Aboriginal Public Servants: Leadership in the British Columbia Public Service

by

Fionna Miriam Main
BCom, University of Victoria, 2005

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

in the School of Public Administration

Aboriginal Public Servants: Leadership in the British Columbia Public Service

by

Fionna Miriam Main
BCom, University of Victoria, 2005

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Catherine Althaus-Kaefer, Supervisor
(School of Public Administration)

Dr. David Good, Second Reader & Departmental Member
(School of Public Administration)

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Catherine Althaus-Kaefer, Supervisor
(School of Public Administration)

Dr. David Good, Second Reader & Departmental Member
(School of Public Administration)

Abstract

This thesis provides preliminary, qualitative research that explores whether there is a common understanding of Aboriginal public servant leadership within the British Columbia (BC) Public Service. An interpretive, grounded theory approach underpinned by attention to Indigenous methodologies was used in this thesis. Research was conducted using semi-structured interviews with 22 self-identified Aboriginal peoples within the BC Public Service. The results identify properties of three analytical perspectives of leadership that interact in the context of Aboriginal public servants in British Columbia: (1) individual; (2) Indigenous, traditional or family setting; and (3) bureaucracy/public service. A linking theme across these analytical perspectives, "it's personal not individual", is proposed that influences an approach that interviewed Aboriginal public servants use in their professional positions and in their daily life. This study concludes that although there is not one specific understanding of leadership among Aboriginal public servants, their personal commitment to improving the wellbeing of their peoples may be the basis for their leadership work to facilitate and build bridges of understanding between communities and government. In addition, there is a call to non-indigenous public servants to consider their own leadership and share responsibility for bridge building alongside their Aboriginal colleagues.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to have the opportunity to thank the many people that have supported me throughout the stages of this thesis experience. There are too many to name specifically here, yet to all those that knew me while I wrote my thesis I feel a deep sense of gratitude to each of you for the guidance, support, encouragement, a suggested resource here, a conversation there and/or just a good laugh when I needed a break.

A few people in particular: thank you to my participants for your generous sharing of time and experience and for the genuine, insightful discussion we have had. I learned more from you than could ever be held in the pages of this thesis and I am truly inspired by the work that you do. To Catherine Althaus-Kaefer, for acting as my supervisor, thank you for allowing me into your own research and for your gentle, patient, supportive, yet honest and focused work with me. I know this would not have been possible without your own passion, commitment and support of my methods and approach, I am very grateful to you. Thank you to Dr. David Good and Dr. Robina Thomas, for your time as part of my committee and for your feedback - both the encouraging and the constructive - you have made this work better.

To the many at the University of Victoria who helped either through guiding me towards key resources that contributed to building my approach, Roger John, or through supporting me in getting the right papers to the right places at the right time, Judy Selina.

To my parents, Marit and Dave, thank you for always being a place I can come home to and for encouraging me whether it was by acting as research assistants, cheerleaders, or just holding me up when I was tired. You probably already feel that this is your thesis too (and it is).

Finally, to Brita, Sandy, Maria and Lil Colero; Sheena Main; and Michael Blackman, thanks for pushing me forward and keeping me smiling.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Impetus for the Study

Canadian governments have struggled with successful policy making, administration and relationships with Aboriginal[1] peoples for over 250 years. Despite significant efforts by government to implement new policy or policy making trials and experiments, a distrustful relationship and significant living inequalities between Aboriginal peoples and non-aboriginal people remain. Leadership in the development and implementation of policy making and administration exists within government systems to varying degrees. Inside of these systems are many approaches to leadership around policy development and implementation. Overall there is still much room for improvement and there may be other approaches to explore that provide options for leadership that could positively impact policy and administration for Aboriginal peoples.

In British Columbia, there are a small number of Aboriginal peoples working in the public service that make up only 3.1% of the total public service regular employees and 2.1% of those in management positions or of higher seniority (BC Stats, 2011). These Aboriginal public servants have chosen to work within the provincial government system, and, in doing so they

---

[1] The terms 'Aboriginal', 'Aboriginal peoples' and 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous peoples' have been used in this paper interchangeably as defined in the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people (DIAND, 1996) in order to indicate, "Indigenous inhabitants of Canada", including First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. As Smith (2012, p. 6) and several participants have pointed out that terms like 'Indigenous', 'Aboriginal', 'First Nations' and 'First Peoples' are problematic as they collectivise many distinct populations whose experiences are different. The selection of a term to use within this research paper was difficult. There was a desire to also include the Nations which participants represented, however, with the data presented at a very high level of grouped analysis this became confusing and difficult to follow. The decision to use these terms was made in an attempt to stay with the terminology used in the greater BC context and to include for participants from many different backgrounds. The use of 'Aboriginal peoples' or 'Indigenous peoples' wherever possible is as a result of Smith's (2012) description of the added 's' to recognize that this does not refer to one uniform group of peoples. I would ask the reader to be cognisant of this point and recognize that in using 'Aboriginal', 'Aboriginal peoples' and 'Indigenous' or 'Indigenous peoples' I am in fact referring to a widely diverse group impacted in different ways by similar policy actions.

hold a unique perspective. This perspective is one that combines a professional public service position with traditional Indigenous heritage and values. As identified by Althaus (2011), this group of Aboriginal public servants may have insight into what type of leadership construct would best facilitate a positive working relationship between the western bureaucratic government system and that of Aboriginal communities in BC.

The impetus for my research relates to the persistent inequalities (CHRC, 2013) between Aboriginal peoples and non-aboriginal people in Canada, as well as the broken relationship and the need for rebuilding this relationship which has been headline news over the duration of this study (Johnston, 2012; TRC, 2012; UNNC, 2013) . However, the primary focus of this research is not on these inequalities, the broken relationship or even on past or current policies. This research instead directly explores leadership as understood by Aboriginal public servants.

This research explores the understanding of leadership that Aboriginal public servants uniquely bring to their role as they combine professional positions within the public service with traditional Indigenous heritage and values. For some of these public servants they are also unique in that the province they work under is not the only, and may not be the first, nation to whom they feel responsibility. The pull between a commitment to their own peoples and heritage, but also to their employment within the provincial government system may foster a particular approach to leading.

Significance of the Study

As Althaus (2011) identifies and Johnston (2012) agrees there does not appear to be scholarly literature which specifically explores or discusses the idea of Aboriginal public servant leadership. Literature exists in the area of public sector leadership and there is a growing body of research related to Indigenous leadership (Calliou, 2005, p. 51); however a gap exists in the

literature where these two streams of leadership might intersect. My research aims to begin to address this gap, by providing preliminary qualitative research in this leadership area from a sub-region within Canada, the province of British Columbia[2].

In conducting this study I hope to recognize the presence of Aboriginal public servants in the policy process, especially when it comes to Aboriginal policy development and implementation. I also intend to produce information on the realities and possibilities within the BC government to facilitate leadership particularly as it applies to Aboriginal concepts and understandings.

In addition, my research will complement recent work on the Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies by the BC government. These competencies are aimed at "improve[ing] individual and collective abilities to appreciate and empower the Aboriginal people of B.C." (BCPSA, 2012). This research will add additional evidence that builds on exploring approaches used to bridge cultures by those who are both part of the professional public service culture and from Aboriginal heritage

This study also contributes to a larger global study funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Australian and New Zealand School of Government, which explores the concept of Indigenous bureaucratic or public sector leadership across four jurisdictions: Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. This study provides a sub-regional representation within Canada to compare with other sub-regional and national studies in other jurisdictions.

---

[2] The geographic sub-region in this study is named as British Columbia, however it is recognized that this area and parts of this area are also known by other names and ways. The use of this name was chosen to match with the terminology used in the public sphere and that of the provincial government understanding.

Research Question and Aims

In response to the gap in the literature and the belief that Aboriginal public servants have an important role to play in positively influencing the public policy process, this study explored the main research question:

- Do Aboriginal public servants in British Columbia possess a commonly shared notion of leadership given their simultaneous self-identification as Indigenous persons and their professional work demands in a modern western bureaucracy?

In addition, secondary research questions were also explored:

- How do shared understandings of leadership among Aboriginal public servants in British Columbia impact policymaking with respect to Aboriginal peoples?
- What possibilities exist for Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia to exercise authentic Indigenous leadership within the BC Public Service?

Philosophical and Methodological Position

This thesis has been written with the intention of honouring other ways of knowing. It specifically and seriously adopts a grounded theory approach to addressing the research question and intentionally attempts to appreciate Indigenous methodology in the way that the research was conducted and the thesis written and presented. As such, the logic and flow of the material may appear more repetitive and circular in structure rather than the traditional linear format associated with more scientific research theses. My use of language in the thesis is also more personal, and I have been careful to avoid language that is overly-specialized or technical so as not to obscure the information. This approach is in response to valuing the relational aspect of Indigenous methodology and honouring the intention of the research to recognize my role, as the

researcher in the research. Because of this intentional decision to move away from a more technically written thesis, a brief discussion is warranted at this point as to the philosophical and methodological position underpinning the thesis.

The study uses an explorative and interpretive approach informed by grounded theory and underpinned by an appreciation of the values of Indigenous methodologies, particularly that of respect for participants. This approach was used in recognition that a scientific, objective and reductionist approach would not respect the breadth of complexity provided by participant experiences and views. This approach does not seek a concrete or finite answer because the scope of this research cannot make a claim of that strength. A more scientific approach may differ in that it would intend to be purely objective and reduce findings to a concrete answer.

This thesis places more emphasis on the philosophy and methodology than the exact methods. Accuracy of the research is addressed through the use of thick description using participant voice along with member checking (Creswell, 2009). Findings are presented in a format intended to build a picture of the different understandings or categories of leadership discussed with participants and the major concepts within these four categories (See Table 3).

The concepts within these categories are presented through linking together participant quotes with some recourse in order to point to properties and dimensions within the concepts. A linking theme is then presented. This approach was used with the intention of placing participant thoughts and words as higher importance than any other data within the research. This may vary from a more scientific thesis in that instead of coming to one finite explanatory theme within this research; the linking theme is one that seemed to cut across some of the similarities and tensions that existed within the categories and is grounded in respect and honour of wisdom holders (the participants).

The format of this thesis is based on Birks & Mills (2011) suggested format for a grounded theory thesis (Table 1) as a series of essays that are linked together to form the final research thesis. As this research did not identify a particular explanatory theory, the conclusion to the discussion chapter speaks to the linking theme as well as elements from the four understandings of leadership to address the original research question.

Table 1

Suggested report format (Birks & Mills, 2011)

Topic	Content
Introduction	Impetus for the study discussed
	Significance of the study introduced
	Research question, aims or unit of analysis defined
	Philosophical/methodological position established
	Structure of thesis presented
Background	Position of the study in the broader context established
Research Paradigm	Philosophical position established
	Methodological underpinnings discussed
	Study design described
	Rational for research approach defended
Findings	Research findings presented (storyline of participant quotes with recourse)
	Linking theme and major concepts from understandings of leadership connected to speak to the research question.
Discussion	Significance of findings discussed in the context of existing knowledge
	Relevance and contribution of the theory described
Conclusion	Limitations of the study identified
	Future application of the findings explored
	Potential areas for further study

Locating myself. Through my investigation into Indigenous methodologies and values, I learned the importance of respect, relationship and reciprocity in this research. Following the values of respect and relationship begins in identifying myself before speaking, both with my participants in their interviews, and with my readers in the form of my writing (Kovach, 2009; McMullen, 2004; Smith, 2012; & Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2009) first highlighted the necessity

of having a purposeful nature and the cultural importance of sharing one's personal story to provide the essential information to better understand the context of the following story. Recognizing that the inquirer's intent is to make sense of the meanings participants have of the world Creswell (2009) recommended establishing oneself as the inquirer within the research story. By recognizing that I as the researcher am within the research story, I must make my intentions clear, because as grounded theorists would also agree, my interpretations exist as part of the data and must be constantly compared to codes, concepts and categories as they arise. Making my involvement in the research as transparent as possible allows for this information to be taken into the data and compared across participant response to adjust for any bias expressed in my own perceptions that is not found in participant voices. The following is a brief explanation of who I am, and how I came to conduct this research.

I am a 31 year-old woman of Nordic and Western European descent, and of Christian faith, with some undiscovered heritage due to familial adoption. I was born and raised in a small town, Vernon, in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, where I experienced the luxury of a close-knit family and large network of friends and relatives. As the middle child of three girls, I have always been interested in people and systems. Relationships are the most important parts of my life. My interest in systems and how things and people connect led me to pursuing my undergraduate degree in business at the University of Victoria.

During my early working years, I became involved in a major community health project. In this project I had the opportunity to work with rural communities to coordinate and administer smaller community driven projects. I was exposed to a wide group of community leaders with many different skills and approaches to their work. Several of these individuals were Aboriginal leaders who in the short duration of the project played an important role in facilitating significant

momentum and change within the communities we were working. They were able to identify and bring forward obstacles that otherwise would have gone unnoticed; this was something that I saw as a crucial part of successes within the project. These leaders brought forward obstacles in such a constructive and collaborative way, which allowed us to work together to find methods of approaching a situation conducive to the needs of both the project and the community group.

Not only did I learn to see some of the barriers inherent in systems and policy making, I also gained the experience of working with leaders who demonstrated a way of working that asked me to step outside of the process and the busyness to work together on a solution. This fostered a desire within me to better understand a much larger entity than the community project: government. I set out to pursue a graduate degree in public administration. While in the study portion of my program, I met Dr. Catherine Althaus. In our discussions about government leadership and the tremendous value we both saw in unique approaches to problems, I found myself thinking back to the Aboriginal leaders I worked with in community health, and how what I learned from that experience might apply in a government context.

The result was a joining with Dr. Althaus in her research to explore an area of leadership that seemed to not yet be part of the current leadership literature: Aboriginal people working in non-Aboriginal bureaucracies. We both agreed that the approach to this research would require an open and flexible methodology that would also recognize the values of relationships, respect, reciprocity and responsibility (DIAND, 1996; Thomas, 2011; Wilson, 2008). In particular, we agreed that the methodology and philosophy of the research would see the knowledge gathered as shared and relational, not as something gained or owned (Wilson, 2008, p. 56-57). We sought to maintain relational accountability by being willing to step away from data or topics that could

be hurtful to participants or to the larger group of Aboriginal public servant leaders (Wilson, 2008, p.39).

My hope through this research is not to claim findings of the only understanding of leadership or to paint broad brushstrokes across all Aboriginal leaders in government. Instead I hope to present a starting point for discussion of what was heard in dialogue with a wide diversity of Aboriginal leaders involved with the BC Public Service. It is also my hope that this research will highlight a significant and important contribution that has been brought to the BC public service through the work of Aboriginal public servants. As an additional outcome and as someone who intends to work within systems in the province of British Columbia, whether they be government or non-government, I will learn from this research and seek to understand other ways of approaching situations. I hope to be able to use this understanding in my future work to make room for other ways of thinking and being that might better fit a situation.

Other values from Indigenous values and methodology that heavily impacted both interviewing, analysis and writing of this thesis were related to the four values that have been recognized in many sources, including the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (DIAND, 1996) and are considered to be somewhat universal (Thomas, 2011): relationships, respect, reciprocity and responsibility.

Although the interviews were not long and the participants were often interviewed at their places of work and amidst their demanding schedules, I tried, as much as possible, to provide a clear understanding of who I was and why I was involved in this study. This was not just about creating a relationship for the purpose of research; rather, I genuinely desired to hear from individuals and do so in a way that both respected and honoured the important work they were doing.

I also took time to think through some of the challenges that may present themselves to my participants as a result of their involvement in this study, from negotiating around very demanding schedules to concerns about how entering into dialogue for this research could impact their professional and personal lives. As a result, I have stayed in contact with the participants over the duration of the study as much as possible, and hope that in the process, participants have felt respected and cared for. The process of analysis and writing has been more intensive than I might have first thought. While I sought to present a respectful yet honest representation of my participants' complex experiences, I also wanted to ensure that I left myself time and room for reciprocity. In my dialogue with the participants, I often learned of useful resources, and, when given permission to share these resources, I sought to reconnect with previous interviewers and share what I had learned. Although this is a bit unorthodox for a master's thesis, the experience has been incredibly rewarding. I hope to be able to continue exchanging knowledge with this group of amazing people and to further this conversation and relationship.

This brief description explains some of the attention to these values of: relationships, respect, reciprocity and responsibility that I exercised and gained from performing the research.

Thesis Structure

The first two chapters provide the reader with the reason and significance for the study as well as the background necessary to understand the overall study. These chapters are followed by the research paradigm, which includes both the philosophy behind conducting the study as well as the details of the study's design and implementation. The findings chapter presents the emergent categories and themes as well as the suggested linking theme. The Discussion chapter links these findings to the current leadership dialogue and explores areas of this study's

relevance both to the literature and to expanding the understanding of those working in policy and with the public service. This section serves to highlight some additional areas for consideration by members of the BC public service, leadership within the BC public service and those interested in further research in this area. The final chapter provides a summary and analysis of the information presented within the larger thesis. This section also identifies the presumptions and limitations of the study, provides some limited considerations for application of the findings and recognizes other potential areas for further study to inform both those in the academic sector and the public sector.

Chapter 2: Background

Inequalities in Canada

Inequalities and inequities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations in Canada have existed for decades. A recent report from the Canadian Human Rights Commission (2013) shows current day inequalities between Aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations in Canada in the areas of health, housing, employment, and economic well-being. The report demonstrates that in general when compared to non-aboriginal people, Aboriginal peoples were more likely to live in housing in need of repair, face higher barriers to employment, be victims of violent crime and face higher barriers to health services and higher incidence of health-limiting conditions. The poverty rates of Aboriginal children in Canada are also reported as consistently higher than non-aboriginal children (CWRP Information Sheet #98E, 2012). Aboriginal children made up 8% of the child population in British Columbia as of 2006, and 52% of all children in care in 2007/2008 were Aboriginal (CWRP Information Sheet #98E, 2012). This recognition of inequalities is not only present in formal reports of government and non-profit agencies, but also in the writings and research of Aboriginal scholars like Howard (2009), who further recognizes significant health disparities among Aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations.

This gap is not necessarily due to a lack in the variety of attempts by the public, private and non-profit sectors to address these and other issues. Non-Aboriginal groups across the public, private, and non-profit sectors have tried different approaches to respond to historical harms and to rebuild Aboriginal communities. Publicly, the government includes whole ministries with the purpose of creating and implementing new policies that address inequalities. In the non-profit sector many programs intended to support and build up Aboriginal communities have been developed and implemented (Lickers, 2008). The private sector has also participated

in attempts to support Aboriginal communities, through approaches like the CAPE fund, an investment fund intended to help overcome barriers for Aboriginal peoples to participate in the market economy (CAPE, n.d.). Despite these different approaches across all sectors the inequalities remain.

The impetus for this study directly relates to historical policies that systematically created inequalities and distrustful relationships that entire ministries and cross government initiatives are now working to correct. Although it is important to acknowledge this history, I did not specifically look at these policies or their development as an extensive body of work recognizing these policies and their impacts already exists (TRC, 2012). Instead I explored the perspective of Aboriginal public servants and how their viewpoint might impact the understanding of how to lead or approach policy making that impacts Aboriginal peoples and communities.

Public Servants in the Policy Process

Given that many well-meaning attempts to right past and present wrongs in governmental policies that affect Aboriginal peoples have failed, it may be time to look at this issue from a systemic perspective. Within any system, particularly one that continues to struggle to make progress for part of the population it is intended to serve, it is important to consider who or what has power. In the case of policy development, implementation, and administration, specific people have a certain level of power and control. Barsh's (1991) article on American Indian policy points to the impact of bureaucrats, or the people employed within the government system during the twentieth century. The combination of tenure, tradition, and seniority of these positions led to these bureaucrats having the power to "control implementation, [and] deflect efforts to change policy direction" (Barsh, 1991, p.13). Although Barsh's (1991) findings about how power, leadership roles, and bureaucracy interacted with respect to policy change are by no

means universal, they are worth noting. This is particularly relevant when considering who is involved in Aboriginal policy-making decisions, how those individuals acquired their positions of power, and how open they are to change.

Aboriginal Representation in the BC Government and New Approaches

Even though strong inequalities remain for Aboriginal peoples in Canada, when looking at the governmental system in British Columbia two notable positives stand out. First, there is a presence of Aboriginal peoples working in government (Aboriginal public servants). Second, there are recent examples of new approaches which recognize the importance of Aboriginal peoples in the development and implementation of policy for Aboriginal peoples. I hope to acknowledge both of these areas and add to the conversation providing an understanding of an approach to leading or working within the context of the BC government that links to both of these areas.

As reported in the 2011 BC Stats Workforce Profile Report Aboriginal peoples represented 3.1% of those employed within the BC Public Service. Within senior and middle management this percentage dropped to 2.1%. This is a significant underrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in government compared to those within the available workforce in BC (4.2%), which should be addressed. However, some Aboriginal public servants are currently within most levels of the BC public service and some are playing a role in the areas of the BC government where Aboriginal policy development and implementation occurs.

Some new approaches have emerged in British Columbia that focus on Aboriginal peoples' direct involvement in decisions and service delivery for Aboriginal peoples. Although inherently logical, this has not previously been the reality (Johnston, 2012). These examples

make more room to bring the knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal peoples directly to where policies are created and implemented. Making this connection will hopefully contribute to increasing positive progress towards policy that benefits Aboriginal peoples. The Transformative Change Accord, signed in 2004, that initiated the "New Relationship" with Aboriginal peoples and the BC government seemed to be a major change in how the BC government approached Aboriginal issues (Province of British Columbia, 2008). With this change in approach came an increased emphasis, at least within policy and discussion, towards consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal peoples.

Although this change has not had the same impact on all areas of government it is currently being demonstrated in two examples. The first is the implementation of the First Nations Health Authority. This delegation of authority will see a First Nations organization take over responsibility from provincial and federal governments for health policy and service delivery to First Nations people in British Columbia (FNHC, n.d). This puts the policy and decision making for First Nations peoples in the hands of First Nations peoples.

The second example is the delegation of Child Welfare services in British Columbia to the authority of Aboriginal agencies, in a movement to "return historic responsibilities for child protection and family support to Aboriginal communities" (Province of British Columbia, n.d). Both of these areas are in early stages of implementation; however, they do recognize the need for policy and service delivery to Aboriginal peoples to be provided by Aboriginal peoples. As David Langtry, Acting Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission notes, there are many positive changes happening including in Aboriginal communities where

Aboriginal peoples are creating their own opportunities (Langtry, 2013). Coates & Crowley

(2013) agree even referring to an "unsung quiet revolution".

Both of these examples demonstrate decisions in policy that see services provided by

Aboriginal peoples to Aboriginal peoples. No official documentation exists of exactly where the

early stages of these changes began, but within this research stories of the driving force of

change behind these initiatives came through the partnership of the many Aboriginal

organizations represented by the First Nations Leadership Council. While it may not always be

possible to create specific delegations of authority outside of government, Aboriginal public

servant understandings may help to provide perspective for those areas of policy development

and implementation that happen inside of government.

In addition to the recent recognition of the need to involve Aboriginal peoples in

Aboriginal policy development and implementation there is also recognition of a better way of

working with Aboriginal communities. Members of the BC public service, Aboriginal

community members, and Aboriginal relations workers recently teamed up under the work of the

BC Public Service Agency, to create a series of Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies

(BCPSA, 2012). This set of competencies is intended to increase understanding and inform the

approach used to work with Aboriginal peoples and groups. The competencies reflect the

importance of this approach in their introduction by pointing out that in working with Aboriginal

partners "…how you work is just as important as what you do" (BCPSA, 2012).

Although positive, these changes seem to be the exception, not the rule, and,

unfortunately, little research exists on the topic of Aboriginal public servant leadership to date.

Instead, research has mostly focused in the areas of Aboriginal policy making, activists, and

politicians (Johnston, 2012), and that of the strained relationship between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal policy makers (Johnston, 2012; Niezen, 1993; & Weaver, 1982). The research does an adequate job of detailing problems, but offers very little in the way of solutions or recommendations. Although instances where Aboriginal public servants have been directly involved in Aboriginal policy making and implementation seem positive, the inquiry into this topic cannot stop there. The Aboriginal public servant role uniquely combines a professional position within the provincial public service with traditional Indigenous heritage and values. This combined knowledge of both contexts may lead to an understanding and approach that could guide leadership in order to make positive progress for Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia as well as for the entire population.

Chapter 3: Research Paradigm

This study was more than a series of methods. Underlying the processes and procedures of the research is a philosophy of understanding and principles that drove the selection of methods and the research process (see Figure 1). In initiating this research I invested a significant amount of time in exploring and understanding the research philosophy and methodology applied. This was particularly important recognizing that I was not a part of the population involved and such it was important to prepare in advance of approaching participants with an understanding of some of the assumptions, biases and myths that I carried into the research as a non-aboriginal person.
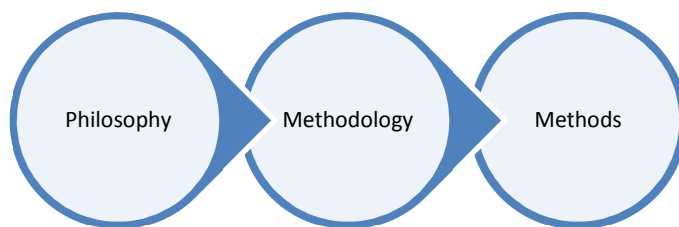
Figure 1.Components of Research Design (Birks & Mills, 2011).

Within this understanding of research design this study used a social constructivist philosophy with a combination of qualitative, interpretive and Indigenous methodologies. Methods used were based on grounded theory and thematic analysis approaches.

Philosophical Position Established

I approached this study with a belief that the individuals in this study could speak best through their own varied and unique experiences to an understanding of leadership as Aboriginal

public servants. This aligns with interpretive inquiry and a social constructivist viewpoint, seeking understanding of the world through recognizing that the meanings of experiences are varied and multiple (Creswell, 2009, p. 8; Smith, 2008). It was my intention to be dependent on the participants' views of their situations rather than on any interpretations I may have. This followed the view presented by Creswell (2009) of social constructivist perspective to look for "complexity of views, rather than narrowing meanings into only a few categories or ideas" (p.8). In this study, I sought to give the participants voices, and to celebrate that multiple viewpoints would be illuminated.

I also recognized that as the researcher my own background shapes my interpretation of the data. This belief aligns with both a social constructivist viewpoint (Creswell, 2009, p.8), Indigenous methodology particularly in presenting and identifying yourself, and recognizing the role the researcher plays within the research (Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009 & Wilson, 2008). It also aligns with a well-known adage from Glaser (2007), one of the founders of grounded theory, that "all is data" (p.1), meaning that everything within the research context should be used as data and constantly compared with the rest of the data to determine if it fits or is tangential. This includes the intentions and understanding of the research as an important part of the data to consider. This is particularly useful in helping to keep researcher bias from bringing in tangential themes that are not supported, in this case, by participant voices.

Methodological Underpinnings Discussed

This study used an interpretive, qualitative methodology based on a combination of grounded theory methodology and an equally important influence of Indigenous methodology through interviews conducted with Aboriginal public servants, and the colleagues and clients of a select number of these individuals. The current study also recognized that in honouring the focus

on participants of Aboriginal heritages it was important to revisit some of the impacts and negative approaches of researchers to Indigenous populations in the past and incorporate the knowledge of some of these dangers into my approach (Smith, 2012).

Qualitative analysis is generally inductive, context-specific, and intended to generate hypotheses around a specific behavior (Kalaian, 2008). A qualitative approach was selected for the current study because a concrete notion of what comprises the understanding of leadership for Aboriginal public servants does not yet exist in the literature. Grounded theory explains a phenomenon being studied by using the perspective and context of those that are experiencing it (Birks & Mills, 2011). This research is similarly intended to observe and look for concepts, frameworks and or theories that speak to the research questions in relation to a very small and specific sub-population of self-identified Aboriginal public servants.

Equally important in the research design was an understanding of the values of Indigenous methodology. This study was not specifically conducted using an Indigenous methodology, particularly because much of the literature on Indigenous methodologies is written for Indigenous peoples engaging in Indigenous methodologies (Smith, 2012; Kovach, 2009), but also because it comes from an Indigenous way of knowing and being of which I personally have just begun to learn and incorporate as the study has progressed. However, this research has been done in a manner that considered what an Indigenous methodology might look like and sought to seek guidance from the approach and incorporate it wherever possible. An application of this principle within the research was when there was a tendency to be impatient or expect something from participants, I always had to take a step back and remind myself that this research was not just about me getting what I needed to complete it, but instead recognizing that I was asking something of participants and needed to be cognisant of their priorities. In a practical application,

this meant being willing to be flexible to reschedule interviews as needed, or to allow participants to choose where they felt most comfortable doing the interview as well as providing advance notice of what they could expect so that there were not any surprises. Out of respect for participants and their generosity in sharing with me, I needed to respect the other demands on their time and energy.

Indigenous methodologies are often "a mix of methodological approaches and Indigenous practices" (Smith, 2012) and inherently "evoke collective responsibility" and put an ethical responsibility on the relationship built between researcher and participant (Kovach, 2009). They put the relationship between participants and researcher and the handling of information in the forefront of the research and require the researcher to use discretion in how information is used (Smith, 2012, p.229). Like other young, non-Indigenous researchers that Margaret Kovach (2009) has encountered I am drawn to this approach because it desires to "understand the world without harming it" (p. 11). In reading Kovach's (2009) thoughts on this approach I cannot agree more how important I have found it to think beyond just getting results and think about the impacts of my research and ways that it could result in harm to those that so generously gave of their experience. As an outsider I recognize that if there are daily consequences I will not be the one having to live with them and so I need to be cautious in my assertion of findings.

Being mindful of the guidance provided by the literature on Indigenous methodologies, I have consciously attempted to make clear who I am and how I fit into the context of this research first before sharing what I have found. I recognize that I am not a knowledge keeper, but instead a facilitator for the sharing of knowledge given by others (Kovach, 2009, p.7) and am dedicated to ensuring learning is happening on both sides, both from participant to researcher, but also back to participants and I will describe some of these learnings in my findings.

