aboriginal poverty and Aboriginal student success, have gained the attention of the general population, and can serve as opportunities to educate and transmit First Nations beliefs and perspectives. In other words, if people are talking about First Nations issues, they may be more attentive and willing to listen and learn.

The third challenge that was identified was the diversity within First Nations communities. First Nations communities are comprised of people with differing needs and wants. In some cases, they are a mix of people who have different religious, educational, and political beliefs and values. On a tribal and provincial level, the diversity increases with language, tradition, and worldview. For the Chiefs, the challenge lies in bringing First Nations people together to respect and celebrate the differences and to collaborate on common concerns and issues.

With the many frustrations and incredible challenges that First Nations leaders encountered, my next question was, "Where does your strength come from?" Respectively, the leaders identified their source of strength to be their family, spirituality, and the people. Being a First Nations leader can be physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually draining, and many of the leaders acknowledged and were appreciative of the understanding and encouragement that their spouse and family members continually provided. Most of the Chiefs stated that they believed in a higher power (the Creator) and indicated that they often prayed for strength, guidance, and wisdom. It was encouraging to hear that these leaders were not alone in their role as

leaders, instead they had people they could depend on during times of crisis and celebrate with when victories happened.

Because the challenges are oftentimes immense, the successes that were achieved by the leaders were valued. Moments of unity, community engagement, and individual and community accomplishments were recognized as successes by the Chiefs. Many of the leaders intentionally brought the community together every three months for meetings to inform them of progress and to ask their opinion and approval on projects. Frequent honest communication, transparency, and accountability were acknowledged as factors in gaining trust and ultimately increasing instances of engagement and unity. Many of the leaders felt satisfaction and pride when individual and community goals were obtained. One leader said that he enjoyed attending pow-wows, community gatherings, and graduation ceremonies because of the sense of community and achievement. Overwhelmingly, all the leaders identified 'we' rather than 'me' successes.

The differences between Western and First Nations leadership highlighted cultures with differing fundamental worldviews. Overwhelmingly, the leaders believed that differences were found in availability, collective orientation, and the spiritual element in leadership. These First Nations leaders made themselves available in their office, in their homes, and on the road through their cellphone 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year. They not only negotiated on a municipal, provincial and federal level, they mediated, negotiated, and collaborated on a community level. They got out of bed in the middle of the night to help in a crisis or to comfort, or they

visited the sick, motivated and encouraged the young, and helped the old. These leaders were visible, available, and emotionally involved to the people.

It appeared that there was no significant difference between 'church and state'. First Nations leaders incorporated Elder prayers before and after their meetings and they acknowledged the Creator's role in their work and in the decisions that they made. A participant explained the importance of establishing a covenantal relationship with the Creator. One leader commented that he was ultimately accountable to the Creator; one Chief said that the Creator was aware of his internal intentions; another stated that more spiritual teaching needed to be done in First Nations communities and in the classrooms. At meetings, during the Elder's prayer, I have often heard, "Pray like you know how." This signifies respect for diversity and encourages prayer. These leaders valued spirituality and saw it as fundamentally different from Western leadership.

The participants confirmed Cajete's (2000) statement that the integrity of Indigenous leadership "is found in the complete expression of community" (p. 90), and that extraordinary Indigenous leadership functions on the principle of relationship and service to one's people. The collective orientation in First Nations leadership may be an extension of the preceding differences of availability and spirituality. One can assume that the collective mentality may actually drive the practice of leadership availability and visibility. In other words, leaders who value collectivism rather than individualism make themselves completely available to the people they serve. Elders often teach people to love one another and to look after others because the Creator commands it. Because this taught, the responsibility to 'all my relations' becomes a spiritual obligation. The leader's responses confirmed that there were commonalities

between the five linguistic First Nations in Saskatchewan, and that First Nations leadership is expressed through a particular worldview, one that emphasizes spirituality – a connection to one's Creator.

The new standards of leadership that the Chiefs identified were not necessarily new, but points of focus and importance. First, all the participants believed that they had to 'walk the talk', that there had to be a values-behaviour alignment to establish personal and public integrity and credibility. There was a greater chance of people dismissing a leader who said one thing and did another (i.e. if he/she preached against alcoholism and they drank profusely). As a result, most of the participants made personal development a priority. Many of them were committed to personal healing, and addressed addictions and abuse through counselling and other forms of treatment. As leaders, they felt that they were more visible and 'watched', making their personal lives a concern to community members.

