THE PERCEPTIONS OF TRIBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE IMPACT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: EXAMINING TRIBAL LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION WITHIN CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Crystal Martinez-Alire
B.A., California State University, Sacramento, 2005
M.S., California State University, Sacramento, 2009

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING
2013
THE PERCEPTIONS OF TRIBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE IMPACT OF
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: EXAMINING TRIBAL
LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION WITHIN CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN
COMMUNITIES

A Dissertation

by

Crystal Martinez-Alire

Approved by Dissertation Committee:

__________________________
Dr. Rose Borunda, Chair

__________________________
Dr. Annette Reed, Committee Member

__________________________
Dr. Deborah Travis, Committee Member

SPRING 2013
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Student: Crystal Martinez-Alire

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this dissertation is suitable for shelving in the library and credit is to be awarded for the dissertation.

_________________________, Director
Dr. Carlos Nevarez

Date
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daughter Mariah Alire and the Native community students and educators. It is because of my journey and path in life that has guided me to conduct this research as a Miwok woman and give back to the Native community. I would like to encourage the discussion on tribal leadership and also ensure that Native students will always be remembered in the field of education. Many years ago my ancestors fought for survival and it is due to their persistence that allowed me the opportunity to explore this topic. It is through my ancestors and community members that I learned more about cultural knowledge, traditions and I am deeply honored for this experience.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all I would like to especially thank all those individuals who participated in this research study. Without them this would not have been possible. Thank you to Monte, Malissa, Virgil, Thomas, Al, Matt, Sage, Christina, Teresa and Dennis. I appreciate and respect them for standing tall in the face of oppression and I am honored they shared their experiences with me. I gained valuable insight into tribal leadership and education as well as new knowledge about cultural traditions. It is because of these individuals that I was able to obtain insight into the realm of tribal leadership.

First and foremost, I must thank my mother (Doreen) and stepmother (Lois), grandparents (Henry & Dorothy), brother (Mathew), and sister-in-law (Gina) as I have to especially thank them all for their support and encouragement to help me pursue my higher education goals. It is because of all them that I continue to strive for the best. I would like to thank them for believing in me and in my work. I was raised solely by my mother, as early on my father passed away and my grandparents worked hard to also give back to the family. They worked on a local ranch in the area and both were determined to give their family a different life. They instilled strong educational values and traditions. My mother taught me to always move forward throughout life no matter what and that during the most difficult times I will always have support in all that I accomplish. I am always reminded to work and speak from the heart and these individuals helped to shape my values, and for that I am eternally grateful. I would especially like to thank my husband (Richard Alire) for his undivided support and belief
in me and always being there as a strong shoulder to lean on. To my little girl (Mariah Alire); it is through her I see my purpose for giving back to the future generations of the Native community. I would also like to thank my nieces and nephews for reminding me to always laugh; Alexandria, Mathew, Eliciano, Elias, Alicya, and Jerry as well as my family in Colorado Springs. I would also like to thank my extended family (Onate).

Additionally, I have to acknowledge and recognize all my family members that are no longer here, as it was through these family members support that have also helped me along my journey and will always be remembered; Jerry Franklin III, Allen Olvera, Henry (Sonny) Olvera, Dell Martinez, and lastly, my father Roger Martinez. Even though they are no longer able to walk with me on this earth, they are always in my heart and will never be forgotten as it is their fight that helped me push forward toward my own achievements.

Also a special thanks to my committee members: Dr. Borunda, Dr. Reed, and Dr. Travis for their guidance, support, and understanding, which kept me going. I have much appreciation, respect, and admiration for the transformational work they do daily to assist students. On that note, there were many professors in the EDD program who made a significant impact in my life: Dr. Nevarez, Dr. Turner, Dr. Bishop, Dr. Castellano, Dr. Leon, Dr. Kitada, Dr. Britt, and Dr. Rodriguez. Thank you for believing in me and for challenging me to learn new transformative ways to view education.

A special thanks to cohort 4 members who supported me through this experience and to my friends, Samia, Mardi, and Eva as well many others in the cohort. Also I
would like to thank you Dr. Cheshire for her support. I would also like to say a thank you to Pedro who assisted with the video, as this was greatly appreciated. Another significant acknowledgement is the Native community members that truly made this study possible and also various Native agencies within the Sacramento Region. I would like to say a thank you to the Sacramento State Career Center staff, especially David McVey and Beth Merrit-Miller (Director), as well as the EOP department and McNair Scholars department on campus as these programs helped shape my educational experiences and were extremely supportive of my goals. To my editor and formatter Meredith, thanks for all your help and support.
CURRICULUM VITAE

Education
M.S. Counseling, Career and School Counseling
California State University, Sacramento, May 2009
CACREP Approved Program

B.A. Communication Studies
Minor: Sociology
California State University, Sacramento, August 2005

Certificate
Next Skills, NSI Prep Teacher Certificate • Los Rios Workplace Center, 2011

Professional Experience
Education Coordinator-Shingle Springs Tribal TANF
Shingle Springs Rancheria CA 2010-Present

Tribal Leadership Institute Coordinator-Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation
Brooks CA 01/2010-06/2010

Paraeducator, Elk Grove Unified School District
Elk Grove, CA 1999-2010

Job Developer, Elk Grove Unified School District,
Elk Grove, CA 02/2008-07/2008

EOP Counselor Intern, Educational Opportunity Program
California State University, Sacramento CA 09/2007-01/2007

Career Counselor Graduate Intern, Career Center
California State University, Sacramento CA 2007-2007

Professional Publications
McNair Scholars Journal, 6, 80-92.

Professional Presentations
The Native American Population, Multicultural Education Conference, 2011
Tribal Enrollment and Tribal Conflict Resolution, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Summer
Research Conference, Pennsylvania University, 2005
Resume Workshop, Career Center, Sacramento State, 2006
Stress Management Workshop, Career Center, Sacramento State, August 2006
The Real Game Training, Sacramento State, 2006
Summer Rez Presentation, Native American Youth, 2006
California Native American Tribes, Counselor Education Department, Sacramento State, 2006

Invited Lectures
California State University, Sacramento-March 2013
California State University, Sacramento-February 2009

Scholarships
  Rodney T Mathews Scholarship Morongo Tribe, 2009 & 2013
  American Indian Graduate Fellowship, 2011-2013
  Ione Band of Miwok Indians, 2013
  McNair Scholars, 2005
  International Business Communicators, 2005
  Educational Opportunity Program Award, 2000
Abstract

of

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by

Crystal Martinez-Alire

This qualitative study examined tribal leadership and education by reviewing the process of tribal leadership in relation to key viewpoints of education in terms of cultural and traditional knowledge. Using a phenomenological approach, the researcher conducted eight interviews with Native American community members, tribal leaders or council members, students, and Indian educators in California. All interviews were transcribed and video-taped. This study documented the relationship between tribal leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership, and shared leadership theories, as well as Freire’s theory of social justice. Study findings identified themes, such as elders, trust and collaboration, just to name a few. This study also identified a relationship between tribal sovereignty and leadership as well as education. Based on study findings, a new tribal leadership model was derived that included three leadership styles – transformational, servant, and shared leadership approaches.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Over 100,000 Native American children were forced into attending boarding schools... the main primary role of this education for Indian girls was to inculcate patriarchal norms and desires into Native communities, so that women would lose their places of leadership in Native communities. (Smith, 2004, p. 89-90)

Background

Many Native American Tribes exist within the United States of America (U.S.) and the numbers continue to increase on a regular basis. The U.S. Department of Interior, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) estimates 564 tribal entities are recognized and eligible for direct funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs by virtue of their status as Indian tribes (Department of the Interior, 2010). California alone has about 112 federally recognized tribes and the overall percentage of the Native American population is 1.9% (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). The U.S. holds a trust responsibility for Native Americans, which includes the protection of tribal governments and sovereignty (Washington & Van Hover, 2011). This directly relates to the topic discussed in this dissertation, tribal leadership and education.
Tribal Leadership is a significant topic and has a direct impact on tribal government and tribal communities. Tribal leadership is viewed as a significant cultural tradition that has been and continues to be a powerful force in shaping tribal communities (Metoyer, 2010). Leadership in many American Indian tribes was established and built on relationships; at times, leaders were traditionally chosen as a result of their service to the community (Deloria, 1994). American Indian tribes based leadership on the intricate network of relationships and responsibility between all individuals. Many structures of traditional governance existed; however, most leaders emerged as a result of their service to the community. Therefore, a leader held great responsibility to the welfare of all. This is still true today as many tribal leaders are elected into office to serve their entire tribe. A leader is often carefully selected since his or her role is to represent the entire tribe of individuals. By carefully examining tribal leadership and by understanding how
leadership shapes and molds the community, the impact various leadership styles have on Native American education can be understood.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the terms Native American/American Indian and Native communities or tribes throughout the paper to reference various Indian people/tribes. The reason the researcher elected to use the above terms interchangeably is due to the history. During certain generations, there were different terms used. Many of the Indian tribes were often referenced in previous written research or works as Indians; therefore, the researcher used all the above terms.

When examining tribal leadership, it is also important to consider the context as it relates to how American Indian people feel toward the U.S. educational system. The boarding school experience was an instrument of colonization that had an extremely negative impact on American Indian society, culture, families, and overall wellness. Its damage continues to greatly impact many American Indian people today.

The United States educational system and boarding school experience to which some of the Native American populations were subjected recorded much of the historical trauma. Many Native people were impacted by the historical trauma by which emotional and psychological harm was felt across many generations (Ottenbacker, n.d.). This trauma still impacts the community in today’s generation as well. Many of the elders still live with that hurt and, at times, when asked to discuss their life history, they refuse or struggle to explain their past as many families were separated and placed in boarding schools. Recalling these memories can create a number of negative emotions. This well
documented experience has created distressing levels of individual, family, and community dysfunction within the Native American population (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). The oppression and genocide this population encountered directly impact the Native American perceptions of education.

Drawing from social justice theory, the cycle of oppression and how it impacts tribal leadership can be examined. According to Freire (1995), the oppressed often become the oppressor whose image they have internalized. It can often be viewed in terms of how tribes incorporate anti-dialogical strategies within leadership approaches. Oppression also explains the relationship between the Westernized educational system and the Native population. The relationship is discussed in more detail within the theoretical and conceptual base framework.

To examine the theoretical framework, one must first understand the impact and history of boarding schools and their relationship to California Native tribes. Education is also another area needing to be examined more closely. From the previous history of Indian boarding schools and their negative impact on the Native American population, there tends to be a negative connotation attached toward education, in general, within the tribal community. In the early years, boarding schools were set up and structured as a way to assimilate many Native people. Much of the assimilation campaign focused on education, as the main goal was to ensure the Indian children learned mainstream societal values. An example of the assimilation can be seen by the types of morals taught at the school. There was a high importance placed on individualism in order to subvert the
greatest barrier to Indian assimilation, their attachment to their tribal community over their own advancement (Adams, 1988). Additionally, the boarding school experience adversely impacted the Native American population and created distrust and animosity toward the U.S. educational system as an institution. It is also clear that Native communities suffered devastating, continuing effects as a result of such policies (Smith, 2004).

To understand the attitudes toward education within the Native population, it would be helpful to take a look at Ogbu and Simons (1998) who described the cultural-ecological theory. The theory examines societal dynamics within the educational system and the minority community. A significant part of the theory examines the way minorities are treated in education in terms of educational policies, pedagogy, and returns for their investment (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). When viewing the history of the boarding school experience, the general treatment of Native students, considered involuntary immigrants, in Indian Education, was a negative experience; many students were taken from their families and also abused. The manner in which the students were treated has impacted students’ performance levels at school and created a lack of trust toward the westernized educational system. By examining this theory, one can gain insight to the relationship of Indian tribes and the reasons some tribes create their own educational programs for Native students.

“During the 19th and 20th centuries, the Federal government forcibly abducted Native American children from their homes to attend Christian missions and U.S.
government-run boarding schools as a matter of state and national policy” (Smith, 2004, p. 91). “The goal of the mission was to Christianize, civilize, and assimilate Indians into European culture” (Reyher & Eder, 2004, p. 15). The main priority was to “civilize” the Native child in accordance to American belief systems. By taking Native children from their community and placing these children in boarding schools, a separation of their cultural traditions, language, and family was created, which ultimately lead to the imposition of a new identity upon some Native students (Noel, 2002). Not only did many Native children suffer the experience of forcibly being taken from their homes but many never returned, as it is well documented that many died of various causes in the boarding schools. Additionally, many children were also mentally, sexually, and physically abused while in boarding schools (Adams, 1988). The abuse led to generational trauma impacting the entire population. One way in which the schools were able to assimilate the Native child was by introducing the student to American values such as to think individualist rather than collaborative (Adams, 1988).

The U.S. failed to design an educational system to accommodate Natives’ cultural differences because the goal in the beginning was total assimilation not acculturation. Neither the public schools nor the military system were designed to accommodate either cultural differences, including tribal religions and ceremonies or language differences. As a result, even today very few public or Bureau schools respect Indian traditions (Locust, 1988). Hence, many Native Americans’ attitudes toward education have helped shape new tribal policy on education. In today’s society, many Native tribes are taking a
more positive approach by taking back and reclaiming their own tribal education. This can be observed through the formation of tribal colleges. In previous years, tribal leadership favored the idea of tribal colleges for many reasons, some of these being academic preparation, financial assistance, the impact of racism, and overall student emotions and feelings (Crum, 2007). In efforts to reclaim and incorporate culture and language, many tribes support their own educational programs because these schools/universities are congruent with tribal values and historical and aboriginal beliefs.

The following sections address tribal history, tribal sovereignty, and Indian Education. These areas directly relate to the importance of how tribal leadership is enacted and what educational policies govern tribes in the present. As American Indian communities work to overcome past injustices, the success of these vital components, leadership and education, will have bearing on the future of their communities.

**Tribal History**

A model of Traditional tribal leadership prior to European contact can be observed in the Iroquois Nation. The Iroquois Indians developed a confederacy and form of leadership emulated and later adopted by the United States government. “The standard works regarding the United States Constitution and the Articles of Confederation do not credit the American Indians with having contributed to their origins” (Payne, 1996, p. 605). The Iroquois confederacy, which originally consisted of five nations, was created by the prophet named the “peacemaker.” According to Grinde and Johansen (1991), each of the five nations maintained its own council whose chiefs were nominated by the clan
mothers of families holding hereditary rights to office title. In addition, the clan mothers could remove a chief from office and these selected individuals held the ultimate authority. Along with the clan mothers, there was also a Grand Council, including 50 chiefs who lead the five nations and met once a year to keep the peace among the Iroquois. The Grand council also helped negotiate agreements with other Indians and European colonists (Grinde & Johansen, 1991). The Iroquois political structure of leadership was regulated by The Great Law of Peace, passed down from one generation to the next. The foundation outlined a complex system of checks and balances between nations and genders (Grinde & Johansen, 1991). The written document was an early representation of tribal leadership examined by the U.S. government system to help structure the U.S. constitution. By understanding and acknowledging the early forms of traditional leadership, a better understanding of how tribal government and sovereignty impacts education today is developed.

**Tribal Sovereignty**

Tribal governments possess the inherent right of sovereignty. That determines the direction of each tribe’s leadership. To examine how tribal leadership has been shaped and formed over time, one needs to take an in-depth look at the history of tribes. Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S Constitution reads:

The Congress shall have power…to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes. The supreme law of the United States recognizes the governmental status of Indian tribes and creates a basis for a unique federal relationship with tribal governments. (as cited in Johnson, Kaufmann, Dossett, & Hicks, 2000, p. 7)
The governmental relationship between the U.S. and Native American tribes gives Indian tribes the authority over their own programs and services. Three instrumental cases helped establish sovereignty, *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) and *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832). The case rulings contributed to the establishment of tribes as independent nations (as cited in Washington & Van Hover, 2011). Sovereignty allows tribes to have a governmental relationship with the federal government, and each tribe is different in the way it is governed. Each federally recognized tribe has its own legislative power and sovereignty. Indian sovereignty “is the supreme power from which all specific political powers are derived” (Wunder, 1999, p. 1). When tribes are regarded as sovereign, they are able to maintain their own political processes, allowing them to create their own laws and regulations for their citizens and also determine their own membership. Tribal leaders also have power and control over various tribal educational programs. Self-government is essential for tribal communities to continue to protect their cultures and identities and tribal traditions and future educational programs (Johnson et al., 2000). The last area that examined is the main focus of this research study, which pertains to education.

**Indian Education**

To learn more about Native education, it would be helpful to also examine the Indian Education program. In the early history of Indian Education, there was a study/report written helping explain the boarding school experience. According to the National Indian Education Association, a study by the Brookings Institution of public and
Bureau of Indian Affairs (government) schools brought to the attention of the federal government the deprivation and abuse of Indian children attending such schools. The Merriam Report (1928) had a significant impact on governmental policy, resulting in the authorization of programs for improving the education of Indians. It brought about a period of change known as the “Indian New Deal.” Federal financial aid was provided to local districts, reservation day schools, and public schools, established on Indian trust lands. This helped to create and develop the start of various Indian Education programs offering more support to the Native community in maintaining Native student educational needs. This is an important concept to discuss when examining tribal education since it impacts many tribal programs today.

California has few BIA funded schools, and Indian Education Title IV funds are operated through local educational authority (LEA). This federal policy allocates federal funding to educate Native students enrolled in local schools located on non-Indian trust lands. This policy allows for local school districts to operate Indian Education programs, which provide additional support to Native students and families within the K-12 educational system. In today’s economy, some tribes are selecting and creating their own educational funding to better service Native American students. Since tribes have established other funding sources, they are able to create their own curriculum using cultural traditions and language. They are also able to determine which educational programs would be ideal for tribal members.
Statement of the Problem

Tribal leadership in the post-colonial era and its influence on education is a topic that needs to be explored. Due to the lack of research examining tribal leadership, there are few tribal leadership programs and educational models to emulate. Without examples of cultural integration within the funds of knowledge, it can be very difficult for tribes to establish educational programs incorporating language, culture, and history of the tribal leadership process. Developing the next generation of leaders is a critical challenge facing American Indians today (Nichols, 2008). Ogunwole (2000) reported that a little over 1% of the total U.S population was American Indian. As the population continues to grow, so do the challenges impacting the community. According to Nichols (2008), today’s tribal communities are faced with a multitude of challenges, including the nation’s highest rates of poverty, substance abuse, heart disease, diabetes, and teen suicide.

In addition, many of the American Indian population live on reservations and since most of these reservations are in rural and white areas, many Native people encounter geographic isolation and low levels of educational attainment (Nichols, 2008). Education is an extremely significant factor for much of the tribal community. The high school dropout rate for Native American students is alarming and in previous years has reflected a rate of 50% (Herring, 1992). In light of the small percentage of Native students attending schools, it is crucial the current tribal leadership encourage and
promote education by keeping this small percentage of Native students enrolled in school while looking to increasing Native students’ enrollment and success.

With the long history of failed U.S. governmental policies that has eroded traditional tribal models of learning and leadership, many leaders remain resilient and committed to drawing on their cultural strengths to building a brighter future for their people (Nichols, 2008). This study identified educational models and types of programs and services implemented by tribal leaders.

Another important concept impacting education is the unemployment rate of this community. The unemployment level for Native Americans has been recorded as one of the highest compared to any other ethnic group in the United States, and the amount is even greater on reservations (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008). Within the population, the unemployment rate has increased; therefore, education has a great impact on the population and can help transform the community. The employment rate was greatly impacted by the boarding school experience and the perception of education (Smith, 2004). This research study will help individuals gain a better understanding of the tribal community and how tribal leadership impacts educational decisions for its future generations. Due to the limited research on this topic area, this study will contribute to the field by providing insight into the struggles faced by tribal leaders, the strategies they are employing to overcome the challenges, and to what degree they are utilizing cultural traditions and approaches in their leadership roles.
Education is critical for Native American students and, by taking a look at leadership, some of the successful/exemplary practices can be analyzed. There is a need to demystify and deconstruct the tribal leadership process while developing an understanding of how leadership approaches from a Native American perspective impact tribal education. By conducting this research, the researcher was able to identify models that could potentially be used for all tribal nations and tribal governments as the communities work to reclaim their autonomy and cultural heritage. To examine the tribal leadership and education, a series of research questions are answered through a qualitative study. According to Merriam (2009), “qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding what meaning people attribute to their experiences” (p. 14). Conducting a qualitative study on tribal leadership will help analyze the meaning and best practices.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to examine the ways in which tribal leadership incorporates cultural traditions within education. By examining different viewpoints on the topic, more knowledge in the field of leadership may be provided and new models and techniques for future generations of tribal leaders may be identified. The findings in this research will help provide insight for other organizations and entities that would like to establish relationships with Indian tribes since to date there is limited research in this area.
Nature of the Study

According to Creswell (2009), if a concept or phenomenon needs to be understood because little research has been done on it, then a qualitative approach would be best. This qualitative study examined eight participants involved in leadership either as a tribal leader/council member, student, or Indian educator or tribal community/agency member. As limited research has been conducted on tribal leadership and education, the ideal approach would be to conduct a qualitative research method to fully understand more about the topic area. “The overall purpose of a qualitative study is to understand how people make sense of their lives and experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). This researcher conducted six interviews and utilized a variety of theoretical frameworks to help understand leadership approaches. The main frameworks guiding this study were social justice theory and multiple leadership theories.