This approach particularly impacted participant recruitment, interviews and the interpretation of results in many large and small practical ways. Some practical implications of the approach were (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; & Wilson, 2008):

- Recognizing and being thankful for the willingness of participants to contribute and not just for the knowledge they shared with me, including being patient in understanding demanding schedules and family needs of participants as being a priority far ahead of this research;

- Making myself known to participants such that they were comfortable and aware of both my intentions and who I am before participating;

- Allowing for flexible data collection and demonstration of respect through listening and not "insist[ing] one idea prevails" (Wilson, 2008, p. 58) also listening with more than just head, but also with heart (Archibald, 2008);

- Acknowledging that the knowledge in this study comes from participants and that we share in the findings;

- Being willing to hear what participants wanted to tell me even when I wasn't sure how this might fit into my questions, having participants tell me what they think is personally important (Archibald, 2008);

- Being sensitive to protocols and their significance in building of a relationship with whom I am making a request (Archibald, 2008; Wilson, 2008); and

- Attempting to always put participant comfort ahead of what I might see as my needs and including approaching consent as a mutual trust to be reciprocated and constantly negotiated, something that is dynamic and not static (Smith, 2012).

Study Design Described

My selection of study design revolved around a number of choices regarding (i) participant selection, recruitment and interaction; (ii) data collection; (iii) data analysis; (iv) use of literature, and, (v) my selected structure for the thesis. These choices are now discussed in the following sections.

Participants. The participants in this study were self-identified Aboriginal peoples who had direct experience working within the BC Public Service or had worked very closely with this organization. This differentiation of "working closely" with the BC Public service applied to two participants, one who had previously worked for the BC Public Service but had moved into a leadership role in an Aboriginal organization and the other had not worked in government, however worked in an organization whose main partner was a BC Provincial government ministry. The study initially targeted 30 individuals, but due to availability of participants and timing of the research, 22 participants were formally engaged. Although this may be considered more than the average number of participants for a qualitative study of this scope, this number was selected in order to increase the reliability of the results by balancing out certain characteristics that had the potential to influence participant responses. These formal interviews were supplemented by additional informal discussions and feedback with other individuals who met the criteria but were not available for interview. This informal engagement took place through phone and email conversations with potential participants that were interested in participating, but had difficulty with scheduling a concrete time.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling as it provides a place for grounded theory research to begin (Birks & Mills, 2011). It also recognizes that "who a person is and where that person is located within a group is important, unlike other forms of research whereas

Palys (2008) states people are often seen as essentially interchangeable. The primary criteria for purposive sampling were that participants must self-identify as Aboriginal and must work for, or directly with, the British Columbia provincial government.

Secondary characteristics were also identified as important to seek representation and balance within the study. These characteristics were: connection to traditional knowledge, culture and customs, public service position seniority, community affiliation, geographic location, age and gender. Table 2 provides additional detail on these characteristics and the rationale for ensuring their representation and balance. As participants were interviewed I compared their characteristics to that of the matrix and tried to ensure that none of the characteristics were over represented. These characteristics have been further outlined in a matrix as Palys (2008) suggests.

Table 2

Purposive sampling characteristics

Characteristic	Description
Connection to traditional knowledge, culture and customs*	The majority of Aboriginal Canadians live "off-reserve". Their experiences may be different than those individuals who have remained "on-reserve" within their traditional community because of the impact of connections and experiences within mainstream Canadian society (Althaus, 2011; Richards, 2006). As such, "the complexity of Indigenous status must be confronted when considering the sample used in the study" (Althaus, 2011). This characteristic was considered based on the participant's, and some exploratory discussion, however was not specifically labelled or rated.
Public service position seniority (junior/frontline, middle management and senior management)	A balance of representatives from all levels within bureaucracy from front line (junior) to middle and senior management positions provides opportunity to account for the mainstream leadership understanding that leadership is contained not only at high levels of management, but can have powerful impacts at the street-level (Althaus, 2011;

	Vinzant & Crothers, 1998).
Community affiliation	There are 203 diverse First Nations in British Columbia. Each of these nations and the larger community affiliations have a long hereditary history here in British Columbia and each of these communities and languages are linked to a particular way of life (FPHLCC, 2010b). Including a broad diversity of community affiliation allows data to be captured that better represents this diversity. Diversity in community affiliation in the data also helps to avoid the emergence of categories that are specific to any one First Nation or Aboriginal group. Affiliation with a BC First Nation was not a primary criteria.
Geographic location	British Columbia is a large landmass with significant geographic variation and close to 75% of residents live in high growth and semi-urban or urban areas. The remaining population is spread widely across the rural areas of the region in communities with median populations of 5,000. Communities in the province range from less than 100 people to over 2 million (BC Ministry of Community Services, 2006). The significant differences in the composition of communities are likely to impact the experiences of leaders, particularly in those located in urban versus rural settings.
Age	Differences in leadership preference and behaviour(s) have been acknowledged and studied in the existing leadership literature with the general finding that the context in which individuals mature can affect their leadership skills and behaviours (Ekaterini, 2010; Fein, Tziner & Vasiliu, 2010). An equal weighting of data from a variety of ages helps to reduce any emergent theories that specifically relate to this characteristic. It may also assist in analysing any change in perception of Aboriginal leadership across several decades. This timeframe approach towards the research is significant because of the change in circumstances of First Nations people in BC with recent moves towards reconciliation that would not have existed during the formative time of older generations, but also as the younger generation may have had increased exposure to western culture and, as such, may have different views than other generations.

Gender	Gender differences in both leadership behaviour(s) and effectiveness have received increasing attention in the leadership literature over at least the past decade (Davidhizar, 2000; Stelter, 2002). Based on the knowledge that gender appears to be a driver in certain aspects of leadership expression and appreciation, the study balances the gender representation of participants. This helps to differentiate from emerging categories that are related to this characteristic and ensure that both genders can bring a balance of their perspective from both a work and community aspect.

A brief description of the participants has been included to provide understanding of who was represented. This description covers the characteristics outlined in the purposive sampling matrix (Table 2) and some additional information.

Participants were geographically spread around the province, five in Northern BC, three from the Interior, four from the Lower Mainland and twelve from Vancouver Island. Half of the participants were from the Vancouver Island region of which two of twelve are located outside of Victoria. This higher representation is a result of a higher overall concentration of central government offices and a concentration of employees. Participants outside of the Victoria area were specifically sought out, however the overall number of potential participants in the Victoria area was higher to start with and such snowball sampling as a result did identify more participants in the Victoria area. This is only a representation of the current location of participants' professional positions.

Affiliation with a BC First Nation was not a primary criteria and as a result participants represented many different nations from across British Columbia as well as Aboriginal groups and nations outside of British Columbia. Communities with which participants were affiliated with included: Gitsxan – Gitanyow; Northern Shuswap, Sugar Cane or T'exelc; Canim Lake First Nation or Tsq'escen', Metis Nation (Manitoba & British Columbia), Anishanbe (Ojibwa in

Canada and Chippewa in US); Tahltan Nation; Victoria, Tuscarora (Mohawk Territory), Salish; Chippewa/Onawash, Ontario; Cree Metis (outside of Winnipeg); Sampson Cree, Hobema, Lac La Biche; Lytton First Nation; Cree, Sioux French (Metis); Ulkatcho First Nation, Cree (Fisher River, MB); Sliammon; Sturgeon Lake First Nation; & Winnipeg (ancestry - Ojibwa & Lakota).

The group of participants represented over ten ministries within the BC government, and two outside organizations who work closely in partnership with the BC government. The two participants who worked for close partners of the BC government were selected to participate based on their positions working very closely with government and with public service employees. Their perspectives were used and compared to those working in government to look for commonalities in insights from working closely with this group. One of these participants had previously worked in the BC Public Service and was also able to bring a comparative lens to both working within the Public Service and working alongside.

Professional position of participants ranged across Advisor, Liaison, Manager as well as including various Senior and Executive level positions. The seniority of participants was based on their positional level within government included three junior or more frontline delivery staff, eight middle level advisors and managers and twelve senior and executive staff.

Participants represented a wide range of time within the public service ranging from 4 months to 31 years. On average participants had worked twelve years within the public service, but most had worked under 10 years (4 months to 9 years).

Participants ranged in age from 30 to 58. Most participants fell in the middle of this range between 36-55. Of the participants, eight were male and sixteen were female.

Recruitment. I initially recruited through email and phone requests using a network of public servants and public sector workers whom I had encountered through my community development work. Additional recruitment was done through contacts at UVic School of Public Administration and colleagues of Dr. Althaus. A written invitation was developed to send out to these networks. Snowball sampling was also used as a method for recruitment asking participants to forward the information or identify colleagues who fit the criteria. The use of snowball sampling was pursued because it is considered a useful method associated with purposive sampling when the population of interest is either hard to reach or not contained in obvious lists (Morgan, 2008). In addition, snowball sampling is appropriate for the intention of this research as Noy (2008) argues that the use of this method can lead to "dynamic moments where unique social knowledge of an interactional quality can be fruitfully generated" (p.328).

Some participants made direct contact with me in response to information forwarded through the recruitment network. However most participants were identified by colleagues who had the option to either refer potential participants to contact me directly or could provide me with contact information and I would email or call the potential participant directly. Participants that were identified as interested and willing to participate were emailed an invitation briefly outlining the research. If they decided to participate and book an interview they were provided with a consent form and interview guide (Appendix A & Appendix B), along with a description of what they could expect within the interview in terms of timing, format and follow-up. I also made sure to make myself available for questions before the interview in order to ensure participants felt comfortable with the topic and format.

For those participants that booked interviews far in advance I sent a follow-up email in the weeks before the interview with interview questions and the consent form so that they were

convenient and fresh for participants. In several instances, for participants with very demanding schedules, this allowed them the opportunity to rebook the interview to a time where they would not be sacrificing time required for urgent work items. I felt it was important to allow for this flexibility recognizing that I could force the issue and do the interview, but that it could put the participant in a stretched or uncomfortable position. Out of respect for participants interviews were always scheduled at times and places that worked best for them.

Data Collection. Data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews with participants. This method is common for grounded theory data collection because of the need for the research to gain understanding of an individual's experience from their perspective (Birks & Mills, 2011). Interviews were informal and worked from a very basic interview guide. This approach was taken in order to ensure that context was set for all participants, that the topic was understood, and, that similar ideas were raised with all participants. This approach also provided a starting point for participants and gave them the comfort of understanding the direction and topic that was being researched as well as how it might be discussed in the interview. The semi-structured format also allowed room to move beyond the questions in the guide. This left space for participants to speak to their own experiences that did not fit what was expected within the interview guide.

I use the term "informal" to describe the interviews, in that they were not rigid, but also that they were more of a person to person dialogue. In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Smith (2012) describes principles for behaviour and although they are specifically named for Maori researchers, she expands the idea to the importance of showing respect for participants in general. These ideas impacted the interview settings and behaviours particularly in the areas of "the seen face, present yourself to people face to face", "look, listen…speak", "share and host

people, be generous", "be cautious" and "don't flaunt your knowledge" (p.124). Using an

informal approach with open ended questions was intended to create room to move beyond the

questions and the topics covered in the guide as participants felt was applicable. This was an

important part of intention behind data collection, allowing for other ways of knowing to emerge

through stories, examples and teaching me in areas that might not have been considered within

the planning of the research.

Interviews lasted from 30–120 minutes, with most lasting between 60 – 90 minutes. Where

possible, interviews were done face-to-face and in the work environment of the participant.

Travelling to participants' geographic location and meeting with them face-to-face was made a

priority in recognition of the values of respect and relationship. Putting forth this effort to be

seen, and meeting in person developed more involved relationship and understanding of

participants. Respecting participants meant respecting their demanding and changing schedules.

Many participants held large portfolios with frequent change, therefore interviews were held

when and where best suited participants. In some cases this resulted in phone or Skype

conversations in place of a face-to-face interview.

Face-to-face interviews were also pursued as much as possible to allow interaction

between participant and interviewer. This helped to account for non-verbal cues important in

grounded theory interviews as they rely on direction provided by participants (Birks & Mills,

2011). It also provided opportunity for collection of field notes and observational data.

In cases where participants needed a modified format, interviews were held over the

phone or Skype. In these instances more time was taken at the beginning of interview to describe

the study, to provide an introduction to myself and my intentions with this research and answer

any questions from participants. In either case questions and consent information were always sent in advance to allow time for review and to address questions leading up to the interview.

I allotted time at the beginning of interviews to answer any questions and to provide participants my story and how I came to the research if they had not heard it in previous pre-interview conversations. This was an important part of the interview as it ensured that participants had time to make sure they knew what they were involved in and what research, and especially the consent form, was about.

As this research was part of a larger study it was important that this information was provided to participants and they understood that the consent was for both studies. However, it was not a hard and fast consent and that anything that would directly affect them would be sent to them for approval in advance of making it public. For each participant I also started the interview by thanking them, not just for agreeing to meet with me, but for their willingness to share. I also presented participants with a small bottle of fruit syrup produced in the area that I grew up as a token of my appreciation.

Participants were audio or video recorded during the interview based on their preference. Following the interview the files were transferred from my locked mobile device onto my laptop in a password protected format. This laptop had password protected entry and was kept in a secure locked cabinet.

During the interview I allowed for flexibility in the format of the interview, but in order to gain clarity from participants on the topic, I first had to establish context. This context involved: (1) an exploration of the notion of leadership; (2) an exploration of Indigenous understandings of leadership or leadership within a traditional or family setting; and (3) an exploration of

leadership in a bureaucracy/public service. Within each of these pieces of context/background information, smaller sub-themes emerged that would later re-appear within the context of the main research question. Thus, attention was paid to these three topics first, to inform the purpose of the interview, and to ascertain that participants were on the "same page" and understood the topic. Once that context was established there was room to discuss the research question and where the three contextual understandings of leadership intersected.

I did take some limited notes during interviews, however I focused mostly on rapport building and probing unique experiences in order to get rich data for the study (Fylan, 2005). Interviews concluded with an open ended question asking participants for any final thoughts or additions. This final question was followed by a check-in with participants as to how the interview process had felt for them, what they had learned, and if they had any remaining questions or requests. This allowed for a sort of debriefing of participants to be able to process some of what we had discussed. Some participants found themselves processing areas of their leadership in the interview that they had not yet thought about. Several thanked me for the opportunity to talk about this topic as they had not previously been able to recognize some of the areas and ways that they were contributing to leadership both in government, but also in their own personal lives.

Photos, quotes, and other materials were recorded before or after interviews as participants saw that it fit within the topic area. These paper files and photos of items were either downloaded to a password protected laptop or stored in a zipped file in my laptop case until they could be returned to the office. As none of the paper files had identifying information, they were kept on a bulletin board in my office so they would be in sight of my work area where I could revisit them as I processed the data.

I also took several minutes on my own following interviews to note specifics about participant's office, feelings or other observations I felt might be useful.

I used memoing and journaling throughout the research, as supported by Birks & Mills (2011) and Ahern (1999) to track my own thoughts and biases. This also allowed me to think through the impact and changes that the research was creating within me. Journaling also helped me to identify themes that were emerging so that I could ask future participants about these themes and their experiences. As an example, one of the themes that stood out to me in an early interview was the idea of being the "ham in the sandwich". The participant was expressing the sometimes difficulty of being the connecting point between contexts and having to provide explanations of one context (i.e. government) to the other (i.e. communities) or vice versa. The people in each context saw them as the other context and this meant a lot of explaining and translating.

Biographical and background information was also collected from participants either through them filling out a series of questions on their own or us going through the questions together during the interview. This data was helpful in understanding the different characteristics about participant so I could assess any obvious background information on participants that might impact the study.

An ethnographic element was originally intended as part of this study, however this was only possible with one participant; others participants found either the time prohibitive or had significant issues around confidentiality that made this approach intrusive. As a result of this continued feedback from participants the ethnographic portion of this study was less than desired. Additional ethnographic study would have been useful as the one case provided insight, however it is unlikely that these limitations described by participants may change and this type

of study should be carefully done so as to ensure it does not put participants at risk within their professional position.

Data Analysis. Recordings of the semi-structured interviews were transcribed in full and open coded, a process in which Glaser (1978) describes how data was coded "in every way possible" (p. 56). Open coding was done through line-by-line immersion (Walker & Myrick, 2006) in transcripts and from the audio recording. The only people with access to these interviews were myself and my supervisor Dr. Catherine Althaus. Transcripts were double checked against audio files. Pauses and filler words, such as 'like' and 'um' were included in the transcription along with some relevant information for example, noting when someone laughed. These pieces were only included if it the action or behaviour increased understanding of what was or was not being expressed verbally.

Following transcription and coding, interview codes were reviewed and themed. A summary of themes from the interview was created. The summary of themes was returned to participants in password protected documents for verification, described by Creswell (2009) as "member checking" (p.191). Returning transcripts to participants is not necessarily considered part of member checking, however in order to be fully transparent with participants and also allow them the chance to review any learnings from the interview transcripts were also returned to participants in password protected files.

Figure 2 provides a representation of this analysis process. I repeated this process for each interview transcript and field notes, constantly comparing as is the practice within grounded theory data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Changes received from participants in relation to the summary were limited, however when received the data was adjusted to correct for participant perspective over any interpretation within the data. Data analysis and collection were

conducted concurrently as suggested by grounded theory methods. This allows for constant comparison of the data and allows for questioning participants about emergent concepts to verify or deny if the concepts were relevant within participants' own experiences.

```
┌─────────────────────┐       ┌─────────────────────┐       ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Transcribe Interview│       │   Code interview    │       │                     │
│ (including data from│  ──▶  │  (compare codes and │  ──▶  │ Review codes and    │
│  field notes or     │       │ readjust codes to   │       │ theme interview     │
│  participant        │       │ categories as per   │       │                     │
│  observation.)      │       │ constant comparison)│       │                     │
└─────────────────────┘       └─────────────────────┘       └─────────────────────┘
                                                                      │
                                                                      ▼
┌─────────────────────┐       ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Compare codes and   │       │                     │
│ categories to themes│  ◀──  │ Send summary of     │
│ from the summary of │       │ themes to           │
│ themes              │       │ participant         │
└─────────────────────┘       └─────────────────────┘
```
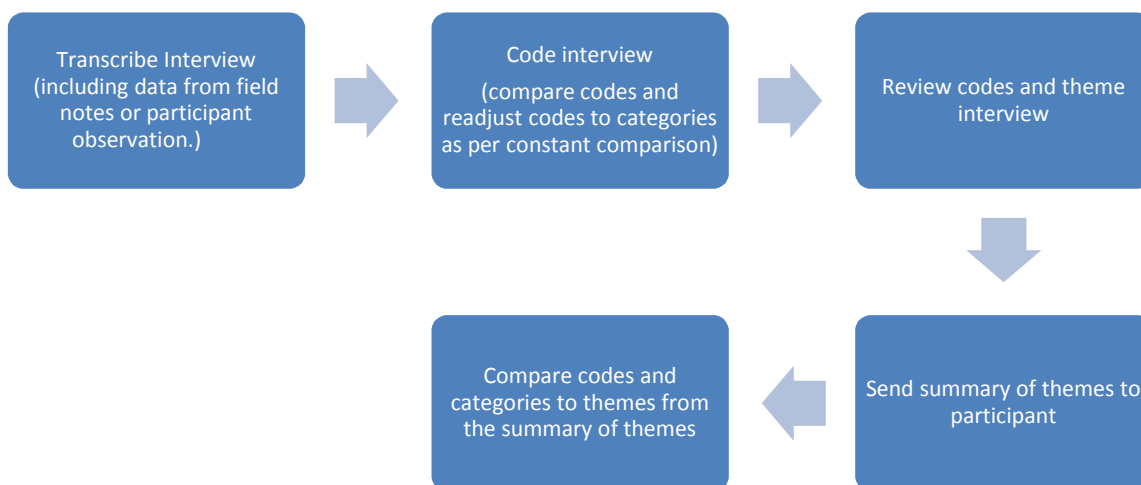
Figure 2. Data analysis process for each interview and field notes

A decision to end data collection was made due to a combination of methodological and practical circumstances. The appearance of saturation as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was experienced in that as interviews progressed, similarities in experiences discussed by participants appeared, particularly in overall understandings of leadership, traditional and family understandings of leadership and within experiences in their professional positions. It is important to note that even though some similarities appeared, there were still unique elements that I felt I could have continued for months gathering more participant perspectives. An additional factor in ceasing data collection was the increasing difficulty in finding and scheduling new participants due to constraints within participants' work environment, such as

fiscal year end and participants' portfolios that were receiving significant public attention which required response.

I found that I could analyze the data in several ways. I chose to compare codes and categories that had emerged when comparing individual codes that had emerged within interviews. This constant comparison was done by looking at each code and asking if it could be combined under another code. This resembled more of a grounded theory approach where concepts were labeled based on their function within the analytical process. As concepts were found to describe many other codes they were raised to a higher level of importance; these concepts were called categories. Categories were made up of concepts that fit within the category; these concepts were called properties. Properties were then broken down to highlight other concepts with the property; these concepts were called dimensions (Birks & Mills, 2011). This resulted in one set of analysis, that highlighted categories of good leadership, traditional leadership and limitations on leadership. This first analysis seemed to over simplify the context of participants and so an alternate analysis was done using more of a thematic analysis. The second approach to analysis was intended to identify and analyze patterns within each individual interview. These themes were then continually compared as new interviews were themed. Comparing these themes and the nuances across interviews led to the realization that this approach to analysis of the data provided a better representation of the overall story of the interviews. It better communicated that there were a variety of understandings at play within the context that participants experienced. (See Appendix C and Appendix D for an example of a coded section of an interview and the associated thematic summary). It was in this analysis that the linking theme stood out, initially starting as a comment from a participant and then further participant experiences where the importance of bigger picture and longer term goal for participants seemed

to be driving the actions and stories that related to experiences in the combined professional position and a traditional heritage.

This secondary analysis maintained the language from grounded theory of categories, properties and dimensions in an attempt to still show the hierarchy of how concepts were thought to be related.

Use of the literature. In alignment with qualitative and grounded theory methodology, a review and connection of the literature to concepts within the study was not conducted until after the initial phases of data analysis with the exception of an initial scan of relevant literature (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was done with the intention of being committed to learning from the data and attempting to limit any bias created by some knowledge of existing concepts. As a novice researcher I also connected with a suggestion highlighted by Dunne (2011) that this approach can avoid intimidation as a result from previous works which undermine the 'self-worth and competence" (p.115) of the researcher. Literature and relevant current events outside of the topic area were pursued throughout the research, particularly in areas of First Nations history and current events.

Literature that was reviewed previous to the study has been woven into the introduction and the findings chapters in a limited way to assist in understanding the intention and direction of the study. The findings have been presented mostly in isolation of the theory and of the literature (Birks & Mills, 2011) to allow for the themes from participants to stand alone.

The bulk of the literature was reviewed at the end of the study as a basis for comparison (Creswell, 2009) following significant analysis of the data. Literature that was pursued was that which was relevant to the themes that emerged and focused mostly in subject areas of management leadership, Indigenous leadership and some foundational sources relating to

bureaucracy and public administration leadership. Themes from the literature have been woven into the discussion chapter in order to connect the findings to some areas of the within the literature and to the overarching research questions.

Structure of thesis. The structure of this written thesis follows the suggestion of Birks & Mills (2011) to first identify the audience in order to determine the level of detail. This thesis has been written to meet academic requirements that are different than solely providing the information back to participants and the public sector with which the research was concerned. However, the thesis is also intended to provide insight and contribute positively to participants, their colleagues and the public sector. In recognizing this as an equally important audience, the writing style avoids technical language as much as is possible in order to not mask findings with dense language (Birks & Mills, 2011). Quotations from participants are concentrated in the findings section; however, in areas where participant perspectives altered the course of the research, quotes are also included with a statement of their impact on the research.

The chapters are organized in chronological order; however, because of the use of a grounded theory methodology, the research was not always linear in its implementation. Thus, throughout the thesis, small explanations of why information has been included or repeated will be present and should be understood as flags for the reader that the linear trajectory has been temporarily interrupted.

The results or findings of this thesis are presented in a storyline manner, attempting to reflect the flow of interviews and the four categories or understandings of leadership that participants discussed (displayed as categories in Table 3). Describing these four categories and their associated properties and dimensions provides a more complete picture of the discussions and concepts that led to the suggestion of the overarching theory. The heavy use of participants'

words in this section was intended to create a findings section with as much of participants'
voices as possible, even though the number of participants and sensitivity to the impacts of
statements on their professional careers made it impractical to focus individually on each
participant. These categories are closely connected and not mutually exclusive which resulted in
some quotations being presented in more than one category. Results were presented in four
categories and in isolation of both the linking theme and the current literature as suggested by
Birks & Mills (2011). This also maintained the integrity of participant voices as separate from
analysis which included data from the literature. The results are then discussed and connected in
a separate section.

The use of quotes without participant identifiers throughout the thesis recognizes the
potential for harm to participants. A significant amount of direct quotes have been used and
some participants may be identifiable should quotes be compared and linked. Although most
participants did agree on their consent form that they did not require confidentiality or
anonymity, it was felt that because of their professional positions and in respecting Smith's
(2012) comments about the handing of information and that the researcher is responsible for
considering and using discretion in this handling of information, I felt that I preferred not to risk
causing unintended harm to participants should their words be linked directly to them.

Rationale for Research Approach Defended

The current study was intended to explore understandings of leadership and to identify a
possible understanding of leadership in the context of Aboriginal public servants. A qualitative
approach was selected for the current study as qualitative research is context-specific, and
intended to generate hypotheses around a specific behavior (Kalaian, 2008). In addition, as a

concrete notion of what comprises the understanding of leadership for Aboriginal public servants does not yet exist in the literature, the use of a grounded theory methodology fits most appropriately with the research as it allows for the discovery of theory through systematically obtained data, where no theory currently exists (Dunne, 2011; Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 2). Grounded theory is also seen to be useful in explaining a phenomenon being studied by using the perspective and context of those that are experiencing it (Birks & Mills, 2011) as was the intent of this research.

Through Glaser's (2007) view that "all is data", the use of a grounded theory methodology fits most appropriately with the research in that it allows for the discovery of theory through systematically obtained data, where no stated theory currently exists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2).

Although grounded theory originally focused on techniques and did not pay much attention to the philosophy, the second generation of grounded theory researchers are more apt to recognize the philosophy and methodology that influence their study (Birks & Mills, 2011). Therefore it fits within this modified grounded theory study to state and recognize the philosophy of the research study.

The focus on individuals with Aboriginal heritage within the study made it necessary to use Indigenous methodology to significantly influence the methods and philosophy, even though the study was not conducted within a specific Aboriginal community or with a single specific Aboriginal group. Understanding the context of the substantive area of research was significantly important in order to be able to find and learn from participants while limiting the western approach which often defaults to the lens of colonization in interpreting responses (Smith, 2012).

The context of the substantive area is complex and includes the negative impacts that traditional western research has had on Aboriginal communities and peoples; the historical and continuing impacts of colonization on Aboriginal peoples; the environment and demands on the professional public servant; and Indigenous values and ways of knowing. Without an approach that recognizes the importance of context, one which Indigenous methodologies are specifically attuned to, the danger and harm both to participants and to other Aboriginal public servants would be high (Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the idea of Aboriginal public servant leadership, and how leadership is understood in the context of the combined demands of a professional public service position and an Indigenous cultural heritage and values. In this chapter I present the results of the study with a focus on participant quotes to emphasize the participant voice. Included in this chapter is a brief description of participants and how they fit within characteristics provided under the research design; a breakdown of the categories, their related properties and dimensions; participant quotes and experiences as they make up the categories; and a description of the proposed linking theme.

Introduction to Findings

The linking theme that this study offers is a connection to leadership for Aboriginal public servant participants that is *'personal, but not individual'*. For many participants their work within their professional position was impacted by a personal and emotional connection to their work, and those that they work with, as well as, to the bigger cause that their work advances. This personal connection is accompanied by a desire and a will to work towards bridging differing perspectives. The emergent theory also seeks to capture the element of emotion, a compassion linked to the recognition of a higher goal, one with an "affinity beyond [their] job description". This understanding also captures an acceptance of differing viewpoints which can lead to understandings being sought where otherwise unresolved differences might be the result. This personal connection results in the desire to bridge communities with government in order to work towards positive change for Aboriginal peoples. This study proposes that this personal element of leadership is a common factor among the Aboriginal public servants interviewed who straddle the worlds of the public service and the ways and values of their Indigenous heritage.

This linking theme developed as a result of comparing across multiple understandings of leadership that impacted the participants' professional context. This context was something that some participants had not specifically reflected on until approached by the study. In order to help gain clarity for participants on Aboriginal public servant leadership, interviews went through a process of exploring: (1) the notion of leadership; (2) Indigenous understandings of leadership or leadership within a traditional or family setting; and (3) leadership in a bureaucracy/public service. Once context was established further exploration of the research question revealed elements of the linking theme and of approaches that participants took as a result.