Second, many of the leaders were in the process of creating organizational structures and policies that emphasize transparency and accountability to the people and ones that reflected community values. They wanted to ensure that succeeding leadership had guidelines to follow. The guidelines that were described were leader-initiated and people-generated. Hence, if there were a change in leadership, the people, not the government, would hold leadership accountable. Finally, these leaders attempted to involve – engage and empower – the people as much as possible in decision making. Community members were informed, educated (if necessary), consulted, and asked for approval on policies, bylaws, changes, and new initiatives. These Chiefs were initiating positive and healthy changes in their personal leadership

style and influencing future leadership by being genuine (walking the talk), changing governance procedures (organizational structures and policies), and involving and being accountable to the people. As one leader explained, they have become 'a force to be reckoned with'.

Question 3 – First Nations Leadership Development

Finally, I asked the leaders to describe an ideal First Nations leadership development model. This question proved to be more complex, and it became apparent that the participants needed more time than the study allowed to explore this question. It is an important question that needs more discussion and a larger forum. However, all the participants gave a general response to the question.

All the interviewees indicated that First Nations leadership development needs a strong First Nations cultural orientation. First Nations history, culture, traditions, worldview, values (spirituality), language, governance, and historic and current First Nations leadership practices should be incorporated into the program. The integration of treaty and inherent rights knowledge and history into a First Nations leadership development program was important to many of the leaders. Many felt that there had to be opportunity to discuss 'tough questions', and others felt that examining real-life case studies would be beneficial to individual and collective leadership growth.

Most of the leaders felt that the benefits of a leadership program should be sensitive and available to their community members and should not be limited to positional leadership. To accomplish this, some leaders suggested that leadership development programs be flexible and adaptive, moving in a retractable motion between the community, tribal, and provincial setting. These leaders wanted to grow

alongside their people. It was apparent that they valued not only personal growth but also collective community growth. Learning and growing together would develop trust, a culture of collaboration, and perhaps unify a diverse group of community members. Including membership in a leadership development program would ensure both leadership and membership progress.

According to many of the leaders, First Nations leadership development should include current and innovative leadership theories and practices. It was important for them to learn Western governance, federal and provincial policies, and organizational structures. A participant indicated that First Nations people should "reconcile old with the new" and that culture evolves with time and is fluid rather than static. For all the participants, being adept and skilled in 'two worlds' (Aboriginal and Western) was important and some of the participants indicated that a balanced Western and First Nations curriculum would help in accomplishing this task. One Chief warned, however, that Western teachings should not supersede First Nations teachings.

For many of these participants, personal and informal leadership development became increasingly intentional and deliberate after positional leadership was obtained. Lack of time, money, and Canadian content, were criticisms of formal First Nations leadership development programs. An interviewee who attended a Canadian leadership development program expressed that with time and financial factors aside, the program that he attended was excellent. The specific program contained case studies, knowledgeable speakers that presented leadership concepts and practices that were new to him, and gave him the opportunity to learn from other leaders. Another interviewee warned that people are born with certain skills, talents, and strengths, and if they are not

oriented toward leading people, leadership education will not increase leadership capacity on a public scale.

As a whole, there were more informal leadership opportunities for the participants. Childhood stories emphasized the lifelong process of leadership. As children, many of the participants listened and observed examples of negative and positive leadership. Some were invited by a Chief or councillor to community, tribal, or provincial FSIN meetings. Others were identified and mentored by a leader, community member, or an Elder for the purpose of becoming a political leader. Once the participants accepted positional leadership (sometimes reluctantly and often with humility) they were open to learning more about their role and responsibilities from other leaders and Elders and through personal and professional development programs. Many of the leaders indicated that the team sports activities that they had been involved in over the years helped in preparing them for leadership. The team situation emphasized collaboration, effective communication, community, unity, and a group mission. The process of informal leadership development was predominant among the group and it created a lifelong learning orientation.

