**Lac La Ronge Indian Band: Pursuing *pimâcihowin* (making a living)**
**to achieve *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life)**

by

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# ABSTRACT

This study explores the importance of culture in Northern in contemporary Aboriginal development. This study interviewed a sample of Lac La Ronge Indian Band members living in the community of Lac La Ronge about their perceptions of two central culture values: northern *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and its relevance to the LLRIB Band developments. This is significant because northern First Nations have unique local histories and perspectives, and they continue to earn a living and self-sufficiency through traditional ways of living on the land (commercial fishing and trapping, hunting) and adapting new ways to their way of life, such as pursuing training, employment, and business opportunities. Using a methodology called snowball sampling from community contact referrals, nine participants agreed to participate in this study. The questionnaire for this study focused on the interviewees' perceptions of Cree culture and northern ways of life, *pimâtisiwin* (life), and whether they thought principles of *pimâcihowin* (making a living) influenced or should continue to influence LLRIB members and leaders to achieve *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life). The literature and findings suggest that Cree culture, *pimâtisiwin* (life) and its connection to the land, and the concept of *pimâcihowin* (making a living) are still relevant today. Overall, this study suggests that concern for northern Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life), the land and *pimâcihowin* (livelihood or making a living), strongly influenced and will likely continue to be important for LLIRB efforts to develop its people and communities thus contributing to their innovative social and developments that blend local values and principles.

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**CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Introduction**

Finding successful strategies for social and economic development remain a challenge for many First Nations in Canada because there are many contributing factors. These can include local cultural beliefs towards development, demographics, geography, and proximity to large urban centres, among many others. While one strategy cannot work for all First Nations, it can be important to learn from the experiences of those who have somehow balanced their profitable economic ventures with their local political and cultural issues. One of the ways of doing this is to explore what culture and successful development means to the local community people. Although there are multiple reasons for social and economic successes in any society, strategies built on a social consensus and rooted in the cultural values of a society or community appear to be a vital, if not indispensable, element. The local norms and values (culture) towards politics and development, more specifically the political culture, can help influence attitudes towards community involvement and leadership. Accordingly, this study asks LLRIB members about their perceptions of the Cree concept of *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and its relative importance in achieving *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and whether northern livelihood values should guide the development goals and plans of Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB).

The LLRIB was chosen for this study due to its reputation as a leader in First Nations social and economic development, its devotion to community level planning, as well as its adherence to its Cree cultural heritage and language. The LLRIB, through its various corporations has won many awards over the years, including the prestigious

Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (CANDO) Economic Developer of the Year Award in 1997 (Williams K., 1997). Furthermore, the Band's large population (nearly 10,000) and vast northern territory distinguish it from other First Nations and provide the Band with opportunities for economic development, education, training, and partnerships (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011). The LLRIB also faces significant social and economic challenges; however, it has also made enormous achievements in building sustainable economic opportunities and fostering social development initiatives such as securing jobs for its members (Bone, 2012), having businesses based on community strengths and capacities, particularly resources of the land and ability to use these resources in a sustainable way (Mason et al. 2004), providing educational opportunities (Lac La Ronge Indian Band, 2011), and having leaders who effectively convey vision of community initiatives, projects, and developments (Mason et al., 2004). The Band is working to build an economic base and secure the future for its members on their own lands by enhancing their socio-economic situation, with emphasis placed on capacity building and self-sufficiency, which is what *pimâcihowin* is all about, "the ability to make one's own living" (Cardinal, Hildebrandt, p. 43-45). The LLRIB's experience in business development and partnerships with industry, as well as its emphasis on capacity building and protecting traditional ways of life makes it an informative case study of First Nations development at the community level (Decter et al., 1989), as well as determining Band members perceptions of it. The survey was done among LLRIB members in Lac La Ronge because it was centrally located and had a large population.

**1.2 Thesis Organization**

Chapter One introduces the purposes of this study of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) and its development initiatives and provides a profile of the LLRIB. It also describes the theoretical context and approach used in this study to examine the influence of Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life) and *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living) in the LLRIB developments. Chapter Two is a literature review of the Cree worldview of *pimâtisiwin*, in general, and more specifically, *pimâcihowin*, and its elements that were organized for discussion purposes under the broad themes of leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood. This is not to ignore the fact that *pimâcihowin* in northern life can have many other attributes, like kinship and language, that can fall under any of these as well. This chapter identifies the trends as well as the strengths and gaps in the *pimâtisiwin* and *pimâcihowin* literature. Chapter Three discusses the methodology (design, data collection, analysis) behind this study. Chapter Four describes and provides the analysis of the research findings from the interviews in the LLRIB communities. Chapter Five presents the discussion on the primary findings of the survey, a comparison of the study findings to the literature, some of the key implications of the study as it relates to the current literature, and emerging new information. Lastly, Chapter Six discusses the concluding remarks for this study, including the significance of the study to scholarship and future research.

### 1.3 Lac La Ronge Indian Band Profile

**MAP 1-1 Area Map**
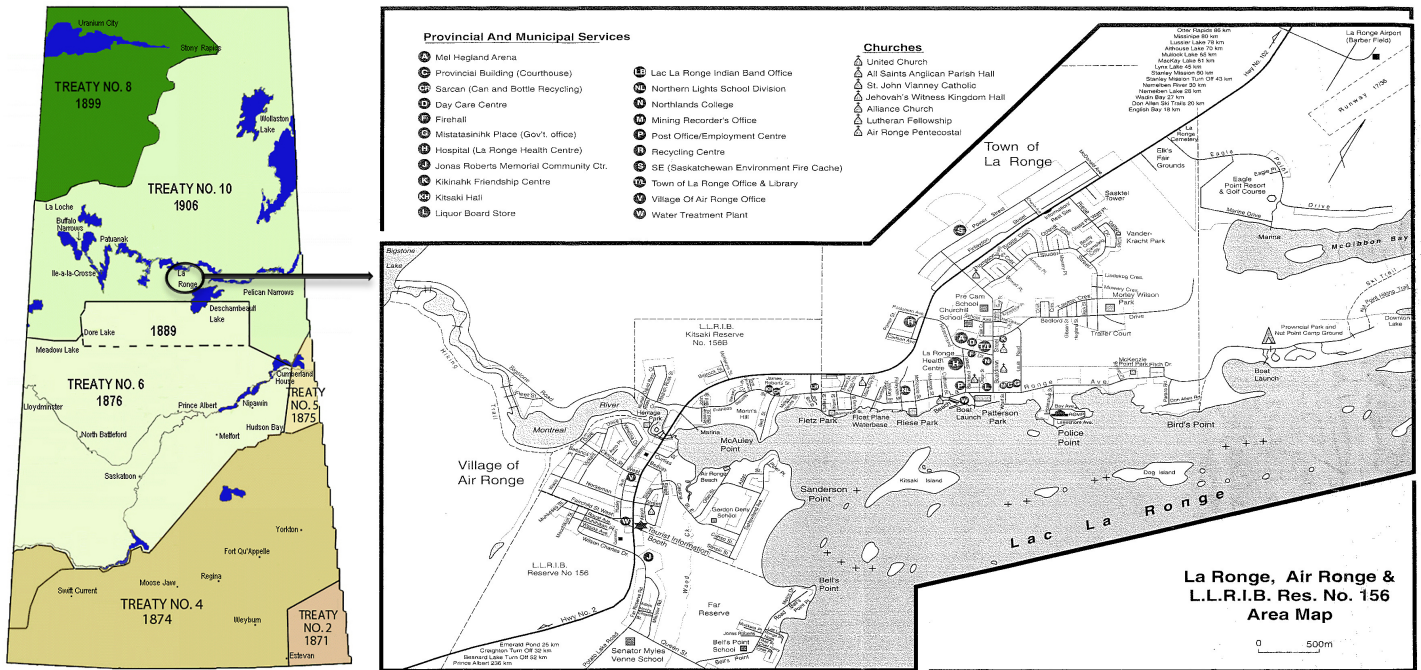


Source: http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_scrip and www.larongeforum.ca/

As Map 1-1 illustrate, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) is the largest First Nation in Saskatchewan, and is known for its distinct history and culture (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011). The Band is part of the Woodland Cree Nation, and descendants of the James Roberts Band, who adhered to Treaty 6 on February 11, 1889, at Montreal Lake in northern Saskatchewan (Lac La Ronge Indian Band, 2011; Kovatch, 1996; Taylor, 1985). The LLRIB is a multi-reserve Band with communities and traditional lands stretching across much of north-central Saskatchewan. The LLRIB membership was 9247 in 2011, and a strong population growth is likely to continue considering the median age of Band members is 20 years of age (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011). The LLRIB members reside in six communities encompassing a total of 15 reserves. It is considered the largest First Nation Band in both population and land

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base in Saskatchewan (Cook et al., 1999). The largest of the six communities is the La Ronge reserve located on the shores of Lac La Ronge, adjacent to the municipal community of La Ronge. The other five communities include Grandmother's Bay, Hall Lake, Little Red River, Nemeiben River and Stanley Mission.

As with other First Nations in Saskatchewan and Canada, the LLRIB population is young and growing fast, but the employment, income, and education rates of the LLRIB population fall short of those of non-Aboriginal people (Cook et al., 1999). Therefore, creating educational opportunities for its Band members represents a primary objective of the Band, along with improving socioeconomic circumstances for the present and future generations. In 1974, the Band voted to take over control of its education programs so that they would have more say in and control of education (Petten, 2006). The Band also gained control of its Band administrative affairs from the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The LLRIB now provides most of its public services and programs to their Band members, including education, employment, social services, health services, social assistance, housing, infrastructure, and economic development (Brown et al., 2011; Decter et al., 1989).

In 1981, the LLRIB made significant economic development strides when it formed the Kitsaki Development Corporation (KDC), now Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership (KMLP), with the objective to operate and develop business opportunities (Decter et al., 1989). The Kitsaki concept originated when the provincial government advised that northern uranium mining companies provide business opportunities and employment for northern Saskatchewan residents (Bone, 2012). The LLRIB Chief at the time, Myles Vennne, recognized that economic development was one of the keys to self-

sufficiency (*pimâcihowin*), and worked at the local level to create opportunities for the Band. Chief Venne saw the growth in business ventures in the North and knew that the LLRIB would have to become directly involved in order to benefit (Petten, 2006). Chief Venne saw new opportunities as a means to achieve what he called "aboriginal ownership that will enable us to possess the control we need to secure jobs for our people" (cited in Bone, 2012, p. 252).

Initiated under Chief Venne's leadership, the Band worked to build relationships with other communities and businesses, as well as with provincial and federal governments, and Kitsaki became the business arm of the Band's operations (Petten, 2006). From its creation in 1981, with the combination of the cultural knowledge and education of the new Chief Harry Cook and the technical business skills of CEO Ray McKay, Kitsaki's formed sound, secure partnerships with other Aboriginal communities and successful global businesses such as Cameco in order to generate revenue for Kitsaki and employment for LLRIB members. Kitsaki developed a number of business ventures, some wholly owned and others partnerships (Anderson et al., 2005). These included Northern Resources Trucking (NRT), a joint venture with Trimac, Northland Processors, and First Nations Insurance (Decter et al., 1989). In particular, Northern Resources Trucking was initiated when the Band recognized an opportunity for northern communities to have access to employment while remaining in their communities, where wages would be spent in their home communities, thus allowing further economic development at the community level for the service sector businesses. This initiative was an important aspect of local development, where an opportunity was seized in order to gain experience and capital at an individual and communal level (Featherstone, 2005).

The Band's development corporation now has over thirty years experience with ventures in trucking, catering, food processing, venture kayaks, and auto parts. The following table lists the many Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership businesses:

**TABLE 1-1  Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership Businesses**

| |
|---|
| Asiniy Gravel Crushing Limited Partnership |
| Canada North Environmental Services Limited Partnership |
| First Nations Insurance Services Limited Partnership |
| La Ronge Hotel & Suites Limited Partnership |
| Athabasca Catering Limited Partnership |
| Dakota Dunes Golf Links Limited Partnership |
| Kitsaki Procon Joint Venture |
| Northern Resource Trucking Limited Partnership |

Source: http://www.kitsaki.com/

In addition, there are Band-owned businesses in La Ronge, listed in the following table:

**TABLE 1-2 LLRIB Band-Owned Businesses**

| |
|---|
| Keethanow Bingo North |
| Keethanow Corner Grocery |
| Keethanow Gas Bar |
| Keethanow Lumber and Furniture |

Source: http://keethanowgroup.ca/

The Band has also developed mentorship programs for business individuals, internship programs for youth, and school to work transition programs (Anderson et al., 2005; Kitski Management Limited Partnership, 2008). According to Kitsaki Management, the key principles guiding Kitsaki developments include respect, profitability, sustainability of traditional lands and resources, accountability, integrity and responsibility (Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, 2014).

Overall, the economic development arm of LLRIB was created to build profitable business enterprises for training and employment. Kitsaki is now one of the ten largest corporations in Saskatchewan, and has a diversified business portfolio and reports substantial profits over the past decade. However, Kitsaki's economic development successes have not always translated into employment opportunities for all Band members. Although the vision of Kitsaki emphasizes training and employment, only 200 of its 800 employees (25%) are Band members. The LLRIB recognizes this challenge. According to the *Lac La Ronge Indian Band Community Action Plan* (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011), the success of its economic arm, Kitsaki, must continue to translate into greater employment opportunities and improve the quality for all LLRIB members. According to Statistics Canada (cited in Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011, p. 8), approximately 29% of the LLRIB 's working population is still unemployed. This information reinforces LLRIB's acknowledgement of the importance of creating employment, training, and mentorship opportunities.

According to the *Lac La Ronge Indian Band Community Action Plan* (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011, p. 4), the population growth trends of the LLRIB reinforces the need for the Band to think about how to provide opportunities, services, infrastructure, and amenities that will ensure all Band members enjoy a high quality of life (*pimâtisiwin*). With a predominately youthful population, the LLRIB highlighted that youth are a great resource and have a lot of potential. However, with a lack of things to do in the communities, youth often experience boredom and many make unhealthy choices such as smoking, drinking, drugs, and vandalism (p. 12-13). As part of the Community Action Plan, youth are recognized as the future of the community and

acknowledges that it is critical for Band members to work together to encourage and empower youth to be advocates of positive change.

The Lac La Ronge Indian Band declares in its website that, "We are proud of our heritage and our Cree language, and of the educational opportunities, economic successes and social development work made possible by many years of strong leadership" (Lac La Ronge Indian Band website, 2011). Pride in history, culture, and traditions are important to the community, and many community members continue to speak the Cree language and practice many of the traditional activities of their ancestors. Although it has become increasingly more difficult to live off the land, many community members continue to trap, fish, and hunt (Cook et al., 1999). According to current Chief Tammy Cook-Searson, the Band wants to preserve and continue their traditional way of life and activities, to continue public participation and consultation, and continue committed support from leaders (Golden Band Resources Inc., 2007).

**1.4 Pimâtisiwin Approach**

The theoretical framework that will be used for this study is a northern framework based on Cree worldview, *pimâtisiwin* (life). Furthermore, there will be a specific focus on the Cree concept of *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living) and its principles. This concept is a general idea or cultural teaching inferred from patterns and actions concerned with survival. A principle is like a rule, and there are typically many principles that emerge from a concept. Concepts and principles are the building blocks that help a community understand the world around them – their worldview. According to O'Neil (2006), worldview is a set of feelings and basic attitudes about the world, involving the past, present and future. Worldview is acquired during socialization, consisting of a

complex of motivations, perceptions, and beliefs that affect how individuals interact with other people, nature, and the environment. Michell (2009) states that each individual in a community possesses different forms of knowledge and skills, and passing on teachings related to worldview contributes to a collective way of life that is educational and empowering.

According to Elder Stuart Prosper (cited in Wright, 2008), Cree people have a holistic approach to viewing their world, and acknowledge the interconnectedness of relationships and natural systems as being interdependent. All of nature is connected to *pimâtisiwin* (life) and the many natural elements that are essential to give life. Without these natural elements there would be no life. These elements include the sun, air, water, trees, plant life, rocks, and all animals. All of these resources are life sustaining and required for survival (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000; Wright, 2008). Saskatchewan Elders who were interviewed for Cardinal and Hildebrandt's (2000) *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* state that the land and natural elements have the capacity to provide a livelihood - animals provide food, water is used for drinking and making things grow, trees provide shelter and fuel, plants are used for medicines, and rocks help make fire. Overall, the land provides those things required for the physical, material, and economic survival of First Nations and is the basis of human existence and also provides the physical necessities of life (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000; Gombay, 2010). According to Inuit hunter David Nasolgaluak (cited in Bourque, 2003, p. 194), "The land has been, and is, our life and it is our industry." Jim Bourque, a Cree/Metis from northern Alberta and lifetime activist and promoter of Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge, has a similar perspective. He states "We see the land as much, much more than others see it.

Land is not money. To the aboriginal person, land is life. Without our land, and the way of life it has always provided, we can no longer exist as a people. If the relationship is destroyed, we too are destroyed" (Bourque, 2003, p. 194). Land is the basis of the physical, material, and economic survival of the people (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 43).

According to Elders in *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000), Cree worldview, *pimâtisiwin,* promoted practices that provided a good life and were community centered and based upon cooperation and respect for the good of the whole. *Pimâtisiwin* is concerned with the economic self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihood of a community and is based on values, such as sharing, caring and being respectful, helping oneself, helping others, working together, and having respect for the land and environment. *Pimâcihowin* promotes individuals achieving independence and self-sufficiency from the land. Traditionally, individuals pursued economic activities and cultural practices such as hunting and gathering that were sustainable and contributed to providing a good life (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000). Over time, *pimâcihowin* has adapted to the changing economy and is now concerned with making a living from a blend of cultural activities (hunting and gathering), local industry (commercial fishing, trapping, and harvesting), and economic development (wage labour and business). Since the economy has changed over the past few decades for Northern First Nations, so have the methods of making a living.

Within the concept of having the ability to make "one's own living" (p. 43-45), *pimâcihowin* also involves the teachings of behavioral codes that help people to make their own living. Cardinal and Hildebrandt's (2000) include principles of developing a

keen mind, listening, watchfulness, understanding, hard work, motivation, respect and kindness – all of which guide personal growth and responsibility (p. 45). These teachings are considered crucial for First Nations towards developing the required personal and skills training needed to be able provide for themselves, their families, and the needs of their communities.

Gombay (2010), whose research focuses on the inclusion of northern indigenous populations in political and economic institutions associated with the state, argues the economic system should be understood in terms of a community's social relations and their values. "Set aside the assumption that economics is based on money," since at its most basic, economics consists of "the social relations people establish to control the production, consumption, and circulation of food, clothing, and shelter" (Gombay 2010, p. 11). Economics are related to a particular place, and a community's economy is based on subsistence. Today subsistence economics is not just harvesting for food purposes, but also consists of a livelihood that is a blend of both subsistence and commercial activities (Beatty 1996). Gombay (2010) explains that when two markets (culturally/locally based and wage labour) increasingly overlap and mix together they create a blended economy "wherein neither of the two economic systems exists in a pristine state, but each must be understood as connected to the other" (p.11). Although there is a desire to hold onto traditions of hunting, fishing and trapping, it is acknowledged that northern economies cannot solely rely on the past economy (Gombay, 2010; Moen, 2002; Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011).