Table 3

Understandings of Leadership: Categories and Properties

	Individual Leadership: Concepts from participants' description of their personal understanding of leadership	Indigenous Leadership: Concepts from participants' understanding of leadership rooted in family or traditional teachings	Bureaucratic/BC Public Service: Concepts from participants' understanding of leadership within the context of both the hierarchical system of government (bureaucracy) and within the BC Public Service	Walking in two worlds (as an Aboriginal Public Servant): Concepts from participants' experiences of working with the simultaneous demands of their professional position within government and their traditional and family values.
CATEGORIES				
PROPERTIES (Dimensions)	Integrity (Character rooted in teachings, walking the talk, credibility)	Benefit for all (commitment to a greater cause, everybody has a role, altruism, representation and open listening)	Limiting understandings of leadership in the BC Public Service (Hierarchy,positional,top down, compartmentalization, focus on expertise, accountability to system)	Cultural competency (lived experience, duty & commitment to understand culture(s), bicultural)
	Vision (setting inclusive direction, considering consequences, moving forward, follow-through)	Walking the talk rooted in cultural values (demonstration of values and teachings, lived experience)	Leadership perspectives in the BC Public Service Corporate Context (Variation in approaches, shift in understanding, Public Service Agency)	Cultural agility (managing resources, seeking common ground)
	Humility (listening, willingness to learn, relational) Self-concept (self-awareness, self-acceptance)	Holistic view of persons (spirituality, fallibility, equality)		Challenges in the space between (representing and not representing, prejudice/racism, personal values limits)
Linking Theme	It's personal, not individual			

The categories presented in Table 3, and their emergent properties and dimensions, were

not mutually exclusive. Many participants, even though they spoke to different understandings of

leadership, were clear that these understandings are not consciously separated in their practical

application of leadership or within any part of their life. Similarities across categories are evident and were part of the constant comparison that resulted in the final proposed idea.

Initially it was considered that the properties and dimensions under walking in two worlds might be the emergent concept that could explain the phenomenon of Aboriginal public servant leadership, however there was a more common thread throughout interviews of a personal connection to the work being done. This thread, combined with the actions described by participants, brought forward a sense of responsibility that appeared to link with participants' conscious or semi-conscious willingness to play a role in bridging across the cultures. In providing a description of the emergent categories that led to the resulting theory, the four emergent categories which were developed are explained in the subsequent sections followed by an expanded description of the idea, "*It's personal, not individual*".

It may seem counterintuitive to provide the description of the linking idea later in this chapter, however as this study used dialogue and shared exploration of the topic instead of a simple question and answer format, this format provides a better alignment with the story of how participants approached exploring the overall phenomenon being studied.

Category #1: Individual Understandings of Leadership

In describing participants' own understandings of leadership some participants expressly stated that their understanding of leadership was not something that they could separate out into particular elements or influences. This understanding came from a combination of who they were as people and what they had learned or been taught over their lifetime. However, most participants were able to explore and describe what leadership looked like for them as an individual, and the findings from this individual understanding of leadership are presented in themes within this section. The themes below also encapsulate elements of leadership as

understood through family or traditional ways which fits with the idea that leadership by participants was not seen as clearly separated.

In discussions about understandings of leadership that were held by each individual participant, descriptions and examples varied broadly and included words, stories, anecdotes, and even in one case movie and book quotes. Within this varied response there were four common properties that seemed to come up repeatedly: Integrity rooted in values and teachings, Vision, Humility, and Self-concept.

Personal integrity rooted in values and teachings. All participants described their own individual understanding of leadership to be one which was about the character of the individual. Leaders must demonstrate a commitment to not only understanding key values and teachings, but also that these values and teachings are acted out in their daily lives. Words and actions matter and as a leader your words and actions must match. As one participant made clear what she looked for most importantly in a leader was "What are people's actions besides what they are saying?...How are you actually living your life? As a leader, to be a leader, it's not what just you say but it's what you do". Participants named characteristics of mentoring and empowering others, being authentic and comfortable to be yourself in all circumstances.

Participants also recognized that integrity, which required authenticity, opened up leaders to make mistakes or be challenged on their own beliefs or understandings. The response of a leader to these challenges or stumbles was a crucial part of leadership, and a demonstration of character or integrity. Elevating integrity to a property within this category came as a result of recurring themes related to integrity. Within these themes the three most evident dimensions which build the structure of this property are: character rooted in values and teachings, walking the talk and credibility.

The concept integrity originally emerged out of a number of repeated comments about properties of "character" and "principles". Participants linked character of the leader as being a central piece, and this character was specifically linked to moral character and a set of values.

> Leadership to me as an individual means having some character, some principles, and basically living by those principles and demonstrating them as best as you can…With a Chief name, in an oral culture a lot of it is about how you put [your teachings] into practice in your daily life. How do you model these different teachings? You really have to live the stuff. It's not about practicing coming to an office, turning it on and then turning it off when you go home. That's what leadership means to me in my culture and I think that's why my answer about what leadership means as an individual is pretty broad, talking about those principles.

Not all participants specifically linked character back to traditional teachings as strongly as this participant. However, for those that did not, they still alluded to values or morals that aligned usually with values associated with family or community, or at the very least a general dimension of altruism or not seeking benefit for themselves or a small but important stakeholder advantage.

> I think of leadership as something or somebody who is doing something for the greater good of people, not for the individuals. I see a lot of people who…bring a personal agenda into leadership and to me that's not a true leader. A true leader is somebody who is actually doing something on behalf of something that is much bigger than himself or herself, however that may be, and so that's how I view somebody as a leader.

I don't have to respect every aspect of them, but I have to think they come from a

good place, that they have good intentions, are honest, that's a big thing I think. I

have to be able to believe what someone is telling me, I don't have to agree with

it.

Closely in line with discussion around character is the dimension of respect and the importance of gaining the respect of those you represent. Respect of others comes from people seeing your character and you living out values that they also hold in high regard. Respect was seen by participants to be earned through honest and genuine relationship and connection with those around you. Participants provided examples of how to earn respect. Some of these examples were associated with a leader that had stood the test of time and respect was earned through their consistent application of perceived good living. Other examples were very specific instances like taking responsibility for your mistakes, or showing care for your staff.

I think good leadership comes from taking the time to get to know those that you

are working with. I think once you gain respect, I think that's a trait of good

leadership…So here within this branch the Director will come through, and [at

one point] we were in an extreme situation, there were lots of people coming

through and the Director came through and stopped at my desk, took ten minutes,

asked the questions and carried on. That's how you gain respect.

Expanding on the importance of this respect within leadership, participants also spoke specifically about the need to be able to trust leaders. When you take the time in a place of leadership to build respect and trust it creates an environment of unity and strength even in tough times or times of change, a circumstance that very frequently effects government departments.

They will trust you that the decision was made for the right reasons, and then they are going to have confidence that 'we are going to make this through' or 'we're going to adjust to that' because it's a very changeable world and things occur…I like to be able to trust my leaders, that they are making the right decisions in the right way and that we are going to adjust if anything happens.

Character, or the strict holding to a set of morals or values, was not important on its own without action as many participants described using the phrase 'walking the talk'. The importance of 'walking the talk' emerged in many participant interviews as a property of integrity and was separated out from character as it emphasized the dimension of demonstrating your character rooted in values and teachings through your actions. One dimension of 'walking the talk' was leading by example through consistently living out your values in your actions, while the other side of 'walking the talk' was in treatment of people, particularly in efforts to mentor and empower people around you.

Consistency was seen as demonstrating in a repeated and somewhat predictable way that leaders would act in line with their values. As a result those around the leader would know what to expect and would be confident that the actions taken by this leader were trustworthy regardless of the situation.

I'm authentic, that I have a consistent vision and that I provide people with the resources that they need to have to be successful; and then I walk my talk and… good leadership is also recognizing the leaders around you and leveraging the talent that you have and always giving credit where it's due, not taking that for yourself. If I was to just try and assert one style only and adapt to provincial government and just follow that, it doesn't come across as authentic; it's trying to

be something you're not. I just can't see anyone functioning comfortably in that role for too long. So I just live as [me], this is me as a person, this is my style and this is how I approach things. I don't try to pull any surprises and it has served me well.

Participants also pointed out key elements of 'walking the talk' demonstrated through open listening; taking action on decisions and tasks; and taking responsibility for their actions.

I just see leadership as being a good example of what you want portrayed from your coworkers…For me that's what leadership is, set the example, do things and have people respect you.

I think good leadership is really about listening and learning, and you know doing what you think is right based on your learnings and what you've listened to. But I think that that's tough. And leadership isn't always necessarily being at the front of something and being the spokesperson for something, but it's about, people need to feel like they are listened to and when people feel like they are listened to then that's who they come to, to share their issues with and ask for help.

One participant shared a story from his own life that demonstrated leading by example, but also having the community's best interest in the forefront. The story was about his community and their experience of regular flooding. He lifted and reinforced his own home so that it would not be impacted by flooding, but when flooding season came he was still the one charged with organizing sandbagging for the broader community who needed it. The protection he organized would not benefit his own house, but that was not even a consideration. This story seemed to be a demonstration of not only taking proactive action as a demonstration to others of

what they could do to help avoid flooding issues, but also that his leadership in community was linked to more than his own personal gain.

Mentorship and acts which built people up emerged as an important part of leadership. This included being available to others to support them in their work, but also to empower and encourage others to grow through letting them find their own way, make mistakes and move forward.

> I have a responsibility to make sure…that I'm a role model. I'm a mentor, a facilitator, you know and an outright leader that shows the way. That I can walk my talk, that I can be inclusive, collaborative, and influencing and the influencing part is one in which people respect. To be able to in a very gentle loving way create a safe place which they can explore their resistance and then move forward. Being a role model, which means being willing to do the work if I'm asking my colleagues to do the work or my peers, or the people that I'm supervising. I guess walking the talk like if I'm going to say something then I need to be able to walk what I am saying.
>
> I have had several people in my life that have played that role in my life that have not allowed me to wallow in wherever I was and challenged me to keep on going. And most of the time they did that by lived experience, they didn't necessarily do it literally.

Service leadership was a dimension drawn out under this property. This included service to your community as well as service to the people that you are leading and not seeing either of these groups as intended to serve you.

> When I think of leadership in terms of the values that I want to bring and embody, it's definitely service oriented, in service to community. It has a lot to do with responsibility and accountability and it has a lot to do with....the leadership and development of others, the responsibility of that it's not about imposing your way it's actually about creating an environment of safety, structure, support that's going to enable others to succeed.

Finally within this emergent category of leadership there was a connection of being grounded in and committed to a set of values, but also being consistent in demonstrating these values. Through the consistent application of these values participants connected leadership and the element of gaining respect to building credibility, where those you represent or are leading believe in you and thus in your ability to lead.

Credibility was a further dimension of integrity described by participants as being gained through proving who you are and that you have good character and intentions. It is about who you and your people are that matters to those you are leading, not what you have achieved as an individual or what formal credentials you may have.

> No matter what, I think being able to be authentic and own it, present yourself that way, to just be real and build credibility.

> You don't need to come in and tell me your credentials or prove this, or set yourself up as all knowing…it's a more holistic kind of view and I think that that's also where government and Aboriginal communities also have a communication gap…people who are non-aboriginal are not realizing that it's the relationship that's important it's not just your binder or your facts or that you've been to school for 25 years, it's who are you as a

person how do you treat me, can I trust you, are you going to stand up if something goes sideways.

I think a good leader is a good leader in any context, so what I spoke of in terms of providing the vision is important, but what also is key in that is being respected. As soon as you lose your credibility and respect with people around you, you can't be a leader… At that point you have to say, "okay I have no credibility I can't get the job done any more because people don't respect me," how could they, and then you have to recognize this. You can try to rebuild your credibility if it's possible, but is some cases you simply can't. There are some big mistakes that people make as they climb the ladder and end up getting exposed for doing something that is disrespectful. When that happens, how can you get anyone to listen to what you say? You just can't.

Integrity was the first and most prominent property in this category. It was made up of the dimensions of 'character', 'walking the talk' and 'credibility'. The three dimensions were closely aligned under this concept; however they emphasize different elements of integrity. 'Character' emphasized elements of having a shared understanding of values with those you are leading were emphasized. 'Walking the talk' highlighted some of these major elements were demonstrating your character and beliefs through action, the treatment of people, and ability to inspire. Finally, 'credibility' emphasized, the linking of strong values, with demonstration which proves to people over time that you can be trusted as a leader to be committed to values and be consistent in your actions and response.

Vision to action. Although participants did focus heavily on the importance of integrity and character, another property which emerged was that of 'vision to action'. This came from a leadership that had the dimensions of seeing ahead and a vision for what is to come and willingness to take time to shape and follow-through with this vision. This includes the actions and responsibilities that are required to bring that vision to fruition. Vision was not a concept that alluded to the leader deciding alone on the way and pushing ahead. Vision was instead seen as a necessary dimension of drawing direction from those you are leading, being able to consider the consequences, and moving forward with a shared understanding.

> For me leadership is a whole bunch of different things, and I'll kind of put it in my family's context. In our family we have a number of individuals who are visionaries…they like to share what they are doing and they want people to follow them and it's about a 50/50 how that works in our family because everybody in our family wants to be a leader. And then there are others that are more inclusive. So talking to people getting their perspectives, incorporating their perspectives, and as they move forward making sure that everybody is kind of along. I think of more like a sheepdog, like herding people along making sure that everybody is okay that nobody is being left behind, that nobody is falling off the cliff that we're all kind of working together and for me I think a good leader should be able to do a bit of both.

Within the property of vision were some other key dimensions that were highlighted as being respectful, inclusive, calm, composed and not forcing direction, but continuing to build shared understandings to allow forward movement on the vision. Aspects that were likely more

challenging dimensions of this concept were the ability to take risks and adapt as the

circumstances changed, and not being stuck in your ways.

> That you're able to communicate in a good way: respectfully and inclusively. I
> think that's the other thing that you're able to tolerate variety of different views as
> well as diversity, not tolerate, but to accept them but to be able to work with it.
> Being able to take risks and being able to have the courage to speak out, not in a
> way that is speaking out that is coming from a place of demanding or being angry
> about it. I can't just force it down on people and expect them to be all
> encompassing of my Aboriginal agenda, Indigenous agenda, and why it's
> important to me.
>
> I believe in more of an 'adaptive' leadership style, one that can mobilize others in
> a team approach and influence through his/her own actions through common
> beliefs and goals and recognize that each area of our community –economic,
> social, spiritual – has a different approach as a leader; hence adaptive.
>
> I think that it means that you're always leading forward. That you're thinking
> about how what you do impacts other people, and how you can influence other
> people in a positive way. It means to me leading by example, leading, walking the
> talk and being, you know, in terms of it doesn't always mean that you are ahead
> or whatever, but it's walking with people and supporting other people to be what
> their potential and what they can be and putting those ideas of other people which
> they have entrusted to you to put forward and speaking.

This concept links closely to the concept of 'integrity' as the shared vision and inclusion

pieces are central. Through 'integrity' and trust leaders are able to better build shared goals.

I think a good leader is a good leader in any context, so what I spoke of in terms of

providing the vision is important, but what also is key is being respected.

One participant expressed the importance of shared vision in leadership through a quote

from the book *The Little Prince* which represents leadership to him. In this quote, the narrator

explains how to get a boat built, emphasizing the importance of communicating the larger cause

as the incentive to do the work that they might not want to or may not think of otherwise.

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people together to collect wood and

don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless

immensity of the sea. ~Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince*.

As a second concept in this category, 'vision to action' exemplifies a slightly different

side of leadership that is more about the ability to set direction and follow through.

Humility. In the Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, humility is described as "the

quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people" (Humility, n.d.). Humility can be

seen in some of the other concepts in this category, but the extent to which it was present within

the data made it important to separate out. As linked to other properties, 'integrity' requires the

ability to be committed to your values, it puts values ahead of seeking personal advantage and it

recognizes that there is a bigger cause than your own agenda, this requires recognition that you

are not better than those you are representing or leading. Similarly the property of 'vision to

action' requires leadership to set and follow a shared vision also requires someone who sees the

views of others as and values them not dismissing them as less than your own vision.

Different dimensions of 'humility' were expressed by participants including: listening

and hearing people, not seeing your approach as always right, willingness to learn from others,

and actively seeking advice.

In the area of listening specific elements of leading alongside or from behind, not from the front were emphasized. The importance of listening in a way that people feel heard, not just listening and then moving on was also evident. In some cases listening meant to hear out what people are saying in a non-judgmental way. It also meant listening and hearing so that people were able to contribute to decision making and were seen as a central part of the decision making process; not seen as less significant than the leaders' opinion.

> I'm a really good listener, so I think that when they come and talk to me they want to come and talk to somebody who is not going to judge them. They come and I listen to them, and I don't give them advice I'll ask them different questions. A lot of people don't know how to truthfully listen. They are ready to make their point, their counter. They've already got it in their mind, you can see they aren't hearing. The one-up, the smarter-than, instead of what works for everybody. I don't mind as long as they listen, as long as they collect information and then make the decision. And once they have made the decision, as long as they have listened and heard, I don't really care what somebody thinks, this is how I've decided to go. But it's really important for me that you hear, and if you hear and then make a decision then I can still respect you.

Other aspects of 'humility' aligned with seeing yourself as on the same level with others. One dimension that came out of this was a willingness to learn from others. 'Humility' was seeing another perspective and not only wanting to hear it, but expecting that you might be able to learn or adjust focus because of this contribution. A willingness to learn was recognized as looking for opportunities instead of seeing barriers, recognizing other ways of knowing and

actively seeking advice, not expecting that if someone had not spoken that they did not have a valuable or worthy contribution.

> I think that a great leader is one who is always growing and challenging themselves and stretching themselves. You never ask anybody to do anything you wouldn't do yourself, or embrace yourself, or you should never get to the point where you think you know everything you need to know. You know I am always asking myself what else do I need to know, who knows it, who can help me with that, who would want to help me with that?
>
> So my very first meeting that I was chairing with a large group of Indigenous people from BC, I was corrected very quickly that [going counterclockwise around the circle] was wrong, and I was like well it's not wrong for me, but in this context it was wrong and it was a lesson for me.
>
> I really enjoy those days where someone changes my mind. I was just saying yesterday…I had my opinion changed about someone, I had wrongfully judged them based on my first impression and how they presented themselves, but then after hearing them talk at a later date…they really changed my opinion of them and yeah I like it when that happens.
>
> I don't push too hard if I see a boundary, I think I'll maybe try to understand and get some information there. I'm not going to push anything that doesn't want to be pushed. I'll find somewhere else where I can work and that's fine.

Although many characteristics of humility were described in this section, as well as in previous sections, one participant expressed the concept of 'humility' using the term "egoless"

and in many cases the absence of ego could be linked to many of the concepts, properties and dimensions that emerged.

   Sincerity and self-concept. This property originally emerged and was titled "authenticity", however, participant response highlighted a negative association with the concept of the "authentic indian"[3] (Raibmon, 2005). Recognizing that this concept is inaccurate and unfair, terminology was adjusted to recognize more of the important aspects of authenticity that participants expressed. In brief, a sense from participants that relates directly to 'integrity' was that of the importance of leaders to be real with themselves and within interactions with all those they come into contact with. One participant particularly pointed out that leadership isn't something you can "put on" but that it is ingrained and part of who you are and what you do.

    Somebody's internal capacity to demonstrate positive behavior and action to somebody else. Like being a role model or a coach or a mentor, those are things that I associate with leadership. But then it would also be as simple as possible and say, be your authentic self, whatever that may be whether your authentic self does have some negative traits and characteristics associated with it. No matter what I think being able to be authentic and own it, present yourself that way, to just be real and build credibility.

    I try not to leave important parts of myself out of my leadership style even working within an organization that might have, you know, some very limited views of how they want their leaders to act or walk or talk or be. As long as I am within the standards of conduct and I'm following all of the processes and policies

---

[3] The concept of the "authentic indian" measured the authenticity of 'indians' by their difference from white society. It segregated them as everything thing whites were not, and suggesting that if they stepped into any area that was in agreement with white society that they were not being "authentic". Impacts of this thinking appeared in the data specifically where participants spoke of response from their communities sometimes as seeing them as "turncoats" or questioning them on "what side" they were on, government or their community's.

that I have to be accountable for, I also want to be able to bring who I am because

we're still people.

Within leadership there seemed to be an element of self-awareness and self-acceptance, which represents the term 'self-concept'. This is slightly different than the other concepts outlined.

Looking inward right and I think even now those are some of the tactics I use now

even to help out our team now…I guess maybe that's just my style and then if you

look at…mini-psychologist. It's kind of little things, like oh you're pointing

fingers, just think about that you have three fingers pointing back at you.

Another dimension of this property that seemed to connect 'self-concept' was having, and maintaining, a sense of humour. Some participants attributed this to specifically to being an important part of communication in Aboriginal communities. Others simply brought up that it was something they thought was important whether it was used to put people at ease, make light of a tough situation or build stronger relationships with those around them.

There is a certain sense of humour. There is just a certain way of being or a

different way approaching things or even following different protocols that are

interwoven in my values that are part of who I am and I won't deny them and I

don't feel that I should separate them out…

This property of 'sincerity' and 'self-concept' requires leaders to learn about themselves and be aware of who they really are. It is also associated with a willingness to share with others. Out of this property there is an interesting emergence of genuineness attached to sincerity. Some other terms used that related to this were "simple" and "honest". As participants spoke about leaders who they admired these traits came up accompanied by expressions of admiration for

leaders that bring this piece of themselves to their leadership. By knowing who you are and being willing to share it with others, even when you are not sure it is what they want from you, is a risk. As part of this concept, being willing to take this risk instead of compromising who you are was considered important to participants.

> We really value sincerity and when people are being insincere with us, we know it. That's one of the things that I think if I could attribute to an Indigenous value, it is sincerity. It's what I said earlier about being honest, but more broadly, if someone is saying something in a sincere way then they could be viewed as someone who is a leader. You could be someone who has never said a word ever in a community meeting but then stands up and says something poignant and sincerely and people will listen and ask, who's that guy?

Summarized Individual understandings of leadership. This category related to participants' individual understandings of leadership consisted of four properties: integrity, vision, humility and self-concept. Integrity was the largest of the concepts highlighting the specific dimensions of 'character', 'walking the talk' and 'credibility'. 'Vision', 'humility' and 'self-concept' were also richly described as the ability to give direction while considering consequences, being inclusive in representing, listening and hearing people, not seeing your approach as always right, willingness to learn from others, actively seeking advice, authenticity, a holistic approach, and self-awareness.

Overall the concepts that emerged paint a picture of leadership as well rounded, in touch and accepting of self and others. It also emphasized the importance of vision, mentorship and empowerment of those around you.

I think a good leader is a good leader in any context, so what I spoke of in terms

of providing the vision is important, but what also is key in that, is being

respected.

I think that's to me the big thing to have fun and joke around, and that is part of

what I do as a leader. And also looking at the vision piece, trying to make sure

that we're kind of moving in the direction that's either the vision of our

management branch, for example and we've kind of moved down the road and it's

a lot about empowering your people and making sure that they have all the things

that they need to do their job.

Leadership seems to be seen as inclusive and unselfish and not lending importance or status to the individual in leadership, but instead maintaining a focus on how the leader interacts and considers those around them.

Category #2: Understandings of Leadership from Family or Traditional Ways of Knowing

Most participants spoke to understandings and styles of leadership that were learned or based on following the ways of their family or from their knowledge of traditional communities and values. This second category emerged from the many traditional ways and values participants spoke about regardless of their exposure or upbringing in these traditional ways or teachings. These understandings, as mentioned earlier, are not mutually exclusive from the concepts within other categories. Properties are easily relatable to those from other categories as participants recognized that understandings cannot always be compartmentalized, however that distinctions were evident across the four categories. As a result of the lack of mutual exclusivity, participants could not or did not want to separate descriptions of their individual styles of leadership from Indigenous ways of leading.

> I don't consciously think I am acting in an Indigenous mode of leadership, I think this is how I've been taught, this is how I know how to be, this is what I feel is right, this is what I think is important.

Although it did not come up in all interviews, a few participants specifically expressed that they were not sure that the current day concept of leadership would have had an equivalent understanding historically in Indigenous communities. One participant made this connection through wondering if there was a word in her language that could be directly translated to the way leadership was understood in mainstream society. She thought there might not be as the concept of leadership today is quite different to how, in her knowledge, her nation operated historically.

> I don't know if in Indigenous languages there is a word for leadership… there may not be anything because it does not translate across. In each language they would have something that would be the person that was the head, the person that was the representative, it wasn't the person that was [leading] because "LEADership" makes it sound like you're LEADing people, but most people that were (it was men in tribal communities) they were being informed by women so there's no power behind the person that's the head of your family. That's the voice, it's the person that you've given that job to speak for you not to have power over you.

This recognition of the non-existence of a cohesive and specific understanding of leadership across Aboriginal nations is supported by recent studies which suggest there is no current or past concept of leadership that fits unilaterally across the hundreds of sovereign Aboriginal nations in North America (Johnston, 2012; Lickers, 2006). Further to this point all

participants were asked to share any specific things that represented leadership for them. This included words, items, objects, places and things. Several participants felt this question did not resonate and did not provide an answer. Of those that did answer there was not one particular piece that stood out, however some of the more common recurring themes were eagle, medicine, vision, listener, respect, elders, feather, bear, talking stick. Many other words and images were also used, but there were the ones that came up the most often.

Recognizing that the concept of leadership itself, and thus a particular understanding, may not be unified across the many First Nations in Canada, the following findings link more to traditional values that impact the different roles and acts of leadership among Aboriginal peoples.

Three properties that emerged in this category are: 'benefit for all', 'walking the talk' and 'holistic view of peoples'. The dimensions of each property are expanded below and a common thread through these concepts is built on the importance and of traditional teachings and values which seem to be at the root of this category.

Benefit for all. The property of 'benefit for all' was prevalent in almost every interview from the start. Key dimensions that emerged were 'commitment to a greater cause' and 'everybody has a role'. A third dimension of "representation" was originally included in this section, however after further analysis and comparison it has been presented under the dimension of 'everyone has a role' because of its strong relationship to representation coming out of valuing equal roles and contribution and expecting a voice that is inclusive and representative.

Participants recognized that the more mainstream approach to leadership was individualistic and as a result had impacts on how benefit is distributed. In some cases, the idea of leadership needing to seek out decisions and directions that would benefit all members of the

group could be linked back to the circumstances, and such the values, of historical Indigenous communities.

> If someone had success hunting they shared that with the community. It didn't matter if you just got a taste, you know the whole community would benefit from your success and from other successes so wealth was shared. I mean yes there was still hierarchy, but I guess as the nation that was the best way to ensure your nation was going to survive, was to ensure that all its members were healthy and educated and now I see that we're losing that because it's becoming more about individual.

> The more individual based and self-focused are, have a tendency to think about property more and less about sharing.

> It's the value of that we are all connected so why would I want to disrupt the harmony in my community for my own personal gain.

> There are other ones out there that are good leaders that are just very family oriented …everything is done from a lens that is inclusive of people that often get forgotten, like children or seniors or persons with disabilities. Some of those leaders are really amazing that they can do those kinds of things…they're sort of altruistic, the ones who just do a lot of good stuff.

> …not to just focus on the loud, but to also look at the other ones that have no voice because they have the same needs, maybe even more so, because like Chief Sitting Bull, it's to look after all the elders and the children and the land.

A central dimension of this property 'benefit for all' was in what participants spoke about as 'commitment to a greater cause' or "working for the betterment of the community", "help my

community and give back", or an "affinity beyond their job description". This dimension of being committed to their people or a cause higher than their particular job saw many participants as viewing their work as part of helping either their peoples specifically or at least a higher cause that was associated with their values.

> …drawing on that strength of your ancestors or your other people to say this is expected for change to happen you know, somebody has to speak up and somebody has to say something or we need to kind of collectively move all this together or…we have to sort of break through some of these issues .

> …still it's not about me and me taking it personal, it's about me working for the betterment of the community and the people and that's the job that I've been given. I feel that job has been given to me that I work for the people.

> I came for the program and I came to help my community and to give back and to work for a larger cause so the fact that it was a government program was actually a detraction versus an attraction for me.

> I feel that we have a piece or a part to play in encouraging a better situation. So even if you're stuck with something you can work on changing what will happen in the future and that gives you a lot of, I think it empowers people a lot.

> I think the people who consider themselves Indigenous public servants rather than public servants who happen to be Indigenous, do so because we see an affinity with the Indigenous public above and beyond our job title and our work location. I hold myself accountable to Indigenous people and not just to my employers.

Expanding within a "commitment to a greater cause", but specifically when it related to their peoples, there was an element of considering past, present and future when making decisions.

Participants spoke about those that came before them, recognizing both the value of learning from them and their involvement in starting the work you are doing. Participants also spoke about the seventh generation ahead of them and that it was impacts on this generation that needed to be considered. Both of these parts of the collective "all" were raised as important in considering both intentions for leaders and the decisions they would make.

> …never forgetting where you're from and the struggles and trials and tribulations people have come before you [have faced] and that you're there because of your ancestors and your history and that they're a key part of it…drawing on that strength of your ancestors or your other people to say this is expected for change to happen…

> …a good leader considers how a decision will impact future generations, seven generations is always what comes to mind when I listen to our leaders talk. And I think a good leader would take all the time they need and get all the information they can before they would make any decisions.

The dimension that became 'everybody has a role' developed out of recurring themes around inclusion and the much lesser importance, if any, of status in leadership. There was also a high value on the importance of all people contributing, which was often shared through stories of the different roles that people played and the strengths that they brought.

> Everybody would have had a role in the community. Each of them would have had a role which would have meant that they were the person that was the

knowledge keeper of how to teach the other people how to do it, and they would come along[side]. It's about roles and everybody shared those roles and with that role it gave you your identity and it gave you your place in the community so everybody is a leader, not just one person. It's a communal effort to be a leader because everybody can be a leader in their own way, we all have gifts that we bring to something. That you are the person that happens to be the eldest at the table or in the camp so we are giving you the role to share your experience. …different ways to go and make change and some people are really good at being the ones that have the signs, they do the blockades, they are loud and vehement, they're going to make change from the outside and they want radical and they want lots, and then I'm more of the person on the inside going hey, they've got a point we can do something let's make some changes and doing that kind of internal changing people's attitudes one person at a time

Many participants also brought the dimension of valuing each role as important. This emerged through our discussions pointing out different places where they saw a wide variety of strengths or roles that were equally important, but just different.