Research Questions

Below are the grounding research questions guiding this study. Chapter 3 contains a more detailed outline of the research questions and sub-questions regarding the topic of tribal leadership. Listed are the three main research questions:

RQ1: What are processes implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within its communities?

RQ 2: How do tribal leaders define educational success?

RQ 3: What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders?
Theoretical Framework

When examining the leadership component, the researcher used multiple theories to create a framework in which to collect and analyze data. Another significant theory examined and applied to this research was the social justice theory as well as decolonizing methodologies. Social justice theory is examined first.

Social Justice Theory

By taking a closer look at social justice theory, we can also analyze the forms of anti-dialogical action and how this has been a major impact on tribal leadership and education. The main forms of anti-dialogical action include the following: conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, and cultural invasion (Freire, 1995). All the listed actions have greatly affected the Native population. When observing the act of conquest, the oppressor dispossessed the oppressed culture in the form of word and their expressiveness. This has been a well-documented example in history, since not only has the land been removed from the American Indian tribes, but parts of their cultural identity were taken away as well. Many times during the boarding school experience, cultural traditions and language were lost. This is one form of anti-dialogical action prevalent within the history as it serves as a weapon of divide-and-rule and cultural invasion; it fell under all three types of anti-dialogical action.

As observed by the prior history, and according to Freire (1995), divide and rule was a powerful force utilized by the dominant cultural group and westernized society. When looking specifically at the Native American population, much of U.S.
governmental policies helped divide the population. A prime example of this was the relocation of Native people and tribes and the introduction of reservations. In relation to education, the goal was to conquer the Native identities, annihilate the value of collectivism, and instill individualism (Borunda, 2011). The main objective was to separate many tribes from their own cultural heritage. For this reason, many tribes are still, today, working to preserve and rebuild their own educational system. One last aspect of the social justice theory that should be explained is cultural invasion. During cultural invasion, the dominant group would attempt to impose their own views of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression (Freire, 1995). This is clearly observed in the prior history of Native people through the concept of assimilation; however, tribes are now enacting and creating their own programs and operating their own governments. The new leadership is helping to reclaim education. There is also a grassroots movement growing on reservations and among urban American Indians seeking to understand the intergenerational psychological consequences of more than 400 years of genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced acculturation (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004).

Another framework utilized is the concept of Indigenous research. This is a research style utilized primary by indigenous people working as researchers in indigenous communities (Smith, 2012). This form of research directly pertains to this study on tribal leadership, since the researcher conducting this study is part of the Native community. This form of research refers to the “peoples” as having connections and
being unified by common territories, cultures, traditions, histories, languages, institutions, and beliefs (Smith, 2012). Such unification can be observed in many tribal communities and oftentimes the interconnectedness and beliefs are similar between tribal communities; however, there are also distinct characteristics of each tribal community. The major themes of this research are survival, recovery, development, and self-determination, and each form of being within tribal communities are consistently shifting (Smith, 2012). The author used tides to explain the process of the indigenous research agenda. A more detailed discussion of this framework is described in Chapter 2. This method of research also helps explain the topic of tribal leadership.

When examining tribal leadership approaches and gaining a more complete understanding of the topic, it is important to examine different approaches to leadership. By focusing on various types of leadership theories, how those styles may be applied to tribal leadership is better understood. For the purpose of this study, leadership is divided into the following categories: individual, shared distributed leadership, and environmental/relational leadership theory. For the relational theory, there will be a focus on transformational leadership. The area of transformational leadership is comprised of three elements: a) a team-approach, b) an emphasis on follower empowerment, and c) a comprehension of change within itself and in the organization, the primary aspects of a leader (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The areas of transformational leadership relate to the topic of tribal leadership since many of the leaders guide a collaborative approach when making decision for the betterment of the tribe. The
transformational framework helps empower others and also inspire others to lead at a higher standard while looking for the long-term goals and vision of the organization/tribe, a main value within this framework is to establish tribal communities. The other two areas of leadership, individual and shared/distributed theory are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

**Operational Definitions**

The following are definitions used within this study.

**Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**

“A federal agency established in 1824 and moved to the Department of Interior in 1849. Originally, the BIA served as a diplomatic corps responsible for overseeing trade and other relations with Indian tribes. Today, the BIA is more involved in advocating programs in tribal education, social economic, and land into trust as well as helping tribes develop its membership” (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. 307).

**Federally Recognized Tribes**

Tribes that have been established and have a relationship with the federal government as self-governing entities with the United States that maintain their government-to-government relationship (Wilkins & Stark, 2011).

**Indian Education**

“A federal program that has helped to prompt initiatives for the Native American Languages Act, the appointment of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force, and the
calling of the White House Conference on Indian Education (Reyhner & Eder, 2004, p. 329).”

Iroquois League

Government and military alliance originally formed more than 1000 years ago, and originally composed of five Indian nations; the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. The sixth nation joined in the 1700s, the Tuscaroras (O’Brien, 1989).

Leadership

Defined as those who inspire those they lead. Leaders use language, actions, and their overall being to help motivate others around them (Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 56).

Native American/American Indian

Individuals who identify with ancestral or cultural ties and or Native American tribes or Alaskan tribes. These individuals can be enrolled or non-enrolled members within federally recognized tribes. This research uses both terms to refer to Native people and uses these terms interchangeably to reflect the generation differences.

Native American Sovereignty

The right of a tribe to make laws separate from the European and American governmental authorities, and Native American sovereignty existed long before
the United States (U.S.) constitution came into existence (Wedding, Vega, & Mark, 2003, p. 131).

**Rancheria**

Spanish term applied to small Indian reservations in California (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. 311).

**Reservations**

Tract of land owned by a tribe or tribes held in trust status by the federal government for the Indians’ benefit. Reservations were created by treaty, statute, executive order, judicial decision, or order of the secretary of the interior (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. 311).

**Transformational Leadership**

This is the act of empowering individuals to fulfill their contractual obligations, meet the needs of the organization, and go beyond the call of duty for the betterment of the institution (Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 59).

**Tribal Leadership/Government**

Reference to American Indian tribal governments and those in leadership roles. Tribal governments can provide effective services to tribal citizens and are an authority to Indian Country (Johnson & Kaufman, 2000).

**Tribes**

To be a member of a tribe means sharing a common bond of ancestry, kinship, language, culture, and political authority with other members (O’Brien, 1989).


**Unrecognized Tribes**

Non-recognized and unacknowledged groups exhibit a degree of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. In some cases these individuals are descendants of tribes who never fought the United States and had no resources desired by the federal government or were in geographic isolation and were ignored and hence did not have a treaty or benefited from the trust relationship that forms the basis of most recognized tribes status. (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. 9)

**Assumptions & Limitations**

The limitations in conducting a qualitative study relate to the selection of participants and the researcher’s connection to the participants as well as any potential biases during the process of data collection. Since the researcher interviewed individuals within the Native American community and is from a local tribe as well, it may cause a bias. In addition, a bias may exist because there was purposeful sampling based on specific pre-determined background knowledge of participants’ work within Native American leadership and education. The researcher knew the participants prior to interviewing them.

The role of the researcher can also have an unknown limitation on the overall outcome of the number of participants in the study. Due to the time constraints of the study, the researcher may be bound to a convenience sample by location of interviewees, and may not be able to cover a larger representation of tribes outside California. Since the researcher is an enrolled tribal member of a federally recognized tribe and currently
works within a Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Sacramento, California, a trust and rapport was established when conducting research. Due to the prior history and lack of trust within the community, the participants may have certain feelings about research; however, a certain comfort level may have existed because the researcher is a community member. Participants were willing to share more information on the topic of tribal leadership.

**Significance of the Study**

This qualitative study will help provide insight into the field of leadership. Based on a search of the academic literature, a limited number of research studies on tribal leadership in reference to education exist. The researcher analyzed leadership experiences using a variety of theoretical frameworks.

The current study is crucial for providing new knowledge in the area of tribal leadership that will impact and influence future generations of tribal leaders. More recently many tribes are starting to review leadership programs for students and focus on ways to help develop skills needed for future tribal leaders. By increasing the knowledge on leadership and also looking specifically at education, ideal programs that can contribute to tribal success can be explored. This study will help address the concerns of tribal leadership.

**Conclusion**

The next chapter explains the history of Native tribes and examines related research in the field of tribal leadership and education. In particular, the chapter gives an
overview of the history of Indian Education as well as an in-depth look at tribal cultural values and traditions and how these are a significant part of the Native community. The chapter also describes and explains in more detail the theoretical frameworks of social justice theory and decolonizing methodologies, as well as the leadership frameworks applied to the study.

**Remainder of the Study**

This study contains five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the topic of study. It described the problem statement, the nature of the study, the significance, and the theoretical frameworks, as well as the operational definitions and assumptions and limitations. Chapter 2 provides an overview of recent peer-reviewed literature as well as primary sources focusing on the history of tribal government and leadership frameworks. This chapter also describes some of the guiding theories in leadership in more detail. Chapter 3 describes the details of the methodology including specific qualitative methods. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the interpretation and explanation of the data and themes reflected within tribal leadership. Chapter 5 summarizes the findings of the study and addresses implications for future research. It concludes with recommendations for future tribal leaders within the Native community. The last chapters will also be reflected in a film and documentary.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1 provided a brief overview on the history of Native American tribes. This chapter provides a more in-depth discussion on the literature and prior research on tribal leadership and education. The following topic areas are included: the tribal history, the relationship between schools and Native American tribes, tribal cultural traditions, a final discussion on the theoretical frameworks regarding leadership styles and approaches, and the development of theories. The last components of this chapter also discuss in more detail social justice theory and how this theory can offer insight for understanding tribal leadership. A major purpose of this research was to examine the realm of leadership within tribal communities and uncover any successful models of education that might be replicated by other tribes who are now rebuilding their communities.

Tribal History

When examining the history of tribal leadership, there needs to be a more in-depth discussion on tribal sovereignty and an explanation on tribes’ inherent sovereignty. Three historical cases greatly impacted tribes and have helped shape leadership today. A major case that should be mentioned is *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831). This case determined that Indian Nations had the full and legal right to manage their own affairs, govern themselves internally and engage in legal and political relationships with the federal government (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). Additionally, two other instrumental cases
in history helped establish the federal trust relationship among tribes. *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) recognized the political distinctiveness of the Cherokee Nation and the supremacy of Indian treaties over state laws (Wilkins, 1997). This case also helped maintain tribal government status. The last significant case that should be mentioned is *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), which dealt with the issue of indigenous property rights (Wilkins, 1997). Each of the above cases helped determine tribal sovereignty rights. Tribal sovereignty is the ability to govern and protect the health, safety, and welfare of tribal citizens. It also granted tribes their own right to determine their own citizenship (Johnson & Kaufmann, 2000). This prior history has helped lay the foundation for current and future tribal leadership.

Another significant part of history is the federal trust responsibility. The trust responsibility derives from treaties and is an obligation of the federal government to protect tribe’s self-governance, tribal lands, assets, resources and treaty rights, and to carry out the directions of federal statutes and court cases (Johnson & Kaufmann, 2000). This history is critical since it was essentially the law that protected the tribe’s inherent right to self-government and directly relates to the topic of tribal leadership. An important element of tribal governments is the legislative functions. In most federally recognized tribes there are three functions the nations exercise: tribal councils, tribal chairs, and tribal courts (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). Each component helps maintain the structure of government. Tribal council members are compared to state legislators and serve the tribe for a select term, generally determined by a tribe’s constitution.
Additionally, a tribal chairperson is like the U.S. president or governor involved in daily operations and administration of the tribe and also makes decisions. Most tribal chairs oversee the tribal government laws and enforce meaning (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). This is also important because to understand the topic of tribal leadership, one needs to know the roles of government. Figure 2 helps clarify Tribal government and the U.S. Political System.

![Diagram of U.S. and Tribal Government Systems](image)

Source: (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. 35)

*Figure 2. U.S. political system on the left, tribal governing system on the right.*

Another important element of history that impacted many Native tribes is the General Allotment Act (1887). This act was major in that it dictated a forced conversion of communally held tribal lands into small parcels for individual Indian ownership. Subsequently, more than 90 million acres of reservation land were taken from tribes and given to settlers (Johnson & Kaufmann, 2000). There was also the Indian Reorganization Act (1934), intended to prevent further allotment as an attempt to help tribes reform
governments. All these important aspects of history shape the direction of tribal leadership today.

**California Tribal History**

In terms of the early years of history and examining the genocide of Native communities that occurred within the State of California, the historical trauma affected the Native American tribal population and community. The definition of genocide, as determined by the United Nations, is

Any acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group, (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (United Nations, 1948, Resolution 260 A (III) Article 2)

This definition helps us understand the trauma the Native population have endured and that the killings of people created destruction and a decrease in the numbers of community members. Some of the earlier forms of history describe California’s tribal culture as being comprised of many diverse peoples within the region. There were estimates of about 310,000 to 700,000 Native people (Castillo, Trafzer, & Hyer, 1999).

A major event that impacted the Native population was the gold rush, and it was very similar to the holocaust killings of people. Due to gold miners and settlers coming to the region and pushing out the Native people, there was an overall decrease in the population. Many of the tribal cultural traditions and values were also lost at this time. The major
cultural implications were that language, the environment, and spiritual practices were often taken from the people, all during the gold rush era.

During the gold rush era, the whites viewed Native Americans as people of little or no value and oftentimes referred to them as uncivilized people. The European people actually intended to push them off the land or exterminate the population so they would not be in the way (Castillo et al., 1999). Once the military forced Native people from their homelands, it was hard for them to survive, as they lived off the earth naturally and their everyday life included hunting, fishing, and just surviving off the daily elements of the earth. The gold rush displacement changed the entire way of living for the Native people. Essentially, since the U.S. federal government and military took people out of their element and the way of life they knew forever changed as did their normal habitat. This was such a traumatic experience that still has lingering effects on the Native American population today as historical trauma and posttraumatic stress. Since the Native lands were conquered and taken, the elements of tradition were greatly impacted (Brave Heart, Chase, Elkins, & Altschul, 2011).

There are many documented historical examples in which many Native people were killed and removed from the land. A particular example is Bloody Island Massacre (Clear Lake), which occurred in 1850 when about 200 Pomo Indians including many women and children were slaughtered by the U.S. Calvary (Dadugan, 2012). This was a horrific event in which many lives were lost. The U.S. Army arrived at the island and killed every Indian man, woman, and child and the waters ran red from the blood of the
people. The event has forever changed the lives of the Pomo people, as many of the culture and population were removed from the land. This senseless act is an example of the genocide done to the Native community and gives some insight into the trauma that many Native people in the community experienced. It is critical to understand these historical examples as a way to better understand tribal leadership.

The Native tribes understood certain aspects of taking care of the land. For example, many of the local tribes within the California region such as the Yuroks, Miwoks, and Maidu were all impacted. The Yurok tribe for example, had not practiced some of their ceremonial dances for some time and no living person had knowledge of certain dances done in the past because there was such a loss of people (Heizer, 1978). Due to the changes resultant from white settlers coming to California one can see how many tribes were affected by the presence of these people. Additionally, the Maidu tribe had its own cultural traditions that impacted the entire village or group. Since this tribe controlled a certain territory, there was usually a headman who had a major role in the socio-political organization, and this person had the authority to call upon other surrounding villages for hunting and ceremonies and other cultural traditions (Heizer, 1978). There was a natural way in which to deal with manners, which was all changed once the settlers came.

Another local tribe also greatly impacted by the gold rush was the Miwok people. They had a variety of linguistic and cultural dialogues. Each of the different communities, from Eastern Miwok to the Bay Area Miwok or Plains Miwok to the
Northern Sierra Miwok and Central Sierra Miwok, had a language distinct to the group (Heizer, 1978). The Spanish missions directly impacted these tribes, as well, having a great effect on the removal of the population. There was a dramatic decrease in the population at the time the Spanish missions came. The California missions were also authoritarian, coercive institutions at which many Native people were not allowed to be free or leave. According to Forbes (1969), physical force was used to keep the Natives from leaving as well as discipline including punishments, such as whipping with a barbed lash, branding, and execution or solitary confinement. The missions also greatly impacted many tribal communities and devastated the Native communities. By observing these tribes and examining the history, one can see how tribes were impacted culturally and spiritually as well as environmentally by the Spanish Missions and gold rush that took place within the California region.

**Indian Education**

Another aspect of history that should be examined in greater detail is the Indian boarding school experience and Indian Education. Indian Education receives little national attention and there continues to be poor academic performance of American Indian students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). One could say the previous history of the boarding school directly correlates with how education is perceived within the Native community. The boarding school experience was often a traumatic event since many children were forced to attend with the goal to assimilate. The conditions of the schools were sometimes harsh with limited food and other resources (Reyhner & Eder, 2004).
The Native students also received strong discipline that oftentimes impacted their social, physical, and mental health. The Carlisle Indian School was a boarding school that had a particularly huge impact on many Native students; many Native children attended this school from various tribes. The children attending Carlisle Indian School were forced to be there. Henry Pratt was the primary individual who started this school and exposed the concept of selecting a school that was far enough away from the frontier. The school opened in 1879, and the reports about the school indicate there were no beds and only bread and water to eat. Once Native children arrived at the school, they were forced to speak English (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Reports indicate that some Native children died and many Native children were sent into the homes of non-Indian families where they became servants. From this boarding school example, one can clearly see the treatment of Native students and how this has contributed to the perception that education is an extremely negative experience for Native people.

To examine more about the history of Native American education, it is important to understand the different laws and policies created by the federal government that impacted tribal communities. During the early 1800s, the Bureau of Indian Affairs was created within the War Department. This was a structure formed to deal with all Native issues and to also assist with treaty negotiations. The Bureau was an important element since the goal was to assist tribes and provide additional support. One way in which the Bureau provided support was through Indian Education. In early years, the research suggested the Indian Education programs operated by the Bureau worked to benefit the
student; however, in reality this was not the outcome, as many of these students were not trained when they went home with skills for employment. Simply stated, the BIA training received in Native schools was disconnected to the environment and culture (Szasz, 1999). It was not a surprise there needed to be a change within the educational system for the Indian student. It was through the Merriam Report (1928) a change was influenced and a curriculum incorporating Indian culture was introduced. This was a small step toward a new shift for Indian Education. In more current times, the goal of the Bureau has been to help tribes establish their own laws and assist them with acquiring land into trust.

Another important element of the history of education was the Johnson O’Malley Act (1934), a way for Congress to aid programs for public schools that directly supported Indian Education and Native students (Szasz, 1999). The Act was important since it gave additional funding to public schools for Native American children. Inherent within this Act was the focus to ensure the State understood the Native student. Such understanding is an extremely valuable part of Indian Education history and was the start of various Indian programs and school funding.

It is significant to examine education but to also examine the history and acts that impacted tribal leadership. During the 1960s and 1970s, tribes began to create tribal colleges to ease the transition from reservation life. Tribal colleges are unique in that they combine personal attention, cultural relevance in pedagogy and curriculum, and encourage Native American students to overcome barriers (American Indian Higher
Education Consortium, 1999). Following these enactments, the Indian Self-Determination Act and Education Act gave tribal governments more control over their tribal affairs and provided more funding for educational assistance (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). The acts are significant since they helped set the stage for the progress of tribes today; this also laid the foundation for changing the educational system.

Additionally, during 1961, John F. Kennedy became president and during his time in administration, he had called for a new independent study of Indian Education. The BIA had increased classroom footage and developed a list of supplies; also, new construction money was made available to schools (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). It seemed as if even though there was more funding to help with these schools, only a small number of students were still attending the BIA schools, as many students had started to attend public schools. Many changes occurred within this time frame that helped shape the current foundation of education today.

In the more recent history, under the Clinton administration during the early 1990s, the president created tribal consultation in which he met with over 550 federally recognized tribal leaders. This was the first time since 1822 that the President of the United States not only recognized the leaders of the First Nations, but met with them as representatives of sovereign nations. The goal of this meeting was to discuss issues of concerns within Indian county/tribal communities. It was under this same president an executive order was given in relation to consultation and coordination with Indian Tribal governments pledging the federal government would establish and engage in meaningful
consultation and collaboration with Indian tribal governments in matters that significantly impacted tribal communities (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). This is a critical component of history showing an attempt at reaffirming the relationships of tribes. This was another way in which the U.S. government recognized tribal power and authority of leadership.