Personal development was indicated as an important element of leadership development. Many of the leaders stated that effective leaders knew who they were – their beliefs and values – and they also knew the values and beliefs that were important to their community. One participant believed that effective leadership began with setting one's house in order and that community development had to begin with individual and family development. Some leaders addressed personal addictions and abuses through Western and/or traditional counselling, and participated in structured

personal development programs because they felt that their personal and professional lives would be strengthened. More importantly, these leaders wanted to promote healing, health, and well-being by modelling it.

Leadership development, on a personal level requires time and a facilitator who understands the risk that may be involved in a journey of self-discovery. In some cases, the facilitator may not have the expertise and credentials necessary to provide appropriate counselling; hence, the need for a trained professional. Furthermore, because of the sensitive, complex nature of the personal development component in a group environment, it requires comprehensive planning and consideration.

Figure 3 summarized the process of leadership development for the interviewees. As indicated, personal and professional development increased as the participants got older, especially after they became Chiefs or had positions of greater responsibility. Formal learning as an adult was structured educational programs and informal learning involved interaction dialogue and conversation with other leaders, community members, or Elders. The decision to participate in formal and informal leadership development was, more often than none, voluntary and deliberate. In other words, the participants actively sought opportunities to learn and develop as a leader.

All the leaders in this research had achieved differing degrees of educational success. Those that obtained degrees stated that they had found value in what they had learned in post-secondary institutions. They indicated that knowledge and skills (e.g. communication, teaching, accounting, business concepts) learned at university was applied, to some degree, to their leadership.

Figure 3 also indicates that leadership development begins in childhood through both formal and informal means. Informal childhood learning of leadership occurred through observation, listening, and interaction. Many of the participants did not realize as children the lasting and profound impact that experiences in childhood would have on the rest of their lives, and on their leadership philosophy. Basically, they were being prepared for future obligations and for their destiny. Often it is through reflection and contemplation that things become clear.

Childhood formal leadership development includes Elder and/or community identification that led to mentorship and an educational process. An Elder identified some of the participants as leaders. This resulted in intentional, often traditional, opportunities to learn from an Elder about leadership responsibilities. Overall, I discovered that leadership development was more than a structured program. Personal and professional development is a lifelong process of expected and unexpected informal and formal learning opportunities. This research affirmed the importance of lifelong learning and the importance of including youth in leadership and mentorship programs.

Response to the Problem

As a graduate student I experienced the lack of Aboriginal literature on leadership. This led to my Master's research (Ottmann, 2002) on First Nations leadership and its spiritual connection. This research, which utilized RCAP revealed a concern and interest in leadership development for current and future First Nations leaders by the Saskatchewan First Nations people who participated in the RCAP hearings. After the master's research was complete my questions became, "Are there First Nations leadership development programs in North America?" and "What do

Saskatchewan leaders think about their leadership and, according to these leaders, how would First Nations leadership development look in Saskatchewan?"

The goal of the study was to raise awareness, increase interest and understanding, and introduce First Nations leadership development principles that learning, business, and health organizations could implement in relation to First Nations leadership development programming. I hope that studies and literature on First Nations and Indigenous leadership and development increase and lead to practices that result in positive influence on First Nations individuals, organizations, and communities and on society in general.

Conclusions Summarized

The salient findings of this study on First Nations leadership development are concisely summarized as follows:

1. The First Nations leadership development programs that were examined attempted to incorporate First Nations culture, history, and issues alongside Western leadership skills, training and education. These programs sought current research and innovative leadership theories and practices and, in some cases, conducted their own research. There was Aboriginal directorship in all the programs, the boards were predominantly Aboriginal, and Aboriginal faculty was involved as much as possible.
2. First Nations leadership is a challenging position because it contends with two fundamentally different cultures – Western and First Nations. First Nations poverty, lack of funding, sexual and physical abuse, addictions, among other things, made leadership difficult. Because First Nations leadership is physically,

emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually taxing, many of the Chiefs cited internal rather than material satisfaction. These leaders were often motivated by a cause and the desire for collective well-being and positive change. Family, community members, other leaders, Elders, and the 'Creator' were acknowledged as sources of strength and inspiration.