The other thing I think that is important about leadership is recognizing that it's just one talent amongst many. That if you don't have the other talents to create your team, then your talent as a leader can't even be applied. And to just recognize that there's different roles, but I personally don't put those roles on a hierarchy. There's maybe more responsibility attached in terms of what I have to ensure, but it doesn't mean that my skill set is greater than someone's skill who is a subject

matter expert. So I very much try to value every role for the importance of it and what it brings.

I mean there are different aspects to leadership that work in different circumstances and again people bring different strengths…in fact my predecessor in this position, she and I have talked often, and it was like okay you are an idea person, you kind of took from nothing and built something and now it's my job as your subsequent person to put some legs on this and get it on the ground

A further element of 'everyone having a role' was the importance of contribution and awareness that everyone can and should contribute. Having a specific role in the community meant that each person had a contribution to make and that each person had value to the greater community. Differences in participants' understandings of the governance structure of nations across BC suggest that there might have been some nation members who might have had greater say, but many participants pointed out that in their nation the status was less prevalent. Being the voice that represents the people was an important role, but that status was not attached to it, it was considered like any other role. Without any one of these roles the community would be at a loss.

…leadership doesn't necessarily mean that you have the right to be involved in every single conversation and that you have the right to run everything and to know everything because you're in a leadership position.

This is what I can do and then other people will step in and say 'this is what I can do', it's just spreading out the responsibility…even this morning getting people to take care of different things so it doesn't all fall on me to take care of something, cause there are other things that I can focus on.

> If one role was not fulfilled the rest of the community would suffer from it, so
> everyone played a role in day-to-day living

One participant specifically noted that as some roles have now been given higher importance and status (i.e. chief and council system), this has caused concerns within communities.

> With our people a chief has no status, a chief is there to do what they can for the
> people. But with the white influence, the government, the licensees, they give too
> much status to them and a lot of people can't handle it and abuse it, and they don't
> last long and when their term comes to an end they are back to nothing again and
> it really hurts. I've seen it. So to just realize that that status doesn't last long and
> to be able to be one with the people, it's a hard lesson to learn.

As raised in the introduction, the concept of 'representation' was originally included as a separate property. However, through further comparison it seemed that it could be associated with 'everybody has a role' because it focuses on inclusion and common decision making that appears to stem from the equal importance put on both participation and contribution of all community members. As a result of this association, representation as presented in these findings is a dimension of everybody has a role which participants linked back to the importance of humility and respect.

> This goes back to traditional teachings, the concept of humility and respect, that
> in a leadership role [where] people have entrusted to you, because of gifts that
> you've been given, a certain role. But every time you walk in that role you are
> representing the people that put you there and respecting that and respecting

everybody that you meet is really important and the humility piece, for me is 'don't get too full of yourself'.

…no one has really come out and said they were a spokesperson, but when I talk to elders about how things were done, and when people decide who made that decision, it always seemed to me that it was a discussion and decisions would be thought out and it might take you know a year or two to make a decision.

Many participants while talking about the dimension of everyone having a role also mentioned traditional situations of what it looked like when everyone has a role in decisions being made. The exact traditions or circumstances of how nations, clans or tribes operated varied across nations, however participants described some of these methods which emphasized elements of open listening to hear all perspectives and then bringing these perspectives forward in a representation of what the people wanted.

…decisions are made in our system, where a Chief doesn't really have to say very much. He has wing Chiefs that do all of the talking for him, do all of the information gathering do all of that stuff, they feed all of the information to the Chief. The Chief thinks about all of that and thinks okay what are the interests here, this is where I need to go from here for my house group. I'm married to a lady from that house group, maybe I need to keep them happy too. Those are all of the things that you might want to consider and in the end you make a decision that you think balances all of those interests while advancing or maintaining the integrity of your house group.

500 years ago communities were not run as a dictatorship, and it was very much a conversational style. So where I'm from in my community there was a hereditary

chief, but that chief was responsible for listening to everyone's concerns and then

saying "This is my proposed way forward will you follow me"… then talking

with the family heads and seeing who has a stake in this, and who is that leader

from every family, who is the natural person that is in that leadership role, that's

in that family that I need to have that relationship, and that conversation

with…and then so each of those other family people are playing that function of

listening to what the family is saying and then being able to say, okay well I can

summarize that in my mind, and those are the interests of my family in this

conversation and then you know, dealing with all the other family heads and

saying okay, well, what does that person have to say versus what does my family

think.

When I talk to elders about how things used to run I mean it was considerably

different than how it's run today and certainly hierarchy had a big part of that.

And I don't even know if most people today don't know where they stood or

where their family stood in that hierarchy. And when traditionally, although they

were the leaders, they weren't identified as the leader they were a big part of the

decision making processes. The men who were the leaders would get direction

from the women and from the matriarchs and listen to what they had to say about

it because they would have a different view on things. Maybe it's because they

had kids, they bear children, they seemed to look for the longer term versus

whereas the males traditionally focused on the right now sort of in a cultural way.

An important element of representation was open listening or listening to all perspectives

and allowing contribution to the process from all sides. This element resulted from participants

describing examples in their own communities of how they had seen this demonstrated, but also how this dynamic might work in a government office and how it had been embodied in their own experience. They also spoke to the element of the time it can take to allow this to happen and elements of listening first and before speaking.

> It is a bit of different style and I think the other cultural piece is that you should understand before you speak. If you don't understand, that just shows bad form as a Chief. So you need to sit and listen, understand and then speak when you fully understand. That's another reason why I may not be talking as loud as other people. I find I usually get more vocal around the middle of a meeting once I'm starting to understand a few pieces and offer a bit more near the end.
>
> I think good leadership is really about listening and learning, and you know doing what you think is ...doing what you think is right based on your learnings and what you've listened to, but I think that that's tough. And leadership isn't always necessarily being at the front of something and being the spokesperson for something, but it's about people need to feel like they are listened to and when people feel like they are listened to then that's who they come to, to share their issues with and ask for help.
>
> I think it's being open to understanding. There's always more than we know, it's like if your co-worker is having a bad day, sometimes we just judge without asking why and there might be a really big why. So it doesn't matter where we are at we just have to understand and respect the boundaries, and the boundaries are there and you might never get past them.

Within the element of 'waiting and listening before speaking', participants explained experiences of how this approach or understanding could be misunderstood in the context of their work environment with it appearing to be a lack of initiative or interest in the particular area.

The outcome of everyone having a role and making a contribution is the ability to hear and come to a place where the representative voice in leadership can represent the group as a whole. As a result of this representation the leader, or the voice of community, has the weight of those they are representing behind them. The strength and unity of the community voice is where their authority comes from, not from their title.

> Indigenous leadership was always from within, so there's that whole community based aspect to it, where our leaders within communities tend to...you know their voice, because they speak with authority, but they speak with authority because they have the support of the people.
>
> They are strong leaders they have the support of their communities. They really believe in the capabilities and capacities of their staff to fulfill their roles in their positions and so they kind of just support them in their work rather than being directive.
>
> I think it's the level of actual leadership, you have a matriarchal type leadership role in community and trust is given to you, you know through our cultural approach you know we have a ceremony in my community when you are elected in as a leader, and through that ceremony trust is given to you to be able to do what you need to do to be able to lead your community, whereas here you are [often] a leader [by position].

> In the community, the intent of the Chief and Council is to be the voice of the band. You can't be the voice if you're trying to lead at the same time you have to be able to…if you're the voice you have to be able to take direction. That's the big difference, right, …people automatically assume Chief and Council, I've got all the power to do this, and that's not what it's there for. Did anyone ever tell you the story of how Chief and Council became...have you ever heard it any rendition of it? Chief Councilor is actually just a voice he's supposed to be a voice of all the Councilors who give the information from the community, but the way that it was interpreted was that that guy was the one in power making the decisions.

A result of a community leader who is able to voice community desires, decisions and needs can also benefit the community by strengthening their belief in their leader, but also belief in their group or nations views and values, creating an even deeper unity.

> As a chief and counselor, you should know that you need to do that, and to do it…their opinions voiced give their community members when they hear it and gives them strength, but when you don't hear anything, there is that void and that's not a good thing.

As the first and most prominent property in this category, 'benefit for all' was focused on putting distribution of benefit across a group ahead of seeking individual gain. Major dimensions that constructed this concept were 'contribution to a higher cause' and 'everybody has a role'. The dimension of 'contribution to a higher cause' emerged from work being seen as contributing to betterment of your community, giving back to community and an "affinity" beyond the job itself. Within this higher cause there was an importance of inclusion which involved not only all stakeholders, but also the past, present and future impacts, whether benefits or consequences. In

the property of 'everybody has a role' the elements of inclusion and contribution were prevalent, placing a value on the part that each individual person plays in creating the larger whole. In addition, this dimension included 'representation' and that when everyone has a role and contributes or is involved then the result is that the voice speaking on behalf of the group can truly represent the group as a whole. Authority in this case comes from the strength and unity of the community voice, not from a title.

Walking the talk. For participants who spoke about leadership and leaders in Indigenous communities many participants recognized that as part of a community it is important first for leaders to demonstrate that they share and operate under the same values as the community. It is also important that leaders are those that demonstrate these values through how to live out their life as a positive example to those around them.

This property is also mentioned under the first category's property of 'integrity' and it links with the next property, in this category: 'holistic view of persons'. In interviews it seemed that this property of demonstration and importance of who you are linked to what you do, was important to participants. This concept has been highlighted briefly, and with emphasis on two areas of demonstration: showing and living out your knowledge of community teachings and values; and the importance of firsthand experience and living out the lessons you have learned through this experience.

For those participants who could specifically speak to their understanding of leadership within their own communities or families there was an importance on knowing and demonstrating your knowledge of values and teachings. Where and how these teachings had been learned and the specifics of the teachings varied, but the more universal values of relationship, respect, reciprocity and responsibility as described by the Report of the Royal

Commission on Aboriginal People (DIAND, 1996) and in many other works (Thomas, 2011)

could be applied to most of the values that participants raised.

> This person here has demonstrated that [they know] the law, demonstrates it, puts
>
> it into practice…It is about being able to walk the walk, being held accountable in
>
> the community.
>
> …roots in your cultural teachings, if you don't know what those are then how do
>
> you find that out, because that will make you a stronger leader.

Another area of demonstration that emerged mostly as participants spoke about

leadership they had learned from their families was in story telling of the lives of ancestors or of

their direct relations. In one story a participant shared about her grandmother and many struggles

she had encountered in her life, but how she still led their families by continuing on patiently and

putting her family first. These stories were often about unassuming leaders who may not have

been seen to be leaders in a professional setting; their leadership was more about unseen action

taken in the background.

> …then during the war the boys all left and the girls all came home with their
>
> babies and she had this crazy household full of people. And then later while she
>
> was in her 80s, my brother and I were there and she took care of us, and two
>
> bachelor uncles who had never left home. I have images of her where her arthritis
>
> was so bad she couldn't walk up the stairs to go to her own husband's funeral, but
>
> doing laundry on a ringer washer in the basement and hanging it out to dry in
>
> Winnipeg winters and cooking and cleaning and ironing and sewing and doing all
>
> these things. And she always did it with ABSOLUTE patience, that you know she
>
> had lost four of her children and she kept on walking. She had lived through the

depression with a house full of kids and kept on walking. So every time I think "oh my God" I can't do this anymore…I'm BURNT out, I think of her and I have an image of her sitting in the kitchen knitting at the end of an evening while my brother and I sat at the table and did homework and stuff, and sitting there and rocking and knitting in absolute serenity. And she is my go to person in my head for "okay, I can find that it's in there somewhere". But that was never, stand up scream and shout leadership, that was just watching her walk through her life and keep walking no matter what.

Participants also shared stories of their own life experiences and how they 'walked the talk' in these instances. Having lived these experiences in a particular context they were able to live out what they had learned and bring in a greater and more connected understanding of a situation. In one instance this was a participant with a background in traditional fishing and fisheries who had taken this knowledge, added to it through gaining a degree that could be related to fisheries. This combined experience was then used to work between his band and government on fisheries-related policy discussions and decisions in his area. Another participant related his experience previous to entering government of petitioning against a particular development in his community. He was not only the one who was involved in initial investigation of the development, but was also present at tradeshows and public events and took on the role of speaking with senior officials. His intimate knowledge of the whole process he felt gave him an advantage over having delegated the different pieces out, although it was not just him doing all the work, but he was involved in the different aspects of the work to change this particular project.

Holistic view of persons. The importance of holding a view of people that is not fragmented or puts value on one element of their life over another emerged in both the individual understanding of leadership in elements of integrity and self-concept, but was often related back to Indigenous beliefs and ways of being. The importance in this area of whole-person and or holistic approaches in the role of leadership described a vision of leaders and people that was about who you were as a person, what your heritage and history were like, and who you were involved with. Relationships with leaders were seen as more than just a snapshot of them in their position at work.

> What's important, what's appropriate, how are you going to be seen? I think one of the big differences is just in authenticity, wholeness and authenticity. That within Aboriginal communities, and these are of course some very large generalizations, you do want to know the person. That's part of our culture, our protocols, who are you from, who are your mother and father? Your grandfather, who are your aunties, uncles, where are you from? You know that you put that into a context versus it's a more impersonal role oriented nature in leadership within western organizations. I mean so many people will just introduce themselves by their title and it tells you nothing about the person.

Within this approach a unique element developed as participants described how this approach included the ability to see that leaders could be fallible and make mistakes. This was seen to be different from more of a western approach where people are expected to do things right and which also lacked encouragement to get up and regain support through demonstration of their character when failure struck. Participants gave specific examples of where they say this

holistic approach come through in telling of either how decisions were made by a community or how leaders act.

> I mean the things that we value in our leaders including humanity, you know allowing leaders to learn and fail, figure it out and start again and ask for advice...that's all part of it as well. Expecting these paragons of virtue, not very realistic. We can't expect that of our leaders and they can't expect it of themselves. From an Indigenous perspective, we do see leaders as whole human beings and people make mistakes. You know people think that maybe 'I know this way' or 'we're going to try this way' and so you need to be accountable for that. You also have to own up and you know if something hasn't occurred the right way. If you've been a leader that's instilled trust and confidence, then they are going to trust you that decisions were made for the right reasons, and then they are going to have confidence that we are going to make this through or we're going to adjust to that.

In being willing to allow people to make mistakes and learn from them participants shared many experiences of how they had grown into leadership through being given the opportunity to make mistakes and still move forward. This was an element that seemed to be valued, the ability to be given responsibility and have the chance to learn from within the responsibility even if it meant they made a few mistakes along the way.

> I was thrown into the deep end of the pool around a lot of whether it was training or whether it was doing different things, doing project I'd sit there and just get kicked into the deep end of the pool and oh, you floated back to the surface again and moved forward. In my work I think I was challenged that way and you know

given opportunities to fail or whatever…I'm in now you know I always tell people

that it's because I've screwed up so many times that they had to do something with

me, and I just make a joke of it, but it's something that has given me another

opportunity and the individual who hired me gave me the opportunity to do this

job too.

So that's the difference around leadership is sharing more inner, personal issues,

like it's not uncommon to share that they may have struggled with an addiction

issue, well, none of my colleagues would never mention that because you don't do

that in the workplace.

Summarized understandings of leadership from family or traditional ways of

knowing. This category emerged from the traditional ways and values participants spoke of

regardless of their exposure or their upbringing in these traditional ways or teachings. Most

participants spoke about their connection or understanding of leadership based on the ways of

their family or their knowledge of traditional communities and values. Three properties that

emerged within this category: 'benefit for all', 'walking the talk' and 'holistic view of persons'.

As has been stated in previous sections, these properties are not mutually exclusive of the

properties in other categories. This was allowed for in the structure of this thesis as many

participants felt that leadership understandings could not be fully compartmentalized, but that

there were differences across the categories.

The concept of 'benefit for all' emerged within most interviews and seemed to come

from valuing equal roles and contribution and expecting a resulting voice that is inclusive and

representative of all who contribute and those who may need to be supported in contributing and

are often voiceless. The property was built on key dimensions of 'commitment to a greater

cause', or to your peoples, and 'everybody has a role'. 'Commitment to a great cause', or your

peoples, emphasized elements of "working for the betterment of the community"; "help[ing] my

community and giv[ing] back"; or an "affinity beyond [their] job description". In addition the

element of considering past, present and future in dialogue and especially in decision making as

also part of this concept. 'Everybody has a role' was the largest dimension under this property

and included elements of valuing every person's role, importance of all members contributing

and representing, which included another dimension of open listening. This element emphasized

inclusion and the strength that can stand behind a leader when they are representing the unified

voice of the whole community.

'Walking the talk', was focused on the importance of leaders sharing the values of

those they are leading and their ability to demonstrate these shared values. It also included a

dimension of modeling how to live life as a positive example. This property was described

mostly through examples participants gave of either lived experience or through role models or

other leaders that they had seen. This included stories of elders or ancestors and their example.

'Walking the talk' also emerged as a dimension under the property of 'integrity' in the individual

understanding of leadership category. This property is very much focused on the importance of

who a leader is and how their actions consistently match to that of their values and it is definitely

seen to be linked to integrity.

'Holistic view of persons' emerged as a property from the importance of not

fragmenting a person and valuing one element of their life over another. Dimensions within this

property were: a whole-person and holistic approach; and fallibility, the recognition that people

cannot live up to being "paragons of virtue". Within the whole-person approach your position or

role as a leader was not considered more important than who you were, what your heritage and

history were. People were not seen to just be a snapshot in time based on their title, but as someone that has a story and an identity of their own. Within the dimension of fallibility were elements of leaders themselves being human and they may make mistakes, but the importance is in their integrity and if they can regain credibility through proving their integrity this can even make them stronger leaders. There was also an dimension of personal experience of participants that leaders are developed through the process of being given chances to make mistakes and that in their careers they had been given responsibility and if they had made mistakes these had been learning experiences and they had recovered and then been "thrown back in the deep end" to figure it out again.

Category #3: Understandings of leadership within the Professional Public Service in British Columbia

This third category represents emergent understandings of leadership that participants identified in the context of their professional experience working in or with the BC Public Service.

Bureaucracy is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary in three ways: "a body of nonelective government officials or an administrative policy-making group"; "government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority"; and a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation". Overall the term relates to an "apparatus" used for public administration that is intended to separate the administration from the politics (Saga & Rosser, 2009) with the intent of creating efficiency, impartiality and rational administration of the state while leaving the ethical and representative/personal complexities to the political sphere.

Under this definition, this professional context is one can be considered bureaucratic, but is also influenced by the corporate culture of the BC Public Service and its individual employees. When specifically asked about understandings of leadership within 'bureaucracy', participants mostly described understandings of leadership that were limiting or did not align well with their own individual understandings. However, many participants also pointed out other understandings of leadership present in their work environment as a result of programs through corporate human resources for the BCPS (the Public Service Agency) or that of the individual approaches present in the styles of high level managers that directly impacted them. There was a tension between these perspectives on leadership which may be attributed to the bureaucratic structure and its underlying values of rationality and efficiency competing with approaches that are more open to balance rationality and efficiency with an emotional and spiritual dimension.

This category has been presented in a slightly different manner than the previous sections as a result of the two perspectives that seemed to influence the understanding of leadership within participants' professional positions and work environment. Findings are presented in two sections with the first section outlining some of the characteristics of the limiting understandings of leadership that emerged from the data as well as similar characteristics and values that are associated with bureaucracy. The second section presents the concepts of the BCPS corporate human resources approach, the observed shift in understandings of leadership over time and the variation of leadership overall as related to the impact of individual approaches and departmental cultures. The category closes with reiterating the tension of a structure that is intended to be rational and impartial and focused on efficiency, while at the

same time is combined with a corporate culture that continues to try and balance some level of emotional and spiritual elements.

Limiting understandings of leadership in the BC Public Service. When speaking about leadership in their professional context perspectives on leadership in government which were thought to be limiting or not align well with participants' own understandings of leadership emerged. Some of the dimensions were: hierarchy, accountability to the system, and compartmentalization combined with a tendency towards valuing expertise based on credentials over lived experience.

An understanding of leadership in this context that was found to be frustrating, or not well aligned with individual values, was the understanding of leadership as related to it being hierarchical in structure. In a hierarchy leaders are seen to be those at the top, initiating top down direction and attaining their power and influence as a result of where their position falls in the overall structure. All participants either brought forward the idea of leadership within government as being positional, based on a hierarchical structure, or when asked agreed that leadership in government was very positional.

> I think the common understanding is that they are in a position that we have to respect, but how effective they are, is debatable. We all know that it is positions you have to respect.

> …there's structural leadership and, you know, where it is assigned. I always found that kind of strange in that within western models of leadership the role itself is what gives the 'power' of the position, whether you've done anything to deserve that or not.

Participants also spoke about accountability within the system and the strong top down approach. There was a high level accountability to those above you and to the policies and

processes within the overall system. As a result of this accountability directly to the system, which is then accountable to the people, there was a recognized high level of accountability for individuals to live up to. However, as the accountability was often to an element of the system, which differed than being directly accountable to your people for your actions, participants also recognized the potential to get stuck in the process. This idea of getting stuck in the process included examples like focusing on written communication and huge amounts of time spent in meetings or "pushing paper". Being stuck in the process was thought to sometimes take away from the question of how you had benefited the public ("what did you do today that made a difference"), to limit thinking outside the box, and to limit the ability to collaborate and innovate.

Another dimension that emerged was that within the government system there was a silo approach, or compartmentalization. With compartmentalization came a tendency to put the highest value on input from those with particular formal credentials or from within a very specific content area. This likely could be related to the technocratic element of bureaucracy as a system that relies and seeks answers from technical expertise and not those with "ascribed status" (Carlisle, 1974).

> Everybody sort of becomes their own silo, I have this expertise, this knowledge and I'm going to push it as hard as I can to be heard and to be on the top of the page. And there are just a few leaders, you might be in a leadership position, you have people who are managers, really top heavy in government, lots of managers and supervisors, only a few good leaders in there [that I've seen], you've got your manipulators, and your paper pushers and people who don't want to make decisions, it's all in there in the mix, on both sides, native and non-native.

Compartmentalization created separations between departments that saw separate departments working in the same area, but using a very different approach or making decisions in a very different manner. It was thought to remove the ability to look at big picture impacts on the whole. It seemed that the tension in this might be associated with focusing on interests of one area instead of including a perspective that incorporated a broader picture.

> …idea that government comes up with band aid solutions. Let's dump money into one area and let's not look at the whole bigger picture…each ministry is responsible for one thing, people don't think that most First Nations, that I know, don't think like that. They don't compartmentalize every little issue it's the whole, everything is connected, it's joined together one thing influences the other and until you start you know building capacity in your community and looking at the community as a whole and looking at all these other issues and how we are going to resolve them or solve them, you're never going to get there. You can dump as much money as you want into that thing.

In the context of discussion with participants, these themes around perceptions of leadership in government: hierarchical, top down, expert based and compartmentalized, were discussed usually with some frustration. This appeared to be the area where the perceptions of power and authority aligned with a system that was intended to be rational and impartial caused discomfort for participants. However, within this discussion there was another element that emerged within the understandings of leadership within government and that was more related to the corporate understandings initiated by the corporate human resources area of the public service and that of the variation in leadership across the structure that was connected to personal leadership styles.

Leadership perspectives in the BC Public Service Corporate Context. A major theme that emerged as understandings of leadership were discussed in the context of the public service was the variation of styles and the non-existence of one steady understanding of leadership across the whole public service. Participants instead saw that understandings of leadership were influenced by a combination of what they described as good leadership (many of the concepts addressed in the first category); individual styles and personalities; specific culture associated with department business; and the work of the Public Service Agency, who is responsible for corporate human resources.

Most participants recognized that who you are as an individual influences your leadership style. Whether an individual leader is an extrovert or an introvert, more directive or more team focused, accustomed to very logical thinking or those that are more creative in their approach, individual people have their own beliefs and styles of leadership that impact the overall perception of leadership within the BCPS work environment.

In particular, some participants highlighted the effect of the hierarchical structure on an individual's style of leadership. In some cases the different cultures that existed across departments and ministries were also underlined as a contributing factor recognizing that the business of a Ministry focused on finance would have different stakeholders and business as compared to Health or Environment. This variance in the business and culture of a ministry also seemed to contribute to the perspective within participants' working environment.

> There are 15-22 ministries, working in different organizations and all of those
> organizations have leadership and they lead their organization. So you are going
> to see a lot of different styles of leadership dependent on the ministry, the
> business that they do, the type of work that they do, and the type of individuals

that are successful in the work that they do. One of the things I think that would

be important to add about government leadership is that it does take its tone from

the government of the day and from the so called top bureaucrats, they can very

much shift a culture, their leadership style will impact others because there is a

trickle-down effect in terms of if things are extremely directive, short time lines,

not taking other things into account then that get trickled down all the way

through the organizations.

The other element that emerged in this discussion was a shift that some participants had

felt during their time in government, a shift that was initiated by the corporate human resources

group, the Public Service Agency (PSA), and leaned more to valuing of people and relationships

and less of an authoritative approach. Participants recognized that though this was something

they had seen, it had not necessarily become widespread in practice, but that it was there. Some

participants had even noticed in recent years increased recognition of emotional intelligence and

spirituality of staff members through recognition of additional spiritual holidays being included

in agreements and training sessions with trust and relationships being the focus of the message

around leadership.

I look at it like when I first came into government I did a training course that was

orientation to management and one of the people that was doing the training and

they talked about leadership styles and at that point in time it was still fairly

directive, type A personalities get to be in charge and do these kinds of things…

and it's interesting because the same person years ago [led] this leadership

training [also led a] course with Energy and Mines that I took and had a

completely different attitude around leadership and training.

In discussion with those familiar with the Public Service Agency's (PSA) work[4] and along with participants, some specific programs and areas within the PSA were highlighted. Most recently the PSA has been developing a specific set of competencies, the Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies. These are intended to "define for the B.C. Public Service what will improve our individual and collective abilities to appreciate and empower the Aboriginal people of B.C." (BCPSA, 2012). These competencies are part of the competencies that are used in performance measurement of staff in the BCPS and so indicate a recognition of specific competencies that aid in developing better working relationships with Aboriginal peoples and groups.

Some participants also spoke about either their involvement or awareness of a government wide diversity strategy as well as various departmental educational or orientation programs that were specifically targeted to more open approaches including increased understanding of ways to better work with Aboriginal peoples and other diverse groups. The particular programs are not named in this thesis, some because they were still in development phases and others as they were department specific. Awareness of these programs and changes was also not evident across all participants; however on hearing about these initiatives most participants thought these to be positive steps.

---

[4] Most participants were aware of the Public Service Agency, however the specific programs that related to a more relational style of leadership were only familiar to a few participants.

Summarized Understandings of Leadership within BC's Professional Public Service. Within this category the main understandings of leadership emerged in the limitations that were thought to accompany understandings of leadership that can be related to the some of the characteristics of a bureaucracy. The main dimensions under limitations on leadership were: hierarchy, accountability to the system, compartmentalization and focus on expertise. On the other hand the non-existence of a consistent understanding of leadership across the public service, combined with individuals and the corporate impact on understandings of leadership that placed value on emotional and spiritual elements seemed to provide a hopeful sign for some participants.

The tension between these two areas was evident with a sense that even though there were positive elements within some areas of the BC government these understandings were more aligned with the more bureaucratic approach which was priority, particularly in times of austerity or in response to public attention or resource constraints.

> What I've seen in my 22 years of government is a real change. From, that government is really trying to be more inclusive in having more than just directive leaders…I see government trying to change from the top down directive leadership style to being more inclusive that's what all of the leadership training courses are when you get executive coaching…being more people oriented, to being more inclusive, trying to have people come on board and be happy with what they're doing as opposed to being told this is what you're going to do and this is how you're trying to do it. Trying to encourage that, in balance with the directedness…but it's interesting because with the tightening of budgets and

things like that we're getting back to more directive again, it's like that seems to

be the fallback for leadership in government.

It's personal, not individual

As earlier described, in setting the context for participants and creating clarity around

the topic being studied, three notions of leadership were explored. In comparing and contrasting

these notions and the properties within these notions, one thing that seemed evident was that in

order to balance some of the tension between multiple understandings there was a common

support or a motivation among participants that led some of them to take action in their approach

to working in government. This linking theme within this research seemed to be an element of

leadership as being "personal" and connected with the identity of participants. It may be easier to

introduce this theme first for what it is not in order to avoid connotations that might come to.

Leadership themed as "personal" is not intended to focus on it as being individual and unique to

each person. It is broader than seeing each person as a separate unit, which together make up a

group, but instead is about leaders who themselves are a piece of a larger whole. As much as it is

not individual, it is also not private or focused on independence and personal gain, but instead

the opposite.

The theme that appeared to run though the data was about public good and a

commitment to greater causes. It was based on ways of being that stemmed from traditional or

family values, but also recognized leadership as it was understood in a mainstream context and

was willing to work with this understanding when necessary. This impacted many leadership

behaviours from decision making to dealing with colleagues or those you were serving. At the

core though was who you are in your beliefs, and how you interact with those whom you are

leading or representing.

There seemed to be a more emotional connection to who, and how you lead. This goes deeper than a desire to accomplish individual tasks and be recognized for moving a situation or task ahead. Progress which does not contribute to a higher level goal or cause for which one is working towards would be less likely to be viewed as achievement within this understanding of leadership. Individual achievement, resulting in benefit to only you, would also likely be seen as less of an admired achievement.

In order to describe this theme further three areas seemed to help create a more complete image: centrality of core beliefs, priority on people and not the individual, and nation building. As a final wrap up, some of the quandaries related to this approach and being in the professional public service are briefly visited.

The centrality of a leader's core beliefs as part of their leadership was evident across all categories starting in the initial focus on 'integrity' and emphasis on the importance of 'character built on shared values' that are demonstrated even in difficult situations. Knowing what drives leadership at a personal level and having leaders not only know themselves, but be willing to bring themselves even in their fallibility, tied into the areas of self-concept, humility and a holistic approach to people. Leaders' ability to walk their talk based on their shared beliefs with community also touched on who the leader was as a person, at their core. There was a theme of not separating who you were from the work that you do and being able and willing to bring your whole self, not simply one aspect that was what you thought was expected of you.