In the year 2000, the Assistant Secretary of Interior issued an apology to Native people on behalf of the BIA for the poor treatment the Native people had experienced from the agency (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). The apology was a major issue in the tribal communities since many times the BIA earned a negative reputation with Native people who, many, felt did more harm than help to tribes. To exacerbate the relationship between the U.S. federal government and sovereign nations, in 2006 during the Bush administration, there were proposed budget cuts of more than $200 million for education and other Indian programs. Ultimately, the full cuts did not occur but some funding was impacted. It is a major concern since tribal education has direct bearing on tribal leadership.

In the more recent years, the Obama administration had hoped to renew the tribal consultation and collaboration outlined by former president Clinton (Wilkins & Stark, 2011). This process helped set a precedent so tribes would have a voice within the governmental system. “In today’s time and under president Obama, he has held the most widely attended Tribal Nations Conference with 564 tribes attending, this president has assured tribal leaders that he would continue to uphold the nation-to-nation relationship” (Wilkins & Stark, 2011, p. xxvii). This not only impacts leadership but also helps
establish support for tribal programs and education. A critical element of leadership is observing the backdrop of history, but it is also significant to acknowledge and discuss tribal cultural values and traditions.

**Tribal Cultural Values & Traditions**

American Indian tribes have many cultural traditions and values that make each of them unique to their aboriginal area. Some of these traditions and values range from ceremonies, dancing, and singing to other cultural gatherings such as big times or Pow-Wows. In essence, the types of programs and services offered to tribal members differ from tribe to tribe. However, when it comes to leadership and tribal government, there is one common value among tribes relating to the value of collaboration and connectedness. Many times as seen in history, tribes come together in a unified response as a way to help support each other. “One foundational value, of leadership from the American Indian perspective, is a shared vision and responsibility. Although there may be individual or tribal differences among familiar groups, this perspective is a consistent cultural view” (Portman & Garrett, 2005, p. 284). It is significant to recognize the common goal of collaboration since it has been a long-standing guiding force within tribal leadership.

However, there are also times when tribal leaders invest their own interests and needs. Although this is rare, some leaders in a particular tribal community have been charged with caring for themselves instead of working for the community (Duran, 2006). When an elderly woman from a tribe was asked about institutional oppression and violence, the woman shared about selfishness apparent in her tribe. The tribal leader’s selfishness was
evident by the policy implementation in which leaders’ family members gained financially from policy decisions; this does not occur in every community but can in some instances (Duran, 2006).

When examining some of the early history of tribes, women played an instrumental role in leadership as well. In some traditional tribal cultures, women often held positions of authority and were also important in preserving the values and culture of caring for their families (Pember, 2008). The women were strong individuals and lived much of their life experiences in leadership roles. More recently within the country, there are approximately 14 female tribal college presidents, and about 130 serve as leaders among the overall total tribes within the United States (Pember, 2008). It is so significant in today’s leadership realm that tradition and culture are still being passed on by the empowerment of women serving in that major role to help and give back to the Native community. In important tribal ceremonies, women played, and continue to play, equal parts as compared to men, and the women would often help with the singing of songs and maintaining tribal identity (Miller & Chuchryk, 1996), yet another example of how critical the role women play is to the community.

Another important element of tribal government is the fact that committees consist of multiple leaders both male and female, and most of the time a group of elder women will hold the ultimate power for decisions impacting the entire tribe (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Typically, in reference to tribal cultural traditions, elders embody a critical role in the community. Oftentimes, they help guide the tribe’s future direction.
Sometimes, there is a separate council made up of elders. This council may have the ultimate power and authority to make decisions about the tribe’s future. An example of such power can be seen by observing the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians. This particular tribal government has formed its own committee for the elders, and oftentimes these elders makes decisions that impact tribal programs and services. Examples of those programs include education, housing or youth programs. Another important element of elders being involved within the Native community is by their storytelling, which is significant since information was passed down from one generation to the next by oral histories. In leadership, it is important elders are counseled, as many of them have already lived a similar or shared experience that can be helpful when making decisions and guiding.

There are also some common values and traditions shared by tribes. Some of these values include collectivism, collaboration, compassion, and the incorporation of nature. The first area to be discussed in more detail is the area of collectivism. There is a respect for individual autonomy and freedom within tribal culture by the whole tribe critical to leadership’s existence (Stubben, 2006). Leadership leads from a stance such that it is important to include all members of the group or tribe. Leadership was looked at from a collective attitude in that each tribal member considered him or herself as part of the group, they made decisions as a whole, and each voice mattered and counted. In today’s tribal leadership, elements of the collective still exist since in many tribes; the
leaders bring the decisions back to the general membership and take the opinion of others into consideration.

Another major part of the traditional culture is working together as a unified tribe. Many times in tribal leadership, decisions will be made as group decisions. The tribal leader will often speak to other members in the tribe before making a decision. The leader recognizes the importance of having all vested stakeholders’ input as part of the decision-making process. In the American Indian community people, leaders are judged on their actions according to whether or not they are benefiting the tribal community or benefiting their own needs. Oftentimes, tribal leadership is rotated, allowing team members to avoid burnout associated with constant responsibility or redundant work (McLeod, 2002). In many tribes, tribal leadership is shared and when decisions are made, a collective approach is utilized.

The second value is collaboration. According to Portman and Garrett (2005), traditional American Indian people are accustomed to cooperating and sharing with each other; there is a sense of mutual empowerment among tribes. This is important in leadership since many times when making decisions, the tribal council/government will usually consult with the general membership before taking action. An important element of tribal leadership is the attachment to the tribal community (Adams, 1988). This is true even today since tribal leaders were elected and selected into the role of leadership. The leader’s role and responsibility is to represent the tribe in the best manner. Often, at times tribal leaders will come together to decide on how to resolve an issue. An example
of this can be observed within the Tribal TANF program. TANF stands for “temporary assistance for needy families;” however, tribal TANF serves the Native population. This program is currently operated in California. There are various tribes within the region that maintain these programs, and most of the tribes offering these services are under the authority of the tribal government. In regard to the area of leadership, tribal leaders and governments will hold meetings to discuss how to address certain issues within the Tribal TANF program. At times, leaders resolve issues by using collaborative methods, which can be observed by holding meetings or conferences and exchanging information.

An element of tribal leadership is mutual empowerment, which helps emphasize harmony and balance. This form of empowerment encourages others within the community to seek opportunities for group promotion in a way in which leaders can work collaboratively (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Tribal leaders often assist each other within their leadership roles and often share and exchange knowledge on programs or services. There are few examples in which tribal leaders attend meetings and from these meeting create tribal associations to assist each other in making decisions or to discuss topics impacting the entire Native community. A particular approach tribes utilize to discuss important agenda items is in the form of a talking circle. Talking circles allow each individual to engage in a discussion and contribute to the conversation. Traditional song, dance, and prayer also help tribal leaders in the decision-making and leadership processes and can also be seen as a spiritual dimension (Nichols, 2008). This leads to the next area discussed, cultural and traditional values.
The third cultural/traditional value is compassion, relating to the concept of the circle imbedded within the circle of life. What is meant by the circle of life is that all beings are interconnected and American Indian traditionalism is humility, or a person’s critical ability to consider the needs of community/family over self (Portman & Garrett, 2005). It is important to consider the entire tribal community needs, which directly relates to the importance of elders and ensuring their needs are met first. At times within certain tribes, unique programs are created to help elders within the tribe. It is very common for elders to get tribal services as a first priority. For example, there are certain elders programs that assist with medical bills or food. From these programs one can clearly observe the compassion for the community. Additionally, elders make up a significant group who holds various positions of formal and informal influence in their extended families, and who oftentimes are essential in the leadership of the tribe.

When a Bay Mills elder was asked about leadership, the elder replied, “All of us stand around the fishing net as equals. Sometimes one person pulls harder than another, and sometimes a person pulls another. Leadership is like that and leadership moves around the circle” (McLeod, 2002, p. 10). Hence, various tribes have elders sit on committees to help guide the direction of the tribe and to educate other tribal members on culture and a number of other life experiences. For this study, the researcher analyzed the educational programs the tribes offer or believe to be most beneficial within the Native community. In the literature concerning Native American education, it is believed greater Native control will lead to schools responsive to unique needs and concerns of
Native communities. In essence, such control will lead to educational practices and policies that will promote greater academic success (Huffman, 2010).

Another component of leadership that should be discussed is the holistic approach, which includes all aspects of life. A holistic approach considers the physical, psychological, and the spiritual elements of an individual. For some Native people, cultural identity is rooted in tribal membership, community, and heritage. The tribe is an interdependent system of people who perceive themselves as parts of the greater whole (Garrett & Garrett, 2003). These are important aspects of tribal leadership since tribal leaders are considered to be one component of the greater community.

**Tribal Leadership**

Anyone that has spent time in Native California knows there are many leaders and people ready to devote their time toward helping the community (Tripp-Allen, 2012). There are many examples of tribal leadership within California, but the research is somewhat limited on the topic of tribal leadership and education. The researcher for this study was able to locate one similar dissertation within the topic area. This study related to the experiences of an American Indian Educator Leader serving Indian students within the community. This research discussed some of the important elements of tribal leadership. It was found that long before contact with Europeans, American Indian people had methods of leadership to assist with tribal matters, and leadership varied based on tribal cultures and traditions (Gardner & Godfrey, 2000). Tribes also had their own traditions and values incorporated into leadership, still found in leaders today. Many
tribes want to ensure cultural values are taught through different educational programs. To understand tribal leadership, some general leadership theories need to be examined.

**Theoretical Leadership Frameworks**

It is not only important to understand the traditional and cultural forms of leadership, but to better understand this type of leadership, it is also important to examine other leadership theories as well. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined multiple leadership theories. The leadership styles are divided up into each of the following areas: servant leadership, shared distributed leadership, and relational leadership theory. For the relational theory, the researcher focused on transformational leadership theory.

Individual leadership theory directly connects to servant leadership. This early form of leadership largely focuses on the relationships between leaders and followers and the one-on-one leadership. The theories cited in this research exist and may be relevant to the population being researched, but the researcher does not want to impose them. Instead, an opportunity for the development of new theories based on the Native American experience and community exists.

**Servant Leadership Theory**

Servant leadership refers to one that serves first. This approach can clearly be observed within tribal leadership, since most of the work done by tribal leaders is for the better good of the entire community (Spears, 2005). Servant leadership usually involves consideration of the other and helps build on the community (Greenleaf, 1977). This is
an important aspect of tribes since many leaders are directly serving their entire tribal community. Servant leadership is a form of leadership that directly relates to the relationship of the stakeholders/constituents (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). In servant leadership, it is critical for the leader to establish a relationship with the community. Since tribal council members are elected into their leadership role, the leaders need to represent the membership. There has to be a relationship established and an understanding of their role as leaders. Their ultimate job is to serve others. Tribal leaders are often expected to have previous histories in which they represent others’ views and ensure the direction of the tribe supports the membership. Another important element and style of leadership is distributed theory.

**Distributed Theory**

When viewing the topic of tribal leadership, it is important to understand how this theory can help explain leadership dynamics. According to scholars, the shared leadership approach potentially provides a more suitable solution to teams (Hoch, Pearce & Welzel, 2010). Shared leadership represents a team of people working toward a common goal. It is suggested this form of leadership may be comprised of transformation, transactive, and empowering leadership behaviors (Hoch et al., 2010). Since many tribal leaders operate from a collectivist approach when making decisions, this approach directly relates to shared leadership. Many times, effective Native American leadership is determined by whether or not a tribal leader works toward actions that benefit the entire tribal community instead of their own individual needs (Portman &
Garrett, 2005). Within the community, it is important for collaboration and sharing. Additionally, there is a strong value of empowering others within the community. In general, tribal leaders try to maintain a unified approach since some tribes have similar resources and need to make similar decisions impacting the entire community.

In some cultures, one might need to take strong decisive action to be seen as a leader, whereas in other cultures, consultation and a democratic approach may be a prerequisite, a relevant area for tribes. Some tribal council leaders are elected into office utilizing a democratic approach in which the general membership and tribal community holds elections to vote individuals/leaders into political office. It is similar to a transformative leadership style. This type of leader enacts new models, realities, policies, and structures that can address the inequalities plaguing society (Nevarez, Wood, & Rose, in press). In some tribal communities, the leader will engage the community members. Within this practice of transformative leadership, inclusive structures are built and collaboration between all stakeholders is encouraged (Nevarez et al., in press). Such dynamics are clearly observed within the Native population and leadership, explained in greater detail within the next section of transformative leadership.

**Rational/Transformation Theory**

This form of leadership theory is important to understand, and transformational leadership appears to be an effective approach in creating and sharing knowledge within an organization (Chi, Lan, & Dorjgotov, 2012). Many times, transformational leadership focuses on the future direction of the tribe. Tribal leadership also encompasses and
considers the future direction and vision for the entire tribe and its community. This style of leadership helps bring change and knowledge that is shared by all members. Additionally, these leaders influence followers’ self-definitions, affect, values, beliefs, and behaviors. Transformational leadership has been a topic of much research in the past three decades and there has been much evidence to suggest that this early form of leadership has a positive effect on the follower work attitudes and performance at both the individual and organization levels (Avolio et al., 2009).

The next theory examined is social justice theory since this directly relates to the topic of education. To understand the direction tribes are taking to reclaim their education, we need to understand what occurred and their previous experiences in education. A way to better understand tribal communities and their past experiences in mainstream education is to review the works of Paulo Freire (1995).

**Social Justice Theory**

According to Freire (1995), one of the first characteristics of anti-dialogical action was the conquest in which someone or something was able to be conquered. This can clearly be observed within Native American tribes. Much of their living environment and land was conquered between the years of 1870 and the 1900s (Duran, 2006). Various people, including the British, the French, the Spaniards and later the Northern Americans fought against Native people and also against one another in an attempt to take the land upon which more than 310,000 tribes in the California region were living (Anderson, 2005). The forced entry displaced those who survived the initial wars, genocide, and
disease, and at least 80% of the population had been systemically exterminated (Duran, 2006). Of the initial North American continent on which Native people lived and existed for thousands of years, now only a small portion of these lands are under Native stewardship. After military defeat, American Indians experienced one of the most systematic and successful programs of ethnic cleansing the world has seen. They were relocated to what amounted to penal colonies, starved, neglected, and forbidden to practice their religious beliefs. Their children were taken from them and reeducated so their language, culture, and kinship patterns were lost to them (Whitback, Adams, Hoyt, & Chen, 2004). All of the aforementioned events in history are significant since they help explain the conquest and historical trauma passed upon each generation.

**Cultural invasion.** When examining the element of cultural invasion, it is essential that those being invaded begin to realize their own reality and that the invasion is considered the element of domination (Freire, 1995). The realization is significant when viewing tribal history, since cultural invasion played a huge role in tribal identity and tribal leadership. When examining the history of tribes and how the goal was ultimate assimilation into the European culture and civilization, it can clearly be observed how cultural invasion greatly impacted tribes. Cultural invasion implied the superiority of the invader, the inferiority of those who are invaded, and the imposition of values (Freire, 1995). It is exactly what happened with Native tribes. As a result, tribes today actively are reclaiming their educational systems and cultural identities. Since tribal leadership was well established before European contact and tribes were oppressed by
Europeans, it is important for tribes in today’s society not use the same anti-dialogical procedures. Such restraint can be a challenge at times for leadership, since oppression was a learned behavior oppressed onto the Native communities. In some leadership aspects, the prevailing issue or concern is making sure the leader remembers the work is for the community and not for him or herself (Duran, 2006). Oppression is not occurring in every community but may occur in some situations and it is critical for tribes to follow the path of dialogue and communication, which many tribal leaders are currently doing (Freire, 1995). For example, tribes are using discussions and communication as a way to assist with their decisions and as a way of empowering future leaders and uniting all.

**Cooperation.** To better understand tribal leadership, we can also observe the dialogical action of communication. According to Freire (1995), dialogue is essential communication and must underlie any cooperation. It is because of the dialogue that others believe a leader’s authenticity. The trust of the people in leaders reflects the confidence of the leaders in the people (Freire, 1995), also an important element in tribal leadership as the trust of the community is given to tribal leaders and these select tribal leaders make those critical decisions that impact all. For critical decisions to be made, there has to be trust in the community. It is also not important to understand cooperation but to understand liberation. Native Americans have moved in the direction of social empowerment into the 20th century, and in the general community there have been more advocates for Indians as a whole in certain areas, which directly leads into the discussion of liberation (Stubben, 2006).
Unity for liberation/organization. According Freire (1995), the unity of liberation is when a leadership group grows out of communion with the united people. This is a reality of tribal leadership. Many times, various tribal leaders will unite and stand together in Indian Education or policy that is in the best interest for the entire Native population. It is also critical for leaders to organize themselves with people and structures of power that constitute the practice of freedom (Freire, 1995). All the above components are critical elements of tribal leadership, and help make sense of the direction of leadership today. The last theory discussed is indigenous research will also help give insight into the topic area of leadership.

Indigenous research. In addition to the social justice theory, it is helpful to learn about Indigenous research as a way to better understand tribal leadership. As part of the Indigenous research agenda, it is conceptualized as constituting a program and set of approaches situated within the decolonization of politics of indigenous people’s movement. The main agenda focuses on the goal of self-determination as a goal of social justice expressed through a wide range of social, cultural/healing (Smith, 2012). Figure 3 illustrates this research agenda, which can be described as four major tides of survival, recovery, development, and self-determination, conditions in which indigenous communities are moving. Each of the areas are as follows: the survival of the peoples as physical beings, of languages and social relations, and recovery is a selective process, often responding to immediate crises, according to Smith (2012). The other elements can be found in the words of healing, decolonization, spiritual, and recovery as often these
are terms that conflict with Western science (Smith, 2012). These are listed as tides because it is in reference to the sea where tides represent change and movement (Smith, 2012). The circle relates to Native culture and the process of life. The overall explanation of the circle is part of the process and cycle.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.** Representation of indigenous research.

Understanding this form of research helps explain the topic of tribal leadership. Within the Native culture, the circle is referenced to help gain an understanding of all things and how these things are inter-connected and equal, not one thing being more or
less than another. Figure 3 helps explain the communities that are moving and the survival of the people’s languages and culture, while also including spiritual practices. The circle also represents the history and the words selected that are different in terms of Western research terminology (Smith, 2012). This cycle helps clarify some components of the tribal community.

In conclusion, to gain an understanding of tribal leadership, first the history of tribes needs to be examined along with the history of Indian Education. In addition, describing the tribal structure and government can help explain the process of tribal leadership. It is also significant to understand the various leadership theories that can be applied to tribal leadership or the creation of new theories. The researcher hopes that from this research, there will be a greater understanding of Indian Education and Tribal leadership. By looking in depth at the social justice theory as well as at indigenous research, the realm of leadership is demystified. Chapter 3 pertains to the specific type of study conducted.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and provides a brief explanation of the research study. This chapter also describes the data collection process and provides information on the participants in this specific study. There is an in-depth explanation on the data collection in relation to the topic of tribal leadership and education. First discussed in detail is the research method and design of the study. I selected a qualitative approach as a way to engage participants in explaining their cultural backgrounds and educational experiences. As a researcher within the Native American community, it is important to take note of the indigenous research style and how this form of research can help with explaining indigenous contexts of the Native community (Smith, 2012). From this method of research, relationship building may be fostered and the researcher is assisted with maintaining equal status with the participants of this study in a reciprocal relationship.

Research Design

The research design is a phenomenological type of qualitative research. According to Creswell (2009), this type of research is described as understanding the essence of an experience about a phenomenon and also provides themes of meaning. In this type of study, the researcher finds statements about an individual’s experience of the topic and helps describe the meaning. The purpose of the study was to understand in
more detail the topic of tribal leadership and how Native American leadership experience impacts education. It was the researcher’s professional experience and interest in the topic that led to this examination of tribal leadership and education and how this impacts future generations. The researcher sought to learn more about the experience of Native American tribal leaders. The researcher initiated contact with participants for the sole purpose of conducting interviews and gathering data. The data from the interviews were collected and examined to identify patterns or themes within the research. The eight participants were contacted by telephone and by e-mail and were asked to volunteer for this study. There were also referrals from other people within the Native community and an introduction and exchange of information occurred between the researcher and the participants prior to meeting. The data gathered pointed to implications of tribal leadership and the significance of working collaboratively across tribes when possible. Some other various findings uncovered by this research were cultural identity, self-awareness, and establishing trust and leadership skills.

**Participants**

The eight participants selected for this study were comprised of a purposeful sample of individuals involved within the Native American community and consisted of members from various tribes. All participants resided within Sacramento region or were close to the area. Participation was voluntary and there were approximately 10-15 interview questions provided and eight individual one-on-one interviews conducted. Each of the interviews was video-taped and audio recorded and the final film will be
edited and shared with members from the Native American community. A consent form was completed and secured from all participants (see Appendix A).

**Research Questions**

The general research questions guiding this study are listed below;

RQ1: What are processes implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within Native communities?

Sub-Question 1: What are challenges tribal leaders face?

Sub-Question 2: How does funding impact leadership?

Sub-Question 3: What types of training and preparation would be recommended for tribal leadership?