Treaty First Nations argue that livelihood harvesting in the Treaties went beyond gathering for food purposes to include commercial harvesting, both of which contribute

to the household income. This notion was somewhat acknowledged by the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1999 *Marshall* case affirming that the Mi'kmaq had a Treaty Right to hunt, fish, gather and trade for 'necessaries,' implying First Nations could commercial harvest for a 'moderate livelihood' in areas used traditionally by their community (Thomas, 2000, p. 710). A 1990's study of the market value on bush harvesting activities in Pinehouse, a northern community near Lac La Ronge, further supports the subsistence/commercial nature of the northern livelihood today. Research has shown that bush food from hunting, fishing and trapping activities was really 'income in kind' that remained significantly relevant to the local economy accounting for one third (1/3) of the total village income (Tobias and Kay 1994, p. 207). Clearly, the economic system of a northern community provides the necessities of life and is commercial to that extent, but it also sustains a set of cultural values that affect the northern Aboriginal ways of understanding and operating in the world.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW OF
## PIMÂTISIWIN FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the literature that helped to frame the northern *pimâtisiwin* framework used in this study. The literature focuses on Cree worldview and its key concepts which are organized for discussion purposes around four general themes - leadership, community engagement, knowledge, and livelihood. The literature provides a better understanding of northern community lifestyles and how traditional Cree concepts and principles are applicable and relevant to contemporary community life, with a specific focus on *pimâtisiwin* (Cree life) and one of its concepts, *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living).

### 2.2 Pimâtisiwin

Broader Aboriginal literature suggests that First Nations in Canada, like many Indigenous people worldwide, are seeking to strengthen capacity among community members through socio-economic initiatives consistent with cultural values and communal identity. Indigenous people around the globe are seeking ways to use education, training, and other capacity building tools in order to maintain, revitalize, and re-envision their cultural worldview and livelihood. In Canada, many First Nations are actively moving forward toward a vision of improved community health through social and economic initiatives (Ball, 2004; Mignone et al., 2005). Despite the challenges that colonization has created, First Nations recognize the need to maintain their independence and control through self-sufficiency and enhancing community well-being (McGuire, 2010; Tiessen et al., 2009). The motivation to build independent and strong communities

through self-sufficiency lies in the aspiration to achieve *mino-pimâtisiwin* (Swampy), or *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (Woodland), meaning 'the good life.'

Despite influences from contact with European nations, First Nations have proven to be resilient (Kainai Board of Education, 2005) as they have adapted, changed, and continue to incorporate many traditional values into their lives and the economy, in both subsistence and commercial aspects combining their traditional livelihood with a new global economy (Calliou, 2007). According to McGuire (2010) there is a relationship between First Nations identity, land, and resilience. McGuire (2010) claims that there is a continuity of knowledge and historical views of the land, and despite various challenges, the majority of First Nations have maintained their identities, languages, and cultures. McGuire describes the continuity as community resilience. A similar view is shared by Verna Kirkness (cited in Jules, 1999) who claims that First Nations have retained their identity from past to present day. According to Kirkness, "This attests to our strength and determination that we have shown that despite all odds we have maintained our identity as Aboriginal people" (p. 42). What the authors suggest is that in spite of colonial influences and modernization, First Nations have managed to protect their traditional values and practices in varying degrees.

Mary Young (2003), an Ashinabe Kwe from Manitoba, questions Aboriginal worldview, specifically *pimâtisiwin,* and how it is relevant to modern times. She states, "I'm always wondering how to bring my Anishinabe worldview together with the non-Anishinabe world of living" (p. 134). Young mentions that her ancestors were connected to the land and were living off the land, "they had a really different lifestyle than what I do" (p. 54). She recalls her parents working hard every day and "working to have a happy

life," (p. 55), and these were values that were passed on to her, "It was not written anywhere. I lived it. I learned it in Anishinabe. I learned it by example. I learned it by doing." (pg. 15). As illustrated by Young, skills and values were passed on orally and through observation of *pimâtisiwin* (life) on the land. As mentioned by Hoffman (2010), Rheault (1998), and Sanderson (2010), learning by doing is a traditional teaching method as information, stories, and knowledge is shared in the context of doing something together and received through apprenticeship. Further understanding is developed through individuals' own acts of doing and important lessons often result, since it is a way to come to a way of knowing through personal, subjective experience. Teachings and learning are a part of the Cree way of life and happens throughout the lived-experience of a person. Teachings are found at home and within the community, and people, are realizing that traditions still exist. Many believed that teachings were lost and forgotten, but duties and teachings are still being carried out on a daily basis. Culture and traditional teachings are part of a process or way to live and are the reality of existence, internally through reflection and externally through observation and active involvement.

When Young (2003) conducted a study on the link between Aboriginal language and identity, she examined the Cree concept of *pimâtisiwin*. According to an interviewee, "It's about life. That's when we speak about *pimâtisiwin*, the good life. That's what it's all about. It's a search for a good life and being well." (p. 121). Interviewees described the understanding of Aboriginal worldview as *"pimâtisiwin"* (p. 134-135). One interviewee also discussed his knowledge of Saulteaux worldview and how the notion of *pimadizewin* is so closely related to *pimâtisiwin*. According to Saulteaux Elder Alfred Manitopeyes (cited in Akan, 1999, p. 31-32), *pimadizewin* means a worthwhile life

achieved by hard work and education, "What one has in life is the result of their efforts and hard work." Today, teachings consist of both kinds of education, formal education in the school system and First Nations knowledge and teachings on the land. According to Elder Alfred Manitopeyes (cited in Akan, 1999, p. 28-29), "it is desirable for all learners and educators to balance the best of school training with the best of their own cultural teachings," as a good education helps individuals to be self-supporting, to earn a living, and to provide themselves with skills for employment. Individuals must work for their education so that they will be able to provide for themselves. He explains that children and youth today have to ensure their future well-being, and need to be educated as well as have a good cultural foundation of teachings in order to have a good life (p. 31-33).

Contemporary ways of life have brought many social changes for First Nations, including modern conveniences such as electronic devices, improved medical treatment, and changing family structures within communities (Williams, 2002). Compared to the past, their living situation has become a lot easier, and youth are growing up in a new reality (Taylor et al., 2009). However, within this new reality First Nations people are seeking ways to use capacity building tools, such as education and training, to maintain, revitalize, and re-envision traditional knowledge and ways of life to enhance positive cultural and community identity (Ball, 2004). Traditional knowledge is a living process and a way of life (McGuire, 2010), and culture is an evolving phenomenon that should not be placed within an historical context. Teachings have continued into modern day and remain relevant (Gross, 2002), and in the north, working on the land, school programs and being with family have been the main ways of teaching young people northern skills. Another community resource is community mentors and role models, who offer

guidance, knowledge, experience, and support to youth so they can build healthy relationships and leadership skills. They can inspire young people to achieve goals and encourage them to make healthy, positive choices by following teachings, and provide support for community programs and increase engagement within the community (Crooks et al., 2010; Northern Development Ministers Forum, 2010; Rose et al., 2007).

According to Settee (2007) and Hart (2002), by following the Cree teachings related to *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life), or similarly *pimâtisiwin* (Cree life), individuals have the ability to make a choice and to implement actions to make that choice a reality. The responsibility is on individuals to pursue positive changes in their lives, as well as assist their families and communities to make positive changes needed to reach *mitho-pimâtisiwin*. *Mitho-pimâtisiwin* can be found among other First Nations groups. The Anishinaabe concept of *mino-bimaadiziwin* (the way of a good life) is one example. According to Rheault (1998), knowledge concerning *mino-bimaadiziwin* develops from listening to cultural stories that contain implicit lessons and directives for living a good life. Rheault (1998) explains that learning happens throughout the lived experience of an individual from teachings found at home, from within First Nations peoples' own traditions, and from relationships with family, elders, and community. Traditional knowledge is then passed down from one generation to the next through teachings, active involvement, and knowledge acquisition. The accumulated knowledge passed on to new generations ensures a continuum of proper behavior and attitude, and gives a sense of continuity and connection with the past.

*Pimadaziwin* (the good life) is another concept similar to *mitho-pimâtisiwin* as described by Algonkian-speaking Odawa Indians. Halowell (1955) defines *pimadaziwin*

as "a long life and a life free from illness and other misfortunes" (p. 104). It is a life of longevity and well-being. Halowell (1955) believes that *pimadaziwin* is within the self and is an individually driven motivation, and it is upheld on a collective level through positive interpersonal relations, collective social identity, and moral integrity. Each individual contributes to the goal of attaining a good, healthy, and interactive moral life for the collective, and therefore creating an empowered sense of community. According to Pflug (1996), *pimadaziwin* is achieved through acts of giving and sharing, such as the gift of knowledge or individuals becoming exemplary models for others. She explains that reciprocity and sharing does not necessarily have to be goods and wealth or things of economic value. Also, relationships are created to establish social solidarity and a collective identity, which requires community members to engage in social organizations and reciprocal exchanges. As a result, a community of participants becomes an organizing center, "a virtual lightening rod for empowerment" (p. 503). Therefore, collective activities such as councils, meetings, and other get-togethers affirm and strengthen traditional values of *mitho-pimâtisiwin*.

While traditional ways of life can never be recovered in full, *pimâtisiwin* creates a bridge from the old world to the new. Although the surface phenomena may have changed, the core essence of Cree worldview and its concepts, principles, and values continue to exist. Gross (2002) gives examples of teachings that continue on a day-to-day basis, such as the importance of rising with the sun to work, or the importance of human relations and exercising the proper conduct and respective behaviour between individuals and within the community. Gross (2002) explains that teachings such as these are based

on a worldview of the past, but they remain applicable in a modern context because culture is a continuous phenomenon.

**2.3 Pimâcihowin**

A commonly recognized concept in the north is *pimâcihowin*, a concept about making a living to achieve a good life. *Pimâcihowin* is about making a living on the land, which today includes commercial fishing, trapping, wild rice harvesting, as well as employment from industries and business developments. The north has a mixed economy and making a living often consists of such blended household income (Beatty 1996; Cardinal and Hildebrandt., 2000; Elias, 1995; Tobias, 1994). The concept of *pimâcihowin* is commonly shared by First Nations in Saskatchewan and is based upon the traditional livelihood of the region and their relationship to the land (Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000, p. 44-45). It is the way in which people lived and achieved economic self-sufficiency, hunting, trapping, and fishing in their respective territories. The teachings related to self-sufficiency provided each individual direction and guidance to achieve a sense of self-worth, dignity, and independence (Cardinal and Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 44). John Cook, an Elder from Stanley Mission interviewed by Murray Dobbin in 1976, discussed living on the trapline in the winter, "I don't make much money but I live a good life over there" (Dobbin, 1976). He described a lifestyle in which people grew gardens and spent time on traplines, "there was no family allowances, no old age pensions," and people were living a good life. Noel Drybone, interviewed by Brenda Parlee and John O'Neil in 1997, discussed the Dene traditional way of life in the north and how self-governance and capacity to take care of one's self were important values (2007, p. 11). These values were

and continue to be essential to a community's survival or a way of life and social organization.

According to Cree Elders (Pelletier et al., 1972), the ability to connect with culture and traditional knowledge is of significant value in the north. Northern First Nations understand the treaty for the assurances that were made regarding the preservation of their livelihood, and they have worked hard to enforce and continue to practice their culture and customs (Taylor, 1985; Pelletier et al., 1972) despite influences of the Canadian mainstream society. It is evident that having a traditional perspective to the northern way of life is important, and that the Cree way of life, *pimâtisiwin*, has value in modern times as it did in the past. According to Hickey (1976), who interviewed Elders from Treaty 6, First Nations earned a livelihood prior to contact based on trapping, hunting, gathering, and sharing. From one of the interviews, an Elder from Treaty 6 stated: "life before the white man came was very good and that even though the Indian did not work for money, he never starved" (Hickey, 1976, p. 7). Although colonial relations had significant impacts on northern First Nations and challenged their worldview, specifically since World War II, many aspects of traditional understandings remain (Coates et al., 1992; Finkler, 1988), such as *pimâtisiwin* and *pimâcihowin* in northern Saskatchewan.

Concepts similar to *pimâcihowin* can be found among other First Nations groups. The Anishnaabe concept of *bimaadiziwin* (the good path) is one example. According to Peacock et al., (2006), the teachings related to *bimaadiziwin* provided values, goals, and responsibilities. For example, youth and adults shared the responsibility for community survival as everyone depended on each other and worked together. If game was not

hunted or crops were not tended to, there was no food. If wood was not gathered, there was no fire. Without food, people starved, and without warmth, they froze to death (Peacock et al., 2006). Therefore, everyone in the community had to do work, and they shared and distributed resources equitably within the community. Similarly, in a series of workshops with Cree and Saulteaux Elders coordinated by Pelletier et al (1972), the Elders speak of working hard and having everyone in the community working together in order to achieve a good life.

For the Lutsel K'e Dene in northern Canada (Parlee and O'Neil, 2007), they also followed teachings and values similar to those of *pimâcihowin*. Historically, working together and communicating well was important for survival and people shared and helped one another without requiring payment. Today, community well-being and the capacity of people to work together is still an important aspect of the Dene way of life. For many community members, those who were interviewed by Parlee and O'Neil, the continuation of this way of life is fundamental to their sense of community health and well-being. Elder Maurice Lockhart spoke about her ancestors and how they have a lot of knowledge to pass on to Dene people, "The Dene people will have a hard time if we don't teach our children our traditional way of life" (2007). For the Lutsel K'e Dene, being healthy is related to good leadership, working together, economic self-reliance, participation, and quality of infrastructure and services in the community (Parlee and O'Neil, 2007).

McDougall (2006), who examined the Metis community of Ile-a-la-Crosse in Northern Saskatchewan, discusses the Cree cultural concept of *wahkootowin*. *Wahkootowin* represents how family, place, and economic realities were historically

interconnected. It laid out a system of social obligation and mutual responsibility, and reflected behaviours that were evident in daily interactions, decision making, and treatment of one another. McDougall (p. 433) describes *wahkootowin* as a 'style of life' that reflected a shared cultural identity. *Wahkootowin* established appropriate social behaviours which in turn, affected economic decisions. It reflected ideas, values and virtues that guided behaviours and influenced daily actions, such as social, cultural and economic activity, that informed the ways in which relationships were formed and resources were utilized (p. 434). Kinship practices and teachings are also examined by Innes (2010) in his study of the kinship practices of the Cowessess First Nation. He suggests the practice of kinship roles and responsibilities of the Cowessess First Nation are rooted in historical and cultural values. The principles related to collective identity and interaction are demonstrated in Elder bother stories, conveying aspects of traditional law to educate and direct children, maintain the cohesiveness of community, and pass on community knowledge and experiences According to Innes, the traditional practices that reflect the responsibilities, normative behaviours, and regulation of kinship patterns are linked to the contemporary practices of Cowessess band members.

According to Beatty (2006), the quality of social relations is demonstrated by practices such as mutual cooperation and sharing among immediate and extended family. Family instills important values such as sharing and being unselfish (Bill, 2006) and continues to be a source of strength as they offer emotional, social, and cultural support (Hare et al., 2011). Kinship and family provide roots and a sense of belonging to the community. Each individual learns how to be a part of the family and community by helping with provisions of food and other basic needs, sharing of responsibilities, and

learning the value of working together (Lee, 2006). In a series of workshops with Cree and Saulteaux Elders coordinated by Pelletier et al (1972), the Elders looked back on their early lives involving hard work and strict discipline, and then reflected on young people today who are not being given enough guidance. The Elders expressed concerns with finding ways to revive the traditional way of life among the predominantly youthful population, where community members of all ages work together to achieve a good life.

Today youth are growing up in a new reality as life has improved since the majority of northern First Nations no longer have to haul water, chop wood, or starve if animals are in short supply. Running water arrived, houses are now heated by electricity and propane, and food can be bought at the local grocery store (Siggins, 2005). According to Williams (2002), electricity, running water, and motorized vehicles have led to a more sedentary lifestyle, "The touch of a dial or the turn of a faucet or ignition key provides instant power, water, and transportation, eliminating the need to chop and haul wood for heat and cooking, carry water, or walk to a destination" (p. 5). Adults now take on many of the household and family responsibilities, but youth still have responsibilities since they are expected to help out at home, to pick up their clothes, mow the lawn, feed the pets, care for younger siblings, help prepare meals, wash dishes, or do other chores. By helping adults and accepting responsibilities, they are learning what has been handed down to them and learn to give back and provide for others (Williams, 2002). Laren Bill (2006), A Cree member from Pelican Lake First Nation, interviewed Cree Elders who asserted that the values of working hard and sharing are practices that continue today. According to these Elders, family instills important values, and many of the values have been adapted to the many changes that have occurred over time.

As an example of a traditional economy in northern Saskatchewan, Bill (2006) conducted a study in the Woodland Cree community of Pelican Lake. From this study, interviewees identified methods of subsistence and living off the land which provided families with a variety of food sources, such as meat from various animals, fish, birds, as well as wild fruits and berries as a source of food. Various community responsibilities included sewing and making moccasins, preserving food and preparing hides, drying meat, and gathering food. One interviewee stated that community members learned to work to survive and live off the land, and taught youth the traditional value of working to achieve their goals and how to incorporate this value into modern day. Another interviewee from Pelican Lake explained that community members were taught to work hard, and it is a practice that continues to today as a strong work ethic provides members with the things they need in life.

Hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering have been the historical root of northern First Nations culture and remain a basis of their economy. These activities remain key features of the northern way of life, despite the adaptation to external forces of change (Tobias et al., 1994). According to the 2010 Northern Development Ministers Forum (2010), many northern communities have a holistic and community centered approach to economic development. This was consistent with recommendations made by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report in 1996 that suggested that local knowledge and community innovations were key to developing their economies. First Nations had their own set of essential skills for successful participation in their traditional economies, which they have brought into the modern economy. In northern Saskatchewan, bush

skills and family systems were essential to a good way of life – a system of values and networks - that continue to the present day (MacDougall, 2010; Beatty, 1996).

In *Making a Living: Place, Food, and Economy* (2010), Gombay explores the blended economy of an Inuit community in Pubirnituq. According to Gombay, a mixed economy is when two markets overlap and mix together. Although the Inuit have a desire to hold onto traditions of hunting, fishing, and trapping, there is a realization that the current economy cannot solely rely on their traditional economy. Similar to non-Aboriginal people, northern Aboriginal people live in houses that have central heating, they watch television, use skidoos, motorboats, and rifles to hunt. None of these things are from the local environment, but rather rely on an inflow of goods and cash received through participation in the blended market economy. At the same time, northern economies are based on a limited set of activities. Therefore, the options for gaining access to cash are few. Gombay argues that economic systems provide the necessities of life and promote the values held by the community.

According to Beatty (1996) northern Saskatchewan economies consist of a blended or mixed social economic model, similar to that of the Inuit in Pubirnituq, where families rely on both subsistence activities and wage labour income and resources to make a living. The north relies on a blended economy due to the decline in traditional social economies in favour for the wage labour economy that has rapidly expanded due to modernization. Traditional subsistence activities continue to supplement household resources, along with commercial activities and non-commercial activities, both cash and other non-monetary socio-economic transactions. Subsistence activities include hunting, harvesting, gardening, and gathering. Commercial activities include trapping and fishing.