> I think leadership can be trained, but how effective you are is a different question. I think that comes from within. That's your core beliefs, that's how you respond to things.

I think it goes to that whole person perspective and that who you are as a person informs your style as a leader. And it's not compartmentalized in the same way so for example, if I hold a lot of power as a leader within a certain hierarchy or structure, and then I step outside of it and I'm inconsequential, I'm not treating people well outside of my job…

This importance of the leader as a person comes through both in literature related to Indigenous leadership and in some areas of leadership from a management perspective. Some recurrent themes with Indigenous leadership literature include the centrality of spirit and gaining authority through respect (Johnston, 2012). The theme of centrality of spirit suggests that leaders gain "internal strength through their spiritual beliefs and spiritual expression in order to withstand the challenges associated with their positions" (Ottoman, 2005). This very personal element of maintaining strength in leadership is not only about what is at their core as an individual, but also connects to spiritual leadership that comes through their community connections (Kenny, 2012).

There are also many aspects of leadership and management literature which look at this element with some examples being in relation to trust and humility. In looking at humility authors Hoekstra, Bell & Peterson (2008) list characteristics of humility as "fallibility, vulnerability, transparency, inadequacy and interdependence". These fit well with a holistic view of persons and a revealing of what is at the core of a person. In this same article the authors recognize a tension that exists between these important pieces of humility in leadership and the pursuit of perfection that is part of mainstream leadership and the competitive nature influenced by the corporate world. As a result of little time to reflect or bring in personhood to leadership, Hoekstra et al. (2008) suggest that leaders instead of bringing the core of who they are to their

work often end up "borrowing" from management concepts such as "this isn't personal, it's business" or "don't get too close to the people you lead"; concepts which are not necessarily aligned with their core being, but that are rewarded in western leaders. This tension is similar to that noted in the data where the idea of "person, not individual" emerged.

Prioritizing people and relationships over task was another area where the idea of leadership as "personal" seemed to fit. The property of walking the talk under the concept of 'integrity' illuminated the importance of both mentoring and empowering people. Seeing people as whole persons and seeking to bring out the best in their skills, encouraging contribution and at the same time establishing relationship built not on power, but on respect. This was quite clearly demonstrated though the thoughts in the concept of humility and having a holistic view of peoples. A more interesting demonstration of this idea seemed to be present in the experience of Aboriginal leaders as seeking common ground where possible. By seeking common ground among peoples, leaders seemed to be seeing the impacts that decisions would have on the people themselves and not just a problem that was being solved. As a result of this more relational connection to those who would be impacted, participants were interested in finding ground where all parties would benefit, and or would understand why benefit might be necessary to be shared, more with one side of an issue than the other.

Prioritizing people and relationships was prevalent in the Indigenous leadership literature, from the underlying values of respect and relationship, and even in that of feeling a responsibility to find solutions that were best for all. Themes of "authority gained through respect" (Johnston, 2012) or persuasion over position (Kenny, 2012) suggest that within Indigenous leadership it is your actions and respect of the people that garner you authority and that at its core leadership is "relational" with healthy societies being where the people were put

first and "individuals acted on behalf of others in the community" and not themselves. This type of leadership is described by Kenny (2012) as "the glue".

Another area which for much of the research has been presented under concepts like "benefit for all", or "vision" or "cultural agility", has been more clearly articulated as the idea of Nation Building (Gambrell & Fritz, 2012). In the current research the idea of Nation Building varies slightly from Gambrell and Fritz (2012), in that the nation is not limited to one particular nation or grouping of people, but in this context is to a much larger nation of Aboriginal peoples in BC. Within this there was also an element of participants not stopping at wanting to seek benefit for just Aboriginal peoples, but to find solutions that would be a benefit for Aboriginal peoples and others living in BC in some circumstances.

One participant articulated this with a story of generations of working and her perspective on the progress that has been made and where she believes she is contributing to change that will impact future generations.

> So my mother graduated from high school in 1950. She went to residential school and then she went to a convent for high school. She won the Governor General's medal in English exams and in French so she was the top student in the province in both of those. She left her community, went to the city to go to normal school to be a teacher. She lasted 3 months. The racism drove her out and she spent her life working for the phone company as a customer service clerk. My brother has a PhD and is a professor of First Nations Studies and does research all over North America in developing ecotourism in First Nations. I do this, I'm a physician. My dad went to his grave introducing the doctor and the doctor. That's one generation. One generation, so the world has changed, we received the gift of our mother's

brains that allowed us to do this, but the environment changed as well. So I am

hopeful that my kids have never dealt with the kind of barriers and limitations that

even I had so I'm very hopeful that as leaders, while still retaining who we are,

and being proud of who we are that the environment around us will allow that

development to happen. Every time that I run up against one of those barriers, I

remember that and think "give it a few years, and a few voices". It's my job to

break down those barriers so that we can continue to move forward and develop,

so our children's children, or in our history it's the 7th generation, we're taking

care of the 7th generation. So those kids, will never know any of this.

As the emergent theme "it's personal, not individual" understanding leadership seems to

shift towards having an attachment to work that requires leaders to invest in the long term. It asks

of leaders to know themselves and their values and to be able to bring this to their work. It

requests them to pursue experiences or understandings of experiences instead of reading about

them, to have a desire to be involved as a part of the group and not as a separate entity. The

emergent theme is one that sees leadership in this context as being made up of complex attributes

and concepts, but underlying each of these is a personal investment in the work you are doing

and the people who it will effect.

Category #4: Aboriginal leaders experience in government – Walking in two worlds

This fourth and final category is an understanding from participants about their

experiences as Aboriginal leaders working in their current or past professional positions. The

first three categories provide a sense of the context which was set in talking with participants and

mimicked how interviews flowed. This demonstrates some of the different perspectives and

understandings that emerged throughout interviews. The linking theme that precedes this section

speaks to one common piece that seemed to link across all participants and support or motivate them to take steps to balance the multiple understandings between their personal and professional context.

This category is slightly different. Only a few participants had specifically thought about the leadership involved in this context, but all could provide examples or experiences highlighting this idea. As a result the emergent concepts were taken mostly from examples and experiences of participants and some constant comparison to the Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies (BCPSA, 2012). On review of these competencies there were many similarities to what participants spoke about throughout all categories.

These experiences represent understandings of leadership from a perspective of many participants who are bicultural (connected with two cultures): western and traditional or family values. As a result they have the ability to walk in both the worldview/culture of government and the worldview/culture of Aboriginal communities and Indigenous ways of knowing. In *Living Indigenous Leadership*, Kenny (2012) describes the idea of "walking between the worlds" and that contemporary leadership for Aboriginal peoples requires Aboriginal leaders be involved in building bridges. This concept fits well with what was described and observed throughout this study as one participant explained "That's why I think it's important to have an understanding of both. You need to understand everything and if I was to totally abandon my culture and totally focus on the western side then there is no possible way that I could get a full understanding or appreciation of what it is that my band wants to accomplish."

Within this category the four properties that emerged are: cultural competency, cultural agility, and challenges.

Cultural competency. Cultural competency is a property that emerged from within data and from discussions with Indigenous academics looking at participation within the health care sector and further was outlined in the recent Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competency Framework released by the BC Public Service Agency (2012). It is a concept that specifically relates to seeking out and having proficiency in the ways and understandings of other cultures, in this case that of western culture and of Aboriginal communities and values. A recurring theme within the data was participants' personal experience or education that combined time or learning specifically about Indigenous ways, values and culture. As well, time was invested in learning ways of the dominant western culture and that of the bureaucratic structure. Participants then had an understanding of these differing cultures which they brought forward into their workplace and their leadership.

In reviewing background information provided by participants many had attended some level of formal education (i.e. University or College) and had either been involved with an Aboriginal organizations or community in their growing up, through work or through school. Participant backgrounds displayed either life experience being brought up in their cultural heritage or that they had made attempts to connect to their heritage if it was not a large part of their upbringing. Formal education in a University or College system immersed participants in western institutions, their culture and expectations. Several participants directly commented on their relationship to western institutions and systems and their cultural knowledge of these systems as a result of their formal education, if this was something they had not been as connected to growing up.

> I think in the western system, it is about credentials, it's where did you go to
> school, what kind of degree do you have…That's a bit different from where I am

from. I would say that I might have a PhD in Aboriginal law, but we don't have

that kind of system. I think there is definitely a need for First Nations people to

get an understanding, to get that grasp, because I just can't see there being any

true reconciliation between Aboriginal cultures and non without being able to

function in that [western] system. On the other side, I think in that western system

[needs] to have some recognition that there is this other way of doing things…one

of my personal goals in doing this job is that even in my old job…I felt that I

could play a role in advancing reconciliation between my band and government.

Working with the provincial government I felt that I could still advance that as my

personal goal, but now I am actually within the system. I've turned my hat around

and used my western civilization hat and did as well as I could in school.

My education is within the western realm of formal education and also in teaching

English itself. So I think that Indigenous people have an advantage in that we are

bicultural, so it's not as though we don't understand how this system works, we

understand it very well. We understand it better than the people within it because

we have a different cultural perspective that we can see that whereas when you

are only a member of one culture you swim in it, and you don't even recognize the

lens that you have.

Within participant comments there was a strong dimension of the importance of being

bicultural. Specifically the idea that if you are only part of one culture you "swim" in it, or can

be unaware of certain aspects of your culture because you are immersed. It is in this ability to see

and be familiar with the different cultures around you that enables you to communicate and

operate in a way that is respectful and to which others will be receptive. This extends to the idea

of understanding protocols, or policies or processes on both sides and to see where there are connections or barriers as a result of any differences between cultures.

One particular area of this cultural competency is understanding the history and lived experience that influences the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government. For participants, having awareness and understanding of the contributing factors that influence this relationship is important in knowing the foundation that you are moving forward from. In an effort to clarify, participants did not generalize or fixate on statements about historical injustices and impacts, however most expressed the importance of understanding the foundation that exists because without it you lose the sense, understanding and context that is intricately tied to this relationship.

> We can't ignore the fact that there is an environment and a history around us that is not positive and building those trust relationships up is challenging because the ground underneath it is not trust relationships. It's not positive history so we have to acknowledge those things and respect people's feelings about those things, but at the same time saying 'okay we're trying to move forward from that'… Indigenous communities, the core of who we are, came very close to destruction, and if nothing else First Nations in Canada are an incredibly resilient people, that no matter what plague of locusts has come by or government policy, we are survivors and we continue to face new challenges to survive. And what leadership is needed at each of those challenges is different. Trust is still a big issue, sort of that we're in partnership agreements all the time in our work, but there is still an underlying anger and distrust that comes from historical relationships and that often translates into a distrust leadership generally.

…there is a bit of a sense of walking two worlds, because I would think that many

First Nations peoples have a family history that has been somewhat plagued with

alcoholism or abuse or neglect or these kinds of things and so…I think you really

bring that forward and that sort of an undercurrent in terms of Aboriginal leaders,

because most Aboriginal leaders are actually trying to work for the betterment of

First Nations people so they are really able to speak from experience and I guess

that's what they bring to their leadership role.

Because I'm [from the nation], when I work up in the north I understand who the

people are and where they are coming from and what their communities are like.

And not just [from the nation], but small northern remote communities. I get it so

it's more a way of approaching things with a deep understanding and then using

what I know of government and what I know of the communities to try and do the

translation.

One participant who was located in a position outside of Victoria's government hub

specifically spoke about an understanding of how her approach to work had impacted

communities. Colleagues of this same participant when asked about her leadership style

recognized her credibility with communities and her willingness to raise issues within

government or within a particular community when she saw that there was something blocking

the way. Her commitment to honoring community values, in this particular case, respect

demonstrated through presence, has impacted her ability to help communities and government

communicate more effectively.

Yes, it's all about the people. I might work with the leaders, but I'm always

talking to the grassroots, always. If you want to be a First Nations liaison, you

think pushing paper is what's needed? How many people are you going to see up

there in the communities? How are you going to know what those people want,

who those families are, how their jobs are impacted if you take this away or do

that or whatever.

The understanding of Aboriginal communities and culture also had an element of

knowing the current day context in communities for participants. Specific dimensions that

participants emphasized were protocols or expectations around respect and recent events or

activities in communities that will contribute to any work happening.

You don't know who in their community has just been diagnosed with cancer.

You don't know whose family has suffered a loss to suicide, you know those

kinds of things that people bring with them. Often we're dealing with First

Nations leaders and politicians who are the focus of that same piece in their

community.

We've got to go to their offices, we've got to show them that respect. You have to

see how poor these people are, paupers on their own land. You can hear it when

they talk to you, but you've got to go see it and believe it. You've got to be there,

that's how you earn respect, they know that you're going to come and talk to

them. …you just bring the people out and they'll listen because you brought them

out. It's just keeping that connection happening, let them know that you're still

thinking about them. Let them know that you're there for them if they have any

questions, or issues.

In addition to experience and understanding of Indigenous culture, participants

expressed the need to be familiar with western values and how government operates within a

mainstream western bureaucratic structure. Knowing how this system works and being able to use this knowledge to improve services and remove barriers is the other side of cultural competency.

> …if I have concerns like that I try and bring it up at I guess at a good time where it would be showing respect to my employer, to my supervisor, so that as not to embarrass them or to challenge them when we are dealing with stakeholders or clients. At the same time I guess still be willing to challenge when I disagree with a decision.

> It's more structured and set out, you know, here is our vision and our goals and our strategies and actions and tasks and this is how we're getting there. And maybe that's something that some First Nations communities have sort of struggled with is being able to fit everything into a planning document.

The property of cultural competence emerged as a result of participants expressing their understanding of both cultures and from the reoccurring theme of "bicultural" that occurred in the data. It is also a concept that has been recognized as important by some government sectors as demonstrated by an online cultural competency training course that has been recently implemented by the Provincial Health Services Authority. The intention of this course is to increase knowledge for those without a full knowledge of the history and culture of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Cultural agility. Walking between the worlds begins with the importance of knowing about and having an understanding and respect as a result of knowledge. Most participants could clearly demonstrate that they understood both worlds and that their efforts to understand had not always come naturally. They had intentionally engaged in learning about either culture if they did not have enough understanding.

Cultural agility as a concept was more than just knowledge and understanding. It related to the process of being able to link these understandings together in a practical way which builds bridges across the two worlds. The terminology is also used in the Aboriginal Behavioural Competencies dictionary which describes it as "It is openness to unfamiliar experiences, transforming feelings of nervousness or anxiety into curiosity and appreciation. It is examining one's own culture and worldview and the culture of the BC Public Service, and to notice their commonalities and distinctions with Aboriginal cultures and worldviews. It is recognition of the ways that personal and professional values may conflict or align with those of Aboriginal people, "the capacity to relate to or allow for differing cultural perspectives and being willing to experience a personal shift in perspective" (BCPS, 2012).

This description seemed to align well with what participants had expressed in the practical applications of what they do through their professional role as a result of them having bicultural background. This element usually emerged right at the end of interviews, often as a wrap up. For some it was not as clear to them how this looked, but many would continue on at the end of the interview. Participants could often think of situations where this had been a part of their role and some even expressed that they were surprised to think of this as leadership. They could, however, see how it was and were grateful for the opportunity to think it through and recognize this part of their work.

Participants spoke of their role in the process of connecting the two understandings. They expressed this through a general sense of "That you can put in the context so that everybody else understands", but also described it through other metaphors or description like "ham in the sandwich" and acting as an interface.

> Somebody described me once in this position as being 'ham in the sandwich' that for Indigenous people with whom we partner I am the representative of the province. For the people I work with in the province, I am the representative of Indigenous communities so we often become the funnel point for both good and bad. … [the] challenge is, you know, in one of the voices that we have to have internally is yes we are Indigenous people doing this work, but we are not necessarily representative of the community you serve so we can be a conduit and a facilitator, but engaging with me doesn't count.
>
> I could understand the technical side of fisheries management and I could apply as part of the information you need to have an informed discussion you need to have about fisheries management and how a decision was made to address this interest, or made to address this interest. I kind of played that role, that interface between my Chiefs and DFO in providing that kind of information.

Although not all participants had a specific term or way of expressing this element, most expressed it through the need to bring forward all interests and consequences. There was an importance placed on having the awareness to provide the whole picture, not just a specific stakeholder view.

> How do I cope with that? If I see something that's not right, I'll speak to both sides. Sometimes together, sometimes individually and see what can be worked

out better. And I let people know, if you're going to keep doing this there are

blockades that are going to happen. I give them their warnings.

I think you need to be able to adjust to circumstances and you need to be able to

listen, and you need to be able to understand that you don't always, in most cases,

you don't have all the things you need to have.

There were also scenarios where participants highlighted how bringing forward both

interests can create a space to find a win-win or realize that the subject might be an area where

there is no compromise and should not move ahead.

I see where there can be potential for win-win. I see where you have a proponent

and province are willing to put in resources to deal with things like capacity or do

the environmental review that might be above the standard that might be above

the bare minimum legal piece. So those are situations where I think 'okay it

would be great if we could have more discussions like that'. There will still be

other places where it just does not make any sense at all, it might be a closed bay

there is no flushing at all, it's right in front of the community – total eyesore –you

don't want to be there, maybe think about someplace else.

Participants expanded this to even include how it applied in their offices among

colleagues.

I think it's being open to understanding, there's always more than we know. It's

like if your coworker is having a bad day, sometimes we just judge without asking

why and there might be a really big why.

Seeking common ground and looking for seeing win-win in discussion with

stakeholders was a common goal among participants if it was possible. They recognized the

benefit of having competency in both cultures and most participants expressed a desire to see and understand differing perspectives and to guide conversations and actions to common ground. This included an element of working where decisions required compromise or raised concerns on either side and to be able to provide increased understanding for either party as to why circumstances were the way they were.

This seemed to be an important piece in relation to understanding the approach that Aboriginal peoples leading in government are taking, how they are assisting in moving forward as much as is in their control, programs and policies that are culturally respectful, relevant and satisfy community needs while staying within the bounds of government scope and structure.

There was emphasis on demonstrating, not just talking about, collaboration that allowed for all interests to be brought forward. With interests on the table participants spoke of seeking opportunities instead of seeing barriers to push through and described different approaches or occasions where they had experienced this.

> My feeling at the time was, I don't think there is a side. There is a decision that has to be made, how do I inform that, where are the sides in that?
>
> So it's just kind of finding those opportunities or the common ground of how I can sort of support them in my position…like where is the common ground, a good starting point to sort of move forward…. I guess just focusing on what is most feasible or where there is most common ground.
>
> Good leadership is first and foremost no prejudice…so if you have somebody that isn't prejudice and wants to be collaborative that's huge. One thing to talk that way, and one thing to be that way. A lot of people can use those words, but it's just words. So to use those words and to mean it and to follow through with it…

Under the concept of cultural competency was the idea of having an understanding of the foundation of both cultures. The concept of 'cultural agility' takes this further to include demonstrating this understanding and educating others. Making sure that each interest was heard, included educating the different cultures on the impacts and scenarios that lay in the background of discussion and decision making. In some cases this is also done in an effort to reduce prejudice or racism and increase cultural competency of colleagues. It appeared to also be a way to bring down peoples' defenses and make space for them to not feel ignorant or fearful of what they didn't know before moving into dialogue. Participants gave examples of using humour for this purpose or knowing how to adjust their communication styles to be able to connect with their audience

> I kind of have to be an educator of both sides of that world. I have to educate my Indigenous partners about government and how it works and what the process is and how you deal with that especially at an operational level. People often have the political experience; they don't always have the operational experience. And on the other side is the cultural competency piece, how do we make this a culturally competent organization and work respectfully with those partners and sometimes those messages; nobody wants to hear them on either side.
>
> It's just sort of understanding the context that the people are coming to you from and that, that is their leadership style. So you know I'm going to adjust to that so that I can understand what they need and actually understand what the message that they are giving me is because they'll give it in different ways.

I always joke with my coworkers because I think joking makes it more

comfortable for them because they are probably sitting on edge that they're going

to say something negative about First Nations so I will joke with them.

One participant shared specifically how her knowledge from living in the community

gave her a perspective that others in her office did not have. She used this opportunity to address

prejudice against Aboriginal clients and continues to use her understanding of the system to

improve the experience and hopefully the outcomes for all. Hearing one story of how she took

steps to change a reporting process to be more respectful of clients through better reflecting who

they were and where they were from was one example. Another example she shared was in her

involvement in shifting the thinking of colleagues in terms of how they speak about clients.

At one point in time I remember being at the front desk once and people were

talking about one of the clients and they were talking about how the client was,

you know, just a drunk. Like somebody who was on the streets, and they call

them a 'trooper' and stuff like that and I said 'well, he's a person and he comes

from somewhere and you know there is probably more to him than we know'. So

I got people, the staff, I guess kind of knew that that was a sore point for me.

Don't be referring to people, labeling them, and just seeing them as people instead

of somebody that is just living on the street or somebody that is just always in the

park all the time. Look at them as people instead of seeing them that way and then

educating people on the residential school, talking to the staff because none of

them have been really exposed to it.

A dimension of this property was navigating the government system and managing the

resources available to ministries or communities in order to achieve a particular outcome. This

was linked to having the context to work across the two cultures, particularly on the government side, understanding the processes and how to work with them to meet priorities that were culturally appropriate and met the needs of Aboriginal peoples. Participants gave examples of how this occurred.

There is always this commitment to consult, always this commitment to have it sort of First Nations led or at least a high degree of consultation within the process so that they have some input on how services are being designed and delivered. In that position, you have to sort of find that balance well here's our legislative mandate, this is the law you can't go out of the lines on this, but where is there room for flexibility to allow First Nations groups to be able to express what is unique about their community, their own traditional approach to say child welfare.

This is something that we can do. And biting off reasonable chunks and working away at it. And the bar will be raised that much higher, and that's okay and that's something that I've had to work really hard with government people around is that people come back to you and say "well they asked for this and we did this and now they're still not happy", and I'm like it's okay we've got 100 years to go and work through here. You know we've just raised the bar and it's a good thing they're very thankful but it's not enough, you know, until it's there's a level playing field for everyone.

A lot of times you come across things that I have absolutely no authority or jurisdiction over. And I can tell people I can help you get in touch with the right person because trying to find your way through government is pretty tricky for the

average Joe and I can. So I make sure that I only promise what I can do, and what I can commit to, and I certainly don't make promises on behalf of government and what they will do. I can try and explain how processes and policies and laws and whatnot work in plain language that people can understand. So, you know in that way I think that for government and for the people that I work with that benefits them, for government as my employer I think I can provide a different perspective and where I can apply my values.

Another participant shared her story of a competition that was run through a college course to create a design for a project. The original idea was set up so there would be multiple entries allowed and they would each submit a completed design and there would be one winner who would receive a prize. When the contest was starting they knew that there would be five entries and with that knowledge made a decision that was more in line with valuing of each contribution equally.

…what I decided is that it shouldn't be a contest in terms of first, second, third. It should be more of a, we kind of switched it up so that it would be, everybody would get the same thing. So it was more like everybody that submitted something [got a set amount] and that was that, rather than leaving someone out.. because that's not how we do things, and I was really uncomfortable with the idea of a contest.

The property of 'cultural agility' seemed to express the importance of applying their 'cultural competency' into bridge building action. By acting as the "ham in the sandwich", participants described giving the two pieces of bread a meeting point where partnership can be established, or by being an interface or guide through facilitating understanding to both sides and

working to lead them to find shared priorities or explain significant differences. Regardless of

the exact approach, 'cultural agility' was commonly recognized by participants as a central role

that they played and in fact an area of leadership that wasn't always recognized.

Challenges in the space between. The context of being an Aboriginal public servant in

the BC government is not always positive despite many participants' ability to share positive

elements and see the opportunities. The findings for this data would not be complete without

covering some of the challenges that participants face in this role, being both of Aboriginal

heritage, and being a part of the professional public service.

This is slightly different than the other concepts outlined in this section as its focus is

not specifically about leadership, but instead about some challenges that occur because of the

unique position of participants. However, managing these challenges and working for positive

change among them is something that I would consider as leadership.

Many participants did not focus much on the challenges, with some participants

hesitating to see these as challenges and instead seeing some of these negative aspects as

opportunities for change. Not all participants felt this way. Some participants were much more

apt to discuss some of the very difficult circumstances that they faced. However, in both cases,

even those that saw opportunities and were much more focused on the positive aspects their role

brings to government, agreed there were elements of very real challenge.

This section explores these challenges in three areas: representing while consciously not

representing, prejudice and racism, and values compromise.

The first challenge 'representing without representing' was articulated by participants in

discussing the dilemma that they were put in as they were viewed by others in a way that they

couldn't control and as a result had to be very careful what and how they approached situations.

What participants expressed was that in context where they came to Aboriginal groups or communities they were seen to be representing government and sometimes in some circumstances people would see them as representing all of government which could lead to discussion outside of their professional role, knowledge or influence. On the other hand, for broader society and in the context of government there is a tendency to seek out opinions of Aboriginal public servants and expect that this could represent a larger group.

> I am identified as an Indigenous person and because of that I am very cautious about what I do and how I do it because I'm always representing…very conscious of not representing at the same time. It's both sides of that coin. I remember my first attempt at university, sitting down in, it used to be called Native Studies at that point, native studies class, 200 people in the theatre, and something came up, I can't remember, and the prof kind of looked at me and asked me to "speak" as an Aboriginal person…just because you've interacted with me, doesn't mean you've interacted with all Aboriginal people.

The message about this challenge is that it is a continuous process to be able to understand when those around you may see your personal thoughts as statements which represent a group that you are part of. In these situations it is a skill to see it happening and to be cautious how you respond.

> I'm only one individual who has a particular heritage and I can bring that to the conversation, but that's all I can bring. So there are two sides of that coin, yes I'm representing, but no I don't represent.
>
> [There are] not enough Aboriginal people at what's called "Strategic Leadership" level or "Executive Leadership" level, you are still, you're not just representing

yourself you are representing your nation, your cultural background, because

people will judge you against that so there is actually…there's a lot of pressure on

you.

An additional challenge that emerged from the position of being between the two

worlds was the recognition of 'prejudice and racism'. This included overt and entrenched

demonstrations and although participants were still positive about making change, examples

stood out and, in some cases had been, invisible barriers for them or their colleagues.

I think one of the things that Aboriginal people have to face within government

and within a lot of other areas too is you know there are, they're not even visages

of discrimination, that exists there's cultural barriers, there's stereotypes…you not

only have to meet expectations you have to exceed expectations to be a strong

Indigenous leader in government, you have to exceed expectations because there

is still a view that well, this is who you are or this would be your skill set, or this

is what you would be interested in versus you can have all of these other things

that you're also intensely interested in and passionate about and have skill sets that

aren't only connected to being an Indigenous person.

There used to be more, but there is a lot of what I would call institutionalized

systemic racism…But I still hear stuff from leadership levels like,

mispronunciation of very simple First Nation names.

Overt examples of racism and prejudice were also shared by several participants

describing derogatory name calling, intentional embarrassment and intimidation of those that

refused to tolerate and perpetuate the behaviour. In the interest of confidentiality specific stories

have not been shared, however these examples demonstrate that although it is not everywhere

and every day that there remains a stream of both personal and systemic prejudice and racism within the government context.

The final challenge of potential and real values compromise that participants felt had either started to happen or lived with the knowledge that they would eventually happen, were described as recognition of a "line in the sand" or a "hill to die on". These examples or concerns were all places of personal compromise that participants knew may come in their careers. This element was first highlighted by a pre-interview conversation about the intentions of the current research study and recognizing how it could or may be used. The question was asked and continued to emerge in different dimensions throughout data collection, 'Do you know where your line is, where you would not continue with this work if you knew it would cause harm or somehow challenged your values?'.

> I know Aboriginal people who come into the public service and really, really, struggle with having a different way of working. Like, you put on your government hat and you take it off and sometimes it's hard and sometimes it's completely contradictory to somebody's values and what somebody believes in and that's what at some point can't be compromised, and people feel too much like maybe who they are is being compromised.
>
> …if you come to that 'is this a hill you're going to die on' and you say 'this is it, I'm done', then it's time to walk away, and that's not always easy.

Examples of this were generally expressed as seeing the potential for a day to come where participants chose their personal values and beliefs over the decisions or approach to process endorsed by the system. The dimension was not about person to person values clashes, but higher level policy and cultural values being imposed in a way that compromised values

could not be avoided. This was a difficult topic for participants because it brought together where their goal of change from within could result in conflicts with their integrity or personal values.

> …the big things and the title and the trappings of leadership and really come down to what are you doing here? And you have to be able to look yourself in the mirror and the day you can't it's the day you should get out… you know if you can't stand there and say 'yeah, I'm on the right path, I'm doing the right things' I have felt that there would definitely come a time where I would have to make a choice between my own personal values and ethics and my career. Or between you know to put it more bluntly, to pick between my Nation or you know my employer. I mean I know I have been challenged by my employer on several occasions on who I am working for or what hat I am wearing when I made that recommendation or when I made that decision or when I made that comment…

For Aboriginal public servants the unique position that they hold which requires them to walk in two worlds, does not come without challenges. Some participants felt these challenges weighed heavily on them and that the potential to have to leave their position because of values conflicts may be at any time. Many participants also shared examples of departments were there had been a significant number of Aboriginal public servants and that this had decreased, also recognizing that for some people this environment was too difficult to navigate. Within this discussion there was also recognition by a few participants that this potential for values compromise was also present for some of their non-aboriginal colleagues.

For other participants, they recognized that there were some instances where they were required to work harder to prove their abilities and that they were provided with mixed messaging about their leadership. Overall they were really positive even in the face of these

challenges again seeing the challenges they had faced as opportunities for change. I think this is important to note because there was quite a difference between those participants who really did not want to discuss barriers and challenges as this didn't fit their perspective, but for others it was a prominent part of the overall discussion about understandings of leadership which seemed to cause a lot of frustration.