RQ 2: How do tribal leaders define educational success?

Sub-Question 1: What are the types of services and educational programs currently being utilized by tribal leadership?

Sub-Question 2: What is tribal leadership’s involvement in education?

Sub-Question 3: What are some suggested ways for tribes to establish an educational program?

RQ 3: What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders?

Sub-Question 1: What cultural traditions are necessary to successfully lead a tribe?
Sub-Question 2: What types of leadership skills, styles, and knowledge are needed in tribal leadership?

**Setting, Population, and Sample**

The setting of this research study included the following; individuals were interviewed in their specific work environments, which were tribal offices and or public settings. All interviews took place in a work office environment, and some interviews were conducted on campus at California State University, Sacramento. The sample of the population was a purposeful and quota sample, including eight participants within Native American tribes, most within the region of California. The purposeful sampling occurred because the researcher wanted to just select participants based on their experiences within the tribal leadership community. It was a purposeful sample because the participants were members of the Native American community and they represented a wide range of state and federal recognized or unrecognized tribes as well. To explain briefly, unrecognized tribes may include participants who are descendants, but are not recognized by the federal government (Wilkins, 2011). In California, there are some tribes that have not gained recognition, and for the purpose of this study these participants were also included in the interviews.

The eight participants were, at the time of the study, involved in leadership either as tribal leader/council member, student, and Indian educator or tribal community/agency member. More specifically the individuals were a) tribal council members in the leadership role or were previously elected as a leader, b) students or current Indian
Educators, or c) tribal community members who worked within the community. All individuals were 18 years old or older. Additionally, committee members of the dissertation helped recommend and identify individuals to participate in the study. Particularly, those selected for this study were Native American with knowledge on tribal leadership or educational programs. It was critical for this sample to be selected since the topic area is specifically examining the Native American community. Since the researcher is an enrolled member of a local tribe within the Sacramento region, the researcher was familiar with participants and related to some participants. Data were collected within the California region to determine some commonalities or themes among tribes.

**Instrumentation and Materials**

The main instrument for this research was the interview protocol in Appendix B. The researcher conducted eight, 60-minute one-on-one interviews at each participant’s work environment or within a public setting. There was a tape recorder and video recorder for the purposes of transcription. A copy of the transcription was sent to each individual/participant for final review as well as the video recording. During the member checking process, the participants were given the right to make any changes or edits to the transcription or video as they saw fit. Other meetings also took place after the initial interview occurred, and a second meeting often took place for participants to review the transcription and video. Each participant was contacted by telephone or e-mail to determine if they would like to participate in the research study. Once verbal or e-mail
permission was received it was followed up with written consent (see Appendix A). The transcription of the data was kept in a secure location and audio tapes will be destroyed after a year of the study date. In addition, for the purpose of this particular study, a video will be created with the final results being in a documentary format. To ensure validity of the instrumentation and design, the researcher utilized member-checking and a fellow colleague to assist with a review of the data collected in the study, and assistance with the videotaping/recording.

Building Rapport and Establishing Trust with the Participants

Due to the historical trauma within the Native American community and to distrust, the researcher established a rapport with the participants before conducting the qualitative interviews. What has been shown in previous research is that at times, indigenous students are confronted with their own identities when conducting research within their community and there are certain protocols to follow (Smith, 2012). It is significant when conducting this particular study on tribal leadership that the researcher takes time to know the participants and establish a respect so the researcher can receive insight and knowledge on the topic area. Some of the main protocols to follow are respect and practices of reciprocity in order to gain trust of the individual (Smith, 2012). Establishing trust is a process and may not occur within the initial encounter, which is expected; therefore, the interviewer may need to meet with the participant once or twice before conducting the interview. Some participants were familiar with the researcher,
and already, at the initial interview, felt comfortable with sharing information on the topic area. In such circumstances, the researcher did not have to establish a relationship.

Prior to starting the opening interviews, the researcher also took the proper steps to ensure each participant was comfortable, and she explained the rationale for taping the sessions. She also explained the purpose of the interview. Before starting the interview, the researcher recorded the participants stating their names and oftentimes would exchange in a dialogue describing some of her own background as a Native professional so they could become somewhat familiar with her work within the community.

Additionally, other selected participants for the study were referred by a local community member. Before the initial interview, the researcher formally introduced herself to the participant. This also helped establish trust as the researcher and allowed for the researcher to gain access to the field of tribal leadership. Also, having the trust of the community members provided an introduction of the researcher that verified and established the researcher’s character and connection within the Native American community. As mentioned by Smith (2012), it is also important to gain the trust of the individual before directly asking for the consent to interview, as in some cases this can be seen as rude behavior.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

Since this was a phenomenological research study, the researcher transcribed and read through the data to look for emergent themes and meanings coded for discussion in Chapter 4. The data were analyzed according to coding categories and the researcher
used a spreadsheet or chart to help identify patterns in tribal leadership. The data were analyzed according to each of three main research questions identified. The researcher also utilized a chart and created categories to display themes identified in the data collection process.

**Protection of Participants**

The researcher took measures to ensure participant protection by obtaining consent. For the purpose of this research, a documentary will be created; hence, anonymity is not possible but there will be written consent for the filming as well. The data collected were video-taped and a film of the results was created for the sole purpose of education and as a tool to explain the research findings. Participants were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and video recording. After the first interview, the researcher e-mailed the transcription to each individual participant and gave them an opportunity to reply within a two-week time period with any comments or edits. During this time, participants were able to address any areas of the video they wished to be edited from the film or transcription. They agreed to the video at the time of the interview.

The accuracy of each participant’s interview was critical to ensure that their true voices were portrayed as well as their thoughts and reflections. Also, at any time during the recording, the participant could make the decision to stop and no longer participate in the research as well. Each participant was given the opportunity to view the video and transcription, which allowed for member checking and ensured that what the participants
stated was accurate. The process ensured approval for both the dissertation and video, which are intended for different audiences. The taped interview was the participant’s voice in the research and his or her perspective on the topic of tribal leadership and education. The transcription will later be destroyed and will not be exposed. The fact that the researcher is from the Native American community helped her establish trust with participants. Since this study took place in this region, the researcher was already familiar with the selected participants.

Chapter 4 contains a description of the research findings and identified themes and patterns. Chapter 4 focuses on the process of the data collection on tribal leadership and addresses the main research questions. This chapter also describes participants’ understanding of leadership and reports the transcriptions as well as the field notes and other documentations from the interviews. The researcher explains in more detail the system used to track the data and the method of research used to analyze the results.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of this phenomenology qualitative research study designed to provide a better understanding of tribal leadership and education and the ways in which leadership, styles, cultural knowledge, and experience are utilized within the Native community. The participants’ semi-structured one-on-one interviews served to answer the following research questions: (1) What processes are implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within Native communities? (2) How do tribal leaders define educational success? (3) What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders? The participants in this study shared their tribal governmental experiences and also their experience working within the Native American community.

A purposeful sample of participants was selected for this particular research study. The individuals were selected based on their experience within the tribal leadership community as well on the following criteria: a) tribal council members in the leadership role or those previously elected as a leader, b) students or current Indian Educators, and c) tribal community members working within the community. All individuals were at least 18 years old or older.

In their own words, the participants shared their leadership perspectives and identified successful strategies utilized throughout their journey. The participants made
recommendations based on their own perceptions of tribal leadership and also on what they had been taught by the community members and elders. Under the category of “tribal experience/community,” participants were asked to describe their overall experiences and work within the Native community. Major themes emerged and were correlated to leadership theories as well as to social justice theory. The leadership theoretical frameworks include servant leadership, distributed/shared leadership, and transformational leadership theories. The literature on servant leadership defines leadership as a leader who provides service to individuals, groups, or the community (Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011). This form of leadership relates to this research study and aligns with the themes of working within the American Indian community. The participants in this research study also mentioned leadership skills and training are necessary for future tribal leaders.

The next leadership theory, shared leadership, can also be applied toward the topic of tribal leadership. This leadership style relates to the shared leadership focusing on a team instead of just the individual leader (Avolio et al., 2009). The leadership style relates to tribal leadership since many times the decisions are made together as a team in a more collaborative way. Usually, within tribal or shared leadership, the general membership and elders are consulted before the tribe moves forward on a decision. A majority of the participants within this research study also made reference to the importance of elders within the community and tribal leadership.
The next leadership style to be examined was transformational leadership, a style focusing on standards and ethical stewardship (Caldwell et al., 2011). The leadership approach appeared to be the most dominant as a majority of the participants mentioned that to be a tribal leader within the community, self-awareness and self-confidence are greatly needed. This is explained in greater detail in the interview data. All leadership frameworks are evident in this study on tribal leadership, but some of the main elements consist of collaboration and working with others when making decisions.

The last theory to examine is social justice to which a majority of participant responses relate. Historical trauma has impacted the Native American population for years. The participants expressed that the cultural invasion enacted upon this population impacted the tribes and the leadership of their respective communities. According to Freire (1995), “cultural conquest leads to the cultural inauthenticity of those who are invaded; they begin to respond to the values, the standards, and the goals of the invaders. In cultural invasion, it is essential that those who are invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own” (p. 134). This is a significant element of tribal leadership since many tribal leaders and community members face conflicts with their group’s values and traditions. For a tribe to be independent they establish their own constitution for its membership. Many participants in this research study believed cultural background and knowledge is critical to leadership. A majority of the participants discussed cultural invasion, and how this has impacted leadership, but the
participants provided knowledge and recommendations related to cultural values and traditions in order to help their community overcome cultural invasion.

Chapter 4 analyzes and presents demographic data through a brief profile pertaining to each participant and Table 1. There is also a general discussion of the themes and patterns identified within this research study of tribal leadership. Each of the coded sections are represented in Tables 2 and 3, which serve as a guide to present the participants’ responses to the research questions; the tables compare and contrast the qualities of each person. A number of common themes emerged in the interviews, which included the importance of elders from the community and resiliency. Resiliency is discussed at greater depth within Chapter 5.
### Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Tribal Council/Native Community Experience</th>
<th>Personal Educational Experience</th>
<th>Cultural Knowledge/Traditional Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N-Community Member</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y-Former Tribal Chair</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sage</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N-Community Member/traditionalist</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N – Current student/community member</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Y-Currently Elected to tribal council as a government official</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N-Indian Educator</td>
<td>Higher Educational background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monte</td>
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<td>None</td>
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<td>Y</td>
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<tr>
<td>Major Themes Defined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust</strong></td>
<td>Building relationships within the tribes &amp; outside.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Working Together/Collaboratively</strong></td>
<td>Identifying Empowerment Agents, Develop Mutual Funding Source, Implement new strategies for the community, Hire own community members</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moral Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Understanding place and work in the community</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Elders</strong></td>
<td>Significance, Stories, Traditions &amp; Cultural Values, Wisdom</td>
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<td>History of the tribe &amp; people, values, language</td>
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Table 3

*Themes by Participant*

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<th>Theme</th>
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<th>Matt</th>
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As I write about the topic of leadership and discuss the impact tribal leadership has had on education, it is critical to explain my background and involvement within the Native American community. My cultural background and experience as a Miwok student from the local region of Sacramento, California, I am able to provide insight into my own cultural experience, which has shaped my perspective on the topic of tribal
leadership and education. Having cultural understanding and established trust within the community, I was able to gain access due to my relationships.

**Participant Profiles**

Common features of the participants included history, tribal knowledge and tribal membership, traditional/cultural experience, and exposure to identity formation within the Native community. Many of the participants had grown up within the Native community and were involved, had been involved, or had an understanding of leadership by observing it within their own tribes. Additionally, all participants in some way had been involved with education and could comment from their own personal experience on the topic of leadership or education. At the time of the study, all participants worked within the Native community as educators or were employed in tribal operated programs or other agency programs connected with the community members around the Sacramento region. The following sections introduce the study participants by providing a brief profile followed by a discussion on the themes and data identified within this research study.

**Al**

Al worked within the Native American community and was a volunteer with the State Indian Museum as an interpreter. Through his employment, he conducted various presentations and some interviews. He implemented a number of programs in the Native American community. His tribal background includes Amah Mutsun Ohlone from his father’s side who was born in the Hollister, California area, and his mother of Aztec
background with Mexican upbringing. His involvement for the last 25-30 years has been with the Native American community through his work within the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) at California State University, Sacramento. There, he worked with high school students in the CSU system and with students in the community colleges systems. As for his own personal interests and involvement inside the Native community, he has been able to learn drumming, dancing, and making his regalia. He refers to himself as having an inter-tribal California experience within the Native culture. He served as a club leader to Native students and taught Native Studies at the college level as well.

*Figure 4.* Al S.- Amah Mutsun Ohlone.
Matthew

Matt’s tribal background includes Miwok and Assiniboine Sioux. He is a member of a federally recognized tribe within the region. His professional experience is vast. He worked within the Indian Education of the Elk Grove Unified School District and grew up as a student in the program. Matt served as the tribal chairman of his tribe. He has also served on tribal council as vice chair for a number of terms. More currently, he works within a Native program providing services to many federally recognized tribal members within the Native American community. His academic background includes attending a four-year college. He grew up within the Sacramento region his entire life, and has cultural and traditional experience as a former dancer with the Miwok dance group and learning from many elders within the Native community. Matt served on numerous boards for education and tribal leadership and was involved with California Association of Tribal Governments (CATG). His journey has enabled him to assist many Native families within the local community where he still continues to promote education. He has also worked to assist other tribal communities to establish and build relationships with federal and state governments as well.

1 CATG-The California Association of Tribal Governments is an association of California Tribes, each a separate government involved in providing health and safety and welfare for its tribal members.
Sage

Sage accumulated a wealth of knowledge in cultural and traditional values as she has been involved with the Native community and the Indian Education program from a young age. Sage is Nomtipom Wintu from Northern California but was not enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. Nonetheless, she has a depth of understanding regarding tribal communities and tribal leadership. She had the opportunity to work with various elders
on gathering materials for medicine. Throughout her life, she has been exposed to a wide
range of people from different tribes and fields. Some of the traditional knowledge she
learned came from the Maidu traditional dancers, as well as other tribes, such as Yurok,
Washoe, Tolowa, Paiute, and Miwok. She learned medicine by learning about the
properties and application of roots and plants for healing. She has been able to
implement her teachings into her current work in the Environment Protection Agency
(EPA)\(^2\) and through working on the integration of Traditional Ecological-Knowledge
(TEK), as a cultural element integrated with discussions related to land management.
Additionally, Sage’s academic background includes a Bachelor’s degree in Horticulture
and a degree as a clinical herbalist. She has applied her knowledge in her former
employment in a nursery and in her work within the watershed. Sage was able to receive
much of her knowledge from others who have been the subjects of interviews and
publications. She has been honored to have been taught by some of these influential
elders.

\(^2\) EPA—Environmental Protection Agency works to protect the environment and tribal lands by the
government-to-government relationship and Indian policy. TEK—This term is used to describe the
knowledge held by indigenous cultures about their immediate environment.
Virgil grew up in Humboldt County on the Big Lagoon Rancheria that includes Yurok and Towala Indians. He grew up on the reservation for 18 years and then graduated from University of California, Davis in Communication Studies and Sociology. Virgil completed his Master of Science degree at California State University, Sacramento in Marriage and Family Counseling (MFT). He is in his last year of the doctoral program in Clinical Psychology at the Wright Institute in Berkeley. Virgil has witnessed his father in the role of tribal leader; his father has been chairman of the Big-Lagoon tribe for about 25 years. It was through his father’s experience that Virgil has learned more about leadership and the skills needed to be a leader within the Native community. His
previous work history includes working at Sacramento State as an intern within the counselor education department and also completing an internship at UC Davis. For the past year, he has been with the Oakland Native American Health as a Psychologist intern where he provides psychotherapy and runs groups for Native Americans from families of multiple tribes, but primarily urban Natives who live in the Bay area. In the next few months, he will complete his degree. His plans are to continue to work within the community.

![Figure 7. Virgil – Student and tribal member of Big Lagoon Rancheria Yurok & Towala.](image)

**Thomas**

At the time of the study, Thomas was serving on the Enterprise Rancheria as a tribal council member. He was just re-elected for a new term. Thomas is an enrolled
tribal member of a federally recognized tribe, Maidu, based out of Yuba and Butte County. He has been on tribal council for the last eight years, and was re-elected for a third term. Terms last for four years and the board consists of seven members. His experience also includes being the chair of the education committee for his tribe. He recently stepped down from this duty to focus on his own educational goals but still serves on the committee. When he was first elected on the education committee about eight years ago, he chose to sit on the board since he knew the importance and significance of higher education. Thomas had prior higher educational experience working as a professional in the admissions office at UC Davis. It was there that he learned about the statistics on Native American students’ college enrollment rates. This motivated Thomas to focus more attention on education within his own tribe, Enterprise Rancheria. Thomas helped with the formation of the inter-tribal education committee within his tribe, and collaborated with their sister tribes: Mooretown Rancheria, Berry Creek Rancheria, and Mechoopda Rancheria. All Maidu tribes specifically focused on education. From the educational committee, Enterprise Rancheria also developed a charter school that is in its fourth year of running. Thomas has a wealth of experience in education and has helped by serving on the board for tribal housing authority and other tribal committees as well. He is currently a student at California State University, Sacramento in his fifth year and plans to graduate soon with hopes of continuing on with obtaining a graduate degree.
Figure 8. Thomas L. – Tribal Council Member of Enterprise Rancheria.

Christina

Christina’s professional experience started at the University of Colorado, Boulder. It was at there she first started working with the Upward Bound program, a college entry program focused on Native American students. The program served approximately 100 students in the summer for the first six weeks of the program and included students from all different regions. The goal of this program was to help Native students become
familiar with the college campus and introduce them to college courses. It was from this program that Christina learned more about Native students and was able to assist with their academic success. Some of the Upward Bound students went on to gain admissions to Ivy League Colleges after completing the program. Subsequently, Christina enjoyed observing the impact this program had on students’ education. Christina’s tribal background consists of being an enrolled member of the Oglala-Sioux tribe and the Rosebud Sioux tribe from the Dakota area. She currently works within the Sacramento region. Prior to working within the Indian Education Program for the Sacramento City Unified School District, she held other positions within the Native American community. She worked for the Indian Educational grant programs in South Dakota within a larger school district that serviced about 3,000 students. Christina has worked with the Native American high school students as a former family school liaison who monitored attendance. She also worked at an alternative high school that focused on preparing students for college. Christina has worked with Native students for a number of years and continues to serve students and families.
Monte

At the time of the study, Monte served on the Bishop tribal council and was an enrolled member of this federally recognized tribe Bishop. Monte also served on the Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone Band of Indians board of trustees (OVBT) that runs a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF). The tribal TANF program provides temporary assistance to needy families with a specific focus on the Native American population. Additionally, Monte was appointed to Indian Education by the Speaker of the House back in Washington, DC and, though he does not possess a college degree, he understands the importance of education. Monte has interned with the Native American Trading Association Institute (NATA). Most of his tribal experience has
included being a political advocate for education. He has been involved with Indian Education from its early development and has helped the Bishop tribe establish one of the first educational centers in California. He has continued his work in the Native American community.

Figure 10. Monte – Bishop Pauite Tribal Council Member.

Malissa

Malissa is an enrolled member of the federally recognized tribe, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians. She was on her third term serving on tribal council and she represented her tribe for seven years. She worked with families and youth for about five to seven years, and currently works for the tribe in the family and social services department. She promoted education within her own tribe and believes education is a priority. Malissa served the youth within the tribe and works closely with the tutoring program, as well. Her professional background included working with the Tribal
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF). As previously mentioned, this program provides temporary assistance to needy families specifically focusing on Native families. This specific program services three counties: Sacramento, El Dorado, and Placer. The Tribal TANF program provides services to many Native families and people within the community. Malissa plans to continue in her role and further her focus on education and youth programs.

Figure 11. Malissa T.– Tribal Council Member of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians.

**Discussion of Themes**

The overall guiding research methodology utilized in this study was phenomenological, while theories such as social justice theory and leadership theories guided the study and helped to analyze the findings. In this study, the data analysis began
by identifying segments in the data set that directly related to the research questions on tribal leadership. The data were coded and grouped into major themes. For the purpose of this research, the researcher then drew from the emerging themes to address the research questions. The research was analyzed to ascertain major themes that emerged from the participants. A total of 12 themes were identified and are presented in this section of the chapter.

**Background and History**

The researcher categorized data under the overall theme of history. The participant statements in this section described where they lived and their educational background experiences, which included descriptions of their professional roles within the community along with their mainstream educational experiences within the classroom. The participants also commented on their work as a tribal council member or their current involvement in education. Overall, one of the major themes identified by most of the participants was their experience within the mainstream educational system, which has influenced who they are today in terms of identity. Many of the participants did not have a positive educational experience and did not feel their K-12 grade experiences involved an inclusive environment for someone of their ethnic and cultural background.