Subsistence and commercial activities reflect a distinct northern heritage inclusive of both modern commercial life and cultural traditions. Family and kinship networks remain strong where sharing food, income, and providing care and support are cultural and socio-economic elements passed on from previous generations and continue to survive in present day (Beatty, 1996; Beatty et al., 2013). Fundamentally, core beliefs have not changed and are used today to create new sustainable opportunities within traditional territories for northern First Nations. Coates et al. (2008) argue that First Nations have to get engaged with northern development in order to compete in the large economy and to build their communities. Northern First Nations have a responsibility to become increasingly involved as full partners in northern development. However, Coates et al. also argue they have to protect their culture and indigenous knowledge systems.

Scholars like Battiste et al. (2000), Couture (1991), and Settee (2007), suggest that First Nations' knowledge systems remain necessary to personal and communal identity, and informs of the skills required for making a living. First Nations knowledge and concepts are dynamic and continually adapting to reflect the changes occurring within communities. Each community must develop and pursue opportunities according to their needs, determining for themselves the future of the community. Leadership is also crucial to *pimâcihowin* – leadership that is based on traditional and modern skills necessary to do the work needed. Manuel (2007) argues that sustainable livelihood is achieved through community involvement, support, communication, leadership, and community-based planning, and according to Buckler et al. (2009), leadership not only depends on technical and content knowledge, but also on relational skills in order to see

things through the lens of the community and acknowledge views of the community just as important as their own.

## 2.4 Pimâtisiwin as a Framework

The literature suggests that community development in its commercial nature is often viewed as the key to improving self-reliance in First Nations communities. Participation through entrepreneurship and business development is widely accepted as the key to building their economies (Anderson, 1995; Bone, 2012; Coates et al., 1992; Cook et al., 1999). However, according to Laliberte (1997), a major challenge for First Nations is that they have to work under Western influences, as mainstream culture today is a lifestyle consisting of individualism, competitiveness, and idealism. It is a lifestyle based on Western influences and linear thought, where many individuals are concerned or preoccupied with their own needs and aspirations, subconsciously neglecting collective needs of family and community members. Loxley (2010) argues that contemporary non-Aboriginal production relations and values are anti-ethical to the Cree traditional economy and livelihood, since they emphasize private ownership and accumulation, hierarchical and bureaucratic labour processes, and focus on economic power and status, as well as individual and technocratic skills. This is a challenge for many Bands, including LLRIB, in their efforts to develop a sustainable *pimâtisiwin* through a balance of local cultural values and developments.

Although numerous scholars have discussed the importance of Indigenous knowledge and worldview, these discussions are often in the periphery of community and economic development literature. One of the few notable exception is the well-known, *Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development*, which gives culture a

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significant role as an explanatory factor. The Harvard Project, as it is popularly called, is an American study of Indigenous communities which sought to identify the necessary and sufficient factors that explained why some American reservations were successful while others were not. The foundational research was led by Stephen Cornell and Joseph Kalt in the 1980s and 1990s (Cornell S. and J. Kalt, 1992, Cornell S. and J. Kalt, 1998). They advanced a nation-building model for social and economic development to guide community development and self-determination initiatives. Economic development, according to Cornell and Kalt is a process by which a community or nation improves its economic ability to provide opportunities and services to its citizens, to achieve its sociocultural goals, and to support its political development, particularly is capacity to exercise sovereignty and operate its own governing processes. The Harvard model research suggested that successful tribal economic and business development required four (4) pillars: local autonomy, effective institutions, strategic direction, and strong leadership (Cornell S. and J. Kalt, 1992, Cornell S. and J. Kalt, 1998). What they dubbed the nation-building model has been popularly acknowledged as being a useful holistic framework for community economic development (McBride, 2010). First Nations communities, through strong leadership can set their own strategic direction and establish governance institutions, while making well-informed decisions. Leadership and capacity building are important in becoming capable of taking advantage of economic opportunities. The community needs to have collective capacity to capitalize on opportunities and deal effectively within the global system. (Begay et al., 2007; Calliou, 2008; Cornell et al., 1998). The nation-building model offers the solution to put in place an environment "that encourages investors to invest, that helps businesses last, and that

allows investments to flourish" (Cornell et al., 1998, p. 193), and raise the quality of life in the community.

However, a number of scholars have critiqued the Harvard Project for its embrace of "western style economics, underpinned by an individualistic orientation and acceptance of authority based on self-interest" (Dowling, 2005, pp. 120). The Harvard Project does not ignore culture, but it does it to be the foundational driving force. It acknowledges the importance of Indigenous communities and their culture, suggesting that in order for indigenous institutions to be effective, they had to be culturally appropriate, in the sense of being politically accepted by the community. Therefore, what people think of their institutions matters. Thus while culture is acknowledged by the Harvard Project, it is seen as an important attribute rather than a foundational element. The northern way of life (*pimatisiwin*) framework used for this study, on the other hand, seem to suggest that leadership, institutions, sovereignty flow from local cultural values and peoples' history and their perceptions of culture and development matter. In other words, this study, in contrast to the Harvard Projects, does not view leadership and institutions as explanatory independent of culture, but rather derivative from culture. For the case of the LLRIB, the findings seem to suggest that Band members believe that culture (i.e. kinship, capacity building, language, land-based activities) is more important than anticipated in the Harvard nation-building model. It may even be seen to be *the* driving force behind LLRIB developments. A key reason is that LLRIB is geographically located far from urban centers and people still work and build their lives on the land as well as in their communities. In that sense, LLRIB local culture really is a lifestyle not a bygone notion. Therefore, the theoretical framework that is applied for this study focuses

on Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life), with a specific focus on one of its concepts, *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living).

According to northern Elders interviewed by Laliberte (1997), First Nations traditional culture is contrary to Western or linear thought. Traditional northern livelihood is inherently connected to the land and is based on principles and laws that govern collective livelihood and well-being. All of the elements of life were interrelated and holistic, and First Nations lived collectively within immediate and extended family and communal societies. The First Nations value system is based on caring, sharing, love, kindness, compassion, humility, and respect, and contributes to a balanced lifestyle of all living things (Laliberte, 1997). Northern First Nations support *pimâtisiwin* (Cree life), where community members exercise effective approaches based on value foundations to meet their everyday needs. The local knowledge of a community guides the development of community life (Ball, 2004), and is maintained by customs and beliefs. Knowledge and livelihood are tied to long-term interactions within a particular place and territory. The history of the community, its location, and resources and skills available within it are factors that make each community unique. Therefore, the goals and objectives of social and economic initiatives must originate from the community (Frideres, 1998; Hatt, 1969; MacGregor, 1961). According to Ball (2004), a community-based approach reflects culture, rural or isolated circumstances, strained socioeconomic conditions, and unique goals and resources of northern First Nations. The structure, behavior, and knowledge they attain are unique to each community and their pattern of organization. As an example, the LLRIB's approach is to benefit local communities in two ways; the income generated by hiring people tends to stay in the community and benefits more than just

those who were directly employed, and it provides an opportunity for local people to improve their career options by receiving skills training (Kitsaki Management Limited Partnership, 2014).

Bone (2012) argues that the process of economic, political, and social development within First Nations communities takes many forms, but the key element is moving from a state of dependency to one of self-reliance (p. 254). In the north, the economic and political landscape is shifting, and the spread of the resource economy into the provincial north has resulted in conflicts over land and tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and their conflicting goals, preferences, and values. The conflict and tension stems from the reality that different people and cultures hold differing values, languages, and hopes for the future. Bone (p. 92) explains that there is an ongoing struggle for economic and political power in the north, however, First Nations are creating community and regional businesses, just as the LLRIB has done by creating Kitsaki. Despite northern culture changing due to contact with western culture, northern First Nations are retaining their Cree worldview, *pimâtisiwin,* and its core elements, such as language, values, and way of living.

Northern scholars (Bone, 2012; Beatty et al, 2013; Tobias and Kay, 1994) argue that the traditional way of life in the north is still continuing in various ways. These studies suggest that Aboriginal people continue to pursue their traditional activities that are largely based not only on family historical practices but household incomes, and that the blended economy is a sustainable northern economic feature. The traditional approaches to northern livelihood continue to evolve and still have relevance in modern times. David Newhouse (2000, p. 408), whose research interests are focused on the way

in which Aboriginal traditional thought and western thought are coming together and creating modern Aboriginal societies, argues the development of modern Aboriginal communities is a blending of Aboriginal and Canadian cultures, where modern notions are combined with Aboriginal notions of collectivism and fundamental values of respect, kindness, honesty, sharing, and caring. Since contact, Aboriginal cultures have evolved to adjust to new circumstances, but they retain their core elements, such as language, belief system, and way of living, and continue to retain their economic self-reliance (Bone, 2012, p. 246).

The Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Dalhousie University and Cities and Environment Unit (2011), who coordinated the *Lac La Ronge Indian Band Community Action Plan*, affirm that the connection to land is relevant to cultural practices and traditional knowledge. The two groups integral to the preservation of traditional knowledge and practices are Elders and trappers. However, these groups face significant barriers as they attempt to preserve local traditions and culture, especially as much of the understanding of traditional culture is dependent upon a strong command of the Woodland Cree language and a connection to the land.

Resulting from the *Lac La Ronge Indian Band Community Action Plan* (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011) was the recognition of the importance of traditional knowledge, language, history, and connection to the land. Also resulting from the Community Action Plan was the recognition that if initiatives preserve traditional culture, principles and values can be strengthened. By supporting the preservation of the LLRIB's traditional culture, principles and values can inform future development of the Band in a way that respects the land and its people. According to Chief Tammy Cook-Searson

(cited in Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011), "We believe that our traditional lands and the resources they contain are a heritage from our ancestors and must be maintained as a legacy for our children and all future generations" (p. 3). The LLRIB is working to find ways to encourage local development projects that will build capacity and improve the quality of life for all Band members. Traditional lands support hunting, trapping, medical, and cultural uses, and also function as a renewable resource for forestry, eco-tourism, and other initiatives. Furthermore, if managed effectively, traditional lands could be the source of significant employment opportunities for future generations.

According to Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al. (2011), when people are asked to identify strengths in the community, they indirectly articulate what they value. Values are defined as the moral compass that points to what is considered fundamentally important. These values describe what the community believes to be important truths, and provide a clear foundation for decisions and choices. For the LLRIB members, they value initiatives and action from leaders, mentors, and individuals who strive to make positive change happen in the community. LLRIB members also value knowledge and education, and recognize that family and the community are a strong support system that is the key to safe environments, healthy lifestyles, and healthy individuals. LLRIB members also identified the value of having a variety of opportunities for engagement where all community members can come together to share and celebrate. Lastly, LLRIB members value their unique history and culture as it teaches them to respect their land and each other. The LLRIB value statement is "i-wicatoskimitowahk katawa kita-isi-wipinikiyak ika kikway kita-wanahikoyahk ikwa kwayask mina kita-wichihayahkwaw kawkithaw athisithiniwak kita-ninotoskahkwaw mitho-pimatisiwin," which in English means "

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Working together to make change happen, we will lift the limits that hold each of us back and inspire community innovation, making life better for all" (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011, p. 19). The LLRIB structure of the community and their Cree worldview influences quality of life and provides LLRIB members with a framework for development and action.

The literature on *pimâtisiwin* or the Cree way of life is a broad concept. It is a concept that is generally shared by other First Nations in Canada and refers to a blended modern life that balances social and economic development and traditional practices and values. There were many elements found in the literature concerning *pimâtisiwin* and *pimâcihowin*. These elements include: relationships, elders teachings, language, education, youth, collective activities, community responsibility, reciprocity and sharing, respective behavior, strong work ethic and skills, survival, sustainable livelihood, and connection to the land. The questions for the interview questionnaire were guided by these elements and were organized under four broad themes: leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood. These themes illustrate some aspects of *pimâcihowin*, which is unique to the northern culture and Cree way of life, *pimâtisiwin.* This framework was applicable for the LLRIB because of tis northern location and its history which is rooted in a deep appreciation and respect for the land and its significance to their livelihood and way of life, *pimâtisiwin*,.

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodology used for this study. The overview of the research design includes a definition of case study research, ethical review and approval processes, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques used for this study. This thesis is based on a case study of Band member's perceptions about their northern Cree Way of Life or *pimâcihowin* and its relevance to the Band's development initiatives. A case study allows focus on a particular community, which in this case, involves a sample of LLRIB members living in the community of Lac La Ronge. It helps provide a snapshot and a better understanding of some Band member's perceptions toward their Band's development. The sample survey consisted of semi-structured interviews with nine willing participants who had agreed to be interviewed for this project. The study also benefited from a review of relevant articles, LLRIB website, and documents provided by participants, by providing a good contextual base on LLRIB Band developments.

### 3.2 Research Design

According to Thomas (2011), designing a case study is like designing any other kind of research: start with a purpose, have a conception of how to meet your purpose, review the literature, then determine how the study will be accomplished and progress towards actually carrying out the research. Overall the research design consists of the following elements: a purpose, research question, a literature review, a theoretical approach to the research question, a design frame (i.e. case study), and data collection methods (i.e. semi-structured interviews). The greatest benefit for using a case study here is that it gives a good illustration of people's perceptions about the northern cultural way

of life (pimacihowin) and its continuing relevance (or not) to themselves and their Band's development initiatives.

This study focuses on the role of Northern Aboriginal culture in social and economic development. The purpose of this case study is to explore LLRIB member's perceptions of *pimâcihowin*, specifically their perceptions of northern *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and its relevance to the LLRIB Band developments. This study asks the following research questions: Do the values associated with the land and the northern way of life, for northern Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life) and *pimâcihowin* (livelihood or making a living), continue to be important to LLIRB members?  And, do Band members believe that these values should guide LLRIB development goals and strategies?

The literature review focuses on Cree worldview and its key concepts and principles related to education, economics, governance, social structure and culture. The literature review provides a better understanding of the northern Cree worldview about northern life or *pimâtisiwin,* with a specific focus on one of its concepts, *pimâcihowin*. Broadly speaking, four themes - leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood were used to thematically frame the questions in the survey.. The literature suggests that the concept of *pimâtisiwin* integrates many things  such as relationships, elder's teachings, language, education, youth, collective activities, community responsibility, reciprocity and sharing, respective behavior, strong work ethic and skills, survival, sustainable livelihood, and especially, the continuing livelihood connection to the land.

**3.3 Definition of a Case Study**

In the social science disciplines, case study research refers to the study of social and political units (regions, cities, villages, communities, social groups, families) or specific institutions (political parties, interest groups, businesses. The purpose of the case study is to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population) (Gerring, 2007). According to Cousin (2005), case study research aims to explore and depict a research setting in order to advance the understanding of it. The researcher's interest is to simply understand the case, attempt to provide a holistic portrayal and understanding of the research setting, and contribute to the knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena (Cousin, 2005; Yin, 2003). According to Gerring (2007), work referred to as a case study might mean that its method is qualitative, that the research is holistic, that it utilizes a particular type of evidence (i.e. field research), and/or that its method of evidence gathering is naturalistic (i.e. real-life context).

The intent of this case study is to capture a sample of LLRIB community members' perspectives of *pimâcihowin* and the northern *pimâtisiwin* way of life and whether they think their associated values, like respect for the land, and land-based livelihood, has or should continue to influence LLRIB's developments. According to O'Leary (2010) a "case study is all about depth; it requires you to dig, and to dig deep. You need to delve into detail, dig into context, and really get a handle on the rich experience of the individual, event, community group, or organization that you want to explore" (p. 173-174). The participants of this study provided their perspectives of *pimâtisiwin's* associated values of leadership, community engagement, knowledge, and livelihood. Participants also offered their descriptions of traditional activities, values and

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principles, and offered their perspectives on whether they believe the LLRIB utilizes traditional knowledge and worldview in their community initiatives and developments.

**3.4 Ethics Approval**

The proposal for this study was reviewed and approved by an advisory committee at the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan. The proposal was then reviewed and approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB).

**3.5 Data Collection & Analysis**

There were two phases involved with data collection. The first phase consisted of an extensive review of the literature and relevant documentary material. In addition the LLRIB website, news articles, and other media publications were also reviewed. The second phase consisted of a variety of data collection strategies: semi-structured interviews (audio-recorded) with nine participants; participant observation, since I was invited to and participated directly in a few community events and activities; and a review of data provided by participants (i.e. articles, documents, etc.). During the data collection process my field notes consisted of comments and remarks of themes arising from the interviews. The fieldwork took place over a 6-month period in which I made frequent trips La Ronge, Saskatchewan to conduct interviews.

The participants of this study consisted of LLRIB community members , and were selected using a snowball sampling methodology. Snowball sampling is defined by Atkinson and Flint (2004) as a "technique for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is used to provide the names of other actors." Regular contact was maintained with participants over the 6-month period as I would

spend a few days at a time in the community in order to develop a relationship with them and other residents. According to Cagnon (2010) "the providers of the data, the informants, are crucially important and the researcher's relationship with them is key" (p. 67), and the researcher must establish relations of trust with the participants and gain acceptance. In most cases, the participants for this study were selected based on prior relationships that I had established (i.e. extended family, friends), or were individuals that I had been introduced to by another community member (i.e. an extended family member or friend). In first meeting to discuss this study, I introduced myself, discussed the study, and asked if they had any questions. When the interview took place, I discussed the Interview Consent Form (see Appendix B), addressed any questions or concerns, then the consent form was signed consenting to his or her involvement via interviews. I initially approached five LLRIB community members that I had already established a relationship with, and all agreed to be interviewed. Then, using the snowball sampling methodology, I was referred to five more potential participants in which four accepted to be interviewed.

As a guide for the semi-structured interviews, a set of open-ended questions were used for each respondent to encourage discussion. The open-ended questions consisted of a two part interview questionnaire based on certain themes drawn from the literature review, leadership, community engagement, knowledge, and livelihood. Subsequent questions were also presented based on the response of the participant. The interviews were approximately one hour in duration, and all interviews were audio-recorded. As a thank you for participating in an interview I offered a small gift to each participant, whether it was paying for a coffee or meal, sharing goods from hunting and fishing

activities (i.e. walleye, goose or duck), or sharing goods from cooking and baking (i.e. soup, bannock).

According to Cousin (2005), in case study research data collection and data analysis tend to proceed at the same time. Cousin (2005) states: "it might be helpful to think of case study research data collection and analysis as a bit like good detection work" (p. 424). As data is received, it can be organized into themes, in that way the researcher can see whether the data sheds light on the research question(s) being addressed. The data analysis process consisted of three phases: transcription of the interviews, analysis of data collected, and presentation of the research findings. Following the transcription of the interviews, the data was organized into common themes similar to those found in the literature (i.e. leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood). The analysis phase included an examination of all collected information from participants – interview transcriptions, articles, and books. The research findings, discussion, conclusion are presented in the next three chapters.

# CHAPTER 4 – RESEARCH FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

The interviews consisted of a two-part questionnaire based on themes drawn from the literature review. These themes include leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood. There were two parts to the interview questionnaire, part one focused on leadership and community engagement, and part two focused on Cree knowledge and northern livelihood. The first part asked questions concerning the context of the community: how are community members involved; who are the community leaders and is leadership effective; what are positive community aspects; what is lacking in the community; and what is their definition and vision of the community towards successful social and economic development. The second part asked questions that sought to better understand traditional culture and ways of life.