Regardless of these challenges all participants recognized that they had stayed in their position because they did see how they could contribute to a larger cause through their roles. They also recognized that some of these challenges are also society-wide and not just specific to the BC government or a bureaucratic environment.

Summarized Understandings of Leadership from Walking in Two Worlds. This category is slightly different than in the previous three categories as this category was based mostly on specific experiences of some participants. This topic area, Aboriginal public servant leadership, is not one which has had much presence within the literature and similarly many participants had not consciously thought about this element of leadership. However, many expressed gratitude for the time and opportunity to reflect on their role and the leadership they provide which often is just seen as who they are and those who had consciously reflected on it were pleased to discuss this topic which they do see as an important and intentional role.

Within the literature Kenny (2012) brings forward the concept of walking in two worlds and recognizes where Aboriginal peoples are playing an important role in bridging their traditional and communities' values with the business and priorities of government to find ways that the two worlds can meet, find, and work together to reach shared goals. The key concepts that emerged within this category were: 'cultural competency', 'cultural agility' and the 'challenges in the space between'.

'Cultural competency' as a concept included properties of biculturalism or the understanding of the values and ways of being in both western and Indigenous culture, knowledge and understanding of historical relationships and current day lived experience, and having honour and respect for both cultures. It is also a concept that has been recognized as important in several BC public institutions through the recent introduction of an Indigenous Cultural Competency training program developed through the Provincial Health Services Authority and the new Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies framework from the PSA. The focus of this is on the capability to understand and work respectfully in different cultures.

'Cultural agility' was a concept that went beyond knowledge and understanding and reached over into being able to link these understandings together in a practical way building bridges that allowed differences in cultures to be acknowledged and connected to work being done. This concept usually emerged close to the end of many interviews where participants were reflecting on their experiences in government. This concept included properties of acting as an interface or "ham-in-the-sandwich", creating context so that "everyone understands", seeking common ground, providing education for those without cultural competency, and managing processes and resources in a way that would be culturally appropriate and accessible. In many cases the properties were identified through analysis of experiences participants shared.

'Challenges in the space between' was a slightly different property. However, when writing up findings this was apparent and played a role in this unique position that participants held. I felt that without recognizing this element the story of findings would be incomplete. Many participants did not emphasize challenges, in fact there were some that explained that they do not see these challenges and instead, in their work, see these as opportunities for places where

positive change can be made. For others it was a very sensitive area and one that impacted their own actions and ability to lead. The key areas that emerged were: representing while not representing, overt and entrenched prejudice and racism and that of potential values compromises.

Experiences of Aboriginal public servants had some variation. However, overall, the major properties expressed were in their leadership roles in both having strong cultural competence, an ability to turn that competence into action through cultural agility. Finally, the challenges presented by this role which could be seen as opportunities for positive change, but also required a high level of navigation through them in order for participants to be able to continue their work without reaching a point where they might find themselves at a "hill to die on" and seek an alternative way to lead outside of this context.

Chapter 5: Discussion

A review of leadership literature in the streams of management, Indigenous and public administration revealed similarities with some of the properties raised by Aboriginal public servants.

The unique element of this study, and where there appears to be a gap in the leadership literature, is the context in which participants are located and if participants share an understanding as a result of this context. This study has identified a theme, it's personal, not individual. This theme seems to link between some of the tensions across the understandings of leadership that impact Aboriginal public servants as well as the obligations and actions that arise as a result of this personalized investment.

The following discussion relates properties raised within the study to existing knowledge, as well as points to their relevance and contribution to the leadership dialogue and to policy makers.

Category: Overall Understanding of Leadership

When asked to explain what leadership meant to them, several participants expressed uncertainty about this broad term. Some participants even suggested that the concept of "leadership" may not exist within Indigenous language; they proposed that, to their knowledge, leadership was not a separate concept, but a combination of many ideas and functions. Many participants saw great importance in leaders remaining open to not being in charge, and, instead, to empowering those around them to do what they do best. The participants that expressed confidence in what leadership was all expressed the notion that "[leadership is] a lot about empowering . . . people and making sure that they have all the things that they need to do their job" (Participant). One participant articulated this very clearly, saying:

The other thing I think that is important about leadership is recognizing that it's just one talent amongst many. That if you don't have the other talents to create your team, then your talent as a leader can't even be applied…there's different roles, but I personally don't put those roles on a hierarchy. There's maybe more responsibility attached in terms of what I have to ensure, but it doesn't mean that my skill set is greater than someone's skill who is a subject matter expert. So I very much try to value every role for the importance of it and what it brings.

Based on the breadth of literature and attention to the topic within media and popular writing, a similar phenomenon of leadership as complex and difficult to define, seems to also exist in the overall leadership dialogue. Many authors identify that leadership can be a difficult concept to define, yet it is important. Danby (2008) articulated this dual sense of ambiguity and importance, saying, "Leadership is like beauty; we may find it impossible to define, but we know it when we see it" (p.47). Similarly, Burns (1978) stated, in his landmark leadership study, "Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p.2).

Within Indigenous leadership literature related sentiments were found. Kenny (2012) spoke about leadership as *unbound* (p. xii). She explained that leadership is not limited to areas of high status, but instead that it is linked to belief among Indigenous peoples that "each person is born with innate strengths that assist in the overall betterment of the community" (p. ix). Johnston (2012) described the similar theme, *no central authority,* resulting from a review of Indigenous leadership literature, stating that leadership was not "vested in one individual" (p.9), but that it was common to have a variety of leaders making different decisions based on their skills and strengths.

However, even as leadership is a difficult concept to understand, participants, including those who began with the caveat that leadership may not, in their minds, exist as a separate entity, did identify components of leadership in the properties of: integrity, vision, humility and self-concept (see Table 3). These components could be seen to agree with a *stewardship* style of leadership, which, as described by Calliou (2005), involves "leaders empower[ing] their followers to unleash their creative and productive potential" (p. 51).

Stewardship is not a new concept in leadership literature; however, it has recently gained popularity in the ongoing quest in mainstream research for the best form of leadership (Kuppelweiser, 2011). Based on Grint's (2000) review of mainstream leadership over time he suggests that the leadership debate has moved towards the stewardship-endorsed qualities of empowerment and collaboration, and away from command and control leadership, which focuses primarily on efficiency, productivity, hierarchy and subordination of personal interest to that of the organization (Calliou, 2005).

Integrity rooted in values. The participants of this study emphasized the importance of integrity, involving strong character and moral principles, in leadership. One participant explained that integrity could be determined by evaluating the way someone lives his/her life: "What are people's actions besides what they are saying?...How are you actually living your life? As a leader, to be a leader, it's not what just you say but it's what you do" (Participant). Many participants saw importance in demonstrating a genuine willingness to learn and value the opinions of others. According to the participants, this required a leader to stay open to new thoughts or opportunities, including those brought forth by subordinates, but ultimately to stay within and honour the values and principles at the core of the organization or community.

Descriptions of stewardship suggest that there is a very close alignment between the values of an organization and that of managers (Kuppelwieser, 2011), much like participants indicated that integrity of a leader is in their demonstration of being rooted in common values. Because of a long-term sense of responsibility, leaders who demonstrate integrity and commitment to shared values earn the intrinsic trust of those in their organization, particularly because integrity involves being committed to doing what is best for the larger group, in this case, the company (Hernandez, 2008; Kuppelwieser, 2011). One participant also explained this notion of doing what is best for the larger group by saying, "I think of leadership as something or somebody who is doing something for the greater good of people, not for the individuals. I see a lot of people who…bring a personal agenda into leadership and to me that's not a true leader. A true leader is somebody who is actually doing something on behalf of something that is much bigger than himself or herself".

Stewardship leaders are similarly seen as being committed to the larger organizational goals before their own self-interests. This commitment to shared goals results in the trust of those within the organization, or those being led.

Vision to action. Participants expressed the concept of vision, or vision to action, as the foresight to set direction and follow-through to ensure that direction moved to action. An important part of setting direction involved drawing directly on those being led to make sure that varying perspectives were heard and consequences were considered. One participant went beyond the idea of hearing a variety of perspectives, and spoke of the way those perspectives would be received by a leader with optimal vision-to-action traits:

"…you're able to communicate in a good way: respectfully and inclusively. I think that's the other thing that you're able to tolerate variety of different views as well as diversity, not tolerate, but to accept them but to be able to work with it."

Many participants spoke of the importance of being able to motivate people to move towards a vision as a group with the leader as the one inspiring action based on a vision that people will want to be a part of, not by being directive.

Mainstream, management and Indigenous leadership literature support what the participants said about the importance of vision in leadership. For example, Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay (2010) suggest that the *charismatic leadership theory* "identifies leaders through their ability to articulate a vision, empower followers to work toward achievement of the vision, demonstrate exemplary behavior, and set high performance expectations for followers" (p.33). Shamir, House, & Arthur (1993) suggested inclusive representation aligns with charismatic leadership in that charismatic leaders change their followers from acting from an "individual-oriented, hedonistic, rational-economic mode of operation to a collective, moral and value-oriented mode of operation" (p.579).

Although charismatic leadership has similarities to how the participants explained the concept of vision within leadership, there were also some differences. The divergence was mostly found in that in charismatic leadership seems to centre around the leaders themselves. It sees the leaders as more important than the rest of the group, whereas, the participants who spoke of vision-to-action capabilities of leaders thought of these individuals more as equals, simply with different skills or assets to contribute to a larger goal.

Davis, Schooman, & Donaldson (1997), however, align a stewardship leader with similar participant perceptions that point to a more equitable relationship and the importance of shared goals. Stewards are recognized as being motivated to align with their organization or community and to consider and satisfy competing interests of shareholders or community members, similarly to participants pointing to integrity among leaders that is rooted in common values.

Humility. The participants recognized the importance of leaders not having expectations of perfection and remaining humble. One participant expressed the connection between humility and learning, saying:

> I think that a great leader is one who is always growing and challenging themselves and stretching themselves. You never ask anybody to do anything you wouldn't do yourself, or embrace yourself, or you should never get to the point where you think you know everything you need to know. You know I am always asking myself what else do I need to know, who knows it, who can help me with that, who would want to help me with that?

Additionally, participants spoke favourably about leaders that they had known who were "simple" and "honest". A lack of self-importance or ego seemed particularly significant in what they saw as part of good leadership.

Within the concept of integrity, there was often a strong link to the concept of humility and not thinking of oneself as better than others. As described in the Merriam Webster Dictionary Online, humility is "the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people" (Humility, n.d.). Hoekstra et al. (2008) suggested that humility was pushed out of the mainstream leadership discourse in favour of a more traditional "strong leader", defined as

"decisive, powerful, masculine, driven, self-assured, fearless, ruthless, risk-taking". They also suggested that Greenleaf's (1970) work on the Servant Leader and successive works by Collins (2001) and George (2003) have brought humility back into the leadership dialogue, and that it should never have been pushed out. The interesting thing about humility in terms of current day leadership understandings is that it runs opposite to some of the pressures on leaders to pursue perfection, or at least the appearance of perfection. This expectation of perfection inhibits leaders from being able to realize the benefits of humility in leadership (Hoekstra et al., 2008; Collins, 2001).

The paradigm of stewardship literature requires a leader to be humble, because it emphasizes the importance of relationships within the workplace (Kuppelwieser, 2011). Trust, commitment, and motivation all exist as products of positive working relationships (Kuppelwieser, 2011). As the participants found, in order to motivate a group to perform a task, strengths and assets in each individual must be valued and celebrated, and with stewardship's emphasis on togetherness, this would likely be more easily achieved.

Self-Concept. According to the participants, self-concept, is an important component of leadership that involves a combination of self-awareness and self-acceptance. Self-concept and self-awareness were seen as products of the internal capacity of a leader to:

…demonstrate positive behaviour and action to somebody else. Like being a role model or a coach or a mentor, those are things that I associate with leadership. But then it would also be as simple as possible and say, be your authentic self, whatever that may be whether your authentic self does have some negative traits and characteristics associated

with it. No matter what I think being able to be authentic and own it, present yourself that way, to just be real and build credibility

Authentic leadership theory shares commonalities with the participants' descriptions of self-concept. In particular, within authentic leadership theory, there exists the need for a strong awareness and acceptance of self and the ability (Bauman, 2013). Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa (2005) saw this type of authentic leadership as involving leaders who were guided by their "true selves" (p. 347), as opposed to external pressures. This reflects what the participants described, particularly in the element of not being controlled or shaped by external pressures that compromise who they are.

I try not to leave important parts of myself out of my leadership style even working within an organization that might have, you know, some very limited views of how they want their leaders to act or walk or talk or be. As long as I am within the standards of conduct and I'm following all of the processes and policies that I have to be accountable for, I also want to be able to bring who I am because we're still people.

Sincerity was also a significant element within self-concept, according to the participants. One participant explained: "We really value sincerity and when people are being insincere with us, we know it" (Participant).

Overall, the participants valued a leader who could admit fallibility and shortcomings, and who could stay true to his/her own values rather than a leader who looked to external pressures and adjusted to accommodate them. This may seem contradictive to the notions of vision-as-action and humility in leadership requiring a belief that group goals and individual goals should be aligned, but it is not. In the case of "self-concept", "external pressures" would be

those outside of the group, or the organization that might yield undue power and influence as a result of the potential ability of these interests to cause harm or create difficulty for the group.

Stewards, as leaders, are rewarded for sincerity. Similar to the participants' valuing of honesty and self-awareness in a leader, even when that leader has a shortcoming, stewardship, in its collectivist focus, forgives leaders who do not have all the answers. Being genuine is more important, particularly in the relational support construct that Hernandez (2008) identifies as necessary for stewardship leadership. In relational support, an emotional bond produces trust, which, in turn, leads to success in achieving group goals (Hernandez, 2008). Genuine appreciation of mutual needs, valuing learning, and taking responsibility create this emotional bond, and, when this bond exists, stewards need not be disingenuous.

While there are many similarities in the leadership literature that relate to participant experiences, in general, participants speculated about the concept of leadership, expressing some ambiguity if leadership is a concept of its own. However, participants had seen and could identify concepts which they felt were important within leadership, similar to the experience of other leadership scholars like Grint (2000) who in referencing his significant experience as a recognized "leader", found that when studying it he could not find a pattern in the data except that: "successful leaders are successful" (p.1).

Concepts that participants identified as part of leadership could be related back to a stewardship style of leadership in many cases. The participants identified the importance of integrity rooted in common values, much like the steward whose values are very closely aligned with their organization. Where participants identified vision-to-action which centered on a vision that was shared among both the leader and those around them, stewards similarly are

characterized by motives that both align with that of their organization or community and look to consider and satisfy competing interests of shareholders or community members. In the area of humility, participants recognized the importance of leaders not having expectations of perfectionism and valuing the input of others. Stewardship leaders are innately humble because of their high regard for the input of those around them and the value they attach to relationships within the workplace which are vital to the trust that is required to legitimate the authority of a steward (Kuppelwieser, 2011).

Category: Indigenous, traditional and community leadership

Participant understandings of leadership that were linked to leadership demonstrated or learned through traditional, community or family ways have been categorized in the findings of this study by three properties: benefit for all; walking the talk rooted in community values; and a holistic view of persons.

Many of these properties show similarities to themes in the Indigenous leadership literature. In particular many of these themes can also be linked to the management features Chapman, Newhouse and McCaskill (1991) identified within Aboriginal organizations in a study that compared management in Aboriginal and non-aboriginal organizations (see Table 4).

Table 4

Features of Aboriginal Management and North American Management Schemes (Chapman et al., 1991)

Aboriginal Management Schemes	North American (non-aboriginal) Mainstream Management Schemes
Group orientation: The interests and functioning of the group are more important than those of the individual.	**Individual**: The interests of the individual are paramount over the group orientation.
Consensual: The organization respects employees and expects them to contribute to decision-making in an equitable collective process.	**Majority rules**: Decisions are generally made by voting in which the majority wins the right to choose the course of action.
Group duties: Roles are not as specialized, and the organization relies on peer support, teamwork, task delegation.	**Specialized duties**: Each person is expected to have a well-defined job with a set of well-defined duties.
Holistic employee development: The organization is concerned with all aspects of the employee's life, both inside and outside the organization.	**Organization employee development**: The organization is concerned only with those aspects of the employee which directly have a bearing upon the ability to do the assigned task.
Elder Involvement: Elders are included formally and informally in the organization as advisors and teachers.	**No elder involvement**: Employees retire at the age of 65 and expertise and knowledge is lost to the organization.

Benefit for all. Benefit for all was a theme that arose in discussions with all participants as a central part of leadership in an Indigenous context. This concept spoke to leadership as being tied to a commitment to a larger cause, usually that of the community, and to stem from inclusive and harmonistic motivations. Participants spoke about tendencies towards sharing of wealth, seeking harmony, and having an inclusive lens that took into account those who were outspoken as well as those with a quieter voice that were often seen to be more vulnerable. This did not necessarily mean that outcomes always created equality, but they did consider the needs of the whole group, including those in the minority, when making decisions. One participant shared a story about

benefit for all where success on a hunt resulted in shared benefits, ensuring the survival of the whole nation ahead of any one person or group having personal claim.

Within this style of leadership decision making seeks to distribute advantage throughout all those that are part of a community. The overall wellbeing and prosperity of the whole community is central to this distribution of benefit. This idea of having the wellbeing of the community as central can also be found the phenomenon of *nation building* that came up both in the work of Calliou (2005) and of Gambrell and Fritz (2012). Nation building in Gambrell and Fritz's (2012) study was found to be the central phenomenon of leadership among the Lakota interviewed. This phenomenon was poised as the desire to become a sovereign nation. This did not mean separation from the United States, as they recognized how they are intricately connected, but their goal was to decrease their reliance on the United States and "transcend societal problems" (p. 322) that have inundated them for generations. Similar to other views within the current study, Gambrell and Fritz (2012) found that individuals' goals might vary, however the overarching goal was a benefit for all of their people or "tribal growth" (p.322).

Chapman et al. (1991) highlight a similar concept in the feature of management that they found within Aboriginal run organizations. They call this feature *group orientation*. Group orientation is described as "the interests and functioning of the group are more important than those of the individual" (p.341). Group orientation found in the management of Aboriginal organizations emphasizes the obligation of individuals within the organization to the group over themselves, and in return they receive the support of the group. Chapman et al. (1991) suggest that this has a profound impact on the relationships between people within these organizations. This mutual commitment to the overall wellbeing of the group is something that connects with participants' high value on relationships with people, but also with how accountability to

community is valued over accountability to the system. This is not to say that participants did not still feel the pressure and responsibility of remaining accountable to the system.

Kenny (2012) also points to a common idea in describing *interconnectedness* and connection of all things past present and future. The importance of care for all things and the considering of consequences, including those that may be far in the future, is a big part of connectedness that is highlighted as an important principle within Indigenous communities.

Benefit for all, group orientation or interconnectedness are in stark comparison to what Chapman et al. (1991) described as the feature they saw in studying non-Aboriginal organization management: individual orientation. Chapman et al. (1991) associate individual orientation noted in non-Aboriginal organizations within Canada with the western culture's focus on individualism. This difference in obligation, and who employees felt are responsible, will tie into later discussion in this paper about the tensions experienced by Aboriginal public servants. The linking theme identified later may provide support as Aboriginal public servants work with this major difference in belief about management and leadership.

An additional dimension of the property benefit for all is in the idea that everybody has a role within leadership. This dimension focused on the belief that everybody had something to contribute. This tied back to the property of humility in valuing other ideas, but also the idea that leadership can be a difficult concept to define. This was expressed by one participant in recognizing the importance of a variety of roles as well as the importance of a communal effort:

> Everybody would have had a role in the community. Each of them would have had a role which would have meant that they were the person that was the knowledge keeper of how to teach the other people how to do it, and they would come along[side]. It's about roles

and everybody shared those roles and with that role it gave you your identity and it gave

you your place in the community so everybody is a leader, not just one person. It's a

communal effort to be a leader because everybody can be a leader in their own way, we

all have gifts that we bring to something.

The idea that everyone can, and should, contribute can also be linked to Chapman et al.

(1991) and the concepts of both *group duties* and *elder involvement*. Each of these features of

management that Chapman et al. (1991) found within Aboriginal organizations relate to bringing

in many perspectives, and valuing contributions from across the organization or community. It

suggests a de-emphasis on hierarchy and less specialization of roles. Teamwork, peer support

and delegation are how tasks are accomplished, bringing together people with skills and abilities

from many areas to accomplish goals, not placing one person in the lead and expecting their

power alone to bring about the end result. Johnston (2012) also finds key Indigenous leadership

literature from which she identifies a theme of *informal leadership*. This informal leadership

incorporates the idea of many leaders operating at the same time or that individuals did not seek

leadership but emerged as leaders from their contributions to the community.

"Calling on the ancestors" and recognizing "those that came before for you" is also

something several participants spoke about. This can also be aligned with a feature that Chapman

et al. (1991) specifically highlight as *elder involvement*. Inclusion of elders formally and

informally allows them to provide advice and remind staff of what has come before them. This is

something that Chapman et al. (1991) recognize is unique to Aboriginal organizations and not

usually a part of non-Aboriginal organizations. This concept is also something that seemed to be

unique within the mainstream leadership literature reviewed.

Other authors also pick up and support this theme as Kenny (2012) does in recognizing the spiritual importance and guidance of family and Alfred (1999) does in highlighting the importance of both spirituality and connection to family and ancestry.

Participants also brought forward the importance of representation, of leadership in honouring and valuing that their role was to bring forward the voice that was representative of the peoples and not of their own personal interests. In the view of participants, this required the ability to listen openly, to want to hear from people, and consider all sides, before coming to any decisions. Chapman et al. (1991) bring forward a similar feature in Aboriginal organizations seeing management as being something that should involve *consensual decision making*. This feature encourages respect for each individual within the community or the organization. Respect for individuals makes space to allow for all points of view to be heard in order to use the group's collective wisdom to prevail, as a community, over what might be best for an organization and not just the majority of individuals. Kenny (2012) touches on this topic through seeing leadership as non-hierarchical and thus something that needs to see individual views receive equal space in decision making. Finally, in both Johnston's (2012) concept of *no single central authority* and Gambrell and Fritz's (2012) concepts *putting others first*, Indigenous leadership literature is seen to strongly agree that representation of the people being served is of significant importance for leaders.

Again Chapman et al. (1991) present a feature they found in comparing Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal organizations that stands in the place of the feature of *consensual* decision-making or non-hierarchical; this is *majority rules*. Within a majority rules idea of management or leadership there is not the larger thought of respecting the needs of all of the individuals in the group, but instead encourages a competitive "fight for our side's rights" (p.343) approach. Within this

approach decisions might be made such that the loud majority are satisfied, but may miss significant consequences of the minority which may not make this choice the best for the group overall. This style of leadership that is intent on hearing and considering all views instead of seeking a majority decision was another tension that arose in discussion about leadership understandings within government which the linking theme attempts to address.

Walking the talk. Participants frequently raised the idea of walking the talk rooted in community values. This was not only when speaking to Indigenous understandings of leadership, but also of the importance within overall properties of leadership. Leadership is seen by participants as being able to demonstrate common values with those that you are leading or representing. This is further emphasized by Calliou (2005) in the importance of leaders being rooted in the common culture and teachings of the community. Not only does this approach provide support and reinforcement for individuals to choose to seek benefit for the group over themselves it also calls them to connect to and maintain their common values with the group. Thomas (2011) also presents a model of leadership, the "Sacred Cycle", which she also suggests the importance of keeping past, present and future connected and a resulting model of leadership that "is about living a life rooted in the teachings, not about political behavior or posturing" (p. 122).

Consistently living your values led to authority through respect and the ability for people to trust that leaders and their decisions were being made to best serve the community and not specifically to serve themselves or the loud majority. Johnston (2012) speaks to this in recognizing a theme of *authority gained through respect*, which could also be tied back to the feature of *group orientation* (Chapman et al., 1991) which puts individuals' obligation to the group above their own importance in return for support from the group.

Holistic view of persons. The participants in this study raised the property within leadership of valuing the whole individual. This included elements of not valuing one area of their life over another and recognizing that people are fallible. As one participant said about leadership from a traditional perspective as opposed to a more western approach:

"within Aboriginal communities, and these are of course some very large generalizations, you do want to know the person. That's part of our culture, our protocols, who are you from, who are your mother and father? Your grandfather, who are your aunties, uncles, where are you from? You know that you put that into a context versus it's a more impersonal role oriented nature in leadership within western organizations. I mean so many people will just introduce themselves by their title and it tells you nothing about the person" .

Johnston (2012) also recognized a theme of *centrality of spirit* within her review of Indigenous leadership literature. She related this to internal strength, which was also gained through spiritual beliefs. Although only some participants openly and specifically stated spirituality as an area that impacts their leadership they did speak about tradition and family connections and it is not unrealistic to think this would include spiritual elements, particularly in the area of culture and protocol.

This idea of holistic persons could also relate back to Kenny's (2012) references to the well know Indigenous concept of interconnectedness and by her recognition that leadership is "embodied" (p.12) that it cannot be separated from all areas of life. Recognizing that there is so much more to people than what they bring to work. Johnston (2012) also noted a similar importance on balance, one which she thinks could be of "huge benefit for non-Aboriginal workaholics" (p.9).

Chapman et al. (1991) present a feature of management that they found within Aboriginal run organizations: *holistic employee development*. Within this feature is that the organization is concerned with all aspects of the employee's life, at work and away from work. This view is more holistic and does not just see the employee as a tool of the organization, but instead recognizes that the group must value the obligations of the individual outside of work just as the individual feels obligated to the group.

Chapman et al. (1991) again note a contrasting feature of management that aligns with the participant quote which started this section. In this they recognize a focus on employees as being relevant only in areas that directly affect their ability to do a task: organization employee development. This approach sees employees more as tools to do a task and such links back to the participant's observation about the linking of employees to their tasks through introductions that simply use a title naming their professional position.

Each of the properties identified under the understanding of leadership participants described as being learned from tradition or family can be linked back to larger themes within the Indigenous leadership literature. In particular, the findings of the current study are strongly linked with the presentation in Chapman et al. (1991) of the features of Aboriginal management schemes (Table 3). Further, Chapman et al. (1991) also present a comparative management scheme based on non-aboriginal organizations. The participants in this study describe similar contrasting approaches that they had experienced in their own professional environment. This connection is further explored in next category.

Category: Leadership in Bureaucracy and the BC Public Service Leadership

Limiting understandings of leadership. The discussion about leadership in the context of government was often related by participants to some of the limitations on accepted and practiced leadership within government that the bureaucratic structure imposed. The main properties that participants spoke about in regards to these limitations were: hierarchy, positional, top down, compartmentalization, focus on expertise, and accountability to the system.

In order to understand where some of these limitations came from understanding the definition of a bureaucracy is helpful. Bureaucracy is defined by the Merriam-Webster online dictionary as "1: a body of non-elective government officials; 2: an administrative policy-making group; 3: government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority; and 4: a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation" (Bureaucracy, n.d.). Within this definition, the negative connotations mentioned by participants usually linked to the third and fourth points.

Weberian understanding of bureaucracy sought to build institutions with characteristics that were mechanistic structured around rationality, moving the ethical responsibility of the institutions from the administrative to the political sphere (Sager & Rosser, 2009). It has been recognized that this approach, which is "based on underlying western-centric preconceptions of the nature of the environment and the place of people within that environment, and that this denies alternative realities and conceptions" (Althaus, 2011) is in direct conflict with Indigenous values and ways (Nadasdy, 2003).

Governments have been set up in a bureaucratic structure, seeking to create administration that is based on a rationale administrative institution separated from the political decision

makers. This type of leadership, however seems to correlate well with what has been described *command and control leadership* for which the objective is to seek greatest efficiency, clearly define a chain of command and authority and subordinate personal interests to the general interests of the organization (Calliou, 2005). Since participants spoke about overall good leadership as containing many properties that closely link to stewardship leadership, and as Calliou (2005) suggests that stewardship has much different values than command and control, it seems to align that there would be a tension for participants in a system that is structured in a way that favours command and control leadership.

In addition to the gap between stewardship and command and control leadership in participants' environment, Chapman et al. (1991) present a series of features of management that compare Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal run organizations. The features presented in this study that relate to management in Aboriginal organizations, as explored earlier, were found to strongly relate to properties participants identified as related to leadership learned through tradition or family ways. Similarly many of the properties of leadership raised by participants in this study related to understandings within their professional positions can be linked to what Chapman et al. (1991) found within North American Mainstream management. Participants in this study recognized that there was sometimes a presence of leaders with self-interest, and a more "individual based and self-focused" (Participant) approach which echoed what Chapman et al. (1991) also noted as a management feature that was noted within non-Aboriginal run organizations.

Participants also recognized that there was often a focus on expertise and compartmentalization. One participant noted this in saying "Everybody sort of becomes their own silo, I have this expertise…" (Participant). This focus on narrow expertise and keeping

different subject areas separate definitely opposes the idea of interconnectedness (Kenny, 2012; Calliou, 2005). It also aligns with two of features of management highlighted by Chapman et al. (1991), *specialized duties* and *organizational employee development*. The feature of specialized duties creates an expectation that each person will specifically have a well-defined job with well-defined duties. O*rganizational employee development* proposes that the parts of the employee that have direct impact on the ability of the employee to do the tasks assigned were what the organization was most concerned with. The combination of these two features seemed to align with some participants thoughts about views within government that were really task focused and lacked a focus on relationship.

Participant response to "bureaucrat". In the original design of this research the terminology "bureaucrat" and "bureaucracy" were used to describe the participants as the topic being explored was originally termed Aboriginal bureaucratic leadership. However, a strong response from several participants and further support upon inquiry of other participants, indicated that this needed to be changed or it may result in gathering a perspective that focused on the negative approach to leadership. The decision was made to change the language of the study from 'bureaucrat' to 'public servant' and from 'bureaucracy' to 'public service'.