When examining the dropout rate of Native American high school students, the data reflect a large number of students who do not complete high school. In 2006, a higher percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native young adults were dropouts, about
15% (Devoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008, p. 58). This could directly relate to the educational system and the banking method of education as explained by Friere (1995), who explained, “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing, projecting absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression” (p. 53). Within the banking model of education, the student is alienated from knowledge and is expected to accept their ignorance, thus justifying the teacher’s existence. This relationship can be observed in many educational classrooms today. The teacher teaches and the student is taught; there is no exchange of learning.

When American Indian history is examined through the mainstream educational system, there is virtually no input from surrounding tribes. This silencing and exclusion of First Nation histories serves the banking method of education (Friere, 1995). This pedagogy influences many other realms within the educational experience and can be partially blamed for California Indians’ disassociation from the Western educational school system. The participants identified this as one of the reasons for their negative experience with the public education. The participants voiced their experience in the following statements.

When I was in fourth grade…in the state of California, you learn about California Indians. In my classroom, I learned about the mission system and one page about Ishi, and basically learned that California Indians were an extinct people. I asked my father and he agreed that we could take some personal items from home to share in the classroom within the San Juan Unified School District. I was in the Indian Education program. (Sage)
Sage’s statement directly relates to how she was able to educate other students about her tribal background and how she was able to expand their limited knowledge, turning the experience into a more positive one. Another participant recalled her experience within the mainstream educational system as well and how these same issues still impact newer generations of students.

I feel like when I worked with students and as a child growing up, there was a certain shame I had about being Indian. I went to a school district that was a larger school district in the community, and this school district had a large Native American community, but we were still in school with a lot of non-Indian students and teachers. At that time, when I started school, I didn’t know what it was and I carried a lot of shame with me and I feel like I didn’t even recognize it or know that it was there until it hit me in college. And now I see a lot of that in our youth today. (Christina)

Christina explained how her grade-school experience (K-12th) impacted her identity as a Native student, and even today, she still observes this same phenomenon of shame impacting other Native students. The participant did not realize what was occurring until she was older and had explained what it was like for her to attend a mainstream school system and the impact it had on her as a Native student.

Oppression

When examining tribal leadership and the Native community, it is important to understand the history and the oppression many tribal members have encountered. This is critical since it explains the feelings and perceptions the community has with regard to education. The statements below address how the oppression and the genocide committed against California Tribal communities still have a lingering impact on tribes today.
We are coming out of the period and factor of genocide, and with the factor of genocide we have historical trauma. A lot of people talk about historical trauma right now but what that entails is that we have generational malfunction that has become a familial tribal dysfunction. So we have gone from being told in a traditional sense that we have this intrinsic value as a sacred being and our stewardship to the land as a sacred being and all that walks upon us; the seen and unseen is our responsibility, and then through ethnocentric values that were placed upon us, we were pushed down and told and shown that we were less than. So we failed to complete our responsibility the commitment that was sent down by the Creator, so that caused children to be taken from homes and parents going off to war. Men did not complete the cycle of being parents, nor were they parented because their parents were sent to boarding schools, and boarding schools taught us nothing about parenting only about how to work in the workforce and how to be a good American. So there was a disconnection with some people who were left behind, who were left to maintain the traditional values and those people coming back did not understand the values or traditions. We are now coming back around to understanding the tradition values. (Sage)

Sage clearly communicates how the factors of oppression and genocide still impact the Native community today, as many times within the community there is a disconnection of culture. There are people trying to relearn their culture while tribal leadership and councils also attempt to reestablish lost values to help future generations. Due to the history and conquest of tribes and their Native lands, many tribes are now working toward reclaiming some of their cultural values and education. This is observed by one of the participants:

At one time, we were divided and nearly conquered. And I think that we, through education can get the tools that we need that will help us become stronger warriors out in the field. (Thomas)

The comment made by Thomas clearly identifies and illustrates the impact of oppression on the Native community, but he also reflected and focused on the future. This is a key component of growing in a new direction for tribes, which is done through
education. The next participant also examined the historical trauma and how this
impacted the family structure within the tribal communities.

I think that one of the things I’ve noticed over the years, is tribal members in
different Native communities have historical trauma. I think that it’s brought up
over and over again, but it has so many different facets and affects so many
communities. I think one of the main things is this because I grew up in a tight-
knit family and I know how much structures are needed to complete an education
and things like that. You know the historical trauma has affected the family
structure of American Indian families not to say that they’re not still strong.
(Christina)

The second comment made by Virgil reflected on the impact of oppression and
how it has become internalized, which can also impact the leadership role. “The
oppressed having internalized the image of the oppressor has adopted his guidelines and
are fearful of freedom” (Freire, 1995, p. 29). Freire also explained how the oppressed
become the oppressors, which can be seen within the American Indian community in
terms of Native leadership roles within organizations. An example of this is given next.

I think the internalized oppression, and the belief that the non-Native mainstream
way is the best way, for an example when non-Native people are hired and placed
leadership positions. Similar to at the Health center, we have a non-Native in a
leadership position, and that’s alright, but I don’t think we are prioritizing to put a
Native into a leadership position. We are just ok having a non-Native person
working there. For the most part, I think that leadership’s role is to challenge that
and to fight and preserve our culture and traditions, and our ways of being and not
to sell out. (Virgil)

Virgil’s comment refers to the fact that within organizations and agencies in the
Native community, hiring a member from the community is overlooked by leadership.
By not hiring someone qualified and in the Native American community, the cycle of
oppression can be continued. Additionally, the final comment examines the accuracy and
teaching of California Indian history within the Western educational system and how the teachings influencing societal perceptions and thought about Native American communities does not reflect American Indian perspective.

So it’s just the educational system going out there and teaching the true history about what actually occurred what happened during the California land grants what the treaty rights actually say, what they amount to, and having the knowledge of what the word means around the lands. (Matt)

The last disclosure explains the importance of moving on from the history and oppression into utilizing a collaborative approach, which is discussed in the next section.

And what happened with the Canadian Indians is…throughout America, maybe the world, but even with the oppression, why do we have to deal with it? Why can't we learn, why can't we just be good to each other? (Monte)

Collaboration/Unity

Another significant code within the research mentioned by a number of participants was the impact of collaboration and working together. Many tribes speak on the circle of life that describes the relationships in which all people live in balance and are interconnected (Portman & Garrett, 2005). This supports the importance of working together within a tribal leadership capacity. An example of collaboration is provided by Thomas who described that there are common concerns impacting all tribal communities and the concerns should be addressed collaboratively by all tribal leadership.

When it comes to education, and when it comes to healthcare, or housing, those are all neutral areas of interest that we all benefit from as a nation, as the first people of this nation, as the first people of this continent. We all can benefit from services. So, we could work together collaboratively to ensure our native people are educated properly. And that they are given the same opportunities as other students out there. (Thomas)
Thomas went on to give an example of how, within his own tribal council, they were able to work directly with other tribes on education. From his experience as a council member, he believed working together on various causes with other tribal governments could help the community and also help them learn leadership skills from each other.

I think working directly with each other. When we started to see movement within our sister tribes, it was because we formed an inter-tribal education committee. (Thomas)

Additionally, another participant felt similarly about leadership collaborating with each other on education and how that can help for the overall betterment of the people. As described below, the participant reflected on the importance of community and unity.

“Traditional American Indian people are accustomed to co-operating, and sharing with an attitude of mutual empowerment” (Portman & Garrett, 2005, p. 288). This helps to explain the unity within the community. Again the unity also relates to the discussion on oppression.

The oppressed will perceive their state of depersonalization and discover that as long as they are divided they will always be easy prey from manipulation and domination, however unity and organization can enable them to change their weakness into a transforming force in which they recreate the world. (Freire, 1995, p. 126)

Al’s statement helps explain how unity within leadership can help the community, as a holistic approach.

“Unity and community” maybe it’ll be a slogan someday. I think that as Native communities and many communities other than just ours because we are one community as a whole; I think in the Native communities and in the old days we learn that everything functions together. One of the lessons I learned from one of
the elders was don’t forget nature is your true teacher, and when I stop and think about that everything works together. Everything is dependent on each other; even if we don’t think it might be or we don’t understand that everything works together, we know it does. (AI)

Many tribes view working together and sharing resources as a way to help with the greater good of the population. In the past years, unity of tribes or family has enabled its members to survive and is critical for tribes to continue on with their future work (Locust, 1988). As observed in history, sometimes tribal survival depended on everyone’s work and sharing of information similar to what the participants said in which everything works together not in separate elements or fractions, but together as a whole. Again Matt and Virgil explained how unity is an important concept and virtue in tribal leadership:

Trying to make sure that tribes come together and unite is important to keep their leadership focused, and it’s hard to focus on one thing, it’s always a moving target. (Matt)

I think the process is that we have to work together; we have to not let personal issues or grudges intervene across tribes or in tribes. We really have to work together, we have to put together events, where we come together, we have to share resources, and a lot of tribes have a lot of resources. (Virgil)

For tribes to work together, there needs to be an establishment of trust and building communities and relationships. It has been stated before that people within Native communities want a leader who works for all and for the entire tribe, but who also serves to provide a vision and is someone who is a role model as well (McLeod, 2002). It is because of these elements in tribal leadership that establishing a connection and trust is all-important.
Establishing Trust and Building Relationships

This code was also used to categorize statements reflecting the understanding and perception of trust and relationship building within tribal communities. The issue of trust is critical since much of the history of Native communities has been built on mistrust. The examples described in the previous chapters help explain this subject of trust as well. In the early years, there was a huge mistrust between the U.S. government and American Indians in terms of the educational system. Since the land was taken away from tribes, young Native children were taken from their homes, and families were forced into assimilation, a level of mistrust between tribal communities and the formal system was created. Based on history, one could clearly see how trust is a critical element in leadership. A major factor influencing the mistrust was the boarding school experience, the purpose being to indoctrinate or brainwash the children. Schools were more like a prison for Native children (Moore, 2003).

Within the tribal leadership role, many leaders represent their people as a government elected official; it is important people trust their leader. At times, the communities can be harsh on leaders and place high expectations on trust. There are times when the oppressed become the oppressor and this can happen in the community when the people project their oppression onto the tribal leader. The proceeding comments are the responses from participants describing their feelings and perceptions on the topic of trust within their tribal communities.

I think a person with confidence in themselves and in their community spells out trust and so I think that is really important. (Al)
So, educating them on that whole…and the injustice that happened to our people. The first governor put a bounty on California Natives heads. And everything in history that's happened. And a lot of our elders and a lot of our ancestors were raped and murdered during the gold rush, you know, during the railroad. (Thomas)

The history provides a backdrop of where some tribes are today and provides an explanation as to why there are still lingering effects on the population due to the historical trauma. American Indians experienced one of the most systematic and successful programs of ethnic cleansing the world has seen as the people were relocated, starved, and neglected. Those losses are still present (Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, Chen, 2004). Most of the participants’ comments speak to how this history stills impacts the tribal community.

I think our situation is because of our historical trauma history, we're just a little bit different than mainstream America. (Monte)

Due to the historical trauma and learned behavior from the colonization by Western society, the trust within the Native communities has been impacted. What has happened within the American Indian society is that through cultural invasion there was a loss of culture. Freire (1995) explained, “whether urbane or harsh, cultural invasion is thus always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture who lost their originality or face the threat of losing it” (p. 133). This is critical, as the historical trauma forced a loss of culture and also a loss of traditions. As explained by the following participants, it is difficult for tribal leadership to maintain the trust of its communities. Also pointed out is how, at times, tribes split into factions of people, fostering an overall
distrust of the community. This can relate to the concept of divide and rule, also explained by Friere (1995), “as the oppressor minority subordinates and dominates the majority, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power” (p. 122). As discussed earlier, this is a way for the dominant society to keep control of the community as it becomes divided.

When I was studying governance at Sacramento State, there are factions of tribes and they don’t always trust each other when you get somebody good in tribes, they turn on each other a lot so when you get a good leader it’s hard to take that leadership over. Tribes are always going back and forth back. (Matt)

Matt’s statement reflects the level of trust within the community, how it can clearly be observed within the realm of tribal leadership, and how a fracture affects the overall tribal community. Another participant commented on the issue of trust and how it impacts the tribal leadership role.

We don’t trust each other and we don’t work together as much as we could. I think that we do a lot and there has been progress and a lot of positives, but I think that the relationship difficulties in large part lead to not functioning as well as we could. (Virgil)

Virgil’s comment reflects on how to improve working together as a community, as it has been observed that stronger relationships and connections are needed to build the community. When observing a human relations approach in leadership, this leadership style highlights the importance of members such as stakeholders, followers, and members of the community to help make decisions (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The significance of trusting can help build the foundation of leadership. The next statement made by Sage also reflects on how the historical trauma has created a tribal dysfunction.
We are coming out of the period and factor of genocide, and with the factor of genocide we have historical trauma. And a lot of people talk about historical trauma right now, but what that entails is that we have a generational malfunction that has become a familial and tribal dysfunction. (Sage)

The historical trauma is prevalent in tribal community today since at times the oppression is acted out among community members. The types of behaviors exhibited are that tribes have factions and distinguish between those who have funding and resources and those members or individuals who do not. Factions can often create a dysfunction within the tribe. It also has a direct connection to leadership since many times, it is the leader’s role to gather the people and focus the discussion on the tribe’s overall vision. Leaders within tribes are expected to be responsible for leading the tribe. This self-awareness is critical and is discussed in the next section.

Self-awareness/Confidence

The accounts from the research study participants also described other aspects of leadership. The participants strongly felt that in the role as a tribal leader, it is important the leader exhibit self-confidence and awareness of their own identity as a Native person within the community. A tribal leader is often selected by the community to represent the people and community members. This form of leadership relates to servant leadership and requires the participation of stakeholders and communities. Servant leadership focuses on servicing others, includes leading from a holistic approach, and promotes a sense of the greater community and shared power (Spears, 2005). The following excerpts are from participants representing the theme of self-awareness and confidence within the role of leadership.
I think that looking at it in a broad sense as any kind of leader, whether it is a tribal leader or not it’s for them to really know themselves. I think that’s probably true of any kind of position, but a person who is an effective leader by position or title or a person who is a leader by character influence is a person who knows themselves and is transparent to the community. I think that a person with self-confidence means to me that you are not afraid to reveal yourself to your people, and people pick up on that and they respond to it by a comparable or parallel kind of freedom to be themselves and it removes a lot of threat. (Al)

Al’s response explains the significance in the ways to prepare tribal leaders within the Native communities. Another participant also responded to the importance of identity and how it impacts leadership. Freire (1995) stated, “that the trust of the people in the leaders reflects the confidence of the leaders in the people” (p. 150). Again this statement helps explain the value of confidence in the person holding the role of leader.

As people come to believe in and gain confidence in their leader’s leadership, the leader must exhibit the confidence in their community. It is a reciprocal relationship. The participant statements below also discuss self-confidence in leadership.

I think the major issue, if not the most important issue is relationships, and the lack of awareness of what it means to have healthy relationships, as well as the inability to have a healthy relationship especially in leadership. I think that it’s important to walk the walk, and work through your own issues whether it is stemming from the historical trauma or internalized oppression, and really being authentic in yourself, and knowing the traditional values of Native people, and giving to give. (Virgil)

In order to help the children we have to help with their own emotional difficulties and help them learn to express themselves, and be assertive, and learn to love themselves, leaders also have to have self-esteem. It’s about resiliency and for the most part that happens with things such as counseling and therapy, and so once that person has a higher self-esteem they feel more likely to believe that they can achieve, and so that’s important. The mental health programs are important to promote education. (Virgil)
Virgil’s statement refers to the importance of promoting education within the community and that the next steps are to educate others to learn about themselves so they are able to be healthy and continue to empower the community. The next response exhibits how this participant experienced some points in life that impacted her self-awareness. These early life experiences helped shape where she is today in terms of self-confidence.

My self-confidence, waxes and wanes. It’s interesting because from the outside looking on education I have been given more opportunities. From the outside I might seem pretty confident, and even when I’m working in my practice I get people saying that they are enjoying getting help from me, and yet I think part of my upbringing with being around some of the dysfunction has affected me. I do realize it and it’s taken me a long time to get to the point where, I say “wow even though I can talk, now being 45 years old, I have seen and experienced those different things, and these have affected my life and my confidence has been brought down by different people not even knowing it. (Sage)

This was another perspective from a different participant on how significant it is for a tribal leader to know him or herself first, and work on his or her own personal concerns before stepping into the role of leadership. This participant also mentioned the traditional values and how Native culture can help leadership connect with their identity.

That for me personally, I grew up in Eldorado County where it's primarily Caucasians, and I was basically one of the only brown skins there. So, I grew up with a lot of insecurities, thinking that I was dumb or thinking that they were smarter. And I had to prove to myself that I wasn't dumb and I was just as smart as them or maybe smarter. It was all about proving it to myself. And then, when I proved it to myself that no one is better than me or any smarter than me, I realized it's just me and my brain and I can do anything I want to. (Malissa)
Commitment to Servicing the Community/Moral Purpose in Leadership

The theme from the research study describes the participants’ perspectives on moral purpose within the tribal leadership role. The motivation behind their assuming leadership roles and what drives their work stems from the traditional Native perspective that the purpose of life is “life, love and the pursuit of wisdom and understanding one’s path as a caretaker.” “From a traditional perspective, this is among the true essence of what it means to be a leader” (Portman & Garrett, 2005, p. 289). This was also a major theme identified by participants in the work of leadership, which is knowing one’s purpose in serving the community. The participant statements described the way they saw themselves as leaders within their Native community and their overall purpose in their work. The participants explained the value in working within the Native community and that leadership is a commitment to serving the Native people. Native communities desire leaders that work for the tribe as a whole (McLeod, 2002). This is instrumental to Native community, as the people want to ensure the focus is on advancing the community. As stated by a few participants, connection to the Native community can help bring people together.

And my late friend, he'd be about my dad's age, 90 or something, M. McCloud from Nevada, he used to help us out in our ceremonies and he'd always tell us we're all here on this mother Earth for a short time, so be good to each other. Love one another. Say kind words to each other or about each other. And I quote that quite a bit over the years. (Monte)

Again, another important aspect of and insight into the purpose of leadership is explained below. Al explained how elements of leadership are not about one singular
person, but requires a team effort to move forward. The participant gave an analogy of how for the leader to address all concerns impacting the community, there should be a general understanding of everything’s function as well as operational aspects of working together instead of separately.

I think that unity and community and a person who is a leader helps people see those things so they aren’t “them and us” and there aren’t the economic issues and the education issues, and all the other spiritual issues…they’re all one and they’re all functions of one another. And I think if we people in the community, those in charge of things and the processes of all that as well as the process of negotiating business things, education things and family matters, and education in general, we have to recognize that our aim is on putting all the things back together and so they work together, and all the parts are necessary. The parts are only parts because that’s the way we’ve been taught to see them. We are all just one entity needing to work together to promote another part just like the left-hand, and right-hand we can’t do anything without one of them, we have to function with both of them. (Al)

Al reflected on how all things need to work together in order to move forward. In tribal leadership and culture, the individual, family, and band were highly valued, but overall there was a clear sense of responsibility both for one’s own actions and for the welfare of others (O’Brien, 1989). So the importance of working together for the greater good of the community helps all and the participant’s comment reflects that in business and leadership, it is important to utilize a holistic approach. The next comment also reflects the importance of giving back in the community.

To learn about politics and to learn about history, and to put yourself in as many as diverse situations as possible, so that you can give out and give back to your people and continue to grow through learning. You’re going to continue to grow and you can continue to improve and take risks and continue to give back and work on how you can become passionate. To love just to love and to give just to give and after the work, one will be able to do that. (Virgil)
Virgil’s comment reflects the importance of giving back to the community, a critical component of early tribal leadership.

The Yakimas, Umatillas, Nez Perces, Cayuses, and other tribes of the area enjoyed an egalitarian society based on co-operation, sharing hospitality, and responsibility for common welfare, and it was an honor both to give and to receive, but the greater honor was to give. (O’Brien, 1989, p. 89)

Virgil referred to the giving, which helps with determining the purpose in the work done for the community. A vital element of tribal leadership is identifying the purpose and place for being a leader. Another important value, education, is discussed in the next section.

**Educational Value**

A critical component within this research study was the connection made between tribal leadership and education. For example, the statement below examines the importance of giving back to the community through education. There were several references made regarding how education is a form of empowerment and helping future generations move forward starts with leadership. The participant below stated how education is a way to establish and build communities.

You need to go back to school because you need to come back and be a stronger leader for your tribe. She said because we need you. Don't forget about us; don't give up on us, we need for you to come back and be a tribal leader, a stronger tribal leader.

So, that really stuck with me because I was thinking she's right. I need to be an example to our other tribal members, our youth, to let them know that maybe you may not think education is the pathway you need to take, because I know I didn't think that at one time, but now that I've been in school, and now that I've become a tribal leader, I've realized all the opportunities that have opened up for me because of it.
And it's something that I want to give back to the tribal youth, it's something I want to give back to the tribal members to let them know that I could be a stronger leader and this is how they can do that, too. Because I shared with you earlier that I'm not going to always be able to be in tribal politics, and be within the tribal leadership role. (Thomas)

When examining the purpose of tribal leadership another participant shared her purpose for serving in a leadership role. This council member gives her direct motivation for continuing on with helping her community. She is reminded of her history but also recognized the value in understanding herself. Her knowledge of her tribal history and culture has enriched her connection to the work she is currently conducting within her tribe.