3. The First Nations leaders who participated in the study perceived leadership development as a lifelong process of formal and informal learning experiences that began in childhood. Consequently, leadership development should begin with individual and family development.
4. The leaders described a First Nations leadership development program that was flexible (able to work in community, tribal, and provincial settings), cognizant of First Nations culture, needs, and issues, and aware of current and innovative leadership practices. First Nations leadership development should also incorporate Western knowledge, skills, and education.

Implications of the Study

The following implications for First Nations leadership development arose from this research.

For Theory

1. First Nations leadership is a lifelong process of informal and formal experiences that involves not only positional leaders but the community. Leaders that involve community members in leadership activities such as decision making develop stronger relationships, organizations, and communities.

2. A focus on understanding leadership leads to reflection on theoretical and practical aspects of both Western and First Nations leadership development.
3. First Nations leadership development involves personal development alongside leadership skills, training, and education. It is a process that involves internal investigation of values and beliefs. Effective leaders have internal motivation because their values and goals align with those of the community. This will lead to authentic leadership and leaders who 'walk the talk'.
4. Community development begins with individuals undertaking activities that lead to personal healing and well-being. Leadership development should include children, families, community members, and should not be limited to an individual. Individual leadership development should directly and indirectly transfer to the community.
5. There are philosophical and fundamental differences between First Nations and Western leadership. First Nations leaders appear to devote their whole being to leadership – their time, money, emotional, and physical self. In addition, spirituality is valued and there is no division between 'church and state'.
6. First Nations leadership development involves both Western and First Nations teachings on leadership. The intent is for First Nations leaders to become adept and proficient in 'two worlds'.

For Research

There are significant implications for further research on First Nations leadership development. However, researchers should be cognizant of the growing cautiousness and suspicion that First Nations people and Indigenous people all over the world have developed regarding research 'on' rather than research 'with'. For instance, the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education website had the following posting:

> As a host nation to the WIPCE conference, we have been informed from our international research and development that indigenous people share a deep mistrust of research. Along with other moves towards decolonizing ourselves and gaining greater control over our own lives, has come a recognition that we have our own questions that need answering. Indigenous research has developed as an insider way of knowing and doing research for, with and by indigenous people, to change, to develop our indigenous world. (World Indigenous Conference on Education, 2005)

The following research implications will be contextualized with this quote in mind.

1. Research on First Nations leadership development should involve the community. If possible, research methodology and questions should be generated with the participants and should utilize Indigenous methodologies whenever possible. The role of the researcher should be to develop research capacity and should help incorporate questions that the participants have regarding the research topic.
2. Research on First Nations leadership development, or First Nations people in general, should not be limited to the recommendations made by the researcher. If at all possible, researchers should be involved in the implementation of recommendations by contacting agencies and people who could help initiate the desired change.

3. Directors, board members, staff, and students of First Nations leadership programs that were investigated could be interviewed. Statistics and data from each organization could be examined to identify success factors. A comparative study on Western leadership programs could also be executed.
4. A similar study that includes Aboriginal youth and women leaders could be undertaken. Moreover, a study that includes a greater number of First Nations leaders, perhaps on a national scale, could be orchestrated.
5. A study that further examines the relationship between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Aboriginal leadership is encouraged. Elements of bureaucracy, trust, resistance, cooperation, and funding could be examined.
6. The First Nations leadership principles that were identified in this study could be implemented in a business, education, or health organization, then tracked in a long-term study.

Author's Final Comments

A research project of this scale demands commitment and resolve. There were times that I doubted my ability to reach my completion goal, or finish at all. I was fascinated with my research topic and I enjoyed the interview sessions, but once the interviews were done, the challenging work of analysis began. Atlas-ti, a qualitative software program, challenged my abilities on many levels. First, it was a program that appeared complex even after I had attended two workshops and observed a colleague use it with confidence. I was afraid that I would spend more time trying to learn the basic operations and correct my mistakes than benefit from the qualitative analysis tools. Second, after repeatedly listening and absorbing the rich stories in their totality, I

found it difficult to begin the process of coding because I felt that I was fragmenting stories that were meant to be heard as a whole. I felt that I would be imposing my interpretation on messages that were fluid, on stories that were to be experienced individually – at one's place and time in life. Finally, I believed that I would violating the essence and power of the narrative and of storytelling. I chose not to include my personal observations and journal entries in the final chapters for the same reasons. I did not want to invade the participants' message with personal anecdotes that could be perceived as judgements. I had too much respect for the leaders that agreed to be a part of this study. At this point, my goal and responsibility was to bring together and 'crystallize' (Richardson, 1994) ten unique perspectives, to make the finished product stronger and more brilliant with analytical investigation, and finally reveal the finished gem in writing through rich description.