## 4.2 Part One

In all aspects of community life, participants were able to connect to traditional ways of life and adherence to Cree worldview and traditional values. *Pimâtisiwin* (Cree life) is the basis for daily community life, initiatives, and goals. For example, *pimâtisiwin* is reflected in daily life when community members exercise values such as caring, sharing, and helping others. *Pimâtisiwin* is also reflected in community members when they strive to achieve their goals, whether it involves obtaining education, finding employment, maintaining an active healthy life through recreation and sports, and/or making a difference within the community through mentorship, volunteering, or leadership roles. However, due to the influences of mainstream society and technological advances, there are certain challenges amongst the community, especially among youth. Furthermore, participants identified many negative aspects of community life that need to

be addressed in order to achieve a healthy community. Therefore, in order to address challenges due to Western influences and the shift away from traditional ways of life, participants identified solutions and their vision of what a healthy and economically successful community is. The main themes that came out from the first part of the survey questionnaire concerning community engagement and leadership include: leaders and role models, education and training, elder's teachings, community activities, and influences of modern conveniences and technology on contemporary community life (See Figure 4-1).

**FIGURE 4-1 Themes of Community Engagement and Leadership**



### 4.2.1 Recreation and Activities

Recreation and activities have become important elements of community life. Although sporting and recreational events were not a significant part of traditional lifestyles, they are essential now so that community members stay active. One participant commented:

> I always reflect, what I do now - was that done in the past? People go jogging do different things, and I think, how does that relate to traditional? And I start

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thinking, oh sure, we don't have the physical work we have today. With jobs and hard work and everything else. I have to jog too, because I don't have hobbies where I am doing all this physical labour. My mother woke up early, in the morning washing clothes, and my dad goes out in the bush and gets food. You know and they worked all day, they are exercising all day. And so, they got to do something, so that's how I connect it and say hey its okay.

As a result of the shift of lifestyles and decline of daily physical labour for many community members, there are various recreational activities that occur in the community. Being physically active and involved within the community is important, as one participant explained, "Well that's what we used to do and that's how they stayed healthy, and balanced, and lived in harmony with everything."

Furthermore, youth want to have some kind of connection in the community and need healthy and positive activities to keep them busy. Recreation and sports have a positive effect on the community and help keep youth out of trouble. Therefore, engagement in recreation and sports are an important aspect of community life. As one participant explained, "we have to exert that energy somehow, physically, so if we are going to feel well, keep balanced, you need to be involved." Many participants felt strongly that without participation in recreational activities and community events, youth will lack a connection to the community.

When events occur in the community, everyone is involved, and youth, parents, and older people are brought together. In particular, sporting events are popular in the community, especially tournaments that take place on weekends. Community members of all ages are involved and come out to play or to watch, and a few of the participants explained that it keeps people away from drinking on Friday or Saturday night since they stay in and have something to look forward too in the morning and during the day on Saturday and Sunday.

The LLRIB hosts many events throughout the year, such as the winter festival for example, where most Band members either attend or volunteer. Many community members participate by either competing in or watching the festivities. Overall, family and friends come together as spectators or to cheer on family and/or peers who are involved in the festival events. The Band also hosts volleyball tournaments, hockey tournaments, cabarets, NFX (MMA events), ball tournaments, a ball league, and other various activities and events year round. The Band also sponsors sports, such as volleyball tournaments that take place in the community, and also sponsors individuals to play hockey in out of town games or tournaments.

Despite the popularity of certain sports, there are some sports that are weak because they do not have coaches who are interested. Therefore, the community will host events where they play sports that youth do not play that often, such as basketball, broom ball, and cross country skiing, in order to engage and give opportunities to youth to participate in a variety of sports. Furthermore, in addition to sporting tournaments and other recreational events that take place within the community, each school and other community facilities have certain recreational programs that they host each night. Some of the participants indicated that numerous people, especially youth, attend open gym nights to play sports. Almost every evening from Sunday to Friday there are activities taking place in the gyms. In regards to sports, one of the younger participants spoke of being very competitive and wanting to participate in all of the sports that take place within the community. Another one of the younger participants also spoke of being involved in various sports and has signed up to coach sports as well. In addition, there are after school and evening programs that keep youth involved daily in various recreational

activities. Depending on the facility, there are a variety of activities held, such as paper mache, dancing, board games, and much more.

Despite the popularity of recreational activities and events, most participants commented that there could be more involvement by community members. Participants expressed that they are hopeful that recreation and sports will pick up to the level that they used to be at. One participant stated that sports and recreation are important since they "keep us occupied with our mind in a good way." Other participants mentioned that involvement in recreational events and activities is relatively low and that there are not enough youth participating, especially when there are a lot of young people in the community and "numbers are going higher every year." Some participants expressed that youth used to be more engaged and enjoyed being involved in community sports and recreational events. One participant described some of the community events that used to take place, such as regional summer and winter games where northern communities would bring their youth. These events were viewed positively since there was always a good turnout and youth were engaged.

In order to address the increasing lack of youth engagement, all participants felt that youth need role models to help them get involved in cultural, recreational, and sporting activities in order to become interested in being engaged within the community. Many participants noted that youth should be introduced to recreation and sports at a young age in order for family members, teachers, and/or coaches to "tap into the gifts that they have." Participants felt that this was important since many youth are very athletic and need something to do in the community that will keep them busy. Otherwise, many

youth often get into trouble and become involved in unhealthy activities, such as drinking and/or drug use.

Almost all participants agreed that there is a lack of role models in the community, and expressed that they would love to see community members step up to fill those roles. One of the younger participants talked about being a role model for sports and being athletic, and would like to show other youth "what they are capable of doing." Another young participant spoke of becoming a leadership person someday where "people would look up to me and I would give examples on how to be a role model to other youth." The main director at the Jonas Roberts Memorial Community Centre (JRMCC) is viewed as a leader, especially by youth, as pointed out by a number of participants. The participants say that he has an understanding of how the community works and how the outside works too, and understands the importance of bringing the community together.

A variety of events and activities take place at the JRMCC, commonly known as J.R. Hall, and many participants referred it to as the focus of the community. The J.R. Hall often hosts sports and events for community members to participate in whether they are playing or watching. The goal of JRMCC is to have more community involvement. From the JRMCC annual report (2013), their vision is stated as follows: "We develop healthy individuals and promote an active community through sports, culture and recreation programs and services."

The JRMCC has personnel available that are willing to guide others and help them fundraise for events, but at the same time each individual seeking guidance must have the commitment to be involved. The main director at the J.R. Hall hosts numerous

activities, and also lets youth play utilize the hockey rink and play sports in the gym daily. Often at the J.R. Hall, participants explained that hockey and volleyball are taking place at the same time. Many youth participate in these sports, in which participants described as a good thing since recreation and sporting events bring youth together in a positive way. The J.R. Hall hosts leagues such as hockey and baseball, events such as cabarets, banquets, birthday parties, and weddings, cultural activities, and has a fitness centre and youth centre. The JRMCC Youth Centre operates during non-school hours typically in the evenings, Monday to Friday. The youth centre has a pool table, foosball table, ping-pong table, computer stations, kitchen, and a lounge area with cable television. Furthermore, JRMCC provides a Summer Student Employment Program, where students from Senator Myles Venne School were employed, and students were also provided training in Play Leadership and First Aid/CPR. As stated in the JRMCC annual report (2013), "each day students were required to lead and organize activities for children and youth."

Many participants expressed that the J.R. Hall is nice facility and personnel are trying to max it out as much as possible for the benefit of the community. A few participants spoke of helping at the J.R. Hall with recreational activities, coaching youth and showing them how to play sports. However, even though sports such as hockey, volleyball, or baseball are good activities to be involved in, these activities stay away from traditional aspects, and most participants felt strongly that more cultural events should be incorporated into community activities. As some participants explained, the JRMCC personnel try to put on more cultural activities and gatherings for the community, however, not many people are motivated to become involved. One

participant suggested that the Band should organize these types of activities and tell community members to come out, such as youth and Elders "to all come as one."

Some participants felt that there is a disconnect in the approaches of community activities. When community gatherings do occur, the community spirit is there but the gatherings often stay away from traditions and cultural activities. Cultural activities for the LLRIB members include storytelling, singing and speaking the Cree language, sewing and beadwork, smoking meat, harvesting fish, picking berries, hunting, trapping, and so on. Overall, most participants' felt that there are not enough cultural gatherings taking place in the community. Although some activities bring youth together to practice community traditions, many participants explained that there used to be more cultural events but they do not happen as often anymore due to a lack of interest and motivation. For example, as one participant noted, there are only a few individuals who sing and host round dances. As another example, another participant spoke about the cultural grounds located on the reserve, where cooking traditional food and making baskets out of birch bark used to take place. However interest in these activities began to decline and these activities eventually "died out." Furthermore, many participants expressed that when cultural activities do take place, mostly older people are the ones involved and not many younger people attend.

Many participants suggested that more cultural activities should occur within the community. In addition, all participants felt strongly that more youth need to be involved in and understand Woodland Cree language, history, traditions, and cultural activities, as well as seek guidance from Elders, role models and leaders. One of the younger participants expressed that they would like to see a variety of activities offered, such as

beading, sewing, knitting, and birch bark biting, so that they are offered the opportunity to learn certain skills, especially those that were a part of traditional culture. The participant also suggested that a moccasins group or mittens group should be created, where community members could learn how to work with hide, sew, beadwork, and create designs. One of the other younger participants commented that youth need to spend more time outside with nature. The participant gave the example of more people using smokers (used for smoking fish outside), and expressed: "That would be awesome, because we do that as well in the back of our house." The participant felt strongly that all youth should be participating in cultural activities that take place on the land as opposed to relying on modern conveniences and technology as a main method of entertainment.

**4.2.2 Influence of Modern Conveniences**

Over the years there has been a significant increase in technology, and many participants felt that it was necessary to take advantage of technology, such as the Internet and social media, to raise awareness for community programs and activities. Although other methods are used within the community to raise awareness, such as the local newspaper and radio, most people get their media from the internet as opposed to a newspaper, and a lot of people do not listen to the radio anymore due to the popularity of satellite radio. On one of the local television channels there is a channel dedicated to community advertisements that has been effective, however, some participants suggested that a Facebook page would be more effective since social media has gained a lot of popularity. Some individuals prefer to have hard copies of advertisements and look at information bulletins at local stores, but most prefer technology such as the Internet. Youth especially prefer social media, and as one of the younger participants commented,

"Well everyone nowadays, like all businesses – food businesses, everything – 'like' this on Facebook, 'like' us on Facebook. I think the best media now is Facebook." One of the other younger participants expressed that since youth will become the future leaders, social media should be used more since most youth have Facebook.

Furthermore, since the majority of the younger generations use Facebook on a daily basis, it was suggested by many participants that there should be recreational pages to promote various groups, activities and events. As one participant remarked, "that would be a good idea," and gave the example of having a sewing group on Facebook where people can post pictures of their sewing and say when and where the group is going to meet. A couple of the younger participants explained that many youth are interested in these types of activities, and that it would be good if there was a place that they could go to if they want to learn how to sew and make moccasins, mittens, etc. In that way, youth will have an opportunity to engage and learn.

Besides using technology to raise awareness and promote activities, some participants also felt strongly that modern technology should be used to help community members becoming involved with cultural activities and practicing or learning the Cree language. The Internet, for example, can be used to post information through pictures and video, which allows community members to observe, listen, and learn. In particular, one participant mentioned that he has plans to live stream hunting and fishing activities so that other people can be a part of the experience as it is happening. The participant explained that this is one method where everyone can be included right away in the activity where they can observe, listen, and learn. Many participants referred to social

media as being an important tool today, "not to brag about what you do, but to let other people know of what you do and how you do it."

The Internet, and in particular social media, can also be used in other ways. For example, when a participant needed a jigger to go fishing, he put a call on Facebook for a jigger and someone who saw the post was able to supply one. Furthermore, although a significant aspect of the traditional way of life requires individuals to learn by doing, sometimes there is not someone available to teach. For example, using a jigger for fishing. When one participant was using a jigger for the first time they needed to figure out how to use it, and did not have anyone to teach him so he followed verbal advice from others and also used YouTube, "I saw how they did it on YouTube and I just did it that way." However, despite the popularity of technology, many of the older generations do not know about the use of social media and how to log onto Facebook, or how to take pictures and post them. Although some older people know how to use modern devices such as cell phones and can be taught how to use social media and technology, many are not interested. As one participant noted, "they aren't curious enough either, because 'back in my day I never used cell phones!'"

Despite the popularity of using modern technology and social media to raise awareness of programs and activities, some people complain that they are not offered. One of the younger participants explained that many programs and activities are offered, but that there needs to be better advertising,

> You have to tell people why, why you're doing this. Why? I'm doing this because my family, I want to get better with my family, I want to be a role model for my kid. You just, you got to put your 'why' first, than your 'how', than your 'what'. Not the other way around. Otherwise you aren't going to get nowhere. Your 'why' is first, your 'why' is what you relate to people. People will believe what you believe. So you have to put your 'why' first. That's why I think some people,

it doesn't get out there enough so people don't know how to advertise right, because they are going for your 'what', 'how', and than 'why'. It's not the other way around. I think there would be more success doing it that way.

The participant felt that community members do not understand why it is important to be active within the community. As a result, individuals need to understand why it is so important to be involved, how it will benefit them, and what they can do to become more involved. Although being active takes a lot of effort, community members will benefit later on and will have pride when others do not. The participant also commented that it is good to motivate others and benefit the community overall, where youth encourage other youth, and adults encourage other adults, so that everyone is involved. Furthermore, many participants commented that there needs to be more role models and people that are willing to make a difference in the community.

### 4.2.3 Role of Elders and Teachings

All participants noted working with Elders as important. Most youth know to respect their Elders – ask if they need any help, hold a door open, offer a ride if it is cold outside, and so on. Youth are very respectful to Elders, they know and understand to show respect to Elders since they have been through a lot, they know a lot, and they teach a lot about Cree language and culture. However, there are few youth who talk to Elders. Many youth do not go to traditional Elders as they used to, but rather they go to peers for advice. When they do approach Elders, they will ask them for advice. As one of the younger participants explained, "when we want to know something we will sit down and talk to an Elder, and ask them or just hear about one of their stories. And it helps us out to be role models as well." If youth want to learn about various cultural or traditional activities, they can be taught by the Elders, or go to a traditional Elder for guidance.

Individuals visit and talk with Elders, and Elders will also go out into the community and teach about the language and cultural values. One of the participants expressed that as an Elder, he tries to meet the person's needs, help in whichever way that he can, "A person like me has to be open-minded." Elder's have gained a lot of knowledge, and can pass on songs, medicines, guidance, and much more. As one participant noted, Elders are there for support and "they'll keep you on a narrow path, a straight line. So when you start getting carried away, start power tripping, they'll pull you back." Another participant noted, "The traditional Elder is not simply, it doesn't only refer to old people. But it's a gifted person." The participant explained that 'Elder' is a term that represents a gifted person, often someone who is very traditional. Although, an Elder does not always have to necessarily be traditional, "But if you know the natural principles of the natural way, that's all, that's the most important." The participant also referenced youth today who know so much and are gaining a lot of knowledge, even though they are not growing up in a traditional way of life, they will still be able to contribute as future Elders, grounded in the principles and values of traditional ways.

All participants agreed that community members can still follow teachings in contemporary society. As one participant noted, when individuals are in touch with their teachings they can be comfortable "because you know who you are, you're in touch with your traditions, you haven't forgotten your ancestors" and individuals will also realize the importance to take time to practice traditional activities. In addition, "Once you know who you are, where you come from, what you're traditional culture is all about" it makes a difference of how individuals live in society, where individuals learn how to cope

within society, how to fit in and become a part of society, and to be proud of themselves and who they are.

Although there are a lot of negative aspects to contemporary community life, there are a lot of positive aspects too, and despite challenges, individuals need to hold their head up high and stay positive. As one of the participants noted, "I'm a prevailer I have to be persistent – because if I falter than I am letting my people down, my community down." Many times, as one participant noted, the community becomes the worst oppressors, where community members bring each other down. However, in order to be successful, individuals have to remain strong and keep going despite everything that they are up against, since there are individuals who try to pull others down any way they can, "it's like crab inside a cup, when one is almost out of the cup, the other will try and pull him down. That's how our people are, it's so sad." A few participants noted that an important teaching is to never give up, despite challenges and judgement, jealousy, and envy by others.

One question raised by many participants is: how does the community integrate traditional values and ways of life into contemporary daily life? A 'band-aid approach' identified by participants is for the schools to step in and teach language, cultural history, cultural activities, and traditional values since they already work with children. One participant described the band-aid approach as an emergency approach, which has been happening already, and noted "I really don't think that teachers and schools have that primary responsibility because that's not good, that's not the way it was done before." The participant felt that strong families and a collective effort are the keys to having traditional ways and activities prominent within the community again. The participant

also remarked, "What we need to do is we need to work with families to educate entire families on how important it is that families continue to teach this from parent to child, and from grandparent to grandchild, that we need to provide support for that so families can do this." Other participants also shared this viewpoint, where teachings and learning belongs within the family unit, and that it is not an "institutional type thing."

Traditionally, culture involved the family unit, and today the strength of each family unit needs to be re-established and supported in order for traditional culture and values to continue. All participants noted that community members today are faced with competing priorities and influences that are a part of contemporary lifestyles. One participant expressed, "I think we need to question some of those things and say if you continue to choose to do other things in your spare time there is going to be a cost to that and what's going to happen is your kids are not going to learn the culture." Each family unit needs to think of their children and grandchildren, since they may not learn anything about their community values and traditional customs. One participant expressed that if families do not pass on their cultural values and traditions, then it is "a cost that you are willing to be responsible for." Each family unit is responsible for the rejuvenation of family traditional activities and making them important for the whole family – children, youth, adults, and Elders.

In regards to rejuvenating Cree traditions and culture, the ability to understand the Cree language was noted as important by all participants as way to integrate traditional values and ways of life into contemporary community daily life. When community members are able to understand their language then they are able to connect to their Elders and to the past, and are also able to combine the past with modern life. Most

participants expressed that speaking the Cree language is a positive thing since it makes youth and those who do not speak the language want to speak their own language. Many participants explained that the Cree language was lost, but it is now coming back slowly into the community. One of the younger participants mentioned that in their Native Studies class at school they teach youth about the Cree language and how it was taken away – how young Aboriginal children were taken from their families and parents were unable to teach their children the Cree language and culture.

Many participants are hopeful that with the growing importance of language, youth may also care more about cultural activities and values as well. One of the participants explained that knowing the language is important, and community members have to try and learn to the language in order to understand traditional concepts and principles. However, although most parents and grandparents can speak Cree fluently, youth only know some of the language and understand a bit of it. One of the younger participants mentioned that their grandparents only spoke Cree "and nothing but Cree." Another participant stated that language must be spoken around children so that they are exposed to it and can pick it up, "Even if they don't speak it, they understand it and know their languages." Some participants agreed that children can be taught in the English language since many youth do not understand the Cree language. As a result, many things are taught in the English language in the community. One participant expressed, "But there's no harm in learning it in the English language, and then there comes a time where you learn your language and translate it into your own language." Therefore, there are many ways of teaching Cree culture (i.e. traditional activities, customs, values) to youth without using the Cree language. However, another participant explained that it is

difficult for some people, such as Elders, to speak the English language and put their words on paper. Therefore, their teachings need to be translated from Cree to English so that others can understand.