When things get hard, I go back to where we were. And where I came from. And being that little girl on the reservation by myself with my grandmother, and all of her struggles, those are the things that I revert back to that remind me of what I need to do is be a strong leader. Why it's important for me to try to be on tribal council and try to make good choices for my whole membership. I think it's important you know where you come from. (Malissa)

The comment made by Malissa references the ancestral wounding that occurred within her grandmother’s generation. During the genocide occurring between 1870 and 1900, at least 80% if the population had been exterminated and those people who survived were wounded as well (Duran, 2006). It was because of Malissa’s grandmother’s struggles and wounds that she was reminded of her purpose and place within tribal leadership. Malissa’s perspective is that knowing who she is as an individual and where she came from is a critical part of leadership.

The next statement examines the many forms of education, as well as the value of education in leadership. Sage went on to explain how education can occur through many
different avenues, but a tribal leader is aware of these other ways to be educated. The participant also commented it is important for the community to understand the different elements of education.

Earlier you asked the question about education and there are so many ways to be educated and all of those ways take time. Whether it’s time for the millennium, or time spent walking outside on mother earth or time to sit quietly to contemplate on our own things and these are all different ways to educate ourselves. There is education that comes from within and so believing in yourself and taking the time to understand truly that we have a lot of the information inside of us, is important to leadership if we allow that to come out. (Sage)

Additionally, the next comment from Christina identifies certain elements of education considered crucial. She also discussed the hope to promote education within her own tribe and her goals to have more Native students involved with higher education and in career longevity.

Language and revitalization is huge across the board, I would like to see that come at the forefront a lot of tribes try to get that and I’m not sure, but I know every tribe’s different and I do know that especially my tribe in the area, I’m from the South Dakota area, and I do believe it’s very neat to see that. It would be a dream to have fluid speaking students in high school and I know there’s still some out there. If that became the norm, that would be amazing and it would do amazing things. I think we don’t even realize that right now, it would change a lot of different things. I hope to see that in terms of higher education that we get more students in Higher Ed and stay in education to finish out their careers. (Christina)

The next statement reflects how in the traditional way, certain aspects focused on basic skills, another form of education. The participant discussed how these skills are significant in tribal leadership.

In our old ways, it’s very important and respectful to listen, really listen using all of our resources and knowing that every individual is important and should be
respected and that’s what I think our elders bring into the chemistry of our education. (Al)

The last statement in this category by Virgil also focuses on education and how critical it is for tribes to establish programs that help with education. The participant also discussed how to engage youth and help them navigate the educational system so the student has a better understanding of what is entailed to enroll in college.

If we want more Indian people in education, what better way than to have a mentor who is Indian teach a student how to get in, I mean have a program. We have programs like that but we can always learn more to train leaders in our own community to work with our Native youth, so those are some of the ways. (Virgil)

Leadership

“One foundational value in leadership from an American Indian perspective is viewed as shared vision and responsibility. Although there may be individual or tribal differences this perspective is a consistent cultural view” (Portman & Garrett, 2005, p. 284). The participant perspective reflects on the role of tribal leadership and how it has evolved over time. Before leadership was seen as a hereditary passing down of tradition within family members and more currently there has been a change within leadership.

I really witnessed a change in leadership. Before there were more traditional leaders, and hereditary leaders, and a lot of the information that was shared was through traditional hereditary in the passing down of information. Whereas today leaders are voted in for the most part when you have tribal councils and you have membership there is a voting in of the people. Before when somebody was the headman it would be their son or their brother that would take over the leadership position and it was passed on to them. Now sometimes that is not truly the case and so there are people who are in positions of leadership that don’t have the cultural education. Sometimes in certain tribes they do, in certain tribes they don’t, or in tribes it will be what is called a co-leadership where there is a
100

headman culturally, and then they’ll be the voted in, Council who becomes a
different entity and are in that facet.

Whereas there are other leaders who understand the traditional aspect of
whom we are, as people which will really help us in the long run to protect our
land base and our cultural base so that we can continue as a people. And so we
really need all of it and I can’t really speak for tribal leaders as I am not on tribal
council, but have attended a lot of tribal council meetings. (Sage)

The change in who assumes leadership posts has occurred over time and evolved.

As the participant mentioned, in early forms of leadership, this type of leadership role
was passed down through the family. “After contact with whites, positions of leadership
came more and more to remain within certain families” (O’ Brien, 1989, p. 32). The fact
that this has shifted allows the opportunity for new leaders to become involved with their
community and more commonly many tribes are now electing people into that leadership
role which carries tremendous responsibility.

Another participant explained another context for tribal leadership and how
leadership represents a variety of elements that are critical for the Native community.
The tribal government has to make decisions that impact all. “Of all the federal, state,
and local government officials, tribal government officials have the greatest influence on
the people on their reservations, from jobs to housing” (Stubben, 2006, p. 143). This is
similar to what is described by the participant in which tribal government elected officials
make decisions that impact all, such as housing, education, and other services for the
community.

Also for tribal leadership, I think it’s important to be trained on funding and
opportunities from the BIA and their whole process, the 638 and housing. We
need to learn more of what’s out there regarding housing and education and
healthcare because we as Native people have rights to all of those services, just
like anyone else. And we as Native people, you know, if anything, we have opportunities to work directly with governments to ensure that our tribal people are supported. (Thomas)

Another reference was made about tribal leadership and the values crucial to governance. This perspective focused on the future elements of tribal leadership. In some elements of leadership exercises, programs are built around the four sacred values of people: bravery, fortitude, generosity, and respect (Nichols, 2008). Certain tribal values and traditions serve as guiding principles to strengthen the foundation of tribal leadership. The recognition of the certain tribal values and traditions serve as guiding principles to strengthen the foundation of leadership.

The values of acceptance. It basically boils down to love; people loving life, love for education and leadership that contains these values promotes the kind of things we want to inspire in young people because the person that grows up with that kind of a focus becomes a better individual for themselves but also carries this into all of the different roles that lie ahead of them whether it’s being a leader formally or informally, being a teacher, counselor or a tribal cultural person or whatever else. I think the old ways are there waiting for us to re-discover them, and these contain the values that I just mentioned. (Al)

The following excerpts also examine other perspective on tribal leadership and the direction of future leadership. The second statement reflects how critical certain elements are within leadership and the importance of maintaining a healthy role in leadership while working within the community. Again, the leadership focus relates to the area of transformational leadership since tribal leadership examines the bigger picture and vision of the community for change. “A transformational leader has a comprehension of change within oneself and in the organization” (Nevarez & Wood,
For the purpose of the study, the reference is made to tribal communities as focusing on the future generations of tribal leaders.

A lot of people are having a hard time getting back involved, but I think the more people that get educated they will see that there is a need to preserve the leadership role, and to move it forward, because I think now we are at a standstill in which they’re going to have to take it to the next level. There have been a lot of leaps and bounds where leadership has taken the Native people. There have been a lot of gains especially with the modernization of the reservations with our knowledge base of governments, and now having a bigger role in the modern day national scene and on the local aspect, so I think the younger generation is gonna have to capitalize on that and take it to the next level. (Matt)

I think first, effective leadership is having healthy leaders at a biological level, psychological level, and social level. So having healthy leaders and really understanding the culture of Native people, and the history of Native people and again to work together and to work across Native American agencies. (Virgil)

Virgil’s statement references that healthy leaders within the Native community understand all aspects not only the history, but culture, and they are able to work with all of it. Leaders who understand their impact and commit to establishing collaborations across all constituents allows for the leader to garnish resources, political support, and buy-in. This type of leadership builds stakeholder confidence (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). This type of collaborative approach can make a leader supportive of all within the community, relating back to Native agencies being about working with each other as well. The next theme relates to the lessons of elders and their special recognition within the Native American community.

**Honoring the Elders**

This theme of elders was a noted theme from all participants. When discussing leadership and education within tribal communities, elders are a significant part of the
community. Traditional education of Indian youth is not linear, as most of the Native children learn by watching their elders and by having circle and completion of tasks (Locust, 1988). The following reflections expand upon the role and importance of elders within the Native community. Elders are a big aspect of the community, and when speaking with members from the community, many of the participants acknowledged and recognized the elder’s work and contribution to the community.

I know that many other tribal groups are working with culture, re-teaching culture to the young people including the language, and many times the ways that were taught by our elders. For the most part, I think tribal communities still respect and welcome the elders to contribute their valuable lessons and knowledge. We still acknowledge that the elders know things that we need to know. (Al)

In addition, not only did Al share the importance of having the elder’s lesson, but so did the other participants. As explained earlier, the elder begins the teaching in ways that promote and connect the whole community, not treating elements of the community in isolation. Their teachings are underscored by the belief that everything is connected and must remain in the whole or the circle is broken (Locust, 1988). This cultural belief is significant and was expressed by participants because a majority of the participants have been told a story or lesson by an elder which has helped shape them or has been beneficial to bringing new insight and depth to a topic area. Below is a statement from another participant describing the wisdom of elders.

And we all know that as Native people, we have a different learning styles, we have elders involved, we have other aunts and uncles involved; we have other family involved that all teach us as we grow and learn and we're more interactive and sometimes we just can't sit and listen to what everything is being told to us. (Thomas)
Below is another example of how the elders share stories and lessons within the community as a way to exchange information so learning can be passed on to the next generation. In leadership, naturally the elders were respected for their wisdom and also for exhibiting fairness and addressing the community’s needs (O’Brien, 1989).

I think I can always tell when a student is connected to their tribal history and knowledge because a student shows respect, there is something about the respect they show their elders, and different things you can see it; especially in younger kids even if they’re in high school or adolescent age and being cool. It is neat to see them when they can show a little respect for someone that is older than them. (Christina)

The next two statements explain how leadership should work together with elders. Matt then shared a story given to him by an elder and described how the elder’s knowledge and life experience shed new light to learning and understanding leadership.

I think that if leaders help each other out for example how much money do we really need, also as Indian people we should work together, prioritize education, share resources, and not just talk about it, but do it then, we can as a group help Indian people get better if the individual gets better, the tribe gets better as a group. I believe that is what many of the elders talk about. (Virgil)

Another example of the importance of elders within the Native community is the fact that they provide insight to issues and bring a new perspective to the community. It is from the elders that stories and lessons about life and education are shared. These are critical to passing down knowledge about First Nation reality.

One particular elder stood up and said “how can we have our kids go to school when there’s more dead Indians down at the Long Beach college campus than alive Indians” and it was an eye-opener and the president was actually there at the meeting, and he said he would look into that so it was an eye-opener. (Matt)
The next comment focuses on how cultural tradition is usually shared by the elders as a way to describe our world. The participant explained how both cultural and college knowledge are needed within the tribal leadership realm. A key aspect is that tribal elders continue to hold positions of formal and informal influence in their extended families as well as within tribal leadership. The following statement encapsulates the value of listening to the elders as an important value and doing so as a sign of respect.

I would like to add though that both the traditional and cultural education and traditional collegiate education, both of them have an extra facet which is the education of experience, rather you are looking for a mentor culturally or in the collegiate world. I think that experience facet of education is not to be dismissed because there’s so much from both our elders in both of those realms that is a necessary part of our education.

One thing is listening to your elders because they have experience. They have the know-how that you don’t have. If you’re younger then they know more than you period. And it’s not always necessarily positive knowledge that they know, but there is a value in listening to them even if it’s for kick of that value. The value is that you are able to give back to them by listening to them, and showing respect to that elder’s voice rather positive or negative. The elder’s use their voices to speak to the rest of the tribal community therefore, listening to your elders is a multi-fold value and then again everyone has a voice. People who are in those tribal council meetings like children also have something to say, and a lot of times the value in that is overlooked, but in our traditional value a lot of information comes from children. (Sage)

The comment made by Sage reflects how critical elders are to education and also for the knowledge they share. The participant also brings up an interesting point that not all knowledge from an elder can be positive, however, even if not there is still a value in taking the time to listen. Leadership in some tribes fell naturally to the elders who were respected for their wisdom (O’Brien, 1989). The fact that elders were instrumental to earlier forms of tribal leadership and still are today is a cultural tradition that has been
passed down. This directly relates to the next thematic area, cultural knowledge and skills.

**Cultural Knowledge and Skills**

This theme helps describe and categorize statements made by participants reflecting on cultural traditions as well as spirituality. The understanding of all of these elements plays a vital role within leadership for the community. Tribal leaders are sometimes called upon to assist with blessings or ceremonies. Tribal council are expected to have knowledge of these values. Thomas described prayer and how this brings the community together.

Definitely prayer. Giving thanks, praying to the four corners. And reminding everyone that we come together in a good way. We come together for the benefit of the next generations to come. I think that it's something that we definitely need to do, and also, tell our stories, our creation stories. Because we can easily get caught up in everyday life, and the technology, and sometimes it's easy to forget the creation story or it's easy to forget we need to give thanks and we need to come together humbly in a good way. And pray to the four corners. And understanding prayer. And even as significant as beadwork, why we value that. And the basket designs, we value that. The whole acorn, we all survived on acorn at one point. Some tribal youth don't even know what mortars are, and yet, they don't know the bear dance. You have to explain to them the bear dance and things like that, certain songs, certain crafting. It's just being able to have some knowledge of it because, it's the foundation of who we are. (Thomas)

Another element of culture and tradition is the holistic approach. Across different tribal nations, a holistic approach is explained. It is how to view the world and life in a way that teaches a natural flow and inter-connectedness of all earth's elements. The participants in this research study discussed aspects of this such as the fire, the air, the
water, and giving thanks to all those important elements in life. The air, fire, and water are an important value within the Native American community.

We are all taught in the old days to help each other and that’s why we respect life, we respect the stones, we respect the water, the air and the fire and on and on, all different forms of life and so I start understanding…well everything is alive, everything helps and so I keep learning that. (Al)

Understanding the balance between life is helpful in tribal leadership since it can help one to understand that when servicing the community and taking on the role as a tribal leader. It is important to consider the bigger picture on how leadership can impact all and that all is affected on different levels such as spiritual, emotional, and physical, and mental.

There are definitely values, and balance that is necessary and being about the word. I know that growing up in my family my dad would always talk to us about retaining our values and physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual balance. I think that’s not just for tribal leaders, but everybody maintaining that balance and making sure you are taking care of each aspect of yourself. (Christina)

Again, another important concept identified within the realm of leadership is the importance of identity as a Native leader, and not to lose sight of her or himself as an individual. This is critical since many people forget elements of their past, as pointed out by Christina, it is always important to carry that cultural element for guidance. When the elders speak in the community, they often mention that one should not forgot the past because this helps influence the decisions of the future. This relates to the importance of preserving culture, but also of preserving tribal sovereignty. There are cultural traditions that have been passed on for years from one generation to the next, and those become critical in helping determine how issues can impact the future.
Embrace your Native identity, embrace Native culture. Do not completely assimilate or sell out. That is important that you preserve your Native culture and be bi-cultural in both societies. I think that a training on the values and the traditions, and the significant events that have happened in the past with Native people, let’s say historical trauma training on what our Native traditions are specific to tribal traditions, there is a lot of differences between tribes, so just a general cultural training on what it means to be an Indian in the 21st century, and how you can work in a culturally competent manner with Indian people. (Virgil)

The cultural traditions also play an instrumental role with the youth as well in that it brings back those traditions and helps remind people of the power of medicine and what the community is about. Through song and dance these can be powerful for healing and bring in more of the connection to the Creator. Some of the cultural sharings have been passed on for hundreds of years. Subsequently, it is important for people in leadership roles to respect the teachings and understand what took place so they may honor the tribal community in a good way. An example of certain symbols, such as the pipe, sweet grass, eagle feathers, and or representations of animals like buffalo, wolf, or elk, carry deep-seated, shared meaning acquired by American Indian communities (Pierre & Soldier, 1995). There are certain spiritual elements important to ceremony within tribal communities and the statement below reflects those significant cultural traditions.

And the dance, the song, the sweating, and just participating in all of the ceremonies, I think is really what a lot of our youth rely on and go back to, which is a really good thing because when they have nothing, they have that. (Malissa)

Monte explained how most tribes try to establish cultural committees within their tribal governance since cultural traditions are important. As a researcher involved within the Native community, this researcher has observed the importance of culture, which
provides a way to help preserve certain elements of one’s identity that, in turn, can extend to the leadership role. Cultural committees often work to restore and repatriate items of cultural significance. The cultural committee brings the focus back to the traditional knowledge and teachings of the elders and the people. Monte’s statement reflects his promotion of establishing a cultural committee.

I express with our cultural committee, in our tribe, and also career development center program, we had different committees, and I push forward this cultural committee because we are having a little bit of personnel problems, more on the west side in our program. (Monte)

**Funding/Tribal Gaming Impacts**

This theme contained data related to the impact funding has on tribal leadership. The participants in this research study were asked to identify funding resources that help tribes and to also explain their own experience on how funding impacts leadership. Mostly, participants agreed that funding played a major role in programs and services offered by tribes. Funding usually impacts all various types of leadership; however, it seems that within tribal communities, another factor of funding impacts the community, economic development and gaming within tribes. Most participants gave statements in relation to gaming and defined how gaming at times can divide the Native community. They provided the pros and cons of this resource. The data in relation to gaming focus on two groups of tribes described in the participant statements, as the tribal groups with gaming are identified as the haves and the second group of tribes who do not have gaming are referred to as the have-nots. There was also a focus on how tribes with gaming are impacted in other ways due to the perceived success of having more money
and how this infusion of financial wealth affects the greater community. An example of this is stated below.

You know, as long as we're capitalists, we're living in a capitalistic system. I think it's pretty necessary to have funding, to have money to carry out your basic needs, and provide basic needs to the tribe, and community. With other tribes in California, you know, they didn't bother with gaming, but they still have problems. I spent about ten years in my life working at a youth regional treatment center that we had on our reservation and we took care of Indian boys from ages 12 to 18. And from that experience and getting to know them from those young guys that came from more successful gaming tribes, I think they had more substance abuse problems than let's say the kids in my community because they just have the fluency of the money to buy drugs, or be drunk. (Monte)

Thomas provided an additional example of how funding impacts the community by way of education. The example given examines how gaming can create opportunities, but can also decrease the desire to pursue an education. The participant described his own tribe and the types of programs in place to promote education.

A good example is about tribal gaming. It has its definite advantages, because it affords you to fund the programs for tribal members. But I think also, it’s a double-edged sword; some tribal members feel comfortable, and only live off of that shared revenue or that per capita. And so, some of them don't have the desire to go on beyond high school. So, I think that's probably been the biggest challenge is letting tribal members know that they need to further their education; they need to go out into the field, they need to get a trade because gaming’s not always going to be here.

And a good example, is when some tribal members feel because of gaming now they're going to be rich, and they're not. Because a lot of that money goes back into the tribe to sustain programs for tribal members. Yeah, there are some tribes out there that get a decent per capita, but those tend to be the smaller tribes with not a large enrollment. (Thomas)

The statement made by Thomas refers to the impact gaming has had on tribal members, but he recognizes the need to create ways in which to help the tribal members
find a purpose for the funds and for themselves other than expecting the gaming revenue to always be there. The statement below is another example given by Malissa that helps explain how the dynamics, values, and priorities shift within tribes sometimes once gaming is obtained. She described how their particular tribal council and government focused on ways to promote education even with the gaming funds so tribal members do not solely depend on this revenue source.

Once you become gaming, it changes everything. And I think people's priorities get mixed up when gaming gets thrown in there. And of course, I'm sure you've heard of all the horror stories from down south with the gaming tribes. But my tribe, in particular, we really wanted to ensure that our kids were still going to stay interested in education. And so, in our rules, we wanted to make sure that just because they thought they were going to get money, and that's not even guaranteed, it still doesn’t mean that they could just forget about their education. (Malissa)

A different perspective regarding gaming was Virgil’s description of the ways tribes can combine resources from gaming and the benefit this would have on many people. This is a holistic approach to utilizing resources. He also described different forms of funding.

I think that funding is very important, that one resource that we have is the economic gains from the casino which then again I think that with healthy relationships we can also work together as Indian people, with the economic advantages that come with casinos. I also think that we also have to walk that fine line between getting funding from the government, and not completely assimilating into what they want our programs to be. We have to fight back and say hey our ancestors fought for this funding and so we need to say that we need to preserve our culture, but also accept the funding. (Virgil)
Another point Sage made suggested ways to improve funding for the overall tribe through different avenues besides gaming. Gaming can generate a big source of income, but there are other business ideas that could help market and bring in money for tribes.