The coding process was tedious and time consuming. In the beginning, I anticipated the truths and principles that I would discover and justified the process by reminding myself that analysis increased the objectivity, rigour, and credibility needed to properly represent the participants and defend my work. Using Atlas-ti, I patiently (but mostly impatiently) read and re-read sentences and assigned codes. As the analysis progressed, I realized that I had become even more fully absorbed in the transcripts, and even in fragmentation, the messages were unfolding. In amazement, I discovered that the process was, in Seidel's (1998) terms, holographic. The message was held in tact and was reflected in smaller segments of the text. This reminded me of the colourful and intriguing fractal images, of seeing exact replications of a whole fractal in its

microscopic essence. Through the coding exercise, the message was being pronounced and made clearer. This discovery made the two-month process worthwhile.

Through trial and error, I learned to create charts, network diagrams and tables with the statistical information that Atlas-ti generated. Ultimately, the summary statistics were used to support the essence of the stories, and the difficult and challenging analysis process helped to enhance the simple truths and the themes that emerged. More importantly, the intense, analytical examination of the text that was guided by Atlas-ti made the writing of the final two chapters easier, fluid, and more descriptive.

This was as much a personal discovery of leadership as it was a discovery of collective First Nations leadership. I began research on First Nations leadership with a sensitivity, an understanding, and respect for Indigenous leadership because my dad was chief of our First Nation for 18 years, and a leader for much longer. I know that he continues to lead because his heart is in it, not for personal glory or monetary gain. I, along with other members of my family, have felt the frustrations and experienced the infrequent victories that come with being chief. We supported him, even when we knew that his health was being jeopardised. Like my dad, I know that many First Nations leaders give all of themselves (time, energy, dedication, money) to their people, and I know that many families willingly share their husband, wife, son or daughter with the community. As a person who continues to call my First Nation ‘home’, I have indirectly and directly experienced the many frustrations and challenges (e.g. poverty, abuses, bureaucracy, misinterpretation, misrepresentation) magnified in Aboriginal communities. I have also experienced lessons that developed resilience and persistence,

the warmth and support of my family, the humour and the laughter, and the rich, compelling stories. Leadership in this context is not easy, it is a sacrifice, but immensely and soulfully rewarding.

The questions about First Nations educational success rates and engaging First Nations communities that I asked at the beginning of the study have, to some degree, been answered. The leaders that I interviewed have wide-ranging interests (e.g. physical and mental health, education, economic development). They were concerned about the general well-being of First Nations people and worked tirelessly at making positive changes in personal and 'organizational' behaviour for the purpose of improving the lives of all the people in their communities. For these leaders, spirituality, in its many forms, was respected and valued, and it provided humility and strength in challenging times. The leaders that participated in this study were examples of people who were actively engaged in the process of change and in the fight for freedom. If they reflect the people they represent and engage more people in the process, positive and significant First Nations educational and governance reform is in the horizon.

It was important for me not to leave the reader with the conclusion that First Nations people and their leaders were completely 'disengaged' from public life and resigned to having their destiny determined by outside forces. On the contrary, countless First Nations people and their leaders have they have withstood adversity, developed resilience in the midst of oppressive circumstances, and they have not forgotten their freedoms. The Indian Act continues to give the federal government legal responsibility over the lives of First Nations people across Canada, however, as many of

the leaders in my study alluded, First Nations people have been actively engaged in the fight of reclaiming their freedoms, treaty, and inherent rights for the past 200 years, if not longer. Although Nelson Mandella is from a different community, his words captured the First Nations' experience and resonated with the challenging experiences and infrequent bittersweet victories of the people that I interviewed:

> The policy of apartheid created a deep and lasting wound in my country and my people. All of us will spend many years, if not generations, recovering from that profound hurt. But the decades of oppression and brutality had another, unintended effect, and that was that it produced … men of such extraordinary courage, wisdom, and generosity that their like may never be known again. Perhaps it requires such depth of oppression to create such heights of character. My country is rich in the minerals and gems that lie beneath its soil, but I have always known that its greatest wealth is its people, finer and truer than the purest diamonds.
>
> It is from these comrades in the struggle that I learned the meaning of courage. Time and time again, I have seen men and women risk their lives for an idea. I have seen men stand up to attacks and torture without breaking, showing a strength and resiliency that defies the imagination. I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. (Mandela, 1995, p. 622)

This quote describes the challenges that First Nations people, along with their leaders, face and it identifies their source of strength – the people. The First Nations leaders that I interviewed chose to step into a position, that was in no way easy, with the goal of establishing standards of leadership that attempted to 'reconcile the old with the new', and with the intent of creating change to a system that continuously chooses to leave them out of the decision-making process. I too have discovered that extraordinary circumstances create extraordinary people.

I have had the opportunity to present the findings of this study at a handful of indigenous forums, and I was encouraged by the discussions and questions that emerged from the information that was presented. One person stated that he appreciated hearing

about leadership and leadership development from a First Nations perspective, shifting the focus to ‘our own’ leadership, and celebrating the accomplishments and strengths of First Nations people.

This study seemed long and it was definitely difficult and frustrating, however, it ended all too soon, it fell into place, and was enormously rewarding. My hope is that this study will lead to more work in this area and in some small way, make a difference. As the following quote suggests, I am far from reaching the end of my work on First Nations leadership and education:

> I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance that I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended. (Mandela, 1995, p. 625)

This research provided a glimpse of the many questions that one can spend a lifetime answering. Leadership, like culture, is a moving target. It is fluid in nature and, like a crystal, has many mysterious but intriguing facets. It is an assurance for me to know that I will never truly arrive at a definitive answer on First Nations leadership and First Nations leadership development, but will encounter truths that will ‘tie [me] over until another one comes along’.

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APPENDIX A

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

To

University of Saskatchewan

Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research

1. Name of Researcher and Related Department

1.	**1a.**
Graduate Supervisor:	**Name of Researcher:**
Dr. Vivian Hajnal/Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart	**Jacqueline Ottmann**
Department of Educational Administration	**Doctoral Candidate**
University of Saskatchewan	**Department of Educational Administration**

1b. Phase I: Anticipated start of the research study is April, 2004.
Phase II: Expected completion date of study is December, 2004.

2. Title of Study

First Nations Leadership Development

3. Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore First Nations leadership development practices using a phenomenological design to ascertain the meaning of First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan. In partnership with the Federation of Sasktachewan Indian Nations organization, the study will begin with individual semi-structured indepth interviews with leaders from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organization. The goal will be to create a new model of First Nations leadership development for Saskatchewan by using the information gained from the literature, documents, and indepth interviews.

The guiding questions are:

a. **What constitutes a First Nations leadership development model based on examination of existing programs?**
b. **What is the nature of First Nations leadership according to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations leaders?**

4. **According to First Nations leaders, what constitutes a First Nations leadership development model within the context of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations?**

4. Funding

The researcher will fund the project.

5. Participants

The proposed research participants will include ten individuals (male and female) First Nations leaders who are members/ appointees from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organization. The leaders will vary in age and experience.

6. Consent

Prior to the interview sessions, participants will be provided with a cover letter including details of the purpose of the study and an explanation of the voluntary nature of their participation and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. It will include a statement that this particular study was reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research. The cover letter will also state that, by participating in the interviews, it is implied that they consent to participating in the interviews.

It is important to note that these participants can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

7. Methods/Procedure

Participants will receive the semi-structured interview questionnaires one week prior to the actual interviews. This will give them time to contemplate the questions. Interpretational analysis will be used to assess that data, codes and categories will be developed to analyse the data. The researcher will conduct the individual interviews. After receiving the participants' permission, data from individual and group interviews will be collected by the researcher through handwritten notes and with the use of a tape recorder.

8. Storage of Data

In accordance with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines, all data will be securely stored and retained for a minimum of five years in the offices of Dr. Hajnal and Dr. Carr-Stewart, Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

9. Dissemination of Results

The results of the study will be used to complete the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in the area of Educational Administration and shared with the faculty of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. Before the analysis begins, transcripts of the individual interviews will be sent to the participants. A summary of the dissertation would be provided to the participants upon request. Once the analysis is complete, the findings may be published, and/or presented at seminars and/or conferences.