It is important to note here, that although participants did express that the negative connotations of the terms 'bureaucracy' and 'bureaucrat' were prevalent among Aboriginal peoples, they themselves understood that this was a historical relationship with the word. They did not consider themselves bureaucrats, so they were not concerned with the term because they knew that it was more of a descriptor of being within a system and that the negative attachment to the word did not represent who they were or how they approached their work.

In light of the comparisons made in Chapman et al. (1991) in combination with purpose of a bureaucratic structure, it seems likely that there would be limitations that would likely not to align with the values of Aboriginal employees. This misalignment between this understanding of leadership and management and both the overall concepts of leadership participants mentioned, as well, as those learned from tradition and family way, it would fit that participants would not ascribe to features and limitations of the system in which they work, but that they would still participate as part of the system, instead ascribing to a goal and the intention of serving the public.

This misalignment would somehow need to be coped with, and as some participants identified coping with this disconnection of understandings needed to be with those that could see the tension, thus many participants spoke about the importance of being connected to others in like positions, through either just colleague to colleague conversation, or in the case of one ministry, a council where time was allotted to discuss requests for advice from other areas within their ministry that related to projects specifically involving Aboriginal peoples or in fact to do work that might increase understanding across government. Within this time of work, those participants who were part of this small council mentioned the importance of their connection to this table as coping with some of the conflicts they faced.

Other leadership perspectives in the BC Public Service. Even as participants brought up limitations within understandings of leadership in government, many also recognized that there were factors that also contributed to the understandings of leadership, beyond that set out by the bureaucratic structure. The variation in styles of leadership, is also one of the main areas raised by participants related to other perspectives on leadership in the BC Public Service. This variation is attributed by participants to the culture of the ministry and the type of business the

particular ministry was responsible for; the top bureaucrat's style and approach to leadership; and both the combination of colleagues their approaches. The other factor that participants named in influences on the understanding of leadership in the BC Public Service was the corporate approach, through the BC Public Service agency and a possible shift in the understanding of leadership that they had experienced.

The Corporate Approach. The corporate side of the BC Public Service which is responsible for the human resources within the public service is the Public Service Agency. Participants described what they saw as a shift in the approach of this portion of the BC Public Service approach. This shift was similar to what is described in the leadership literature as one from *command and control* to that of *stewardship* (Calliou, 2005). The BC PSA seemed to be embracing and moving towards a stewardship form of leadership. A similar movement was also discussed by Redpath & Nielson (1997) as a new wave of management and leadership discourse that views good leadership as moving away from bureaucratic structures and command and control leadership, and towards more open, innovative and flexible stewardship or service oriented leadership (Redpath & Nielson, 1997; Calliou, 2005). Public administration theorists have also recognized this need to move towards more open, innovative an flexible structures is based on the challenges facing the public sector at this time which require leaders who are more collaborative and responsive to those that they are leading and serving (Tizard, 2012).

Through a combination of participant observations, corporate level changes within the BC government and some recognition within the public administration literature it seems there is a slight shift, similar to the one noted by Calliou (2005) and Grint (2000) of the view of leadership as something that is more stewardship than command and control. However, what is not clear is how this shift will play out in the context of bureaucracy. Is there room to shift understanding

within the modern day bureaucracy or will the structure of the bureaucracy need to be replaced? Whatever the result, participants seem to feel this tension already as a result of their own values and if there were to be a shift in this direction government wide this may help with both recruitment and retention of Aboriginal public servants.

Tension in understanding of leadership in government. As described by participants there do seem to be some limitations on how leadership is approached in their professional work environment as a result of the bureaucratic structure in government. This seems to be somewhat in contrast to a sense that there is a changing corporate view in government which even offers services like executive coaching for managers. However, it also seems to align with the understanding that leadership theory and approaches are shifting and that change is not always immediate.

This tension also seems to mimic the tension between the limitations on leadership that participants describe within their professional work environment and that which participants describe in both overall understandings of leadership and that which came from traditional and family ways.

With a new wave of management in the literature (Calliou, 2005; Redpath & Nielson, 1997) and recognition by some of the need for the public sector to adapt to a new, more collaborative and responsive approach (Tizard, 2012) it is possible that what Aboriginal public servants can offer in terms of an approach may be relevant for the purposes of improving the process to improve Aboriginal policy as well as within the government overall.

In addition, as a new generation of employees enter into the public service and as leadership dialogue and understandings continue to move away from past styles of leadership focused on

power and control, this may help to impact the system (Johnston, 2012). At this point it seems that some participants recognize that the public service is in a time of change so they work day by day consistently on the little things, and where opportunities arise, the bigger things. They look ahead and watch for little things to indicate change. They also recognize that they are not the only ones involved in the greater cause and that there are other roles that people are playing to help move forward positive progress. There are times that they need to let community members or chiefs speak up and stand up to regain movement that isn't possible when working inside of a system.

Although this study does not propose that Aboriginal public servants have one specific understanding of leadership, what it does suggest is that there may be a commonality in what motivates the ability and desire to link across the tensions that exist. This is a role that this study suggests is the linking theme presented under results, *it's personal, not individual*. Like the leadership phenomenon of nation building that Gambrell & Fritz (2012) presented, this theme puts the growth of the larger nation or their people as a main goal and seeks to grow the nation not necessarily by separating out from Canada or the United States, where Gambrell and Fritz (2012) was situated, but by reducing reliance and seeking to overcome "societal problems that had plagued them for several generations" (p. 322). From this place of desiring betterment of a specific nation or the broad diversity of Aboriginal peoples, this commonality seemed to speak to the overall purpose of the study. Some participants were also able to speak to some practical examples and approaches that were taken in pursuit of bridging tensions. These approaches used to "walk in two worlds" demonstrate some of the skills that are required of these individuals as well as the benefits of their involvement in policy design and implementation.

Category: Walking in Two Worlds

Not all participants had specific stories under this category, and many did not realize that these stories were relevant to the topic until far into interviews. However, when these stories did arise, there were many commonalities in the experiences of how in their professional position they were able to link and connect between the BC government and Aboriginal communities or groups that they were working with.

The metaphor of walking in two worlds is not new when it comes to describing the sometimes incompatible dualities that Indigenous peoples around the world face as they balance living by their traditional ways and culture, but also as they are surrounded and participate in mainstream culture. In informal conversations with participants, almost all had at least heard this metaphor. Calliou (2005) also recognizes this metaphor and argues the need to weave together traditional principles of leadership and governance with that of modern management. Calliou (2005) recognizes the debate about the effects that colonization has had on leadership and the need to overcome this through bringing back traditional values and principles. He sees bringing back of these values and principles not as trying to achieve "pristine" (p. 51) forms of leadership, but that instead leaders need to be rooted in their "culture, traditions and history". He hesitates to generalize these leadership values, but presents five that seem to cut across the wide diversity of traditions among Indigenous leaders, landing on: (1) a strong sense of identity as part of their culture; (2) having long term vision, strategy and direction; (3) being action oriented; (4) being generous and having the respect of followers; and (5) the willingness to seek the council of others. Calliou (2005) also clearly argues that these traditional values also need to be combined with an understanding of modern day leadership principles, such that leaders have a "foot in both worlds" (p.53).

Kenny (2012) also recognizes that in contemporary leadership that there is a need for Aboriginal leaders to "make bridges between many worlds" (p.4). Kenny (2012) sees that demands on Aboriginal leaders require that they act by bridging the gap of misunderstanding across many cultures. One participant also agreed with this idea of the need to be able to bring together modern and traditional approaches:

> Aboriginal leaders are modern, traditional and bi-cultural. Each has authenticity and the ability to respond to the needs of their community. I am always amazed at how my own communities call for leadership that is modern, at times traditional, and at other times when they call for a blended approach. What makes sense to me is their need for us leaders to be open, adaptive and versatile.

This metaphor of walking in two worlds fits well with themes identified by participants in terms of the context facing Aboriginal leaders working in the public service. Concepts that emerged from participants highlighted areas of cultural competency, cultural agility, and the challenges that exist.

Cultural competency. Cultural competency as a concept from participants gets at something else that seemed present within interviews, a duty to learn. On one side, this duty to learn came up repeatedly in interviews in the form of either speaking about humility and the importance of seeking council or being willing to learn from those around you. It also came from the perspective of believing that everyone has something to offer and strengths to contribute that can betters the community as a whole. These elements seemed to intersect in a duty to learn from each other and not to fixate on finding the one person with all the answers.

As a second side of the duty to learn, I personally felt a duty to learn as I progressed through the research. For myself there was a duty to learn and this was mostly part of starting a journey which was largely about "confronting the history of colonization" as Regan (2010, p.11) describes. Deconstructing some of my own views that are formed on myths I have been told within the historical narrative of Canada, I had to look at myself and the collective responsibility I bare to see that historical harms are not perpetuated. This responsibility is one that is not just to understand the true history of Canada, but also to participate in seeing where the destructive mentality of "benevolent paternalism" that characterized colonization, continues in Indigenous-settler relations today (Regan, 2010, p.4). This process which I admit, I have just begun, was about recognizing that I need to be willing to stop and take apart my own unscreened interpretations. I needed to try to see some of the underlying assumptions or ingrained ways of thinking. This lengthened the duration of the research as I spent much time trying to fill in gaps in understanding about Canada's history and current day issues but, also questioning myself and my assumptions.

In a recent book *Unsettling the settler within*, by Paulette Regan (2010), she argues for the responsibility of non-aboriginal Canadians to undergo their own process of decolonization "relinquish[ing] the persistent myth of themselves as peacemakers and acknowledge the destructive legacy of a society that has stubbornly ignored and devalued Indigenous experience" (Regan, 2010, backcover). Regan also raises the issue of the western approach viewing those outside of our culture as "other", this focus gets in the way of us acknowledging how we are shaped by it, as I have heard somewhere in my many conversations over these last months "you don't notice you're wet, when you're swimming". Though this was at times paralyzing, leaving

many rocks to turn over in order to get glimpses of my own blinders, this was an element of responsibility that I think came out of the research that I had not expected.

I have not completed this journey, and I am often left wondering if what I have presented in this thesis represents participants well, but I realize that I will always be learning and that is part of the process. That I cannot assume or expect expert status from myself, but that as a duty to learn I will present this back in written form and be willing and have a sense of expectation that I will continue to be taught.

Cultural agility. Cultural agility was another concept identified by participants, but also one that links to the action end of walking in many worlds. Cultural agility seems to be taking the understanding and knowledge of cultural competency and using it not only for your own purposes, but also to begin to build bridges between different worlds that are missing each other. Participants brought up many examples of this, from working with colleagues both within government and communities to explain how each side worked and what might be impacting them at the time. It was sometimes about changing the way actions are implemented, like the example of running what would have been a contest, but making it so that everyone received a reward as they had each contributed, even though one design was ultimately the one selected as the best fit. This cultural agility to me is the practical application of walking between and walking in, two worlds.

In this idea of cultural agility, similar to my personal experience discussed under cultural competency there is a call to action for non-aboriginal public servants to pursue not only understanding, but to work with Aboriginal colleagues and be open to new ways of working. One participant, when asked about positive changes that could be made, spoke to the idea of co-

creating and making opportunities for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal public servants to work together to build a policy or program. This is also recognized by Kenny (2012) as a current "lack of mutuality and shared responsibility among worlds" (p.5) as she describes how there are contradicting processes and policies that ask for efforts from Aboriginal peoples, and then get tied up in processes led by those who lack the understanding or desire to integrate this input.

This is not to say that this is not happening already. Some participants spoke of "allies" within their departments, of non-aboriginal people who understood the cultural elements that were important and worked alongside Aboriginal public servants to try and move change forward. This seemed to be more prevalent in some ministries more than others, but according to some participants there are already non-Aboriginal public servants in the BC government that are standing up to take on this responsibility, there just is room for more. For this I am hopeful, and only suggest that more of this approach could help move forward changes in leadership and in the BC government.

Challenges. The position of an Aboriginal public servant is not without its challenges. Out of respect for participants who did not dwell on challenges, but honestly presented them while also moving on, I do not want to dwell on these challenges. However, it seemed important to recognize that leadership is not always an easy place to be and comparably, neither is having to know how to live in many worlds.

Participants spoke about challenges that included: representing and not representing; prejudice/racism; and being away of their personal values the limits of compromise. In most interviews one or all of these elements were raised, however even when the severity of the challenge was high, participants were usually still quick to recognize it as a challenge, but not

dwell on it. In her dissertation, Thomas (2011) describes a similar challenge to what participants described as "representing and not representing", in the expectation she felt of "all or nothing" (p. 139). She recognized how some saw her as being able to represent all things Indigenous, but to others she was questioned by other Indigenous peoples if she was still even connected to the "grassroots" of community (p. 141). Her response to this challenge, and others that she recognized as not being her issues, was to see them as irritants, mosquitos, that she must "deflect" (p.151) away and keep moving forward. In many senses participants also seemed to share this idea, not suggesting that this made it less difficult, but that it was something to move past focusing on whatever issues of bettering the community were their ultimate goal.

In the context of Aboriginal public servants there does seem to be a role that Aboriginal public servants can and already are filling. In this role they bring understanding from different cultures or systems, as well as, a desire to consider many viewpoints. This aspiration is to find common ground across sometimes differing viewpoints to ultimately benefit the peoples it effects, while still addressing the goals of the government department or ministry. This, however, is a challenging role. Though there are great examples of the benefit that comes from bridge building and a personal commitment to achieving a higher goal, being within a system that is focused on: efficiency, and rationality and experiences powerful external pressures, can be constraining particularly when it does not always promote or reward such an approach.

Discussion Conclusion

Exploring the understanding of Aboriginal public servant leadership exposed first that we must recognize that leadership may not be a concept in itself. Participants and scholars agree that leadership is difficult to define and may not be one concept, but rather a combination of many

functions. This difficulty in definition suggests that it is unlikely that there would be a common understanding for this group of participants, especially since western interpretations also struggle to find a common understanding.

Participants did suggest concepts that they relate to leadership, many of these were also raised within both the Indigenous and mainstream leadership dialogue. These concepts could be linked back to the idea of stewardship leadership, one which focuses on leaders as being those that empower the people they work with to unleash their potential. In essence it is leadership as a facilitator ensuring that each function and role is enabled to make their contribution to the larger group and while keeping the group moving forward.

From a traditional and family perspective this idea of stewardship leadership was expanded as the importance of the group benefit was put at the forefront with the idea of "nation building" being the driving force. Leaders were also required to be rooted in the shared teachings and traditions of their nation and to be able to both demonstrate and require this from the entire group.

Though stewardship leadership may be one piece of beginning to describe understandings of leadership for this group, there were nuances of difference. This was particularly apparent in the tension that existed between some of the limitations within the government structure which impacted leadership. This was a particularly interesting tension when looking back to the early parts of this study where participants initiated a change in terminology within the study because of strong negative associations to the term bureaucrat.

Changing terminology from bureaucrat to public servant seemed to better enabled participants to see themselves within the research. With this study complete it seems

significantly important that it is the link to the government's bureaucratic structure that is seen as negative and disconnected from participant understandings of leadership. Service to the public, however, is seen as the reason for being in the profession that these individuals have chosen. As such is it possible that service to the public within government has become increasingly difficult within a system that sometimes sees itself serving the public and those employed within it as serving the system itself? What does leadership look like in this context regardless of belonging to a sub-group, and, if leading is not a concept that may not be able to be specifically described in this context, could it instead be linked to an approach to work that results in service instead of striving for leadership?

Regardless of the answers to the questions posed, many Aboriginal public servants interviewed did seem have one commonality in their approach. Within the work that they do, leadership or not, it is personal to them and they make use of their desire to benefit their nations and the people that they serve in their positions by working to understand the needs and challenges of government and their communities. Using this understanding allows them to find creative ways to build bridges. These bridges may be in the approach to implementation of a specific program; in building understanding among a team of colleagues about what is really happening in communities or groups; and, being able to point out either successes where other may not see them or common ground from where a different approach might be used. As bridge builders, facilitators, "ham-in-the-sandwich", Aboriginal public servants have the potential to continue to impact positive change by identifying areas of challenge or opportunity that resonate with communities. Even if it is slow and sometimes requires several different approaches or many years of waiting for the information to work its way into the system, the long-term view

and long-term commitment of participants can and likely is already having this desired impact. However, there is still much to learn.

I think participants would agree that they are still learning some of these skills, and their non-Aboriginal colleagues either need to learn or are also still learning. This study is an early response to the gap in the literature on this topic and it is hoped that this research will be built on, in order to create a better picture of how the policy process can be improved, and, ultimately benefit Aboriginal communities through increasingly better policy that starts with a different approach.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Improving policy and impacts of policy can be achieved through improving and exploring leadership within the policy process. We have much to learn from the people involved in this process. This research explored the understanding of leadership from the perspective and experience of Aboriginal leaders working in the public service. These people often balance competing demands of their professional position within the public service and that of their traditional Indigenous heritage and values while seeking to promote the welfare of Aboriginal peoples.

This research asked if Aboriginal leaders in the public service shared a common understanding of leadership and how leadership might look within this particular context. Four categories or understandings of leadership were identified: as an individual; from family and traditional ways of knowing; within the public service and its bureaucratic structure; and specific experiences of participants operating in the combined context of acting as an Aboriginal public servant.

Overall, participants questioned the concept of leadership itself. A similar sentiment was also found within the larger leadership literature. This sentiment recognizes that leadership is difficult to define; however, even though it is not easily defined, there is something about it that makes it important enough to seek out. Participants tended to view leadership not as one concept, but more as a combination of many functions that can be facilitated to bring out the best in the contribution of each function. This thinking could be linked with stewardship leadership (Calliou, 2005; Davis et al., 1997; Greenleaf, 1970; Grint, 2000; Hernandez, 2008; Kuppelweiser, 2011) in its focus on supporting and empowering the work of others.

Unique elements related to leadership were also raised by some participants particularly in the importance of being linked to their own community values and teachings; and to furthering the efforts of their nation, particularly in transcending some of the struggles that had significantly impacted their communities for decades.

These ideas of leadership seemed to be in tension with some of the limitations that come along with a bureaucratic structure that generally views the power of decision making as positional; a right held within particular positions in the hierarchical structure. There was also tension in that with a system that was set up to represent the "public" (i.e. citizens of British Columbia), professional positions are often there to serve the system and distanced from the direct impacts the roles or the system may be seeking to make.

In order to bridge the tension between participants' values and that of the bureaucratic structure in which government is located, it seemed that the linking theme, *it's personal, not individual*, came up in many interviews. Within this theme is a connection to a more personal way of being; in being sincere and genuine in who you are, bringing your whole self to a professional role, but also moving away from individualistic and self-promoting behaviour. This personalised leadership was especially relevant in terms of respecting people and relationships, and not just seeing these relationships as a means to getting a task completed. Finally, this theme linked to a commitment to a cause greater than the particular tasks that were being undertaken. This greater cause was linked to what was described in the literature as "nation building" and as one participant described as "an affinity beyond our job title, our work location, that I hold myself accountable to Indigenous peoples and not just to my employers."

The motivation provided by this "personal" connection leads to a unique approach heard in the experiences of Aboriginal public servants. This approach has them seeking to understand both the needs of the government system and that of Aboriginal communities and peoples they are working with. Using this understanding they are able to seek out common ground; facilitate between, or educate, the different parties about each other; and in some cases, create new ways of working that honour both the ways and needs of Aboriginal peoples and nations, as well as, meeting the requirements of the government system.

This approach is not without challenges; though these challenges were not an area where participants chose to dwell. Common areas of challenge for participants were recognized in the areas of: representing while not representing, overt and entrenched prejudice and racism and that of the potential for values compromises. Beyond these challenges the point was also made that there is not one ideal approach to leading. However, there are also practicalities. A willingness to take a flexible and adaptive approach to changing circumstances can help in dealing with both challenges and practicalities that occur.

The knowledge from this research is likely not new to participants. It is their words, descriptions and emotions that led me to focus on the area of leadership as being 'personal, but not individual' and about more than accomplishing tasks, even though accomplishing tasks and moving forward has also been recognized as an important outcome of good leadership. It is hoped that this research can highlight an approach to work within a government context that may better support positive progress in policy development and implementation in areas related to

Aboriginal issues and in the larger policy realm[5]. It is also hoped that this research may provide a

chance to recognize the important contribution of participants and other Aboriginal public

servants.

Finally, this research has created a broader desire in me to encourage other ways of

knowing and leading especially as a non-aboriginal person who has done, and intends to do,

further work in the public policy arena. I will use this understanding to make space for other

ways of knowing and hope to also expand space for approaches that seek to work from a place of

common ground and reconciliation in order to find solutions. I hope this work may have similar

impact on others.

Situating myself again

Within this process I have seen myself, as a learner, and not as an expert. This is similar

to some of the approaches Paulette Regan explored as a non-aboriginal person researching

Aboriginal peoples. She explores many different methods and theories that relate to this

approach, and states how it required her to be reflective in the process as well as to be aware that

knowledge is not neutral and that her learning is impacted by her own personal story.   I feel that

it is important to share some of my own personal learnings that connect with the findings. This

is intended to expose some of my own thinking and link back to the earlier situating of myself.

This is intended to reciprocate knowledge transfer by not only giving back findings from the

study, but by also giving back some of my own expectations, unexpected results and the

learnings that stand out most starkly for me.

---

[5] The recent introduction of the Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies developed by the BC Public Service Agency indicates that this discussion has already be recognized within the corporate human resources area of the Public Service.

Expectations preceding research. Within this research I expected to find a strong commitment to improving the wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples, at both a Nation level and at in the broader sense of Aboriginal peoples (other Nations and relations). I also expected that I might find a collaborative approach to leadership and the recognition of a need for translating or building bridges across differing understandings. I thought this would mostly occur though translation of the on the ground needs and wants of Aboriginal peoples to government. I also expected that part of leadership might be acting as a pointer to where changes needed to happen within policy and practice around matters that effect Aboriginal peoples.

I also anticipated that this role might have challenges. Assuming that translation or bridge building was part of the process, there would likely be miscommunications that needed to be identified and worked out; that there would be blind spots and preconceptions that would require a sensitive approach to addressing. Helping people to see blind spots is not easy in any circumstance and likely more sensitive in a policy work environment where we often do extensive work to ensure that there are not blind spots.

I presumed that links to traditional ways or knowledge might have some specific and central themes that would have great influence resulting in commonalities among participants' responses, of course with the awareness that as people we are all different.

Learnings within the study: expected and unexpected. What I found is definitely a strong commitment to Aboriginal peoples, whether it is their own nation, nations to whom they had connected, or to the broader community of many nations or Aboriginal peoples. This is evident in themes within the traditional and family understandings, (benefit for all, walking the talk, holistic view of persons), but also within the ideas under individual understandings of vision led by shared action and unity. The linking theme "it's personal, and not individual" also linked to participants' own stories, experiences and families. Their work within government certainly had a connection to the central theme in Gambrell & Fritz (2012) study of the Lakota, Nation Building, "the aspiration and objective of moving the tribe toward becoming a sovereign nation that is self-reliant, in both traditional and contemporary structures" (p. 319).

What I had not expected, a least to the extent it was evident, was the wide diversity of participant stories and their level of connection to their peoples and their culture. I expected some variation, but not the wide breadth of variance in stories and connections to community. I will not speculate as to the reason for this variation as not all participants spoke in depth about their personal stories. Those who did speak, referred to interruptions in family or community structures often related back to historical harms related to colonization. It became apparent to me that "Aboriginal" as a characteristic may not be specific enough. It is challenging to say that any of my participants were typical; however, this is not to say that there is not value in using this broad characteristic especially when the population is relatively small. As I reflect, I was warned of this reality early in my research planning, but there is nothing like experience to increase understanding.

I also found a definite appreciation for a collaborative approach to work. I think that this may be a result of the belief that everyone has a role and the long term goals all share the

commitment to seek a benefit that can impact a community as a whole. Influenced by the belief

that everyone has a role, and also that vision leading to action should come from the group, one

can see why there is more likelihood that there would be expectation to listen to many interests

and work to balance the competing interests towards a shared outcome. This is in contrast to

more heavily weighting, and sometimes limiting, input from those who are considered experts.

Having an expectation that there will be broad contribution would lead to a strong foundation for

collaboration if you consider collaboration as working with those whom you are not directly

connected or "to cooperate with an agency or instrumentality with which one is not immediately

connected" (Collaboration, n.d.).

I also had not expected to find that in the property of "everyone has a role", it was not

only about a round-table collaboration to seek agreement, which is what I had pictured. Some

participants recognized that alternate approaches can be required and different personalities need

to take a stand and speak loudly. One participant noted that sometimes their own role within

government was not able to spur necessary change or action and there were times when

community voices or leaders needed to get involved. Knowing the system and knowing when to

let other roles or styles of leadership take over was something I would not have anticipated.

Bridge building, between government and Aboriginal peoples to help government better

understand the needs and circumstance of Aboriginal communities is indeed an important

element. However, there was also a counterpoint to this bridge building that I had not

anticipated. The bridge back to community to help explain what was happening and help rebuild

trust, or at least a working relationship, with government was also evident. Based on a history of

policies that either did harm or were made and then not followed through on as expected, there is

an innate distrust of government from communities. I had not thought about this also being an

element of the bridge building, one which also brought challenges. In some cases, suspicion of government's intentions was also applied to the Aboriginal public servants. This lack of trust led communities or community members to question which side the Aboriginal public servant was on and if they were just acting as agents to push through more government policies that would not benefit them. When bridging through trust or relationship building was successful though some participants indicated there was both time and steps that could be avoided leading to more timely and effective actions on both sides.

Something that really stood out was that bridges need to be built both ways. This is a place where non-Aboriginal public servants have a role to play building bridges alongside their colleagues. This can only begin when the duty to learn, mentioned under the properties of cultural competency and cultural agility, is taken seriously; when non-Aboriginal public servants are able to uncover and right historical myths and colonial mindsets.

In regards to there being challenges within these roles, I found this to be a correct assumption. It was unexpected though and I think it is important to note that although I did hear of many challenges in their role; participants did not focus on these challenges and often either downplayed or did not view them as challenges. This was unexpected. Though participants were not naïve, they also looked for other ways to approach an issue if one method was not working and they were willing to drop the issue in some cases if they found that the timing was not right, or, the community was not interested in moving ahead. This tied into something else that was somewhat unexpected, which was the number of participants who, although had not yet reached a point where their values were so compromised they felt they had to leave, but they had a very real sense that it was possible, for a few it was a very real concern that came with them to work. They knew it was possible that they would have to quit their livelihood, and in some cases their

current approach, because of a major compromise between their professional and personal values.

One final thing that I had not expected, but that came up over and over again was the history of denial that relates to colonization. Coming into this research I expected that I would learn more about the realities of communities and maybe even realities that impact all those included under Aboriginal peoples. I had not anticipated the many times I would, and continue to, catch myself responding to or falling into some very strong historical myths about Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. I had not anticipated just how much my own position and what I had been taught denied some historical realities that are important in understanding the roots of Aboriginal issues today. This seemed to be echoed by some participants in their own challenges with colleagues, that were not able to see the historical myths they held and when given the opportunity through Ministry efforts to educate, they did not see it as something that was required. This is not to say that there are no non-Aboriginal public servants who do have a renewed understanding of the historical relationship between Canada and its First Nations, but there are many that do not see the need to understand and as a result perpetuate myths that create barriers for better relations with Aboriginal peoples. Paulette Regan (2010) also notes this phenomenon in a series of decolonization workshops that she has done with an Anishinaabe Metis counterpart where she notices that non-Aboriginal people resist the telling of history that suggest violence is at the center of indigenous-settler relations. If we continue to resist this part of our history I think it will be very difficult to make a new path forward.

Reflection on the study and my personal learnings. The pieces from this study that stand out most to me after having reflected on some of my personal learnings, are the need for cultural bridge building, both ways; the opportunity available through co-creation of projects by joining together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal public servants to work on projects together and the concept of time that it takes to make change.

The importance of bridge building that really stood out was that although there are likely irreconcilable differences between the two groups, it is possible that some of the differences are a result of a lack of understanding from either side. Through this study themes of "ham in the sandwich" or "acting as an interface" insert a possible missing link in the process. This connection may allow for space, maybe through facilitation or education, where each party's goals are expressed and then dialogue is allowed to explore if there are similarities in desired outcomes even if there are disagreements in smaller details. It could also simply be the case of being able to communicate the lack of receptiveness on either side as something that is tied to the need to protect against earlier harms, or as a result of a bigger issue that could be further explored.

The second biggest learning that stood out is the opportunity to look for ways to co-create or project share in policy development and implementation through Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal public servant partnerships. As another approach to bridge building, bringing together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal public servants with joint responsibility might provide an avenue for both creating the space and genuine willingness to seek solutions, as well as addressing some of the issues raised about the lack of understanding in general about how communities and peoples are impacted by past and current outcomes. This also addresses the "duty to learn"

concept that I discussed, recognizing the need for non-Aboriginal people to be able to hear and need to be willing to at least see if not make adaptations.

Finally, the concept of time was something that stood out for me; short term versus long term thinking and outcomes. Participants spoke about long term commitments and long term views and the limitations within the system of being task focused and short term. Although this research did not specifically discuss time, the concept of time and understanding within indigenous cultures that it is much more interconnected including past present and future, the importance of this long term view became more obvious.

Limitations

As a qualitative study one of the limitations is that the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population (Birks & Mills, 2011; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). So while the potential for impact motivated me to undertake this study, from a research perspective, the results only represent the combined perspectives and resulting concepts of a small group. Rather than seeing this as a limitation, I actually saw the rich descriptions and wide perspectives to be an advantage. A qualitative and interpretive approach was intentionally chosen for this research with the goal of attaining rich perspectives that could help build understanding for readers, this approached allowed for this to occur. I also took steps to balance a breadth of perspective within those interviewed through purposive sampling which attempted to balance out characteristics that were thought to have the potential to effect perspective. This was done with the intention of providing finding from participants with a broad background which could then be used in future research as a place to add and compare new data that could help to deepen understanding of this topic (Stern & Porr, 2011).