I see some tribes who are utilizing their gaming revenue to buy orchards and venues and a lot of the land. I think that’s really positive because compacts are changing, the regulations are changing with whoever is in office, not just the presidential office, but in state offices and also in tribal offices themselves and tribal council. I see a hindrance of tribes that relied too much on gaming to give them both, but it needs to be a mixture of people as there’s a mixture of climate and economic climate, and the tribes venture needs to grow more with the climate that is coming. (Sage)

Funding also impacts the resources on which tribes rely for programs; an example of this is explained by Thomas in which there is a discussion on how funding fluctuates. Most tribes have to manage their funding and sources as a way to ensure that the next year, they are able to offer the same types of services to their community and membership. He explained some of the challenges related to funding and how this impacts tribal leadership.

I think that's been the biggest challenge is the lack of funding because even though there is funding out there, sometimes it's not enough. Or as we all know, it changes because the BIA or because the gaming money, it all fluctuates, it's not consistent. And sometimes you have to put the horse before the cart—how does it go? The cart before the horse sometimes. And you know that funding is going to get there, and you know it's coming, but you have to wait. It's a waiting game. (Thomas)

At times, the funding tribes receive is not consistent, and if tribes are waiting to receive revenue trust funds, that amount can change and vary. The comment made by Thomas explains how tribes can depend on funds, but these funds may not always be available; therefore, it is recommended tribes plan ahead. Oftentimes, gaming revenues
are seen by tribal leaders and members as salvation of tribal sovereignty and culture, since such funds revitalize the ability of tribes to decide their own political future without federal intervention of funds (Stubben, 2006, p. 124). From the gaming revenues, many different programs can be created; however, if that cannot be the sole source of funding, there should be an expansion of resources.

There are other elements and ways funding can separate the community. An example of this divisiveness is discussed as sometimes money can project power. In some tribes money contributes to a disconnect in relationships where some individuals are able to belong to the group and others are not, so they do not get the same resources. This is also evident in tribal membership and enrollment. This results in an array of opinions for not only the community but for the leadership as well. There have been examples in which the leadership council changes once money is generated from the tribe. Similar to the earlier statements made by participants, Al stated:

Dealing with the complicated issues, first of all dealing with the people’s survival as tribal entities/groups. Currently, in particular with the monies involved through casinos, and the haves and the have-nots, those kinds of things, we are often faced with family against family, tribe against tribe or who is authentic and who lived on reservations during certain time periods and therefore belong, and those who didn’t live there at certain times and therefore are seen as not belonging.

In addition, there is the element of funding that impacts opportunities made available to the overall population. The following example explains an educational perspective and how within certain programs, stipulations are placed on the funding, and the policies or rules impact the entire community.
So funding is huge, it provides people with access to resources, and even providing those families with resources that they need. When I think about education funding in different programs especially starting students at a younger age. Where I’m from we have the Lakota transitional Head Start, and we have those types of programs to help students, but you always see funding impacted by the numbers of students that people are able to serve or enrolled in the program. (Christina)

Christina also brings up an interesting point, that gaming and education are both areas that should be explored by leadership. One item does not matter over the other; however, if there is one sole focus and that becomes gaming, education is needed to help make well informed decisions.

I know gaming needs to get preserved, but if education doesn’t get the same light shed on it, I don’t think we can focus on gaming and preserving the sovereign rights that need to be protected. At the same time, I think that shedding more light on what our focus needs to be is getting more leadership, and then as a tribal leader what occurred was that I learned, that the Bureau of Indian affairs dictates how much money needs to be focused on programs, I learned this at the budget conferences. (Matt)

Lastly, the final point regarding funding relates to the area of structure and how funding can impact tribes based on tribal eligibility of state or federally recognition for sources of funds. Many tribal leaders are aware of the fact that being a part of an unrecognized tribe can hinder the entire community in terms of being eligible for certain types of funding sources and benefits such as those related to education, housing, money, etc. Most of the funding is given to federally recognized tribes or tribes that have trust status. The federal status helps to make other opportunities available to tribal leaders.

I mean, in some instances, it shouldn't play a role at all. I think that—well, that's a hard question because sometimes tribes with no federal recognition have no type of funding at all. But you can still be a leader without that.
But of course, to have funding and have some sort of structure, of course, it's better. So, yeah. It's better to have funding. (Malissa)

A main element for tribes to have funding is based on the federal recognition status. All federally recognized tribes have a special relationship with the federal government, which acknowledges a tribe’s right to self-determination (O’Brien, 1989). Many tribal governments today focus on ways to assist their community members by providing services for the youth and help with housing and a number of other programs, as well. Indian people have a holistic and spiritual approach to life and societies were communal and non-materialistic (O’Brien, 1989). All these aspects still impact the direction for tribal leadership today. The last theme addresses tribal leadership communication.

Tribal Leadership Communication

The topic of tribal disagreements was touched upon by a few of the participants when describing tribal governance. This theme was used to categorize the statements that reflected misunderstanding between tribal councils and misunderstandings between community members. Below are a few comments made by participants about their perspectives of different issues and situations that must be resolved internally.

Sometimes, there can be minor disagreements between tribal councils and the below comment reflects Thomas’s experience and concern for tribes.

Unfortunately, tribes come up against each other, they sue each other over things that shouldn't really be sued for, and they'll bring it to the state court level. And that, again, sets a bad precedence in Indian country. There have been some recent lawsuits and recent cases at the national level that also have not come out in favor of the tribal communities. (Thomas)
Again, there was another concern about the importance of tribal government focusing on aspects of leadership in a holistic way. The description below explains that, at times, leadership and tribal communities are viewed as being fragmented. When the community experiences a fractured tribal membership, then federal and state recognition of tribes can divisively separate tribes by the types of funding or services they receive or are eligible for. The response below reflect these parameters placed on the tribal community/tribal governments and how leadership needs to change this.

We are having to look at ourselves in a fragmented kind of way and I think leadership in those instances has a heavier responsibility trying to allow people to feel like they all belong. There are artificial parameters set up by this dominant society and sometimes we buy those parameters ourselves and begin to believe them and that’s not in the old way as far as I know.

I think tribal groups face complex issues; first of all recognition - and sometimes the recognition is not simply federal recognition, but recognizing one another and we have tended to look at things in fragmented kinds of ways and separate dualistic kinds of ways where there is “them and us” and “you and me” as opposed to a coherent tribal entity, as people who belong together. (Al)

The following perspective also explains how tribal leadership does not always agree on certain topics or decisions, which can also divide and separate tribal councils. In terms of tribal governance, it is up to the council to represent the greater membership, and sometimes the council elected into office may have disagreements or different viewpoints. That can be challenging when trying to move the tribe forward in certain ways or on certain matters; therefore, leadership often has to make critical decisions.

And when you sit on council, to me, your work is with the whole tribe all as one, what's best for the tribe as one. And sometimes, people don't agree. So that's hard. I would say that's one of the hardest things is just getting everyone on the same page. All fellow council members because everybody has a different view.
Yeah. I would say everything that my tribe has, we fought for it. And even when it came down to the funding, even—whether it was grant funding, whether it was the tribal TANF program— that we really had to go out and seek everything that we've gained. So, funding is a big issue. And I think for my tribe in particular, nothing has been given to us, I think we are like every other tribe, we fight for all of those things. (Malissa)

The following response from Sage also examines how critical it is for leadership to listen to each other, and to have discussion on all viewpoints before making a decision.

So there’s value of hashing out and listening to each other of what things can be achieved, and that is something really important in leadership and being a good leader. That’s to listen to all sides of the argument of what is trying to be achieved in a positive way, and to make an ultimate decision that’s good for the overall. (Sage)

The next responses from the participants below identify the risks and fights made from ancestors before and that in leadership it is critical to continue to fight for government and sovereignty rights, as these are essential parts of Native American community. Two participants explained how within tribal leadership, there are times when the tribal council or chairperson has to make decisions that involve taking risks. Looking back in history, leaders would identify many programs and services that would not be here today if it were not for someone standing firm and protecting the elements of culture. There were certain leaders who stood strong and helped tribes establish certain programs that exist today.

To make sure that they know the morals and the traditions and customs, and not give up and not give in and to protect those to make sure that those stay around and people have fought hard to keep them and make sure that people are always wanting us to take deals to give them up, but we wouldn’t be here if we did that easily. (Matt)
The skill needed is having the courage to take risks. We are very much a warrior society, that we are not scared that our ancestors fought, that our ancestors did not sell out. They were strong so we have to be strong as leaders. We have to fight for that tradition that was fought for us, and so taking some risks putting ourselves in uncomfortable situations, being vulnerable, continuing to learn about yourself that takes courage so that’s an important skill. (Virgil)

**Summary and Conclusion**

In conclusion, Chapter 4 analyzed the data collected from the study with the purpose of understanding tribal leadership and the impact on education and cultural knowledge. The eight participants were purposefully selected and all were individually interviewed for this qualitative study. The participants shared their experiences working within the Native community as well as their cultural knowledge about tribal leadership. Some of the participants included in this study were tribal community members, Native American students, Indian Educators, and tribal council members. The brief profile of each participant helped give information about the differences and life experiences of all the participants. The data collected and analyzed served to answer the following research questions: (1) What processes are implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within Native communities? (2) How do tribal leaders define educational success? (3) What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders? There were also sub-questions under each of the main leading questions. From the findings, significant information was revealed about those important elements of tribal leadership and skills needed for future generations. The findings revealed the importance of culture and tradition and leadership
styles, as well as education programs and suggestions and recommendations for current leadership.

The participants in the research study all had similar experiences in that they explained how the history and oppression impacted tribal communities today and how within the community, it is critical to establish trust and have open dialogues for tribes to work together in an effort to provide mutual support. The majority of participants also discussed the importance of elders and that cultural tradition and identity are necessary parts of tribal leadership. There was also an important element described as leading for the people and greater community and purpose. A few participants mentioned that to be a leader, it is critical to understand the community. Education was also mentioned as being of value, and how certain trainings and exchanges of information are needed to better prepare the community and know the needs of the people. A majority of the participants also believed that academic and formal education, as well as cultural and traditional knowledge, is important to the tribal leadership role. A majority of the participants reflected leadership values and styles that were critical for future generations of leaders.

As previously mentioned, the level of training for tribal leadership was a critical area for most of the participants in this research study and many were in agreement on this topic. While some participants believed there are recommended ways for tribal leadership to develop leadership skills, many of the participants were in agreement that it was important for leadership to understand the past history and also work collaboratively
with others to help promote education within the community. It was also pointed out that
together as a community, leadership could be a stronger force. Many of the participants
also felt leadership has evolved over time; however, a majority of the participants agreed
elders possess significant wisdom that helped give guidance. Elders are known for
preserving sacred stories that define tribal values and traditions (Moore, 2003).

There was also a discussion on situational conflict and disconnection within
leadership; however, it was stated that an effective leader is confident and has worked
through his or her own struggles or challenges to work more collaboratively with others.
Conflict was mentioned by a few participants because as leadership makes decisions that
impact people, usually the tribal council has to be in agreement. In any capacity each
person has their own perspective related to concerns for the community, so it was
mentioned that tribal councils must work together to serve its membership.

These research findings addressed the three leadership styles. As evident in the
study, the three leadership approaches can be applied to tribal leadership:
transformational leadership, servant leadership, and shared leadership style. A number of
participants in this study mentioned the importance of working for the community. This
is similar to the servant leadership style in which others’ needs are served. There were
also statements reflecting a transformation leadership approach in that the participants
mentioned the significance of leading with a vision and as a role model for the
community. When examining the earlier forms of leadership, and even more currently as
well, there are times the tribal council works together and has a shared leadership in also
meeting the needs of the community members. Therefore, from the research study, all three leadership approaches could help analyze tribal leadership.

The findings in this research study identified different forms of culturally responsive education as well as new concepts for developments of tribal leadership programs. A number of participants also agreed the promotion of education was significant for community members and that there also needed to be an increase in the awareness about tribal government and sovereignty rights. A majority of participants believed two kinds of knowledge were needed to be included in the tribal leadership role: having a formalized educational background and a traditional and cultural knowledge background. Many times within the tribal community, leaders are elected into the role of a tribal council member and sometimes the leader may have limited experience or educational knowledge; however, the leader is expected to move forward to assist with the future of the tribe, therefore education plays a major role in tribal leadership. A majority of the participants also believed a curriculum should be introduced at the higher educational level as well as within the K-12 mainstream educational system. These recommendations will be addressed in the next chapter to follow.

Additional findings included the concept of providing specialized training programs within the tribes that could focus on the youth and also on promoting language, another aspect of culture. This was another major part of culture also addressed by a few participants, the importance of dance and songs as well as traditions. The tribal and Native American community values differ from mainstream society values, mentioned by
Some participants made reference to the cultural norms imposed on the American Indian, directly connecting to identity development, since at a young age, Native people were instructed not to speak their language or practice their belief systems. Today, many tribes are in the process of reclaiming their educational and ceremonies back.

Participants in this research study also shared their own experiences in tribal leadership or what they observed in leadership. Many of the participants also gave their own ideas for future generations of leaders. Almost all participants believed funding played a major role in leadership and with the right educational knowledge, tribes could learn more about the types of funding for which they may be eligible or that could provide additional resources to the community. A number of participants also addressed funding as an area on which to focus training, which is discussed in the next chapter.

A number of participants also mentioned trust was a critical element to leadership. Due to the history and mistrust that occurred during the boarding school experience within the Native American community, trust became a significant factor. The majority of participants related trust in leadership as important. As participants expressed, in leadership it is important to have stakeholders invested to build the rapport, and trust needs to be established between the leader and the community. At times, tribes face issues within their community and confidentially and integrity are important aspects of leadership so people are able to feel protected. Hence, trust becomes a major factor in leadership. Additionally, there have been times when a tribe becomes fragmented over
an issue. The only way to bring the community back together is with the trust for the leader to do so and this trust can go a long way. Being that many times within the Native community, tribal members are related and most families know each other trust, is valued immensely.

From the research findings and the data collected in the interviews, there was a deeper understanding of tribal leadership with implications for developing a new tribal leadership model. According to the research, the major themes identified were trust, collaboration, importance of elders, the impacts of oppressions, tribal tradition and cultural knowledge, leadership skills, educational values, identity, funding, and communication styles. All of the above elements within tribal leadership are critical as is learning about a holistic approach. The newly developed leadership approach addresses most of these aspects and is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5.

The literature review revealed a limited number of research studies on tribal leadership. The research studies available were limited to and focused on Indian Education or tribal colleges. Based on the data collected and analyzed in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 makes recommendations on how to improve tribal leadership awareness by implementing educational models at both the higher educational level as well as the K-12 grade levels. The information obtained from the data collected in this study produces a new body of knowledge and can be used to suggest innovative ways to increase tribal leadership awareness and effectiveness. The major focus is on education and how to
implement ways to address the needs of the student. The final chapter focuses on the recommendations and implications for future research in the area of tribal leadership.
Chapter 5
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of Study

There has been an increase in the number of Native American tribal leaders, and the types of trainings related to cultural/traditional knowledge necessary for the tribal leadership role have increased. Today, many tribal leaders and community members believe education is a crucial element to tribal leadership. In recent years, the alarming rates of high school dropouts among this population have caused a great concern in education. In 2006, a smaller percentage of American Indian students (75%) reported receiving a high school diploma (Devoe & Darling-Churchill, 2008). Since education is a crucial part of tribal leadership and a majority of American Indian students are not completing high school, this specific study was conducted to more closely examine tribal leadership and the impact of education on it. A large number of individuals in tribal leadership believe leadership styles and models are helpful in understanding tribal leadership, and through educational trainings or new programs, all of these can help further develop a new generation of tribal leaders. For many centuries, tribes were sovereign and possessed inherent sovereignty; they had authority and held a strong tribal government responsive to the political, economic, and cultural needs of the people and community (O’Brien, 1989).

This study examined eight participants with a variety of backgrounds that included: a) tribal council members or previous tribal council members, b) Indian
Educators or those currently working in the field, and c) Students and or Native American community members who also work within local agencies or programs in the Sacramento Region. All individuals were at least 18 years old or older. The participants in this study shared their tribal government experience or their experience working within the Native American community. This was a purposeful sample of participants with individuals selected based on their experience within the tribal leadership role or involvement within the community. Most participants interviewed for this study were enrolled in California federally recognized tribes with a few minor exceptions, as some of the participants were not enrolled in any federally recognized tribe. Each of the interviews was video-taped and participants were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and make edits to their interviews. This researcher conducted a member check to ensure the information was accurately reported.

In this study, a variety of leadership theories were applied to understanding the different aspects of tribal governance and education. The major leadership theories identified were servant leadership, shared leadership, and transformative leadership. From the research findings, themes emerged among participant responses and helped the researcher give recommendations as to the types of direction needed for tribal leadership. From this particular research study, various recommendations could be applied to the tribal leadership role. By implementing new changes within leadership, the development of more educational programs within the American Indian community can occur more easily. There is a discussion on a new model for tribal leadership described in more
detail later in this chapter. Results from the data analysis suggested innovative ways to implement educational programs for this population. There was another major theory that helped analyze the history of California Native American tribes; this guiding framework was the social justice theory.

In this study, Freire’s (1995) theoretical framework helped explain the oppression that occurred within this population. This theory describes the anti-dialogical reaction of conquest that directly occurred with many Native communities and tribes. Most of the Native population had first contact with European settlers when they arrived on the land, and many American Indians were forced off the land. As explained by Freire (1995), the vanquished are dispossessed of their word, their expressiveness, and their culture as a means of further being oppressed, not only economically but culturally. This helps explain what occurred in many Native villages to many tribes, since much of their cultural traditions were lost. As discussed in Chapter 2, The Literature Review, a major component of history was the boarding school era in which many American Indian children were taken from their homes and were not allowed to practice their language or cultural traditions. This negatively impacted the Native Americans’ perceptions on education, and the historical trauma still affects Native communities today. The social justice theory serves as a guiding framework within this research study.

There has been a limited amount of qualitative research conducted on tribal leadership; however, there was a related dissertation. The dissertation referenced the topic of leadership experiences of an American Indian Educator and the sole focus was
on the educator (Johnson, 2009). The focus of this particular study differed in that the research questions guiding the study focused on tribal leadership models that could be utilized within the Native American community. Given that limited research has been conducted on tribal leadership and education, this study helped bring new insight to the field of tribal leadership and its impact on education. Since the researcher is also a member of the local Native American community, trust was more easily built and established among the participants interviewed. It also assisted with the understanding of the general topic area of tribal leadership and knowledge about cultural values and traditions.

This study contributes to filling the gap in the literature. This study explained the essence or basic underlying structure of tribal leadership and education. The findings of this research also provided evidence of themes within the topic of leadership as was discussed in Chapter 4. Some of the dominant themes consisted of the importance of elders as well as resiliency. Many of the participants, when discussing tribal leadership, focused on ways to navigate within the educational system. A majority of the participants mentioned historical trauma and oppression and how the challenges resulting from this trauma presents difficulties for tribes as they endeavor to maintain their cultural traditions and a strong sense of identity. In addition, by conducting this research study, various leadership styles were examined, and a new leadership model was developed including all components of leadership, similar to a holistic approach reflecting Native American values.
The research method was a phenomenological qualitative research approach, which helped with the data analysis. The study used coding to analyze the participants’ responses (Creswell, 2009). The eight participants selected for this research study shared their experiences in tribal leadership and also gave their perspectives on understanding the cultural values as well as educational knowledge needed for the leadership role. The findings revealed important information about the participants’ perceptions on education, leadership styles, and methods of communication. All such elements are critical within tribal leadership.

Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of the findings based on the evidence collected and addressing the following research questions:

1. What processes are implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within its communities?
2. How do tribal leaders define educational success?
3. What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders?

The themes presented in Chapter 4 were illustrative of the consistencies and commonalities between responses of each participant. The themes presented in Chapter 4 identified key components of leadership and the findings were evaluated utilizing the existing literature in Chapter 2. This specific chapter provides recommendations for action using learning objectives from the Sacramento State Doctorate program in Education Leadership, which helped provide some leadership framework. The learning
objectives include: a) transformational leadership, servant, and shared leadership theories and b) application of theory such as diversity and social justice theory also aided in the examination of this research by utilizing different research methods.

The chapter ends with recommendations for further study, reflections from the researcher, and a concluding statement of the research. The first area discussed is the research findings and responses by the participants in reference to the main research questions.

**Interpretation of Findings**

This section helps examine the existing body of literature by addressing the topic of tribal leadership. To discuss the topic of tribal leadership, a few elements needed to be further explained to assist in the understanding and description of the Native American population. The major factor that helped describe the historical trauma of tribes was the literature review on history and tribal governance. Tribal leadership has been around for a number of years and can date back to early forms of the Iroquois Nations. The major creation by the five nations was the Great Peace Confederacy, which was the confederacy’s constitution providing a governing council of 50 chiefs (O’Brien, 1989). This is a documented part of history, and in order to examine tribal governance and U.S governance today, it is critical to mention the earlier forms of leadership.