10. Risk of Deception

Before the interviews begin, the study's purpose will be communicated to the participants and that no deception is involved at any point in the research process. Participation in the study is voluntary and anonymity of those who choose to participate will be protected using pseudonyms in all writings. Participants may withdraw at any point in the study without penalty, at which point, their interview data will be destroyed.

11. Confidentiality

The participants will be informed in the individual interview that their responses will be anonymous and pseudonyms will be used. Participants will be informed of their responsibility and agreement to protect the integrity and anonymity. No other risks are associated with this study.

12. Data/Transcript Release

Each participant interviewed will sign a data/transfer release form once they have had an opportunity to read the transcripts to clarify, add, or delete information to accurately reflect what they said, or intended to by their comments.

13. Debriefing and Feedback

All participants will be informed about the public access to the finished dissertation at the University of Saskatchewan libraries, and information maybe used for articles and presented at conferences.

14. Signatures

Applicant: Jacqueline Ottmann

_____

Doctoral Candidate
College of Education
University of Saskatchewan

Advisor: Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart/ Dr. Vivian Hajnal

_____

Department Head: Dr. Patrick Renihan

_____

15. <u>Approval</u>

The University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Sciences Research has approved this research on _____, 2004. *Any questions regarding one's rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services (966-4053).*

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Dear First Nations Leader,

I am a PhD. student in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of my study is to gain an in-depth understanding of First Nations leadership and identify the leadership development needs from First Nations leaders affiliated with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations organization. The overall goal will be to create a First Nations leadership development model for Saskatchewan. I am extending an invitation for your participation in interviews relating to my study on First Nations leadership development.

The benefit from participating in this study include: helping in adding to the research on First Nations leadership development; providing information on First Nations leadership; helping in the creation of a First Nations leadership development model which could be implemented in the future.

Information will be collected using two in depth interviews. Individual interviews will take one hour. Participation in all of the interviews is voluntary.

The interview findings will be a part of my dissertation. I will discuss the emerging findings, and will make myself available for further discussion after analysis is complete. A summary of the overall findings will be sent to you upon request. Once the dissertation is complete, the findings may be presented at conferences and workshops in final form. Furthermore, all data will be secured and stored by Dr. Hajnal and Dr. Carr-Stewart from the Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years and in accordance with the University of Saskatchewan guidelines.

The interviews have been granted approval by the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan on _____, 2004. If you have any questions regarding the approval, please phone 966-2084.

In advance, thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 966-7660 or 221-9790. My e-mail address is j.ottmann@sasktel.net.

Sincerely,

Jackie Ottmann

Leader Interview Protocol

1. Describe an instance when First Nations leadership was demonstrated in an extraordinary manner. This may have been an instance that has left a lasting impact on your life and decision to pursue leadership.
2. In your opinion, what are the similarities and differences between First Nations leadership and Western leadership? How do you envision First Nations leadership to appear in the future? Explain the relationship it would have with First Nations people and dominant society.
3. What were the events and circumstances that led to your decision to become a leader; and, who were the people that influenced your decision to become a leader?
4. Describe successes and frustrations you have experienced as a leader. With the knowledge and experience that you have acquired as a leader, how would you prepare an aspiring First Nations leader?
5. What formal or informal leadership development have you taken over the years? Describe the programs, the experiences, and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the programs.
6. When you hear the phrase "First Nations leadership development," what images, concepts, or experiences come to mind?
7. List and explain the essential elements of a First Nations leadership development program in Saskatchewan. What would be the purpose and goal of a First Nations leadership development program in this province? What, if any, relationship would it have with other programs or organizations?
8. Is a First Nations leadership development program necessary in our province? Why or why not? If so, who would be the prime stakeholders, and who would be involved as faculty? What are the complications and the benefits of creating a First Nations leadership development program in Saskatchewan? Who would be the students? What would be learned? Where would it be located? What would be the length of the program? What should be the cost for participants?

Transcript Release Form

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview and study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with Jacqueline Ottmann. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Jacqueline Ottmann to be used in the manner described in the consent form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

_____ _____

Participant Date

_____ _____

Researcher Date