Although schools attempt to fill in for the family unit by providing some teachings about Cree language and culture, "traditionally it's always been a family thing, like your family always taught you that stuff." Especially on the trap line, as a few of the participants explained, the family was located on the trap line sand as a result everyone learned that lifestyle. But once the family moves from the trap line, the priorities change and the role of family changes. A one participant commented, **"The parents or whoever is taking care of these kids are very much responsible for what their kids learn and what they don't learn because you are attached to the rest of your family,"** therefore it is the primary caregivers responsibility to provide teachings about traditions and cultural aspects to children and youth. If parents or primary caregivers do not give their children the means and knowledge to participate in traditional activities and ways of life, than there is limited means of learning those ways. Community members might be interested in knowledge, teachings, and activities, but if there is no one to take the time to teach them then it is hard to actually participate, especially since there are no clubs or programs for learning these types of activities.

Many participants noted that it is a lifelong process to be raised with the traditional ways, and is something that individuals build on over the years. However, one participant noted, "We haven't necessarily given our youth these opportunities and our responsibilities as parents or caregivers, we're not fulfilling them anymore." Community members have to be exposed to these ways and that is how they learn, similar with

language, a person cannot learn if they are not exposed to language, and they will not be interested if they are not exposed to it or shown that it is important. Most participants agree that these are issues that impact children and youth, but it is not necessarily something that they can fix on their own.

School programs take children out for a few days at a time on the land and participate in cultural activities, which is described as a good thing by participants, but it is a different experience from being out for extended periods of time. It is not possible to fit in everything there is to know of traditional ways of life and activities in one weekend, so it is a different scenario today that community members are faced with. One participant commented, "I was exposed to that when I was really young so I knew what to expect. I think it's harder if you don't go out there for extended periods ever, than to expect someone to go out there if you are not really used to it. I don't think it's very appealing to them." It will not be very appealing for community members, especially youth, to spend time at cabin in the bush and on the trap line if it has not been a part of their life. As a result, some children and youth do not benefit since there is no one in the family practicing these ways and activities passing on teachings and skills. Those who do practice have to teach others who do not have anyone to teach them, but are willing to learn. This problem is a bigger issue than a youth or school program, as one participant expressed, "Can a school teach culture a few days a year going to a culture camp? Is that going to replace the culture and that knowledge that you learned when you were a kid? Is that going to be equivalent?"

A common concern raised by participants is that youth should be educated on the whole truth in terms of knowing what happened to the traditional way of life. One

participant explained that some of the negative things in the community were not always a part of their culture, such as drinking and laziness. Children and youth need to be exposed to the importance and relevance of traditional livelihood and their ancestors. Although it is suggested that knowledge of Cree culture and traditions should be a part of the schools, what children and youth need are family members, role models, and Elders that they can talk to at any time. One participant stated, "Recognize where you come from, and than you can succeed in anything." Knowledge of the traditional way of life and culture transmission is important, however many people do not have the experience to talk about traditional activities and livelihood. As a result, individuals need to work with Elders to build and maintain relationships, and become connected with their traditional roots.

In regards to cultural transmission of knowledge and skills, individuals and youth today will one day become the teachers, to empower future generations by maintaining relationships and traditions. As one participant comments, "Never forget always go back and practice your traditions. Because, when we don't go back, we slowly get away from it – from our traditions." As a result of the community straying away from traditional livelihood, there are many negative issues in the community that need to be dealt with such as symptoms of substance abuse and social problems. One participant expressed, "Until this day, even today, we have so many kids who are hurting out in the community, with the spinning of the wheel at the expense of our youth."

All participants believe that youth need to be empowered, where they are successful at any level. One participant commented that the community "Lost the sense of being and working together to accomplish things for the betterment of their own. And

that's the struggle we have, and it's always going to be a struggle until people start changing." Each community member needs to find their gift, and everyone has a different gift that they share with others. One participant explained that this takes away from selfishness and other aspects of contemporary lifestyles that were not a part of traditional ways of life. In traditional society, Elders and community members recognized a young child as having a gift, and will support that gift, give guidance, and give direction.

**4.2.4 Vision of Community Success**

When asked to define success for the LLRIB, one participant talked about their efforts to try to do as much as possible to help within the community to try and make a difference for present and future generations. This participant, along with others, mentioned that in contemporary every daily life community members can still exercise basic values from traditional ways of life – caring, love, respect, sharing, passion, being humble – and those basic values contribute to the success of the community. For example, an important value for community members to have is to help others and talk to others within the community. Some participants explained that helping out within the community and with people is a "thankless job." An example given by one participant is that when he offers assistance and helps others in need, someday the favour will be returned to him if he is in need of help or assistance. The participant explained that these are the basic laws of sharing: "You don't even question it and then it comes back to you and you're also helped." Overall, an individual does not do something just to say they practiced a law or concept, they do it because that is what they are taught to do, as a participant noted, "We were just taught that it's proper to help Elders, to help older people, and to help others that need it. That's all, and you don't even think about it." The

money component should not be an issue and people should not think about it, "and that's the right way to think," because it will come back to the individual in the form of good luck and a healthy life and those are the benefits and return that will be enjoyed.

All participants agreed that success also depends on resources, access to resources and funding, as well as support from the community. In particular, participants felt that the community needs to support youth, especially when they have the ability to become prominent leaders within the community. Many participants felt that community support for youth is missing, which has a lot to do with parent involvement. A few participants explained further that there would be more successful youth if there was more parent involvement, for example if their children want to excel in academic or recreational activities, than the parents need to turn around and ask what they can do to be involved and to encourage their children. One participant expressed, "If you have a kid that excels himself, try to max that kids potential." For some youth, they are supported by their parents who really push their child to excel, which makes a difference. Many participants felt that some parents could do more to support their children, for example, making it mandatory for parents to show up and help activities and events that their children are involved in. Once more parents are involved with their children and what their children are doing, than the community will be much stronger. Furthermore, it was mentioned by many participants that the community could run more camps and workshops for youth, to help motivate youth to get involved. As one participant explained, "The vision I guess is working together, to make things happen," where everyone is involved, committed, and providing support.

All participants voiced that there needs to be more opportunities for youth around the community so they are not getting into trouble and making bad choices. At the same time, youth also need to make choices on their own, and see the consequences of their actions rather than be told what to do, "live and learn" as one of the participants phrased it. Youth need to understand themselves by going through experiences, where they "trip and fall down," but also as an individual "you learn and you don't make those mistakes again." Despite different contexts, youth are faced with barriers just as previous generations have, they need guidance but also need to fall and pick themselves up to grow as individuals and overcome barriers in life. They learn what is right and wrong, and learn what their limitations are. As one participant explained, each individual learns from their own experiences and it is not a bad thing, but rather an experience where "Negative is not necessarily bad. Negative force, it has a purpose." The participant further explained that experiences are like a vehicle battery where there needs to be a positive and negative for the vehicle to have power, and "if you have two positives it doesn't work. If you have two negatives it doesn't work. Positive gives it power, same thing with life." Positive and negative experiences are what shape a persons daily life and the decisions that they make. Individuals can reflect on stories or information that other people have told them and can learn lessons from their own experiences. Stories are important as they tell lessons and give meaning to aspects of everyday life and how to live. As part of storytelling, individuals need to be good listeners, they need to talk to others, and also help others. One participant stated, "sometimes when you talk to someone you go back in time and you find answers for yourself, of the specific situation

that you are dealing with right now [and] than it dawns on you what you're doing, if it's right or wrong."

Education is another factor as success as identified by all participants. One participant commented that the ideal scenario would be to "have people who are educated within our band to benefit the community, not themselves." Community members have to be academically strong in order to succeed and be successful at any level, "Whether it is working for the province, and academically they can function in both societies. Whether it's the community college, or university level or college whatever you want to call it. They have to be successful in those areas to be totally successful anywhere." When people achieve an education and have support they feel good about themselves, and often come back to the community to help with the community and youth. Having an education is something to be proud of, where individuals can accomplish goals and become a positive impact within the community.

However, in terms of education, some participants felt that there is a lack of support for youth in school. Nonetheless, there are many youth who attend school and are "trying to get somewhere" to achieve their goals. At the same time, as many participants pointed out, there are a lot of youth that would rather be participating in unhealthy activities. Furthermore, there is not a lot of support for or awareness of post-secondary education and opportunities. It is each individual's choice if they want to pursue further educational opportunities. There are some educational opportunities for community members, however, the Band does not provide enough funding for education. For example, Northlands College, Nortep, and other programs - not everyone can get funded. One participant stated, "I was not able to get funded because there was too many

applicants getting funded. They didn't have enough for everyone." The participant suggested that maybe if they had more funding for everyone than there would be more community members educated and more working in the community after receiving post-secondary education.

Despite opportunities created in the community, education remains one of the main stumbling blocks in the community – the academics are not as strong as they are in other schools, and as a result many youth are not prepared for post-secondary programs. Some participants expressed that youth do not have a place to turn to, especially after they have graduated, and most are often unaware of where to go and are not informed prior to graduation on their options and opportunities. Younger adults should be role models to give youth the courage to go to school and stay in school. Also, as one of the younger participants explained, there are members at the Band office who will offer help to youth and others to find employment or get started with school, "say if you are finishing school and you want to go to college he'll say 'come talk to me I can try to get you into school and get everything ready for you', and he'll try to get you into the school and try to get funding for it."

The Band office will also help with resumes and finding employment within the Band and community. The Band wants the youth to start working more instead of being on welfare, to become motivated after graduating and seek opportunities. They want young people to stay off welfare and get employment to become independent. The Band is trying to help out "so I think it's good," as one participant commented. However, other participants felt that more awareness could help prior to graduation on informing youth of opportunities and who to talk to. They felt that the Band administration should be

pushing education and programs, but also expressed that possibly there is not enough money for programming.

The Band helps to create jobs, and many community members are working at Band or Band member owned businesses. Some of the participants perceive the majority of these businesses as being successful. One example is the Keethanow gas bar, since people from all over stop in at Keethanow and they get a lot of business. One participant noted that they have a lot of customers and it is busy, and the service is really good. The Band also creates job opportunities at the their office, employment opportunities on the reserve, and the J.R. Hall employs Band members. However, there are still not enough opportunities within the community itself to employ a significant amount of Band members. Some are employed within the town of La Ronge, which some participants explained is more of a government town with government jobs that require higher education that most Band members do not have. Overall there are a lot of job opportunities in La Ronge, but many Band members lack the required skills and education. As a result, many are forced to relocate and leave the community to try and look for opportunities and success elsewhere. But at the same time, as one participant commented, many people come from other communities for job opportunities within La Ronge or the reserve, so it goes either way.

A common concern raised by many participants is that there is an issue of politics within the community and the Band. Some participants expressed that changes need to be made in order to be very successful. One participant commented, "I think we would have been more advanced if our people would work together." However, the community lacks togetherness and expertise in some areas. The community and the Band have many

consultants who are outsiders to the community. As a result the Band is not utilizing their own community members to be successful, and if they did, as one participant expressed, there would be more success and "we could get them on the same page." Another participant suggested that if the community came together and addressed the Band leadership, maybe they would do something about it, especially if the youth approached the community and the Band. Overall, participants strongly felt that expertise - values and principles, need to come from within the community. A participant stated that the direction of the community needs to come from the community, and by asking "What do you think should occur in the communities? What do you think will be successful? How are we going to benefit the youth? How is it going to benefit the Elders?"

The meaning of success to many participants also means that community members must having an understanding of how the community would operate best, based on their traditions, and have an idea of what has been happening and what has happened in the past. Traditional culture and its values are "still happening today." Individuals do not have to be traditional to make things happen, but can have a good understanding of how things work in terms of natural processes, "You know, consequences, goals," where goals have no end because they are a part of a process. Youth need to be involved in different disciplines and brought together to make things happen. Youth also must have an open mind, and "[be] a good listener, and know to be reactive in situations. If there's something you don't like, think about it, talk about it." Individuals do not necessarily have to be practicing their traditional way of life, but at least have an understanding of that way of life and important aspects of it and how they have relevance to how to live today.

Overall, success cannot be simply defined, and there were many core themes that came from the participants' responses when they were asked to define success (See Figure 4-2). Success to the community means having each individual making an effort to help within the community and make a difference, whether it is through supporting, motivating, and/or guiding community members, especially youth. Success is having opportunities available for education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship, and ensuring that all community members have an awareness of and access to information about these opportunities. Success is also having opportunities available for community members to be involved in cultural, recreational and sporting activities and events that promote healthy lifestyles, teamwork, and skills training.

**FIGURE 4-2 Determinants of Success**



## 4.3 Part Two

Part two of the questionnaire sought to better understand traditional Cree culture. Each participant was asked how he or she viewed culture and ways of life for the La

Ronge reserve. The themes that emerged are: defining what Cree culture is to the LLRIB, traditional ways of life, and *pimâcihowin* (See Figure 4-3). As some participants explained, Cree culture is found within each individual and in all creations, and is the way of life experienced both in the past and in the present from being on the land and carrying out activities on the land. Most participants expressed their concern with the clash of Western lifestyle with northern traditional lifestyles and its influence on day-to-day activities. Many problems in the community stem from this cultural clash, since Western influences and ways of doing things have not been a part of traditional Cree culture and ways of life. Therefore, a main challenge for community members is maintaining or going back to their roots in order to carry on a healthy lifestyle grounded in the framework that guided their ancestors' lives. Many participants have maintained traditional activities and ways of life passed on through generations; some continue this lifestyle, and others combine it with modern conveniences and resources.

Overall, all participants recognized the importance of their unique northern culture and way of life, and spoke of its importance for contemporary community life and for any individuals who have been disconnected from traditional activities and way of life. Pursuing *pimâcihowin* (making a living) to achieve *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) was identified as important within the community, where all community members are afforded the ability to make a living and provide a livelihood for themselves and their families, and contribute to a healthy, sustainable economy and community.

**FIGURE 4-3 Themes of Traditional Culture**
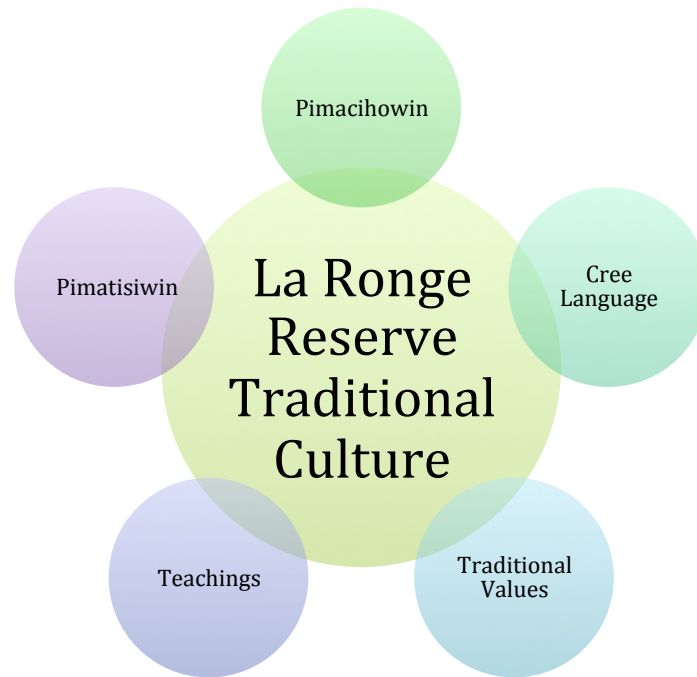


### 4.3.1 Role of Culture

Each participant expressed that culture can mean a lot of things, but generally most agreed that it had to do with land-based activities (hunting, commercial fishing and trapping), and its associated values of family, language and respect for the environment. One participant stated, "culture lies all around you," and many participants expressed that culture is found within oneself and in all creations. According to one participant, culture is "how you relate and resonate your spirit to all those things," in reference to all creations. The sun, earth, moon, and stars were explained by a few participants as all being a part of Cree culture. Same with plant and animal beings, fire, water, air, "they are all a big part of our culture, and that's the way we believe as Aboriginal people." When one participant was younger, Elders explained to him that when individuals first learn about traditional Cree culture, they need to understand the importance of animals and their role as Elder brothers and teachers. The participant stated, "I thought to myself, well

how can those animals teach us anything about life? You know, than I had to acknowledge that and they show you that the animals are our teachers – the greatest teachers that we have." Along with animals, individuals also learn from the trees, rocks, and other elements of the environment. Another participant explained that everything is all connected in the everyday activities that people carry out. People are living culture because they are experiencing the spirit of the land and the activities they carry out on the land – it is a way of life.

Almost all participants mentioned that culture also means being on the land, providing food, knowing the language, and knowing the way of life. Culture to the Lac La Ronge community is hunting, fishing, trapping, and survival, and is found in concepts, principles, customs, and values related to land and environment. According to many participants, in order to be a self-governing successful community, traditional culture and lands are required. Many participants believed that community members somewhat follow concepts and principles of traditional Cree culture, and commented that there are not that many on the "traditional approach." A few participants expressed that there are many who talk about traditional culture but most are not involved in the traditions where they are actually following Cree principles and participating in cultural activities on a daily basis. When individuals are traditional, they are following concepts and practicing principles, customs, and values – they are involved in the way of life rather than taking parts of it. As one participant commented, "I think we are slowly making a breakthrough in terms of culture, but it's a slow process." Community members sometimes rely too much on modern day conveniences, and participants explained that the community needs to exercise traditional principles to carry on with every day actions. Many participants

felt strongly that although many individuals are living a contemporary life with computers, cell phones, vehicles, etc., at the same time they need to have their Cree culture.

It was brought forth by some participants that there are many negative aspects of the community that clash with and question traditional Cree culture. One participant remarked, "Where do we come from? Where is my identity? Is it drunkenness on the street? And all these other things – taking dope and drinking Lysol, is that my culture?" Overall, the greatest problem identified by participants was community members, especially youth, being detached from traditional ways and lacking an understanding of what Cree culture is. According to one participant, "if people could only understand and be open-minded even if you are not involved in the traditional, but just to understand that hey this is ours, this is what our roots are, this is what makes me a person." Community members require a strong foundation that is influenced by their traditional culture. Without that foundation, "you aren't going to get anywhere," as a participant indicated.

Many participants believe that there has been resurgence in learning about the traditional ways of life of Cree culture, but more direction needs to come from the community. As one participate commented, "You can give the horse some water but you can't make him drink anything." In other words, cultural aspects such as concepts, principles, and teachings can be introduced and taught to community members, but it is an individual decision on how they incorporate and follow them in everyday life. Some participants felt strongly that more community members need to talk to Elders and learn about the Cree teachings of their culture and everyday way of life. Individuals and families can make changes in their life by following concepts and principles. Participants

explained that youth "will bring it," as they are building connections with their Elders and are open-minded in learning about their culture. Although many adults lack interest in learning, youth are very interested and require support from their family and community to experience and follow their traditions. As one participant remarked, youth will have the power to make changes, "it's been prophesized by the traditionalists that the seventh generation will stand up. You know, I think we're into the sixth generation. That's after contact, that's how they do the generations, after contact. One generation, two generations, to the seventh. That's when they become strong."