A second area that may be considered as a limitation of the research is that the intended ethnographic component of the study was limited to one participant. It was only possible to outreach to supervisory staff, colleagues and clients of one participant in order to elaborate on the perspectives of that participant regarding their leadership. As such, the ethnographic research was thin. The views of leadership are therefore predominantly self-reported. I, however, did not consider this a limitation as the goal behind this research was to seek out the understanding specific to this group. Based on Lewis's (2009) belief that truthfulness and validity are the same, and using a social constructivist viewpoint that meaning is created by people and how they experience the world, I believe that the truths participants shared with me are intrinsically valid. This research is focused on Aboriginal public servant understandings and so by incorporating too many outside perspectives some of the participant voice might have been lost. Further study of this topic would benefit from additional research that brings in the voices of those working around Aboriginal public servants that could be compared to the findings of this study. While this study could not perform this task at this time, this reality was done out of respect for the participants and therefore it is not considered a limiting factor of the research.

A third limitation was the number of interviews and the necessary confidentiality that made it implausible to provide participant backgrounds which provide a rich context from which their words have additional meaning. This limitation did not likely have significant impact as the number of participant quotes that shared common thoughts provide strength in the meaning behind these words, however the richness of the data would have been enhanced in the event that length and confidentiality were not a consideration.

A fourth potential limitation was the lack of a specific definition of leadership coming into the study. Instead, I chose to leave the understanding of leadership as a broadly understood

concept with many meanings and definitions. This did add complexity within the research, but similar to the reasoning behind a late interaction with the literature, the reasoning behind avoiding specific definitions of leadership was to avoid inadvertently directing questions and participant thoughts to previously determined understandings of leadership.

Another limitation in this research is the possibility of my own personal bias and assumptions. As a non-Indigenous person raised and educated in a western, colonial system I have found myself in the process of what Regan (2010) describes as decolonization. At many times along this journey I have felt a deep sense of responsibility, also described by Regan (2010), to pay attention to where I may fall back into colonial myths and instead challenge those myths as they arise. This comes as a result of an awareness that regardless of how much I have listened, read, and questioned views that I hold, my perceptions are based on my own story. To address this I have tried to explicitly state and journal about the assumptions I hold as I started and that I encountered along the way. This is intended to both recognize that I am part of the research, but also to keep me connected to these assumptions and cause me to go back to the data where my assumptions align with the results. Through use of member checking and follow-up dialogue with participants as well as heeding advice or new perspectives that participants generously shared during member checking, I tried to reduce this impact; however I also see this limitation as a benefit. In remaining sensitive to my own perceptions it kept me conscious of listening with expectation that I had everything to learn instead of trying to verify or validate what I thought I knew.

A final limitation in this research validated something I had come across mid-way through the study of the potential difficulty in using grounded theory, underpinned by Indigenous methodologies. This concern is thought to stem from grounded theory's link to post-positivism

and to some approaches that seek to generate theory that is "so highly abstract it becomes totally decontextualized" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p.168). The other concern that grounded theory often focuses on asserting is that the emergent idea is the only concern or idea relevant to a particular study.

This difficulty did arise within the analysis process and to address this tension, I moved much more deliberately to an approach of working with participants through member checking in order to hear the voice of participants and seek out findings that will enhance both my and their understanding. This was also when thematic analysis was introduced, allowing room for the inclusion of many themes surrounding the topic being studied. In addition, I took the approach shared by Breckenridge, Jones, Elliott & Nicol (2012) that the emergent linking theme in this study was not participants' only concern, but one specific theory that seems to be "highly relevant" to participants.

Moving Forward

Throughout this research I have been extremely grateful to participants and those that guided my learning along the way. In order to give back to those that have generously given to me, there are a few important points and recommendations from my viewpoint as a non-indigenous researcher engaging in this topic area. If Aboriginal public servant leadership includes facilitation, education and translation between community and government, this is a high and unbalanced expectation. This expectation puts the initiation of change on one side of the equation instead of equally across both the public service and Aboriginal public servants. This unbalanced expectation needs to be corrected and the impetus for bridge building needs to come from both indigenous and non-indigenous public servants and citizens.

In order to show leadership themselves, non-indigenous public servants need to recognize and pursue their duty to learn and to become responsible for following the path of "unsettling" that Regan (2010) introduces. Non-indigenous public servants can work to improve their relationship with Aboriginal peoples and communities. By improving the relationship, there can be improved communication. Improved communication can lead to increased understanding of needs and circumstances of the many Aboriginal peoples within Canada. Equipped with better understanding and communication on both sides there is opportunity for policy development and implementation that is better suited to meeting real needs and a better chance of avoiding the continuation of policy that degrades instead of enhances the welfare of Aboriginal peoples in BC.

It is strongly suggested that additional qualitative data be collected in the area of Aboriginal public servant leadership in order to be compared and contrasted to the findings of this study. Using the findings and interpretations within this study and building or revising understandings could serve the public sector and Aboriginal peoples in further exploring the benefits that this approach is already having with the BC government and other ways that this approach to leadership can be supported and encouraged. It is hoped that this will happen in part through the larger SSHRC study, but even following this study this area of research is in infancy and there is still much to discuss and explore.

This study sought to fill a gap in the literature and to open dialogue about other approaches to leadership that may lead to positive progress within the policy process. One study in this area is not sufficient however, and as few studies exist looking at the intersection between public sector leadership and Indigenous leadership in Canada. This study could be built on by

expanding the British Columbia focus to look specifically at this topic across the other Canadian provinces and territories as well as at federal and municipal levels of government.

Further study would also be encouraged and suggested in looking at concrete examples of approaches that have resulted in policy processes which have seen positive results for Aboriginal peoples. These case studies could explore these positive changes, where they came from, how they evolved and the benefits and challenges realized. This could also expand to case studies of leaders themselves in these examples, including opportunities and challenges as well as capturing the impact of the policies. Case studies of this type of research would have benefited this research study and could still provide increased depth and breadth of the findings from this study when added hopefully in the future.

Speaking to the public sector. Members of the public sector who read this study will learn or have a richer understanding, of a style of work and leadership which is currently happening within the BC government; that an approach which seeks common ground and raises personal connection is present and possible within their work environment. They will also learn of the challenges faced within this approach and by their Aboriginal colleagues. I would hope they will learn to be sensitive and aware of these challenges and instead of perpetuating behaviours that detract from and make it difficult for colleagues. They would seek ways for ways to support and encourage this approach which can positively impact the policy process in any area of government.

As Aboriginal public servants recognize the ways of a western bureaucratic system, there is also a responsibility for non-Aboriginal people to recognize another way of being. In a sense I would recommend that all public sector employees take the time to build their cultural competence, through first recognizing the destructive legacy of past and current policies and

their impacts and seeking to go beyond, expand their cultural understanding and start building bridges to Aboriginal communities alongside Aboriginal colleagues that is positive and does not create additional harm.

In addition, the under-representation of Aboriginal public servants in the BC public service is known and it seems that there is a desire to address this (BC Stats, 2011). In addressing under-representation through work to encourage more Aboriginal peoples to work within government I hope that the BC Public Service can learn from this research that there are incompatibilities within government for some Aboriginal public servants and that these incompatibilities are wide ranging. I would recommend looking at the root of some of these incompatibilities in addressing this issue. At the same time, continuing to open opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to enter into government, even if for a short time, as is made possible through programs like the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program, a program that provides a paid internship where interns are supported by supervisors and mentors as they work for nine months within the BC Public Service, and then, three months within an Aboriginal organization (BCPSA, n.d.).

Speaking to Aboriginal public servants. For the participants of this study and other public servants within British Columbia I hope that this research provides additional recognition of the important work that you do and the challenges that you face within this work. For those that may not see their work bridging between government and communities as leadership I hope that through the reading of this study and any dialogue that continues you would come to see the importance and significance of this work and would be encouraged. For those Aboriginal peoples outside of government tirelessly working to impact society external to formal public service structures, I also commend you as many participants also recognized the need for those working outside of government to influence the process in other ways.

References

Ahern, K. (1999). Ten tips for reflexive bracketing. *Qualitative Health Research, 9(3)*, 407-411. doi: 10.1177/104973239900900309.

Alfred, T.A. (1999). Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous manifesto. Toronto, Canada: Oxford University Press Canada.

Althaus, C. (2011). *Leading from Between: The Challenge and Promise of Indigenous Bureaucratic Leadership*. Successful research proposal submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council November 2011.

Archibald, J. (2008). Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit. Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.

Barsh, R.L. (1991). Progressive-Era Bureaucrats and the Unity of Twentieth-Century Indian Policy. *American Indian Quarterly. 15 (1),* 1-17.

Bauman, D. (2013). Leadership and the three faces of integrity. The Leadership Quarterly, 24(3), 414-426.

BC Ministry of Community Services. (2006). Local government excellence through collaborative partnerships. *Report for World Urban Forum*. Retrieved from: http://www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/intergov_relations/library/wuf_bc_guide.pdf.

(BCPSA) BC Public Service Agency. (2012). Aboriginal Relations Behavioural Competencies. Retrieved from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/myhr/article.page?ContentID=55246cff-6276-7a2d-e7e3-71356191492f.

BC Stats. (2011). Workforce Profile Report. Victoria, BC: BC Public Service. Retrieved from:

>   http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/EmployeeResearch/EmploymentEquit

>   y.aspx

Birks, M. & Mills, J. (2011). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage

>   Publications Inc.

Breckenridge, J.P., Jones, J., Elliott, I. & Nicol, M. (2012). Choosing a Methodological Path:

>   Reflections on the Constructivist Turn. *Grounded Theory Review, 11(1)*, Retrieved from

>   http://groundedtheoryreview.com/2012/06/01/choosing-a-methodological-path-

>   reflections-on-the-constructivist-turn/.

Bureaucracy. (n.d). In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*. Retrieved from

>   http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bureaucracy.

Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper and Row, Publishers Inc.

Calliou, B. (2005). Chapter 5 - The culture of leadership: North American Indigenous Leadership

>   in a changing economy. In Champagne, D., Torjensen, K.J. & Steiner, S. (Eds*),

>   Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State.* (pp.47-68) Toronto, Canada: Altamira Press.

(CAPE) Capital for Aboriginal Prosperity and Entrepreneurship. (n.d.) About Cape Fund.

>   Retrieved from http://www.capefund.ca/en/about-capefund/background.html.

CWRP Information Sheet #98E. (2012). Montreal, QC: McGill University, Centre for Research

>   on Children and Families.

Chapman, I., Newhouse, D. & McCaskill, D. (1991). Management in contemporary aboriginal

    organizations. *Canadian journal of native studies 11(2)* 333 – 349.

(CHRC) Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2013. Report on Equality Rights of Aboriginal

    People. Government of Canada. Retrieved from http://www.chrc-

    ccdp.gc.ca/sites/default/files/equality_aboriginal_report.pdf.

Coates, K. & Crowley, B.L. (2013, May 15). Resource development offers opportunity for

    Aboriginal communities. The National Post. Retrieved from http://nationalpost.com.

Collaboration. (n.d.) In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*. Retrieved from

    http://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/collaboration.

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great*. New York, NY: HarperCollins

Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods*

    approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Danby, P. (2008, September). The Soul of Leadership. *Business Strategy Review*. Retrieved from

    http://bsr.london.edu/lbs-article/522/index.html.

Davidhizar, R. (2000). Gender differences in leadership in the health professions. *The health*

    care manager, *18(3)*, 18.

Davis, J. H., Schooman, D.F. & Donaldson, L. (1997). Toward a Stewardship Theory of

    Management. *The Academy of Management Review , 22(1)*, 20-47

(DIAND) Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. (1996). Report of the Royal Commission

    on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Dunne, C. (2011). The place of the literature review in grounded theory research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 14(2),* 111-124.

Ekaterini, G. (2010). The impacts of leadership styles on four variables of executives workforce. *International Journal of Business and Management, 5(6).*

Fein, E.C., Tziner, A., & Vasiliu, C. (2010). Age cohort effects, gender, and Romanian leadership preferences. *Journal of Management Development, 29(4)*, 364 – 376.

(FNHC) First Nations Health Council. n.d. Tripartite Governance Process. Retrieved March from http://www.fnhc.ca/index.php/FNHC/tripartite_governance_process.

(FPHLCC) First People's Heritage Language and Culture Council. (2010b). Report on the Status of BC First Nations Languages. Retrieved from http://www.fphlcc.ca/downloads/2010-report-on-the-status-of-bc-first-nations-languages.pdf.

Fylan, F. (2005). Semi-structured interviewing. In J. Miles & P. Glibert (Eds). *A handbook of research methods for clinical & health psychology* (pp.65-77). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gambrell, K.M. & Fritz, S. (2012). Healers and Helpers, Unifying the People: A Qualitative Study of Lakota Leadership. Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 19(3), 315-325. doi: 10.1177/1548051812442749

Gardner, W. L., Avolio, B. J., Luthans, F., May, D. R., & Walumbwa, F. (2005). Can you see the real me? A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*, 243–272.

George, B. (2003). Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value. San Francisco, USA: Jossey-Bass.

Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.

Glaser, B.G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: Advances in the methodology of grounded theory*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press

Glaser, B.G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B.G. (2007). All is Data. *The Grounded Theory Review*, *6 (2)*. Retrieved from http://groundedtheoryreview.com.

Greenleaf, R. (1970/1991). *The servant as leader.* Indianapolis: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 1-37.

Grint, K. (2000). *The Arts of Leadership*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hernandez, M. (2008). Promoting Stewardship Behaviour in Organizations: A Leadership Model. *Journal of Business Ethics, 80(1),* 121-128.

Hoekstra, E., Bell, A. & Peterson, S.R. (2008). Humility in Leadership: Abandoning the Pursuit of Unattainable Perfection. In S.A. Quatro & R. R. Sims (Eds.), *Executive Ethics:*

Ethical Dilemmas and Challenges for the C-Suite. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Howard, P.A. (2009). BERRIES, BISON, AND BRANCHES: RETURNING TO TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL SUSTENANCE. Masters of Arts in First Nations Studies, University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC, Canada.

Humility. (n.d.) In *Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humility.

Johnston, H. (2012). *Traditional Aboriginal Leadership in North America: And the search for Aboriginal Bureaucrats*. Literature review for SSHRC Study: Leading from Between.

Kalaian, S.A. (2008). Research Design. *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods.* Ed. Thousand Oaks, USA: SAGE. 725-32. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 11 Feb. 2012.

Kenny, C. (2012). Chapter 1: Liberating Leadership Theory. In Kenny, C. & Fraser, T.N. (Eds), *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities* (pp.1-14). Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts.* Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Kuppelwieser, V. G. (2011). Stewardship Behavior and Creativity. *Management Revue, 22(3),* 274-295.

Langtry, D. (2013, June 26). Why I'm Cautiously Optimistic About the Plight Aboriginal People. *The Huffington Post.* Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca.

Lewis, J. (2009). Redefining qualitative methods: Believability in the fifth moment. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8(2),* 1–14. Retrieved from ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/ viewArticle4408

Lickers, M.J. (2006). *Urban Aboriginal Leadership*. Master of Arts Thesis, Royal Roads University, Victoria, Canada.

Lickers, M. (2008) Urban Aboriginal Leadership: The Delicate Dance Between Two Worlds, Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller

McMullen, J. (2004). Regenerating Indigenous Health and Food Systems: Assessing Conflict Transformation models and Sustainable Approaches to Indigenous Food Sovereignty. Master of Arts in Dispute Resolution Thesis, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC.

Morgan, D. L. (2008). Snowball Sampling. *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 816-17. SAGE Reference Online. Web. 8 May. 2012.

Nadasdy, P. (2003). *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Nicolson, M. (2005). Moving forward while looking back: a Kwakwaka'wakw concept of time as expressed in language and culture. Master of Arts Thesis, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada.

Nielsen, R., Marrone, J.A., & Slay, H.S. (2010). A New Look at Humility: Exploring the Humility Concept and Its Role in Socialized Charismatic. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 17(1)*, 33-43. doi: 10.1177/1548051809350892

Niezen, R. (1993). Telling a Message: Cree Perceptions of Customs and Administration. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 13(2)* 221-250.

Noy, C. (2008). Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *11(4),* 327-344. doi: 10.1080/13645570701401305

Ottoman, J. (2005). First Nations Leadership Development. Aboriginal Leadership and Management. The Banff Centre, AB. Retrieved from http://www.banffcentre.ca/departments/leadership/aboriginal/library/pdf/First_Nations_ Leadership_Ottmann.pdf

Palys, T. (2008). Purposive Sampling. *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods.* Ed. . Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. 698-99. *SAGE Reference Online*. Web. 11 Feb. 2012.

Province of British Columbia. (2008). New Relationship. Retrieved from http://www.newrelationship.gov.bc.ca

Province of British Columbia. (n.d.). Aboriginal Delegated Child & Family Services Agencies. Retrieved from: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/aboriginal/delegated/

Raibmon, P. (2005). *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounter from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Redpath, L. & Nielson, M. (1997). A Comparison of Native Culture, Non-Native Culture and New Management Ideology. *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences. 14(3)*, 327-339.

Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the Settler within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press.

Richards, J. (2006) Creating Choices: Rethinking Aboriginal Policy, CD Howe Institute Policy Study 43, Ottawa: CD Howe Institute.

Sager, F. & Rosser, C. (2009). Weber, Wilson, and Hegel: Theories of Modern Bureaucracy. *Public Administration Review, 69(6),* 1136–1147.

Shamir, B., House, R. J., & Arthur, M. B. (1993). The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organization Science*, *4*, 577–593.

Smith, J. (2008). Interpretive inquiry. In L. Given (Ed.), *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods.* (pp. 460-462). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. doi: 10.4135/9781412963909.n233

Smith, L.T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd Ed. New York, USA/London, UK: Zed Books Ltd.

Stelter, N.Z. (2002). Gender differences in leadership: Current social issues and future organizational implications. *Journal of leadership & organizational studies, 8(4),* 88.

Stern, P.N. & Porr, C.J. (2011). *Essentials of Accessible Grounded Theory*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc.

Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J.M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Thomas, R. (2011). *Protecting the Sacred Cycle: Xwulmuxw Slhunlheni and Leadership*. Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada.

Tizard, J. (2012). The challenges and opportunities in contemporary public sector leadership. International *Journal of Leadership in Public Services. 8(4)*, 182-190.

(TRC) Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2012). They came for the children: Canada, Aboriginal peoples, and residential schools. Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication, Winnipeg.

(UNNC) United Nations News Centre. (2013, January 8). Canadian authorities must start meaningful dialogue with aboriginal leaders – UN expert. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=43891#.UmS7qxCn7HU

Vinzant, J.C. & Crothers, L. (1998). *Street level leadership: discretion and legitimacy in front-line public service*. Washington, D.C, USA: Georgetown University Press.

Walker, D. & Myrick, F. (2006). Grounded Theory: An Exploration of Process and Procedure. *Qualitative Health Research, 16(4),* 547-559. doi: 10.1177/1049732305285972.

Weaver, S.M. (1982). The Joint Cabinet/National Indian Brotherhood Committee: A Unique Experiment in Pressure Group Relations. *Canadian Public Administration, 25 (2)*, 221-239.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood Publishing.

Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Leading from Between: The Opportunities and Challenges of Indigenous Public Servant Leadership* that is being conducted by Dr. Catherine Althaus-Kaefer. This study is being conducted at an international level with the assistance of collaborators Professor Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh from Griffith University in Brisbane Australia and Associate Professor Gerda Van Dijk from the University of Pretoria/ North West University, Potchefstroom in South Africa. The three jurisdictions under study are British Columbia in Canada, Queensland in Australia and Gauteng Province in South Africa.

For Canadian participants, Fionna Main is a Graduate Student under the supervision of Dr. Catherine Althaus-Kaefer, an Assistant Professor in the department of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by phoning 250.938.1914 or emailing fmain@uvic.ca. Dr. Althaus-Kaefer can be reached by phoning 250-721-8060 or emailing calthaus@uvic.ca.

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to explore competing and coalescing notions of leadership across sub-national bureaucracies and Aboriginal communities in Canada, Australia and South Africa focusing on the perspective of Indigenous public servant leaders to address the following questions: Do bureaucrats and Indigenous peoples share the same notion of leadership and how does an answer to this question impact on policy making with respect to Indigenous peoples? What possibilities, then, exist for Indigenous peoples to exercise authentic Indigenous leadership within western bureaucracies?

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important to academic scholarship, public leadership and management practice because it will produce information on the current realities and possibilities for bureaucracy to facilitate leadership, especially as it pertains to Aboriginal concepts and expectations. A greater appreciation for the contributions made by Aboriginal public servants to leadership styles, models and theory will also emerge, with concomitant community benefits not only for traditional academic forums but also (via appropriate visual and oral media) for Indigenous communities themselves and for the general public, through a public website and local museum exhibitions.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a self-identified Indigenous public servant at the subnational level in British Columbia. Your unique and **individual** perspective with respect to your experiences as both a self-identified Indigenous person, and as a public servant at the subnational level in British Columbia will offer an important contribution to this topic.

What is Involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your contribution will include participating in an interview.

If you are in agreement and give permission, audio-tapes, written notes/observations, photos and video data will be taken, as appropriate. You will be given an opportunity to indicate what material should be kept 'off the record' and your express permission will be sought for any visual and oral data collected.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you in the sense of scheduling time to participate in the research project.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include contributing to academic scholarship, public leadership and management practice in Canada and beyond to Australia and South Africa. One of the major scholarly contributions of the work will be to connect the bureaucratic leadership literature with that in the fields of Aboriginal leadership and feminist critiques of the bureaucracy to facilitate leadership, especially as it pertains to Aboriginal concepts and expectations. A greater appreciation for the contributions made by Aboriginal public servants to leadership styles, models and theory will also emerge, with concomitant community benefits not only for traditional academic forums but also (via appropriate visual and oral media) for Indigenous communities themselves and for the general public, through museum exhibitions.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used in the analysis if you agree to this.

Do you grant permission for your data to be used in the analysis should you choose to withdraw from the project?

yes __, no ___.

Confidentiality

If you agree to be video-taped and/or photographed, your participation in this study will not be anonymous, though your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected.

Do you consent to being video-taped and photographed and that this material be used for analysis and/or dissemination purposes including in an online format? Yes ____/No _____

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by changing any identification information to ensure non-attribution occurs in any published material. The data will be stored at Dr. Althaus-Kaefer's home and at the University of Victoria campus. The data will be password protected.

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: through presentations at scholar meetings, conferences, publications in scholarly journals in the field of Public Administration, and via a project website to communicate project information to participants, Indigenous communities and interested parties (including, for example, the Canadian Assembly of First Nations). It is possible that this website might attract the interest of museums in the respective research countries and that exhibition material might be developed from the publicly available data.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of after five years <u>or earlier if</u> the researcher no longer has need for it. At this time, the files will be deleted from the computer and the paper files will be shredded. This timeframe is given to allow any follow-up questions and analysis to be performed.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Fionna Main, Graduate Student in the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration, fmain@uvic.ca. +1-250-938-1914

Catherine Althaus. University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. calthaus@uvic.ca.

+1-250-721-8060

Ciaran O'Faircheallaigh. Griffith University. ciaran.ofaircheallaigh@griffith.edu.au

Gerda van Dijk, University of Pretoria/North Western University, Potchefstroom. gerda.vandijk@nwu.ac.za

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

Visually Recorded Images/Data: Participant to provide initials:

- Photos may be taken of me and my workplace for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____

- Videos may be taken of me and my workplace for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____

*Even if no names are used, the material could be used online and you may be recognizable if visual images are shown in the results.

[WAIVING CONFIDENTIALITY] *PLEASE SELECT STATEMENT*

I agree to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study. yes __, no ___.

I agree to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results. yes __, no ___.

_____ (Participant to provide initials)

Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name:

Age:

Gender:

Community Affiliation/s:

Formal qualifications (including schooling and for credit as well as completed):

Informal qualifications:

Current Public Service Position and location:

Length of Career in Public Service, to date (cumulative total if interrupted service):

Past Public Service Positions:

Private Sector and/or Non-Governmental Organization Positions held during career:

International Organization or Other Public Service Positions held during career:

REPRESENTATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Word(s) for leadership:

Item that represents leadership (animal, object, place, etc.):

DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP

What does leadership mean to you as an individual?

How would you define leadership as a self-identified Indigenous person?

What makes for leadership in your Indigenous community?

What does good leadership look like in your Indigenous community?

How would you define leadership as a practicing bureaucrat?

What makes for good leadership in your work environment?

What does good leadership look like in your work environment?

If you have moved within the bureaucracy, has your understanding of leadership changed?

Do you think there is a consistent understanding of leadership across the bureaucracy?

If these understandings/definitions are different why do you think this is so? Do either of these perspectives on leadership impact your decision/policy making more or less?

How do you cope with potentially multiple understandings of leadership?

Have you come across any significant barriers within either of these perspectives/cultures that you have difficulty resolving? If so, how do these affect your ability to make decisions that will most significantly benefit the interests of Indigenous peoples? And your role as a bureaucrat?

What possibilities exist for Indigenous people to exercise authentic Indigenous leadership within western bureaucracies?

What suggestions would you make for positive change concerning this issue moving forward?

Any additional comments:

Appendix C: Sample coded section of interview

FM: What does leadership mean to you as an individual?

█ I guess to me, Leadership to me as an individual means having some character. Some principles, and basically living by those principles and demonstrating them as best as you can.

> Comment [FM1]: character
> Comment [FM2]: character
> Comment [FM3]: walk the talk

FM: How would you define leadership as a self-identified aboriginal person? Is it any different than as an individual?

█ Not really, it's kind of how I was raised in the aboriginal community. It's a hereditary system so all ██████████████████████████████ I would take on a chief role at some point in time so as a kid I was groomed to take on that role, that responsibility. I think the interesting thing was that it was a bit of a dichotomy, at the same time you had to be able to function outside of the community as well. What I found personally if I take the learning experience I had as a kid and apply that throughout all of my life, it applies in both realms (within work and within personal). With a chief name, in an oral culture a lot of it is about how you put it (The teachings into practice) into practice in your daily life. How do you model these different teachings? You really have to live the stuff. It's not about practicing coming to an office, turning it on and then turning it off when you go home. That's what leadership means to me in my culture and I think that's why my answer about what leadership means as an individual is pretty broad, talking about those principles.

> Comment [FM4]: purposefully prepared
> Comment [FM5]: responsibility
> Comment [FM6]: walk in two worlds

> Comment [FM7]: walking the talk

FM: For other individuals (not chiefs) in your community is the same type of leadership expected?

█ Yes, I would say so. For others who aren't chiefs they have a key role in the community as a role. It is a clandestine system, everyone has a role, it is a hierarchy. When it comes to leadership it is about gaining the respect of others. There have been instances when people who have been born in the leadership lineage never got it because they never lived up to those responsibilities, and other people who did model that they became the default. This person here has demonstrated that this person knows the law, demonstrates it, puts it into practice. Therefore I would rather go to this person than the one who is from the leadership lineage. It is about being able to walk the walk, being held accountable in the community. I think as a culture, like I said before being groomed into it, one of the key pieces I

> Comment [FM8]: everyone has a role
> Comment [FM9]: gaining respect of others, authority
> Comment [FM10]: responsibility
> Comment [FM11]: modeling, role model
> Comment [FM12]: walk the talk
> Comment [FM13]: walk the talk
> Comment [FM14]: accountability (to community)

Appendix D: Sample thematic interview summary

Note to participants with this summary stated: This section has some key themes I pulled from our interview that begin to cross over with other participants. Please feel free to add to this if you want, or to flag particular pieces that you think might be misrepresented so I can further explain them.

About Leadership:

- ❖ Leadership is centered on walking the walk
  - ○ How you live your daily life
  - ○ Importance of having good character, living by the principles of your teachings
  - ○ Demonstrating what you are saying with your actions

About being an Aboriginal leader in government:

- ❖ Responsibility to learn the western system
- ❖ Bicultural – recognition that you need to be able to operate in both understandings (traditional & western)
- ❖ Looking for win-win solutions and situations – recognizing them
- ❖ Recognizing where there are no-go issues – if there are barriers, then don't push them, but look for a different approach to the situation
- ❖ Facilitating between the two sides, but doing this with an understanding of both sides.
- ❖ Acting as the interface between community leadership and government leadership
- ❖ Listening first on the periphery, and then adjusting in the role to be more about exploring and explaining why decisions were made and what was considered on both sides.
- ❖ Feeling of frustration with the disconnect between traditional perspectives and that of the crown and a realization that there was a need to help bridge this (use of technical skill to make the initial transition).
- ❖ Recognizing where the western system can help the Indigenous cause (court ordered consultation) – try and find solutions
- ❖ Coping through continuing to look for win-win situations, shared goals, shared priorities
- ❖ Taking the cloak off, finding middle ground and recognizing that some interests will prevail, but making sure that at all interests are presented.
- ❖ Listening and discerning before talking (hearing all sides before presenting your thoughts)
- ❖ Living authentically as who you are – don't try and pull any surprises.

About Leadership in Bureaucracy:

- ❖ It can be largely about credentials (education, position)
- ❖ Missing the recognition of other ways of doing things, of knowing.
- ❖ Win-lose solutions are acceptable, sometimes this system can be seen as one-sided, has the upper hand

❖ Similarities to traditional system in terms of the administrative law piece and how decisions are made through collecting information from those around you and then using this information to make the best decision.

About Indigenous Leadership:

❖ Accountability to community, gaining and maintaining respect of the people you are leading
❖ Mutual respect – everyone has a role
❖ Recognition of leaders as whole people (fallible) – they will make mistakes, but by owning up to these mistakes and proving to the community that they are sorry they can still be respected leaders

Possibilities for Aboriginal Leaders in Government:

❖ Possibilities are limitless, but require recognition of that there are different approaches – get away from the confrontational style and find a way to reconciliation, how do you bring these different approaches together.