However, a concern raised by participants is of how traditional Cree culture can be brought back into the community so that members are practicing their traditions more. All participants feel that this is an important question. One of the participants stated, "It doesn't matter what culture you live in, but to know the principles that govern people in the good way, good way of life." The participant explained that all cultures "they're just different, that's all it is. Each one has good, and you can't discriminate against the other." However, if one culture imposes on another than it becomes problematic, "If you do your own thing and they take the time to understand you, it's okay. But if they continue to press, than it becomes a problem." One participant commented on the arrival of Europeans: "We can see that the world has changed for some purpose when they came over, beyond our control. We started to change, and as a result we have all this. But we can still, you know, use it in a good way and borrow it but have your traditions, your principles, your philosophy, your ancestors – don't forget them." The participant strongly believes that once the community understands where they come from and remember their ancestors, they can become rooted in their Cree culture and traditions. Despite changes

within the community with the introduction of modern conveniences and influences of other ways of life, traditional concepts can remain relevant to all areas of community life. As a result, many individuals are "walking in two shoes" as participants described, one moccasin and one regular shoe walking "in the same way, in one life."

Many participants believed that Cree culture is stronger in more northern and remote communities. For example, youth from smaller and more remote communities are often viewed as more respectful than those from larger communities such as the La Ronge reserve. One participant expressed that what community members choose to do in their spare time in the community is very different from what people choose to do in smaller, more remote communities. Furthermore, "I've even heard one kid say, 'that I try to stay away from La Ronge because I don't want to get caught up in all that stuff because it's negative. It's really negative stuff that I know if I stay there I'm going to get swallowed up by it and I know I don't want to because it's actually affecting my life so I have to stay away from that'." The participant elaborated that younger people are realizing the negative aspects of the community and see it as a center that it is not culturally land based, and that they must stay where they are exposed to more positive community life and activities. Another participant felt that the smaller and more remote a community is, there is a better possibility of people practicing their traditional ways of life and activities more often, as well as speaking their language. However, "bigger communities like La Ronge, it is very urban," and La Ronge reserve is viewed as being urbanized.

A few participants commented that it would be really good if concepts and principles were brought back into the community, especially since there are so many

things that work against community members, such as lateral violence, backstabbing, gossiping, and put downs. Individuals have to the fight many barriers in order to succeed. However, many feel lost because they are not connected to their traditions, so as a result individuals need to be grounded in Cree culture. As some participants noted, there is a cultural clash, and many community members just do what everyone else is doing, which may not always involve traditions. Although, despite modern conveniences and changes from the traditional ways of life, "you can borrow contemporary ways, but don't be used by it, use it, but base yourself on your traditions and your roots."

Despite being in a community that is considered urbanized, a younger participant believed that if there was more Cree culture (i.e. activities, customs, teachings, values) within the community, there would be less youth involved in negative activities. Youth would have healthier activities to be involved in, goals to strive for, and role models and leaders to look up to where they are contributing to a healthier lifestyle by following traditional activities, customs, and values. One of the participants stated, "Every young person is hungry for spirituality, hungry for traditions," they want to learn and be a part of it. Another participant also mentioned that youth are hungry for Cree culture, and that "they could not see anything else that would make them feel a sense of belonging of having a culture that they could use to make themselves feel good and keep on going." Youth must learn and understand the concepts, as well as participate in traditional activities. Many community members want their children to learn about their traditional culture, since some view it as being lost along the way.

Although participants are positive about their Cree culture, there is realization that it is a difficult task to teach traditional ways (i.e. customs, principles, values) in

contemporary day, especially to youth when they are influenced by modern conveniences. One participant commented, "It seems like we do so little with so much," and the potential of individuals and the community is not being reached and fulfilled. The participant believed that more could be done, especially in regard to traditional activities and ways of life that would lead to healthier individuals, families, and community overall. Many participants suggested that there needs to be more support from the community, and support for youth where they can talk to someone if they need help or want to know something about their Cree culture.

**Pimâtisiwin**

Most participants identified the importance of trying to pull in as much of the traditional ways of life and activities into contemporary day. Traditional lifestyles were complex and required a lifetime of education invested in learning the skills of every day survival. Once each person appreciates the complexity of traditional lifestyles of their ancestors, they will recognize the importance of maintaining a connection to the past. One participant felt that if they let go of practicing traditions, "than we could completely lose it, because whoever comes after me is even more distant." In other words, it is urgent to carry on traditional ways of life and activities for fear that it will eventually be lost, and the connection to traditional culture will be lost. Maintaining that connection and participating in traditional activities is described as a balancing act by one participant, "But you are always trying to push yourself a little bit further because you always want to learn more." By following traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and harvesting, individuals get the feeling of pride, a sense of accomplishment, and appreciation for traditional ways of life. Following this way of life, as described by

participants, gives a sense of purpose and fulfillment, where individuals are contributing to every day livelihood and well-being, which is "what they are supposed to be doing."

According to many participants, without purpose and fulfillment, there is a missing connection since traditional activities require experience and a learning environment where individuals become independent. One participant explained that they feel rejuvenated, strong, stable, and at peace because they are reestablishing their roots and positioning themselves "the way I should be." The participant also felt that there are "so many things I get out of that experience," and is conscious of why these activities are so important. The ideal situation as described by many participants is that all family members should be involved, not just a few people in the family, since traditional ways of life required the effort of everyone in the family and resulted in strong family units and culture. In that way, "kids of all ages were exposed to it because their whole family was involved in it right, you get the whole family going back to the land." One of the participants exclaimed, "imagine the difference" if all generations of the family were going out and practicing their traditions and prioritizing those activities while spending extended periods on the land. Individuals and families would be healthier and stronger, and would be providing a strong foundation for future generations.

A question raised by one participant is: "What if there's nothing left? What if you don't learn this and pass it on to anybody?" The participant expressed concern over traditional activities and ways of life merely becoming stories, "That's what I worry about, that it's just stories and nothing else. No experience anymore." The participant explained that they do not want that to happen within their family so they do everything they can to continue to be involved in traditional ways, "I just didn't want that to happen

for it to be like 'oh yeah they used to do that a long time ago but we haven't done that for a long time'." Other participants explained that it is a parental decision to make cultural activities a priority for children and youth and to expose their children to traditional ways of life and the connection to land. One participant commented, "If the parents don't prioritize it, how can the rest of the family participate in it?" If parents do not want their children to go out and participant in traditional activities or choose other activities, than there is no exposure to traditional ways of life. One participant stated: "Whoever is your primary caregiver is going to determine whether or not you're going to do that stuff or even be exposed to it," it is not necessarily the children or youth who need to prioritize it. Whoever is taking care of children and youth makes those decisions and decides what the priorities are, "because you can't expect a 16 year old to get their own pick-up truck, their own boat, their own trailer, and buy their own skidoo, and learn all that stuff on their own. That's unrealistic." Children and youth do not have to means to be able to do things on their own, especially when it is supposed to be passed on within the family. Cree culture (i.e. customs, values, teachings) need to be re-established in families since there are not many who are maintaining it.

A question that a few participants ask is what happens when the family does not prioritize these activities anymore? Especially since most families do not participate in traditional activities like they used to. Furthermore, it is hard to find young people to go out for hunting, trapping, fishing activities, especially young men for hard labour activities. These traditional activities do not fit into contemporary lifestyles of young people, as one participant exclaimed "Well you can't go hunting at 2 in the afternoon on a Saturday, like sorry it doesn't work that way. You got to get up really early!" To

participate in traditional activities individuals and families have to be committed, plan in advance, and make it work within schedules along with school or work. It is up to each individual and family to make it a priority, but for most it is not made to be a priority. For example in the summer, instead of going fishing, many would rather go water skiing and participate in other activities on the lake. But at the same time, as one participant noted, "if you've never gone out in the bush when you were a little kid, you're probably not going to be very interested in it by the time you are a teenager." Younger children will likely want to go out and will be excited to participate in activities, but when they are teenagers, "It's like 'No I have a million other things that I am interested in and you know working my butt off in the bush overnight is not something I'm interested in'."

The participants indicated that some community members occasionally go out on the land and participate in traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, gathering, and trapping, but no more than a day or few days, mostly on weekends. Individuals and families need to make time to practice their Cree cultural ways and maintain knowledge and skills by participating in traditional activities, more than just a few hours a week. As one participant commented:

> When we were young we had so many relatives that did it all the time and that's kind of what we're used to is that everybody in the family was doing it when we were kids and then here we are older and like nobody does it anymore, now we're the older people. But look at all the other people our age and nobody is doing that. How did it change that fast from so many people doing it to practically nobody doing it within our own lifetime?

If there is someone in the family who realizes the importance of traditional knowledge and activities, "at least it's maintaining itself." However, a barrier for a lot of families is limited means or lack of resources. Individuals and families need resources to go out – transportation such as a boat or canoe to travel on the lake, a cabin for shelter, and also

need to prioritize time off to spend time at a cabin and participating in traditional activities. It is essential to accumulate resources, such as a truck, skidoo, boat, anything to be mobile quicker if individuals or families are only going out for a weekend due to work or school. There is also an issue of single parents, which is a prominent issue. A single mother cannot be expected to teach sons to hunt, trap, or fish – they are doing the work of two parents and do not have the time or may not have the knowledge. One participant explained that it is even more difficult if a single mother has younger children and babies, since traditionally, "the fathers were there teaching those skills to the young boys, very young, like they were already moose hunting on their own when they were teenagers." Young men needed to be pulled back into the family, but it will be harder to learn if their fathers have not taught them.

Family support is needed in order to pass on knowledge and skills, however a few participants mentioned that family breakdown is a casualty due to a lack of cultural transmission. Cultural transmission is anything that goes from parent to child, and grandparent to grandchild, "You can only pass on what you are already doing yourself," stated by one participant. The participant also noted, "If you don't know it, how do you expect your kids to learn it?" If children and youth are not practicing their traditional ways and activities, than it will not get passed on which creates a break in cultural transmission. Traditionally, as explained by one participant, "You would be exposed to it young and as you spend time, as you get older as a child you're learning more and more skills. By the time you are a youth you actually know how to do quite a bit of stuff by then and you're becoming highly skilled already, and that's the traditional model of how it was done."

Traditional livelihood was family oriented, where all family members were very involved and there were a lot of teachers. With a lot of people having the skills and carrying out activities on a daily basis, there were many opportunities to practice. One participant gave an example of building a cabin, where all relatives would come together and help build a cabin and families would spend extended periods of time at these cabins. A few of the participants spoke of their childhood and spending time at family cabins. In more recent times, families spend time at cabins in the summer time or other breaks when children are not in school. One participant described this time as "my non-school time," which she felt was enough exposure where it was a part of her life and she feels the need to maintain it. The participant commented on her time spent at family cabins for weeks and months at a time, "We stayed out there and pretty much lived out there all summer, it wasn't just like a little outing. That was your summer time and you just stayed out there, you didn't go to town and you didn't have much out there." A few other participants described a similar childhood experience.

However, many participants recognized that today it is a struggle for those who want to participate in traditional activities and carry on aspects of traditional livelihood and living off of the land. As one participant exclaimed, "That's why it's really got to be in families than if you see it, you're going to be doing stuff when you're young. Than by the time you are a teenager, you know it's familiar to you. You really understand it. You've tried it a lot, than this issue is not going to be an issue." But for those community members who were not afforded these opportunities to spend on the land, "how can you truly understand it if you've never practiced it?" With a decrease in traditional activities and lifestyles, community members are not exposed to it as often anymore. As a result,

many adults are trying to learn the skills of trapping and fishing for the first time at an older age, and are sometimes "less sure of themselves."

Overall, all participants expressed that traditional activities require experiential learning of essential skills, which takes more than a few hours on weekends to acquire. One participant commented that the more a person learns, the more they begin to realize just how much there is to learn, "You're basically like a child out there trying to learn how to do this stuff." Furthermore, since many families are not practicing their traditions together as often, there will not always be someone to pass on teachings and skills, and they will have to figure out how to carry out activities on their own. Skills associated with traditional livelihood require a process that is largely experience based learning versus learning from studying books and in class training. Observing and practicing are very important aspects of experiential based learning, as explained by one participant, "What you do is you watch it, then it's like okay I'm going to try it now, and basically that's traditional learning." Traditionally, individuals would observe various activities being carried out many times at a fairly young age, and would have the opportunities to practice and gain skills throughout their lifetime. Today however, many young people are not involved in traditional activities – trapping, hunting, fishing, gathering, and harvesting – and are not gaining the valuable experience and skills required to carry on activities throughout their lives. As a result, those who are trappers and fishermen, "We have an obligation to help other people that want to learn it but have lost it perhaps," and also to help encourage and engage youth and adults alike in participating.

**4.3.2 Pimâcihowin**

Various responses were received when participants were asked to explain their perspectives on the principle of *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living). Many participants believe that to achieve *pimâcihowin* community members need work hard to sustain themselves and their families, and work hard for the things that they want. They also believe that it is crucial that community members are always afforded the ability to sustain themselves and their families, since that is one of the reasons the LLRIB agreed to sign treaty. One participant explained that treaties provide an ability to carry on with vocations, and that treaties were understood to guarantee individuals "with the ability to just carry on with our livelihood just the way we have always done." As a result, community members must ensure that they live up to what was agreed to in the treaty, and carry on those ways of life of living off of the land. One participant expressed, "People think that, that's kind of really far away from every day life, but in the north we have those chances all the time to carry on with that way of life." The participant also commented, "I just do it because we are supposed to do it," and it is extremely important to promote that ability and that way of life to other people, especially youth. However, many community members lack access to resources and knowledge of how to carry on traditional land-based economic activities. With that said, it was suggested by participants that children, youth, and adults alike must be willing to make the effort to spend time on the land, and learn about the land and land-based activities.

Some participates explained that in order to achieve *pimâcihowin*, there needs to be more effort put forth by each community member. A few participants mentioned that the Band would like to see more youth working and becoming motivated and

independent. Furthermore, those participants who have been successful need to be identified and utilized as role models for other young people in the community. For example, some participants thought that it would be a good idea to showcase community members who were motivated and worked hard to finish high school, attend post-secondary, and find employment, as opposed to being on welfare or social assistance. One participant strongly believed that going on welfare is one of the worst mistakes made by community members, "once you start taking welfare, people will get useless, they won't work." Also, as the participant explained further, when people go on welfare they get their housing, water, and many other amenities paid for, "so why should you work?" Other participants agreed that welfare has had an extremely negative effect on the community, and one participant noted:

> The pride is not there anymore. Not like it was before. Like my dad, when we were growing up, totally refused to go on welfare. His summer of work was, he'd guide. When he was done guiding he would trap, he would do other things to make things meet. But he would never go on welfare, and we were brought up that way too. To this day the majority of my family members work.

The participant mentioned that he and his siblings were brought up with a strong work ethic from his father and commented "I sure feel sorry for those who don't have that."

Overall, many participants are hopeful that all community members will become motivated to participate in traditional land-based activities, pursue educational and training opportunities, and seek employment within the community. As one participant expressed "it would be nice to see the day where you have individuals who are willing to work for the betterment of the community." The ideal situation that was identified by many participants is to work hard for their livelihood and well-being. One participant

commented that when an individual works hard to earn a living "You cherish that dollar more than you would if somebody just given it to you."

Most participants expressed that a connection to the land is vital to everyday life and well-being. One participant noted, "Without land you don't have an economy on your reserve." Some participants explained that their ancestors' survival depended on the land and traditional economic activities. The traditional economy of the north depended on hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering, and only what was needed for survival was taken from the land and the monetary component of resources was non-existent. As a result, a land-based culture and economy is strong in the north. One participant commented, "It grounds us [because] this land is traditional. This is our territory." Furthermore, without the land as a power base and a connection to the land through traditional roots, "How can we have an economy? It's very, very difficult. It is always collapsing as soon as we start something, and we've seen that." As some participants explained, the northern economy is centered upon a land-based culture and therefore land stewardship is a crucial responsibility. At times, some people only focus on the monetary component of economics and forget to care about the land. However, without a strong land-based culture, one participant questions as to how the local economy is different from the non-Aboriginal approach economics, where there is too much focus on the political and legal aspects. The participant further commented that the Western concept of economics differs from the northern concept of economics, where the Western way of thinking clashes with the cultural base of the north, since they are different cultures.

Elders had explained to one participant that northern Cree culture has a lot to do with land and environment, and without a strong cultural foundation based on northern

traditional roots and ways of life, than the community is not grounded when they talk about economics. Other participants expressed that northern economics is a balancing act at times due to the strong land-based culture, since individuals want to balance their traditions connected to the land and know what can be lost if the land is ruined. However, community members recognize that northern economics and ways of life are changing due to modern influences, and one participant commented that the community might have to substitute or improvise their economy with "contemporary economics."

Many community members realize that the traditional economy of trapping and fishing are unable to sustain families to the extent that they used to, and many individuals must also pursue other opportunities to sustain their livelihood. It is also believed by many participants that economics is more than monetary, and what is gained from economics are the benefits of providing a livelihood, which is why individuals are motivated to maintain it. Some participants felt strongly that too many community members have been looking at the economy solely from a Western economic perspective, and many only focus on the money component and forget about the connection to land as the base for economics. Some participants also expressed that Elders talk about this issue but not everyone is listening, "Unless you are on the land, you aren't really going to know who you are," and if the community loses their connection to the land than it will not be a part of discussion and the land based culture will be compromised – the ability to make a living and provide a livelihood from the land will be compromised.

Although many participants agreed, for the most part, that the days of full time land based livelihood of fishing and trapping are "behind us now," it does not mean that the land has to be completely abandoned. One participant commented that Aboriginal

people have always been very adaptable, but in order to move forward the community needs to discuss the land and work towards new ways of land stewardship. All generations must be involved in the discussion of the importance of land, for example, asking questions such as "Why is it so important in the first place and how are you acting on that?" Some participants identified that gaining an understanding of why the land is so important and discussing what can be done to maintain connections to the land are important steps towards contemporary land stewardship. These discussions are especially important since many community members do not have land-based experience to talk about these issues, therefore other community members need to convey the significant values that come from experience and why it is so important. As one participant remarked, "If that connection has never been made in the first place, you don't realize that it is absent." The participant also expressed, "but once you have that connection and than it's cut off, that's when you realize – I need that in my life." In other words, individuals and families are cutting themselves off from their land-based culture if they never practice it. As another participant expressed, being Indigenous means being of the land. Land is an important part of Aboriginal identity, and is directly related to the connection to land and living off of the land.

Some participants spoke about traditional livelihood. They explained that traditional livelihood depended on living off of the land, and families carried on their way of life by being out on the land, participating in land-based activities, and learning about the eco-system and all living things. Today there are still ways for individuals to continue to make a living on the land through land-based activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering, but it takes time commitment and skill investment.

One participant expressed that spending time on the land gives individuals respect for how their ancestors used to live. In other words, the land provides a connection to ancestors and their way of life, and that is why the land is so important. The participant goes on to say, "I've heard several Elders telling me in the last while, is the land misses us and the land needs us, and the land is crying for us." Everything on the land is related to each other, and participants expressed that they feel that when they are out on the land and can feel that connection. One participant gave the example of how people can be related to the trees. If a tree is not rooted in the earth and does not have a strong foundation, then it is eventually going to fall. If the tree does not have further support from the sun, air, and water, than it is going to have symptoms and possibly die. The tree is rooted in the earth and supported by the environment, and it grows from within outwards – just as people do. There is a special relationship that needs to be understood, that all things and processes are related to nature. Spending time with land is important, and is said to give power from having a connection to the environment and identity as an Indigenous person.

When discussing the land and environment, one participant stated, "Come to my laboratory, my university in the bush." The participant mentioned that each culture is different, some cultures may prefer in classroom learning but in the north the learning is primarily experiential and land-based and that is what many community members are used to. Each community member has to experience the "wilderness and contact with nature and so forth, to really understand what it is all about." Other participants also agreed that land-based education is extremely important. When discussing traditional activities, one participation commented "If I don't learn how to do this well, there is no

possibility I'm going to be able to teach anyone else." The participant explained that she made the decision to prioritize land-based education and participate in traditional activities whenever possible in order to observe and learn how to carry out the activities. The participant felt that it was important to be able to "feed ourselves and our family" where products from hunting, fishing, and trapping are the main source of protein. Food and diet was the main focus of traditional ways of life, and activities carried out daily involved obtaining or harvesting food products from the land. Many participants felt strongly that community members must experience land-based survival and livelihood in order to understand and appreciate the land.

A few participants mentioned that many people in the community do not grasp the importance of physically being on the land. One participant noted that individuals cannot read about being on the land, but rather they have to experience it first hand. Another participant explained that when participating in land-based activities, there will not always be ideal circumstances, and individuals must be prepared to encounter cold and rain, snow and ice. As the participant explained further, the Dene would say that the water is boss:

> I thought it makes total sense, because when you're out on the land you aren't the boss anymore the land is the boss. The weather and everything you have absolutely no control over it so you have to be extremely conscious of how everything is out there and you adjust yourself to the land. It doesn't accommodate you, and that's what the difference is in worldview between being on the land and being off the land, your perspective changes.

Many participants strongly believe that community members can only understand their culture, which is primarily land-based, by having a relationship with the land. Furthermore, it is of significant value to go back to the land as much as possible, especially for those individuals who do not live close to family cabins or trap lines.

Although it is up to each individual to prioritize participation in cultural activities, since activities such as hunting, trapping, fishing, etc. are time consuming and requires travel, the benefits of participation is spending time with family and maintaining a connection to the land. When one of the participants was young girl, her parents wanted all of their children to learn about living in the bush and on the trap line in order to gain the connection to the land so that they could pass on that way of life to future generations. A few other participants commented on similar childhood experiences.

Although there are still many community members that continue to participate in hunting, trapping, and fishing activities and consume traditional foods, there are many people in the community who are not used to eating traditional and wild foods. Furthermore, a common problem noted by some participants many community members lack the skills of how to clean and/or prepare the products obtained from hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering activities. A few participants mentioned that what is missing in the community is the collective effort of the family. The collective effort of the family consists of teamwork, where skills and individual roles are passed on to younger generations. Due to the lack of collective effort of the family, there are fewer individuals contributing and more work and commitment for those who choose to hunt, fish, trap, gather, and harvest.

About half of the participants interviewed continue to carry out land-based activities, and they spoke strongly about the need and urgency to continue that way of life. In particular, a few participants noted they continue to provide and share fresh fish and meat to their family and friends. One participant explained that traditional livelihood is connected to food "it's either getting food or eating food but you got to get it

somehow." One of the younger participants discussed hunting, "we cut moose in the back and we just try to tell people to come out and we give, we share, and give to our community. Like families that need meat we go around to the reserve giving out some traditional food. So whatever we kill, we give." The participant also mentioned that parents and grandparents teach the importance of sharing and always say "share with other people, don't let them go hungry." Giving and sharing traditional food to the community and families in need is of significant value, some participants mentioned that they share fresh fish to parents, Elders, and others in the community, and also share caribou meat, moose meat, etc. When asked about sharing, one participant stated, "it's just part of your life and you don't even think about it." According to a majority of the participants, having fresh fish and meat as part of their diet is of significant value, and many commented that it was their parents who prioritized eating traditional foods when they were young.

However, a common concern raised by participants is that there are not many community members who continue to go out trapping, fishing, or hunting, or who are willing to learn about and participate in these activities. As one participant explained, many community members are "town-raised versus trap line raised." Furthermore, "people who are of a certain age who never really went on a trap line are basically urban here now. They might be reserve raised, but they are urban reserve raised versus trap line raised." There is a distinction between an individual being trap line raised or town-raised, since a town raised individual may have never been on a trap line or participate in any traditional activities. One participant exclaimed, "How different is that from being urban anywhere?" From this perspective, community members who are town-raised will be

distanced from trapping, fishing, and harvesting activities and may not learn the skills and values of traditional livelihood.

Some of the participants were raised on the trap line, some continue to spend time on the trap line, and others have been exposed to it at some point in their lives. When discussing the trap line, one participant explained that they are "First generation not to be raised on the trap line," in other words, first generation not trap line raised but has a parent that was. The participant stated "You're here but you are connected" and it is important to pull in as much of that way of life into contemporary lifestyles. Another participant explained, "I lived the trap line style, I lived in the community, and I went urbanized for a while. I went to the city for a while. But you know, there is something definitely missing, you know, especially to be holistic." The participant noted that living a holistic lifestyle required a connection to the land and continued participation in traditional livelihood activities to maintain that connection.

Many participants agreed that community members cannot necessarily go back to the hunting and trapping lifestyle and expect to make a living and provide a livelihood. When discussing working on the trap line, one participant remarked, "As a person living in a contemporary world, what we have to do is accept the fact that we can't do this full time." For those who do still practice traditional activities, they are often finding employment that will accommodate a lifestyle where they can have a wage earning job and be able to continue on with aspects of traditional livelihood. Many community members move to more rural areas where they can commute to accommodate both types of lifestyles. Therefore, many individuals commute on a weekly or daily basis to their rural home or cabins. One participant explained that they have to navigate around their

work schedule in order to fit in traditional activities, such as adjusting time off and finding the most effective way to do things when trapping, hunting, fishing, and harvesting. Some individuals also try to have internet, phone, and other modern conveniences in order to carry on their job from a cabin or rural setting.

Lastly, some participants explained that traditionally everyone had a role within the family or community. Each individual had a role based on certain strengths or skills, and each individual carried out tasks that contributed to the collective effort. Today, some people are skilled at setting fish nets, setting snares, or at hunting various animals, and also need to pass on those skills to others. As expressed by one participant, "The best way is to teach others and to show by example, and hopefully just by what you leave behind in terms of your legacy that others might want to do that too."

Exercising and maintaining values from traditional culture (see Figure 4-4) and lifestyles was found to be a factor of success, according to the participants. However, much like success, traditional culture cannot be simply defined, and there were many core themes that came from the participants responses when they were asked about the role of Cree culture in the community. These themes include: land, traditional activities, language, knowledge, family, and survival. According to the participants, culture refers to all creations. Culture means being on the land, knowing the Cree language, providing food and resources for survival and livelihood which ultimately relates to practicing hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering, and harvesting activities. Traditional culture has been influenced by modern conveniences and there have been significant changes in the Woodland Cree culture from past to present, specifically in the way that family units and the community function. However, core principles, values, and customs remain

unchanged, but cultural transmission from older to younger generations must continue or these principles, values and customs will be lost in time.

**FIGURE 4-4 Elements of Woodland Cree Traditional Culture**
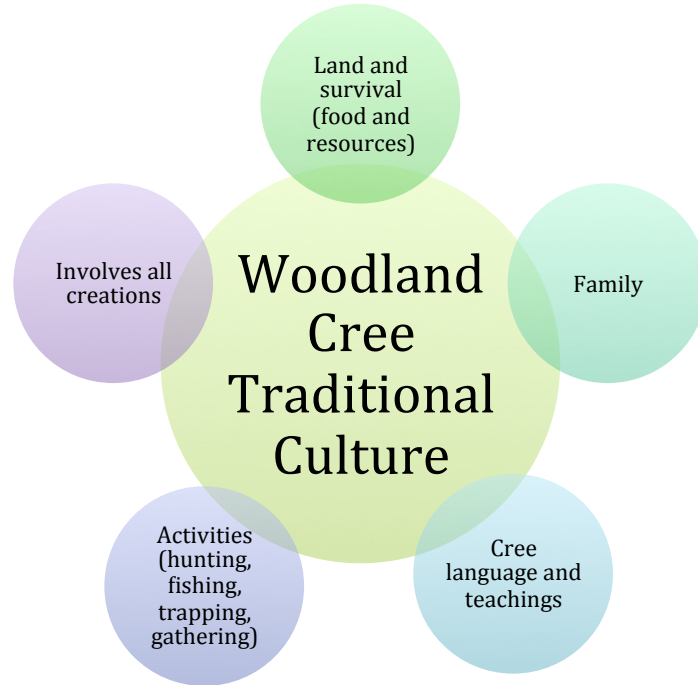
**CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION**

**5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a discussion on the primary findings of the interview questionnaire, based on the four broad themes – leadership, community engagement, knowledge, and livelihood. These themes illustrate some aspects of *pimâcihowin*, which is unique to the northern culture and Cree way of life, *pimâtisiwin.* The discussion provides a comparison of the study findings to the literature, some of the key implications of the study as it relates to the current literature, including emerging new information.

**5.2 Main Findings**

This study interviewed a sample of Lac La Ronge Indian Band members living in the community of Lac La Ronge about their perceptions of northern *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and its relevance to the LLRIB Band developments.. The broad themes that were drawn from the literature and the research findings include leadership, community engagement, knowledge, and livelihood. These themes broadly categorize elements of *pimâtisiwin* and are important for pursuing *pimâcihowin.* As a whole, the findings suggest that LLRIB Band members believe that the northern cultural way of life is and should continue to be important to leadership and communities and should influence their development initiatives. This is consistent with the *pimâtisiwin* literature by Settee (2007), Hart (2002) and Young (2003), and it enhances the work done in studies like the Harvard Project that looked at the aspects that made some Indigenous communities in the United States more effective that others, in terms of economic development. The LLRIB study suggests that northern local culture is foundational to LLRIB developments rather than as Harvard might suggest, being only

one attribute. The distinguishing regional and remote location, the cultural history and ongoing livelihood activities on the land by the LLRIB members in northern Saskatchewan might better explain the tenacity of cultural relevance in development and indeed, all of northern life or *pimâtisiwin*.

## 5.2.1 Theme 1 – Leadership

The first theme from the research findings is the role of leaders and role models in the community were identified as being important. Leadership is also a significant element of *pimâcihowin* and *pimâtisiwin*. Authors such as Crooks et al. (2010), Rose et al. (2007), and the Northern Development Ministers Forum (2010), assert that community leaders and role models offer guidance, knowledge, experience, and support. Furthermore, leaders are a key cultural component in the community, as they demonstrate confidence and experience, offer encouragement, and promote positive social attitudes and relationships According to the findings, the elected leadership plays an important role in the community, and should be knowledgeable about issues that affect the community and meet community and Band member needs.

The literature by Rose et al. (2007), Crooks et al. (2010) and Northern Development Ministers Forum (2010) also suggests that leaders and role models understand the community and can inspire others, especially youth, to achieve their goals and encourage them to make healthy, positive choices. The literature on the Harvard Project discusses leadership as one of the four pillars to nation building, and leaders are required to introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, propose change, and convince people that things can be different and inspire the community to take action (Cornell and Kalt, 1992, Cornell and Kalt, 1998). The Harvard Project

appears to define a leader as someone who is driving change by introducing new knowledge and challenging the community on their views and perceptions. However, the LLRIB research findings here imply that leadership is derivative from culture, rather than an independent variable, and the leadership is influenced by local cultural values and views of the community and may indeed, seek developments that align with the unique northern ways of life or *pimatisiwin*. Indigenous communities will likely only support the institutions they feel are legitimate and of benefit to them. This also applies to leadership especially in small communities when family networks and communications are so interrelated and can affect how people perceive, select and support their leaders.

The LLRIB participants emphasize that leadership builds relationships, plays an important role in the affairs of the community, drives social and economic development, and is devoted to community level planning and listening to community members concerns. More importantly, LLRIB participants described a leader as someone who understands how the community works, inside and outside of the community, and is able to bring the community together, including youth.

This is consistent with the literature, as Crooks et al. (2010) and Rose et al. (2007) suggest that community leadership can provide important support for programs and initiatives, and increase connections within the community. All participants expressed concerns towards youth and their role and participation in the community. Elders, adults, and young people themselves felt that youth need more support and more should be done to ensure they are involved and engaged in the community. Crooks et al. (2010) and Rose et al. (2007) suggest that leaders and role models (i.e. family members, Elders, peers) can develop and create support for youth and ensure they are engaged in the community. The

participants claim that youth are influenced by and learn valuable skills from family members, Elders, fellow peers, role models, and community leaders by listening and observing their actions. Youth need to have a connection in the community and need positive role models and community leaders to inspire, provide guidance, and find ways to increase their engagement. This is consistent with the literature, as authors such as Lee (2006) and Kainai Board of Education (2005) insist that youth learn and leasten from the wisdom of parents or guardians, family members, Elders, and fellow peers. Youth learn and build assets formally, through teachings, and informally, through participation, and as a result absorb the organization and ways of family and community life. With guidance, support, and encouragement, youth become individuals and develop strong sense of responsibility towards the community.

### 5.2.2 Theme 2 – Community Engagement

The second theme from the research findings is community engagement.  It is suggested that community engagement and involvement of members may be an important basis of *pimâcihowin* and *pimâtisiwin*. The literature identifies the importance of the quality of social relations and mutual cooperation and sharing among immediate and extended family networks. People needed each other to make a good life. Authors such as Beatty (2006), Bill( 2006), Lee (2006), and Hare et al. (2011), suggest that family instills important values and continues to be a source of support. Kinship and family provide the roots and sense of belonging to the community, and where each individual learns how to be a part of the family and community by helping with the sharing of responsibilities and learning the value of working together. Authors such as McDougall (2006) and Innes (2010), suggest that the practice of kinship roles and responsibilities are

rooted in historical and cultural values. According to McDougall (2006), the system of social obligation and responsibility, *wahkootowin*, reflected a shared cultural identity and established appropriate social behaviours, reflected ideas, values, and virtues informed the ways in which relationships were formed. The literature is consistent with the findings, since interviewees stressed that traditional livelihood was family oriented, where all family members were very involved and worked closely together. Kinship continues to provide roots and a sense of belonging to the community, however, the roles and responsibilities have changed over time. A main challenge identified by interviewees is community members maintaining or going back to their roots in order to carry on a healthy lifestyle grounded in the framework that guided their ancestors' lives. Another challenge is finding a way to engage youth in these activities. Many community members have maintained traditional activities and ways of life passed on through generations; some continue this lifestyle, and others combine it with modern conveniences and resources.

As a result of changing lifestyles, individuals are not exerting physical energy through daily labour intensive work like their ancestors had, so today community members need to exert physical energy through sports and activities. Community events and recreational activities have become important elements of community life. Although events and activities were not a significant part of traditional lifestyles, they are essential now so that community members stay active. The literature suggest that community engagement and participation are important, but it does not state that they are important due to the fact that individuals are not exerting physical energy like their ancestors had through daily labour intensive work. However, authors such as Siggins (2005), Lee

(2006), Taylor et al. (2009), and Williams (2002) did acknowledge that the way of living has changed drastically due to modern conveniences, leading to a sedentary lifestyle. Community members, especially youth, generally have more free time, in which they spend at events and activities so that they continue to be engaged with their families and community. Also as a result of modern conveniences and a shift in lifestyle, kinship roles have changed due to changing social and family structures. As a result, adults take on many of the household and family responsibilities. Youth do have some responsibilities in the household, but not to the extent that they would have had if they lived a hunting, trapping, and fishing livelihood.

### 5.2.3 Theme 3 – Knowledge

The third theme from the research findings is the role of Cree knowledge and worldview. The findings suggested that community members, especially youth, are becoming disconnected from their Cree language, history, values, traditions, and cultural activities. According to Cree Elder Mary Lee (2006), northern First Nations ways of life have changed from traditional ways of life, but cultural values and concepts are still central to daily activities. As part of learning, youth need to be encouraged how to live according to values and teachings. Due to the disconnection of from language, history, values, etc., participants suggested that a 'band-aid approach' is for the schools to step in and teach language, cultural history, cultural activities, and traditional values. It is identified as a band-aid approach since it is not how Cree culture was passed down in the past, but it is an emergency approach since schools already work with children. In the literature, authors such as Ball (2004, Barnaby (1992) and Champagne (2007), suggest that each community must assert their own solution based on their history, community

relations, and institutional arrangements to engage in efforts to revitalize culturally based values and practices.

A few participants suggested that technology should be used to help community members, primarily youth, to become involved with cultural activities and practice their Cree language. For example, YouTube and Facebook were mentioned as resources to post videos, pictures, and blogs showcasing cultural activities and raising awareness that many activities still exist despite changes in lifestyles, such as harvesting fish, smoking meat, hunting, gathering, beadwork, sewing, speaking Cree language, etc. Instead of viewing modern technology as hindering traditional culture and activities, it can be used to engage the high number of LLRIB youth in the community. This finding did not appear in the literature reviewed for this study, as the use of social media as a means for communication, entertainment, and information is a relatively newer concept in the north.

**5.2.4 Theme 4 - Livelihood**

The fourth theme from the research findings is achieving independence and self-reliance in order to have the ability to provide a livelihood for oneself and family, which is what Cardinal and Hildebrandt (2000) claim what *pimâcihowin* is all about. It is the way in which First Nations communities lived and achieved economic self-sufficiency, hunting, trapping, and fishing in their respective territories. Some of the participants claim that this was reflected in the language and understanding of the treaty that LLRIB agreed to sign, in which community members are always afforded the ability to sustain themselves and their families. According to Cree Elders interviewed by Pelletier et al (1972), northern First Nations understand the treaty for the assurances that were made regarding the preservation of their livelihood. Treaty 6 Elders interviewed by Hickey (1976) also

assert that First Nations earned a livelihood prior to contact based on land-based activities such as hunting and gathering, and although colonial relations has significant impacts on northern First Nations, many aspects of traditional understandings remain.

The Harvard Project literature suggests that successful economies are based on legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government, and each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture. While the LLRIB participants did not specifically highlight the Harvard Project's pillars, like sovereignty specifically, it was in a sense implied in the holistic understanding of northern pimatisiwin. The LLRIB participants defined culture as being concerned with land, traditional activities, language, knowledge, family, survival and well-being. Furthermore, the participants defined economic success as working together, providing support, having each individual making an effort to help within the community to make a difference, and having opportunities available for community members to be involved in cultural and recreational activities that promote healthy lifestyles and team, and also having opportunities for community members to pursue education, skills training, and earn a livelihood. The LLRIB findings seem to place a stronger cultural emphasis on development in general in contrast with the Harvard Project, likely due to the land-based local livelihoods (hunting, fishing and trapping) that continue to be important to northern people, as implied in the LLRIB findings.

All participants recognized the importance of their unique northern culture and way of life, and spoke of its importance for contemporary community life and for any individuals who have been disconnected from traditional activities and way of life. Pursuing *pimâcihowin* to achieve *mitho-pimâtisiwin* was identified as important within

the community, where all community members are afforded the ability to make a living and provide a livelihood for themselves and their families, and contribute to a healthy, sustainable economy and community. This is consistent with the literature, as authors such as Beatty (2006), Tobias (1994), Elias (1995), and Bone (2002) suggest that the north has a mixed economy and making a living on the land often consists of blended household income, which today includes commercial fishing, trapping, wild rice harvesting, as well as employment from industries and business developments. The interviewees believe that economic success means having a healthy, active, and engaged community where members strive to make a good living for themselves, whether through education, training, employment, or continuing to practice traditional ways of livelihood – hunting, fishing, gathering, and trapping. Each community member has the responsibility to pursue self-reliance and achieve independence with the skills and knowledge that they gain.

Participants were able to connect *pimâcihowin* and *pimâtisiwin* to their livelihood on the land and in their workplaces. They identified that achieving a good quality of life is concerned with making a living – each individual needs to be able to make a good living in order to have a good life. In other words, each individual needs good *pimâcihowin* to have good *pimâtisiwin,* or *mitho-pimâtisiwin.* Authors such as Young (2003) also connect *pimâtisiwin* and its relevance to modern times and the values of working hard, living off of the land, and learning by observation and participation in various land based activities are still important aspects of community life. Authors such as Settee (2007) and Hart (2002), also discuss *mitho-pimâtisiwin* and its continued relevance to modern times, in which individuals have the responsibility to pursue positive

choices in their lives and contribute to family and community well-being. All participants agreed that community members can still follow these teachings in contemporary society. LLRIB reflects this concept in their vision of social and economic development initiatives, and sees this philosophy as practical in their planning, such as in their Lac La Ronge Indian Band Community Action Plan (Lac La Ronge Indian Band et al., 2011). This plan emphasizes the LLRIB's vast territory that provides resources for sustainable economic development, and highlights that LLRIB social and economic initiatives should respect the land and support the preservation of traditional culture and values. The plan also emphasizes the use of local skills, knowledge, and resources to create training, educational, and employment opportunities that support sustainable development and a good quality of life for Band members.

**5.3 Limitations and Benefits**

The first limitation of this study is that it used a relatively small data sample of the considerable population of the LLRIB. However, the benefits included more time to meet with participants and the ability to conduct follow up conversations and meetings. A second limitation is that since this study used a relatively small data sample, it may not adequately reflect the different socioeconomic sectors for the community. A third limitation is that I am not fluent in the Cree language, and I required guidance with the linguistic challenges when participants used Cree words when discussing Cree culture and teachings. A third limitation of this study is my own knowledge base of Cree concepts and principles, since it generally takes years to gain knowledge related to traditional concepts and principles. According to Dorion (2010), traditional knowledge

and teachings are typically gained through years of mentorship, trust building, and relationship development.

A benefit of this study is that I had already maintained relationships with most of the participants that I approached for this study. Many of the participants interviewed were from my extended family system, or I had gained a relationship with them from spending time in the community before and during the 6-month fieldwork period. Having the ability to work with extended family members or others that I have gained a relationship with was an asset since I already knew the process for relationship building and made a personal commitment to family and friends to work respectably with the knowledge and teachings that they passed on to me. Furthermore, it is traditional protocol to learn from within your family and extended family system, and is a key aspect when passing on Cree knowledge and teachings. A second benefit is that I had a significant amount of prior knowledge and personal experience with Cree concepts and values passed on to me from my family, and my knowledge and experience was built upon through the time spent with the participants.

## CHAPTER 6– CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduced the purposes of this study of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) and its development initiatives and provided a profile of the LLRIB. It also described the theoretical context and approach used in this study to examine the influence of Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life) and *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living) in the LLRIB developments. Chapter Two provided a literature review of the Cree worldview of *pimâtisiwin*, in general, and more specifically, *pimâcihowin*. Chapter Three discussed the methodology (design, data collection, analysis) behind this study. Chapter Four provided the analysis of the research findings from the interviews in the LLRIB communities. Chapter Five presented the discussion on the primary findings of the survey, a comparison of the study findings to the literature, some of the key implications of the study as it relates to the current literature, including emerging new information. Lastly, Chapter Six will discuss the concluding remarks for this study, including the significance of the study to scholarship and future research.

### 6.2 Overview of the Study

This study interviewed a sample of Lac La Ronge Indian Band members living in the community of Lac La Ronge about their perceptions of northern *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and its relevance to the LLRIB Band developments. The questionnaire for this study focused on the interviewees' perceptions of Cree culture and northern ways of life, *pimâtisiwin* (life), and whether they thought principles of *pimâcihowin* (making a living) influenced or should continue to influence LLRIB members and leaders to achieve *mitho-*

*pimâtisiwin* (the good life). This study suggests that concern for northern Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life), the land and *pimâcihowin* (livelihood or making a living), strongly influenced and will continue to influence the LLIRB leadership efforts to develop their people and communities thus contributing to their innovative social and economic developments that blend local values and principles. It also provides an alternative view on the importance of local culture (northern *pimâchihowin*) as the driving force to northern communities in Canada, as implied in the LLRIB findings, in contrast to the Harvard project's nation-building ideas that suggest culture as being one of the important pillars to successful development in tribal communities. In the LLRIB case, the distinguishing elements could be its northern location in Canada, the land, its socio-economic history, and the continuing importance of cultural livelihood and practices to northern First Nations.

The theoretical framework used for this study focused on Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life), with a specific focus on one of its concepts, *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living). Although numerous scholars have discussed the importance of Indigenous knowledge and worldview, these discussions are often generalized and broad, and many only discuss the business approach towards improved community and economic development, such as the Harvard Project. For the case of the LLRIB, culture (i.e. kinship, capacity building, language, land-based activities) is important and may even be a precondition to economic success and where leadership, autonomy, institutions, and strategic direction – seen as vital to the Harvard project -  may even be subordinate to culture.

The literature review focused on Cree worldview and its key concepts and principles related to education, economics, governance, social structure and culture. The

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literature review provides a better understanding of northern community lifestyles and how traditional Cree concepts and principles are applicable and relevant to contemporary community life, with a specific focus on *pimâtisiwin* (Cree life) and one of its concepts, *pimâcihowin* (the ability to make a living). The greatest limitation in the literature is a lack of discussion of a northern knowledge base and its relevance to contemporary ways of life. Although many sources recognize the importance traditional culture and values, they are often discussed in past contexts and generally do not connect their applicability to present and future contexts. The literature used for this study is limited in providing a clear depiction of northern Saskatchewan knowledge and livelihood, but was useful in finding themes (i.e. leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood). These themes guided the data collection process (i.e. questions asked during the semi-structured interviews) and the data analysis process (i.e. the findings confirmed the themes found in the literature).

The design frame for this study was a case study, and the methods for data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews and a review of relevant articles and documents provided by participants. Data analysis began as soon as data become available through nine semi-structured interviews and documents provided from participants. Following the transcription of the interviews, common responses were developed through identifying themes that were consistent with the literature. These themes include leadership, community engagement, knowledge and livelihood.  The participants for this study were selected and limited to LLRIB members from La Ronge and area. All participants have maintained their relationship to Cree culture and have been exposed to traditional activities and teachings in their life. The participants shared

their perspectives on the importance of Cree concepts (i.e. *pimâtisiwin* or similarly *mitho-pimâtisiwin*) and principles (i.e. *pimâcihowin*) within the community.

The findings from this study suggest that culture, in the form of northern Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life) and *pimâcihowin* (livelihood or making a living), are and will likely continue to be very important for the LLRIB and its development. These findings stand out from other development frameworks, such as the Harvard Project, and suggest that culture is foundational in explaining economic success in First Nation communities.

## 6.3 Future Research

There are many possible areas for future research resulting from this study. First, there are many northern communities in Saskatchewan, each with their own unique history and ways of living. For example, there are different First Nations groups, such as the Woodland Cree, Swampy Cree, and the Dene. This study only looks at the Woodland Cree of the LLRIB, and the data is limited to a small sample of participants from Lac La Ronge area, so there is opportunity to expand this study by interviewing more participants, or also by conducting this same type of study in other northern communities and First Nations. Second, Cree *pimâtisiwin* has many concepts, for example *miyo-wîcêhtowin* (good relations) and *wîtaskêwin* (living together on the land), which can also be examined for the LLRIB or other northern communities or First Nations, just as *pimâcihowin* was for this study.

## 6.4 Significance of this Study

The focus of this study was to interview a sample of Lac La Ronge Indian Band members living in the community of Lac La Ronge about their perceptions of northern *pimâcihowin* (making a living) and *mitho-pimâtisiwin* (the good life) and its relevance to

the LLRIB Band developments. This is significant because northern First Nations have unique local histories and perspectives, and they continue to earn a living and self-sufficiency through traditional ways of living and adopting new ways, such as pursuing training, education, and wage-based employment, and by following principles and values that guide everyday livelihood.

This study suggests that concern for northern Cree *pimâtisiwin* (life), the land and *pimâcihowin* (livelihood or making a living), strongly influenced and will continue to influence the LLIRB leadership efforts to develop their people and communities thus contributing to their innovative social and economic developments that blend local values and economic principles. Although numerous scholars have discussed the importance of indigenous knowledge and worldview, these discussions are often generalized and broad, and very few scholars' focus on a specific Cree knowledge base and its legitimacy as a framework to community developments. This study sought to fill in the gap in the literature to discuss the framework of a northern Woodland Cree community through the lens of community perceptions towards development and culture. Furthermore, this study sought to identify themes from the northern livelihood and socio-economic development framework and how these themes fit into contemporary life of a Woodland Cree community.

From this study, it is apparent that there is a real concern for youth, particularly with them being disconnected from their Cree language, culture, and values. A common solution is for the schools to attempt to fill in and provide teachings. However, the LLRIB members interviewed for this study did not believe that this approach was the best solution. They strongly believe that teachings about Cree language and culture belong to

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the family unit. One interviewee noted, "We haven't necessarily given our youth these opportunities and our responsibilities as parents or caregivers, we're not fulfilling them anymore." It becomes apparent that language and cultural teachings need to be provided to all community members, there is a disconnect in the community. An individual cannot learn if they are not exposed to their Cree language, and they will not be interested in cultural activities if they are not exposed to hunting, fishing, gathering, etc. and shown that it is important. It was mentioned that many community members lack access to resources and knowledge of how to carry out land-based economic activities, such as hunting, trapping, gathering, and fishing. With that said, it was suggested by interviewees that children, youth, and adults alike must be willing to make the effort to spend time on the land. Furthermore, children and youth need to be exposed to the importance and relevance of the traditional livelihood that their ancestors lived, and need to be educated on their history and traditional roots. Today's youth will one day become the teachers and leaders of the community, and they will provide guidance and empower future generations.

Another concern raised in this study is that it is crucial that community members are always afforded the ability to sustain themselves and their family. The LLRIB members interviewed for this study believe that it is crucial that community members work hard for the things that they want. Some participants mentioned that in order to achieve and *pimâcihowin* there needs to be more effort put forth by each community member. Also, a few participants mentioned that the Band would like to see more youth working and becoming motivated and independent. Those community members who have been successful in the community need to be identified and utilized as role models.

For example, showcasing individuals who were motivated and worked hard to finish high school, attend post-secondary, find employment, and participate in land-based activities, as opposed to being on welfare or social assistance. A key finding from the LLRIB members interviewed is that they are hopeful that all community members will become motivated to participate in land-based activities, pursue educational and training opportunities, and seek employment within the community, especially employment opportunities provided by the LLRIB development initiatives.

Lastly, a major concern raised in this study is the connection to the land, as it is vital to everyday life and well-being. The LLRIB's ancestors' survival depended on the land and traditional economic activities. Today, LLRIB's memberships' survival still depends on the land, "Without land you don't have an economy on your reserve." Many community members continue to participate in hunting, trapping, gathering, and fishing activities and consume traditional foods. Many community members continue to provide and share fresh fish and meat to their family and friends. The LLRIB members interviewed discussed the urgency to continue that way of life, and the community needs to discuss the land and work towards new ways of land stewardship. Northern culture is connected to the land and environment, and without a strong cultural foundation based on northern traditional roots and ways of life, the community will not be grounded when they talk about economics. Economics in the north is a balancing act at times due to the strong land-based culture, and individuals want to balance their traditional activities, but also recognize that northern economics and ways of life are changing due to modern influences. This is the reason why the LLRIB began to pursue contemporary economic solutions through new economic development initiatives and partnerships. For many

community members, economics is more than monetary, and what is gained from economics are the benefits of providing a livelihood. Interviewees believe that many community members have been looking at economics solely from a Western economic perspective, and many only focus on the money component and forget about the connection to the land as the base for an economy. The western concept of economics differs from the northern concept of economics, since the Western way of thinking clashes with the cultural base of the north, since they are different cultures. Today, it is a struggle for those who want to participate in traditional activities and carry on aspects of traditional ways of living off of the land.

This study suggests that LLRIB members' perceptions of development goes beyond the profit motive and is more community and kinship oriented. For the LLRIB, as indicated on their website materials and strategic plans, development depends on resources, access to resources and funding, as well as support from the community. And it also depends on each individual's effort or engagement to try and do as much as possible to help within the community to make a different for present and future generations. In modern day, community members can still exercise basic values from traditional ways of life, such as caring, respect, sharing, and those basic values contribute to the sustainable development of the community. In order to ensure a good future, the community needs to support youth, parents need to support their children, and role models and leaders need to help motivate young people to get involved. As one interviewee stated, "The vision I guess is working together, to make things happen," where everyone is involved, committed, and providing support within the community. Since many Band members lack the required skills and education, the Band offers

support to youth and others with their education or to find employment. The findings found that resources and support, motivating youth, creating opportunities, providing education, working together, making a difference, and exercising traditional values were all important to development. Success to the community means having each individual making an effort to help within the community and make a difference, whether it is through supporting, motivating, and/or guiding community members, especially youth. Success is having opportunities available for education, training, employment, and entrepreneurship, and ensuring that all community members have an awareness of and access to information about these opportunities. Success is also having opportunities available for community members to be involved in cultural, recreational and sporting activities and events that promote healthy lifestyles, teamwork, and skills training. Overall the study participants that it was important to pursue a livelihood, *pimâcihowin,* in order to have a good life, *pimâtisiwin.*

Overall, this study contributes to the transmission of knowledge and strengthening of community, and as a Cree/Metis from the north, I have a responsibility to share what is gained through my study with the Cree community so that Aboriginal people can benefit from the knowledge. According to Dorion (2010), "it is a recognized cultural practice to organize our thinking and share our knowledge" (p. 13). My role in this study is to transfer knowledge and concepts in a format that bridges academic and traditional methods. The research process of gaining knowledge from participants for this study resembles the process Cree people embark upon when seeking knowledge to help them understand questions that they have. How Aboriginal people learn and practice what they have learned is similar to the research process in this study, where knowledge is acquired

and put into practice in a way that is meaningful to the participants and the community. The research methodology is reflective of Cree knowledge acquisition, where knowledge is passed onto generations of people living in the community, and knowledge is available for the community to use to generate conversation and ideas.

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# APPENDICES

**A- Interview Guide**
**B- Interview Consent Form**

# APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Community Engagement

o How are you involved within the community? What contributions have you made?

o What brings together/pulls apart the community? (activities, events, elections, etc.)

o What are important aspects of community life?

o What is your vision for the community? What type of community would you like to see?

o What does success mean to you?

o Who are the leaders within the community? What do they try to accomplish?


### Lac La Ronge Indian Band

o Does the LLRIB create opportunities for community members?

o What has the LLRIB done for the community? (programs, services, activities, events, etc.)

o Is the leadership effective? What qualities does a leader need?

o Is the LLRIB successful from a community perspective? Who benefits?

o What are the economic initiatives, and how is the community involved?


### Traditional Knowledge and Concepts

o What traditional concepts/values are you aware of are applicable to community life?

o What is your knowledge of the Cree concept of Pimâcihowin?

o Do traditional concepts/values have contemporary relevance?

o Is traditional knowledge important for present and future generations?

o Should traditional knowledge and concepts have importance within community initiatives? (i.e. health, education, economic development, etc.)

o What is the connection with/importance of land? What are community responsibilities toward it?

**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN Behavioral Research Ethics Board**
**CONSENT FORM**

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: "Northern First Nation Economic Success Through Pimâcihowin Principles."

Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask questions you might have.

**Researcher(s):**

Researcher: Dana Carriere, M.A. Candidate, Department of Native Studies
Supervisor: Bonita Beatty, PhD, Department of Native Studies

**Purpose and Procedure:**

The purpose of the study is to document and record, through interviews, information concerning the Lac La Ronge Indian Band (LLRIB) and it's economic development initiatives based on the perspectives of leadership and community members involved with the LLRIB, and develop an understanding of how pimâcihowin principles inform and enhance the LLRIB and membership. There will be approximately 15 interviews at 90 minutes each-depending on the time needed. The interviews will be audio recorded, and will take place in a location of your preference. The information gathered will be used as source materials for my thesis, journal articles, and conference presentations. You will be given an opportunity to review the transcripts of your interview to ensure it reflects your words and perspective as closely as possible. After you have reviewed the final version, you will then sign a "Transcript Release Form" which shows that you have verified and approved the accuracy of your interview.

**Potential Benefits:**

A copy of the transcript document will be given to you for your own purposes. Also, the transcript document will be used as source material for my thesis study, in which a copy will be made available to the LLRIB.

**Potential Risks:**

The risks may involve you not being completely satisfied with the final version of the transcript document. To deal with this, we will ensure that you sign off the final version which will ensure that you have been involved into what goes into the end product of the transcript document, which will be used as source material for this thesis study.

**Storage of Data**:

The original data will be stored at the Native Studies Department at the University of Saskatchewan and will be locked for confidentiality purposes.

**Confidentiality:**

The original data will only be accessible to Native Studies Faculty. However, any use of the raw data for other future research purposes will require signed consent from the person interviewed and if they are deceased, their spouse and if they too are deceased, the eldest person in their immediate family.

**Right to Withdraw:**

Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. There is no guarantee that you will personally benefit from your involvement. The information that is shared will be held in strict confidence and discussed only with the research team. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time, without penalty of any sort. If you withdraw from the research project at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request. If for any reason, the research project needs to be extended for any length of time, the researcher will advise you of any new information that could have a bearing on your decision to participate, as well, you will be informed about the process by which ongoing consent will be sought.

**Questions:**

If you have any questions concerning the research study, feel free to ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researcher at any of the numbers provided at any time.
This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on _____. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

**Follow-Up or Debriefing:**

You may find out about the results of the research project at any time by calling the researcher at 966-6209.

**Consent To Participate:**

a) Written Consent.  "I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____        _____
Name of Participant                                      Date

_____    _____
Signature of Participant                            Signature of Researcher

b) Oral Consent. I read and explained this Consent Form to the participant before receiving the participant's consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it.

_____    _____
Name of Participant                                Date

_____    _____
Signature of Participant                            Signature of Researcher