It is through the interpretation of the study and findings presented in Chapter 4 that helped identify the various types of leadership approaches utilized within tribal leadership. This chapter also discussed the significance of education in the Native
American community. The goal of this section is to focus on institutional practices within the K-12 educational system, as well as the higher education system to build on existing knowledge by adjusting the curriculum within the system. One practice is to promote a culturally responsive curriculum that introduces the early structures of tribal leadership. The two questions that helped to identify this conclusion will follow.

1. **What processes are implemented by tribal leaders to reclaim education within its communities?**

   According to the literature, and based on the finding that many American Indian communities are operating a number of programs to help reclaim their education, many tribal communities focus on meeting the educational needs of the population. The participants in this study gave insight to the current actions taken by tribal leadership to incorporate learning models within the American Indian community. Several participants discussed the types of tribal programs currently assisting the next generations of Native American youth. For example, a few participants stated that depending on the tribes, there could be an array of programs, from the tribe creating their own school system such as charter schools to service tribal members, or having educational events within the community. A few participants also mentioned the implementation of youth programs and some tribes have enacted policy to address education. A few tribes have developed language programs and have also expanded on the currently existing Indian Education programs within their school district.
The participants mentioned ways to integrate information on tribal leadership and governance into the K-12 curriculum as a way to educate all students on tribal governance. A number of participants reflected that the current curriculum needs to be expanded or developed in a way that promotes discussions on tribal leadership but also in a way that is culturally responsive in meeting student needs. For example, a majority of the participants in this research study made reference to education and ways to promote education within the entire Native community. A few references were made to leadership roles and governance within public education. An example on educating others and promoting tribal leadership would be through training the Native American youth. As explained by one participant:

It’s been in more recent years that I was like we need more of that, because these are our future leaders; these are our future attorneys, these are our future lobbyists, these are our future tribal chairs, and our future tribal administrators, we need more than a high school diploma program. (Thomas)

Thomas’s statement provides insight into the community and the understanding that more education is needed to train the community members to serve in tribal leadership. Tribal government officials have the greatest influence on the people on their reservations, from jobs to housing (O’Brien, 1989). In the leadership role, a leader provides services to the community; therefore, it’s up to the leaders to plan out future programs for the tribe. Tribal council members and community members realize education is needed to operate the tribal business. There also needs to be a focus on career development, training to expand on fields and certificate programs. Developing
the tribal members’ skills would help them operate their own tribe and understand what is
entailed in the leadership role and business.

Not only did Thomas mention educational training, but so did another participant who explained the importance of education.

So I think if tribal leaders spend more time not just on their own education, but educating the younger generations, you know, maybe have them attend a fourth grade, because that’s when students are learning about California Indians. If tribal leaders visit the classroom and share that information about their role in leadership then some of the kids that don’t really care to get educated… this may spark an interest and they may say “wow I can be a tribal leader one day.” (Sage)

Sage pointed out a significant element of leadership, which is being a role model and structuring an educational program that expands the area of tribal leadership and mentorship. If tribal leaders go into the public educational setting, it may engage students. Having direct contact with students can help introduce the topic of leadership, but may also help students gain a greater understanding of the early forms of governance. The transformational leadership style focuses on the element of role models and investing stakeholders. “A transformational leader not only focuses on the vision, but also asserting the expectations of a program, and serve as role models to others” (Nevarez & Wood, 2010, p. 59).

Additionally, another leadership theory with which tribes are familiar is collaboration and servant leadership as a way to give back to the community. “The collective attitude that dominated nearly all ancestral tribal governments meant that each tribal member considered himself or herself in terms of the group. The idea of people doing things individually did not make sense because each individual was only part of the
whole. Because of this collective attitude, most tribal decision-making procedures were highly democratic” (Stubben, 2006, p. 23). The next statement explains the significance of tribes working together as a way to improve education.

For example, we got one thing going on right now, here we started a youth cultural exchange at the Native American Health Center, were we are bringing together the urban Native youth of the bay area with the rural Native youth with Hoopa up north of Humboldt County and Yurok County and Tawala. And we are coming together as different groups of Native people, but as Native people we are promoting cultural identity and cultural sense of community and sense of education and through that I think education, so that’s one example of current programs. (Virgil)

Creating programs like those mentioned above exposes the youth to different leadership methods and supports the youth in developing a greater sense of cultural identity. The next statement also offers another way in which tribal communities are reclaiming education by starting other educational programs. Another critical component of education to tribal communities is language. During the earlier boarding school experiences, many Native children were forced into becoming civilized. It meant the children were not allowed to speak their language or practice other cultural traditions. It is now that many tribes are starting to implement language programs as a way to teach the youth and educate its membership. Due to the boarding school experience, many tribes lost their language, and a limited number of elders knew how to speak the dialogue. Native language educators have taken up the work of Native language preservation with devotion and commitment, and recognizing the serious rate of language loss, have made a commitment to restoration (Pease-Pretty, n.d.). Language is critical for many tribal
communities, and the following participant explains how current tribes are focusing on language.

I am thinking of some of the processes involved here that are used by lots of groups focused on reclaiming language, reclaiming culture in terms of material culture, the know-how of doing things, whether it is baskets or flutes or other kinds of instruments, clothing the dancing, songs and those kinds of cultural aspects. (Al)

Matt focused on the ways to address and expand tribal leadership programs, within the higher educational system. He explained how to include a tribal leadership program at the graduate level for Native American students.

I think we have to teach a formalized Master’s program once you go through a Mathematics and English course like a WPE course as Sacramento State does, get a formalized education so we can compete at a par level not saying you can’t compete, but go through a BIA level and then create a specialized program a unique program for tribal leaders, because I think San Bernardino is doing a great job of bringing up tribal leaders down in Southern California, but also have one on a broader level that specialize in getting some ground traction up here, where you could get some students who are doing well identify them, which reservations they are coming from and pull them out and focus on them, and really get somebody who knows and who has been through it. (Matt)

The participant’s perspective offers new ways to introduce a program at the higher educational system that is specific to tribal leadership. Matt also explained how the K-12 educational system could also teach a more formalized tribal government within the school curriculum.

You’re educated to become the president of the United States, but you can’t become a tribal leader and there’s more formalized traditional government in the 12th grade where you learn about your government, but you don’t learn anything about tribal government in the same state where your tribes are located, and there is nothing to set you up to become a tribal leader let alone that your tribe exists. (Matt)
These findings help reinforce the transformational leadership theory because as a former tribal leader, this participant explained a way to make changes within tribal programs that will help the community. The literature on transformational leadership recognizes that leaders seek to offer new solutions to help resolve a problem or concern (Caldwell et al., 2011). All of the examples given about education help support the effort in tribal leadership and offer recommendations for the educational system. Traditional cultural values within the Native American community is discussed in the next section.

2. How do tribal leaders define educational success?

The participants in this research study gave insight into the definition of educational success. The participants within this research study described success in various ways, as each description was different. Based on previous experiences and boarding school experiences, some participants defined success as a milestone not as a degree or achievement. Due to the historical trauma this population had encountered, many participants felt the fact that Indian students even attend school on a regular basis and promote onto the next grade level is a huge accomplishment. The following participant defined educational success:

I think everyone views it as necessary from my history and background, even the smallest things were considered successes, which was a student coming to school for a week or completing the semester and promoting to the next grade. These are huge successes and I just love my students, I feel like for the youth any success that they have is huge and should be praised even if they came to school for one week straight. (Christina)
The next comment reflects how education success is not measured in terms of degree attainment but as a way by which to maintain cultural identity. The example reflects the importance of maintaining bi-cultural identity.

I think tribal leaders should define educational success as again, I go back to the bi-cultural competency that you could get within education’s mainstream Institute such as UC Davis or UC Berkeley, Stanford or Sacramento State. You can learn that way of navigating the world and what that system is and what that educational institute teaches, but you also have to continue to embrace your Native identity, embrace Native cultural not completely assimilate or sell out. That is important that you preserve your Native culture and be bi-cultural in both societies, so if the educational system and Native American departments within the universities teach that and preserve that then we will have more Native students internalize that. (Virgil)

Both statements describe how educational success can be defined in the Native community as it can be defined in various ways as some tribal leaders also define success by the amount of high school students graduating or even continuing on in early grade schools it just depends as most know the difficulty with students staying enrolled within the educational system. As the graduation rates continue to decline success could be having one or two students from the community attending school daily.

3. What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders?

When examining this question, a majority of the participants believed cultural knowledge, traditions, and values were instrumental in training the next generations of tribal leaders. Mostly, all participants mentioned that not only formalized education is an important aspect of tribal leadership, but also that traditional and cultural knowledge are significant. The cultural knowledge and traditions have been passed down for years. The
I think through a series of conversations with one another, consultation and making sure our goals are really goals that help each that every one of us can expand as individuals. I think that growth is really important for the individual, and a person who is confined and stepped on or isolated is a person who is not expanding, and is not appreciated, and is not respected and those kinds of discussions about how to expand our community should occur. How do we allow each other to grow in our culture and our language or whatever seems to be important because this is different from group to group as some people need one thing more urgently than another thing. So I think those kinds of discussions need to happen. Again, not to simply use the form, the model, or the paradigm our dominant culture has used because it has already been proven to be successful only in some ways and horribly ineffective in other ways. We must urge our people to continue their education in their communities whenever possible, and that culture is really important. I think most of my valuable educational experiences happened outside of the classroom. It happened with people that I knew, people that I was led to. We have lost contact in many cases with the Spirit world, we have lost trust in the methods to do that and I think that lots of our meetings start with prayers and sometimes people don’t recognize what the prayers are for or why we start with a prayer. But it is important that we do and I think that the dances and how they are performed and all those kinds of aspects of our culture help us stay close to the truth of what we’re about, which is coming together and not to be alienating each other. So there’s a whole different kind of awareness that needs to take place to reconnect us. (Al)

Al was not the only one who believed culture traditions were instrumental to tribal leadership, but a few other participants mentioned that as well.

The next comment relates to traditional values fought for by previous ancestors, and that the values are sacred and should be protected and preserved. Restoring the tribal traditions and customs are an essential part of leadership.
To make sure that they know the morals and the traditions and customs and not give up and not give in. They need to protect them make sure these are always here the people fought hard to keep them. (Matt)

Subsequently, it was not only Matt who described the importance of cultural knowledge base. Another important tribal value discussed was the importance of respect and being honest. Due to the prior history that happened to Native Americans’ trust is a main element in leadership. When examining the early forms of tribal leadership, there was a description of the leader’s expectations. “The leader held authority through the consent of the people, and he could lose his position if his actions ceased to command confidence and respect” (O’Brien, 1989, p. 32). From the examination of leadership and understanding the attributes it was clear that respect was an essential part of leadership.

The comment made by the following participant reflects the value of trust.

I think we can go on with so many different tribal values, but in terms of leadership there is a way to have respect within the home and there’s a way to have respect for the community, and I think those entire things interface with each other. How you are in your home and how you are as an individual reflect your leadership qualities whether you’re honest and have humility, and are a good listener, and have patience, these basic characteristics that are traditional. I think both traditionally Native and in the modern traditional way of the indigenous people around the world there is a value of respect. (Sage)

A few other cultural traditions were discussed: stories, basket weaving, as well as language, and teachings of songs. All of the cultural traditions are major factors within tribal life. “The strongest driving force among American Indians is their traditional spiritual beliefs and practices” (O’Brien, 1989, p. 83). It is these traditions that have been passed on for years, and today in many tribes, leadership and council members recognize
the important cultural elements. The next statement mentioned reflects the feelings about tribal traditions and cultural knowledge.

We have a cultural committee. So, what we do is we have language that we couldn't have without funding. So, someone comes out and they teach our tribal members Maidu language every Wednesday. And there are a lot of interactive activities; we offer beading courses, we offer basket courses for any tribal members that want to come out and bead or want to come and weave baskets. And so, we tell stories, we have our elders, they'll tell stories about the area, or our creation story. So, we're able to do all of that where we all come together. We still have grass games, and teach songs and things like that. Because we know that the Maidu language is a dying language and so, there's really been a big push to start to offer language lessons. (Thomas)

The findings support the idea that cultural knowledge is relevant in tribal leadership and helps give the leader additional support. Since many tribal leaders are elected into office, and depending on how they were raised, the leader may be familiar with cultural traditions and norms or may not have that background. However, as mentioned by a majority of the participants, the community holds cultural knowledge as a strong value. It is through education and the teachings that help expand on the learning within the Native community. Tribal leaders connect with each other and empower the community by giving back to various types of cultural programs. Collectively, participants described that even if tribal leadership does not know about their traditions, it is important to learn that information, as it is a crucial element of leadership. These findings support the key components of leadership, which is establishing trust and respect with the stakeholders. The findings support one of the theoretical frameworks of transformational leadership in which the leaders are admired for their respect and trust level (Chi et al., 2012). The three leadership approaches and frameworks used in this
study to analyze the research findings led to the development of a new theoretical framework.

**A New Theoretical Framework**

In previous leadership models, and according to the literature review, there is limited focus on a tribal leadership theory that could be applied to the realm of Native American governance. For the purpose of this study, the research focused on the various styles and leadership theories to create a holistic approach. The stakeholders and community members are the most instrumental parts of leadership. For purposes of this study, three leadership frameworks helped guide and explain different facets of tribal leadership. The theories helped analyze tribal leadership within the Native American population; however, a new theoretical framework can be utilized when examining tribal leadership. It is an assumption that many times there is no introduction to the area of tribal leadership within the mainstream educational system. The new theoretical framework introduced in this study can help incorporate tribal leadership into the mainstream educational system. The three existing frameworks: a) servant leadership, b) shared leadership, and c) transformational leadership along with the Indigenous research method help explain tribal leadership. This new framework, introduced by Al Striplen (2012), helps identify some critical cultural teachings within the Native American community and provides a holistic approach. The circle in this model symbolizes the inter-connectedness of the community and this approach also compares mainstream educational values to tribal values. The last theory that helped explain the impacts on this
population included the social justice theory. This theory helped explain the history component that many tribal people in the community faced and the implications of the historical trauma. The three leadership theories are explained along with the newer tribal leadership model developed from this research study. Figure 12 illustrates the main theoretical frameworks guiding this research study.

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<td>• Leaders that are admired respected and trusted also serve as role models.</td>
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<td>• Leaders that focus on the vision and highest standards.</td>
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<td>• Team approach and also emphasis on follower empowerment.</td>
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<td>• Comprehension of change within oneself and the organization</td>
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<td>• This leadership approach takes into consideration the needs of the community.</td>
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<td>• Leadership focus is on serving others.</td>
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<td>• Transfers responsibility to the leader.</td>
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<td>• Ethical decision making.</td>
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<td>• Role model</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Team-based structures.</td>
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<td>• Focused on the role of the individual leading</td>
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<td>• Group or organization goals.</td>
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<td>• Oppression</td>
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<td>• Anti-dialogical &amp; Dialogical methods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Banking method of education</td>
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*Figure 12. The Theoretical Framework*
**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership theory is important to understand since transformational leadership appears to be an effective approach in creating and sharing knowledge within an organization (Chi et al., 2012). This leadership approach can be applied to tribal leadership in that many tribal leaders focus on the future of the tribe and also use a team approach for educating others in the community. Oftentimes what occurs within tribal leadership is when it comes to the decision making, the general membership in the tribe are consulted, so there is a consensus in making decisions. Another important element mentioned by participants was the value of trust and respect in the tribal leadership role. Many participants focused on the fact that establishing trust and building rapport were essential parts of leadership and maintaining a strong identity as a leader.

The transformational leader recognizes the investment of the stakeholder and community members. A majority of the participants in this study referenced that it is critical to empower the community members. Many participants saw a need for further training and education on the topic of tribal leadership as a way to empower the entire community. The transformational leader recognizes ways to implement change with a focus on the bigger picture. This also aligns spiritually with tribal leadership since a major focus of the leader is to plan for the future.

**Shared Leadership**

Shared leadership represents a team of people working toward a common goal. Since many tribal leaders operate from a collectivist approach when making decisions,
this approach directly relates to shared leadership. The early forms of tribal leadership display cultural values based on a collectivist society and taking into consideration all aspects before making a decision. This is common in today’s tribal leadership, as most leaders work as a team. Many times, effective Native American leadership is determined by whether or not a tribal leader works toward actions that benefit the entire tribal community instead of those satisfying their own individual needs (Portman & Garrett, 2005). Again this form of leadership was mentioned by a majority of participants in this research study, as they believed working together across tribes can help the overall community. One particular participant mentioned how their tribe worked with other tribal governments to focus on education. Another participant also mentioned how working collaboratively on certain topic areas and across tribal governments could help bring more resources for the tribe. It was also acknowledged that if tribes were able to collaborate on certain elements or projects, funding that could help build and establish more services to the community may expand. The participant Thomas mentioned neutral areas on which all tribes can collaborate as a team. Some of those key areas mentioned were education, health care, youth, and elders. If tribes worked on these key areas together, the potential for the community could possibly be extremely beneficial to all.

The shared leadership approach could also be applied to tribal leadership in terms of support. There have been times when leaders have come together for different causes to help support each other and clearly, by the participants’ comments, the best approach or leadership practice is a unified approach involving many governments. It is important
to consider the stakeholders within leadership and to make decisions as a team since collectivity is of high value in the community.

**Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership focuses on serving others and can clearly be observed within tribal leadership, since most of the work done by tribal leaders is for the better good of the entire community (Spears, 2005). This type of leadership is a collaborative approach and basically considers the community desires. In the tribal leadership realm, depending on funding and the direction determined by the rest of the community, the leader is told to focus on certain areas based on the community’s needs.

For example, many times tribes might have educational or housing programs or an elder program based on the needs of the general membership. These programs are operated through the tribal government, and it is common for tribes to have educational programs that help fund either higher education or vocational/certificate programs. The funding for these programs is usually based on the needs of the tribal members within that particular tribe. Again, depending on how many individuals within that tribe are attending college or needing assistance with housing determine the types of services offered. There are some tribes offering an array of educational programs such as higher educational funds, cultural classes, language; however, these programs are all dependent on the community. As mentioned by a majority of participants, each tribe is unique in their culture, but also in the types of programs implemented. An example of this was also mentioned by a participant within this research study with regard to how their own tribe
developed their own charter school for its tribal members, and it has helped promote
education. Other participants commented on youth programs or Tribal TANF programs
and on new developed programs with a focus on specialized trainings for their
community members. All these examples directly relate to the servant leadership
approach.

Social Justice Theory

According to Freire (1995), one of the first characteristics of anti-dialogical action
is a conquest that someone or something was conquered. This can clearly be observed
within the Native American population as much of the land was conquered.
Understanding the tribal history helps explore the historical trauma and pain the
population has encountered over centuries. The importance of identity was mentioned by
a majority of the participants in this study and was a major finding. Identity is an
important element of tribal leadership since knowing about one’s tribal background and
about the tribe’s culture helps identify the assimilation that occurred. Due to the
assimilation and boarding school experiences, many Native communities lost their
language, cultural stories, and songs.

Due to the history, tribes are now reclaiming their education in a number of ways
in order to preserve those significant traditions. Many of the participants in this research
study mentioned the revitalization of cultural and language and that these are critical to
tribal communities, as a way to gain some of the teachings back that were once taken
over by colonization. Another element also introduced by the colonization was the divide
and rule concept. Unification was seen as a threat to leadership and the oppressor would divide as a method to weaken the oppressed (Freire, 1995). This is a critical aspect of leadership because in some tribal communities there are factions further dividing the members. As mentioned by a number of participants, the best approach for tribes is to unify and work together.

Another aspect of the social justice theory that helps examine tribal leadership and understand tribal communities is the cultural invasion. According to Freire (1995), the cultural invasion took place when the invaders imposed their own view of the world on those they invaded and inhibited their creativity as well as curbed their expression. Since Native people were not able to freely practice their belief systems, they faced the threat of losing their culture. Many times the invaders would try to mold the Native people into the ideals of Westernized value systems. The goal was to assimilate the American Indian people and, therefore, they would learn to practice the same beliefs as mainstream America. It was also through the mission system that other religious ideals were placed onto the American Indian communities. This history still impacts tribes today, as it was mentioned by a majority of the participants in this research study that it was not in the traditional way to value materialistic items that some tribal members now value. Some participants also mentioned that in the old ways, tribes valued other things such as community and culture. It was stated by a few participants that the traditional ways of song and dance are now being integrated into tribes, whereas some people know the
traditions and are trying to establish ways to help educate the younger generations in these areas because it is critical to pass this on.

Another important theme determined by these research findings was the importance of elders within the community. Elders in the community were a key component to early forms of tribal leadership, and today many tribes have elders who sit on tribal council and also work with the tribal governments helping to share their valuable knowledge and wisdom. There is a high value and appreciation for elders within the community that still influences tribal leadership today. Most of all, participants within this research study mentioned such connection to the elders and leadership. These are just a few values in the Native American community that are described in more detail later in this chapter. There is also a chart comparing and contrasting Native American values with mainstream American values presented as well.

**Indigenous Research Theory & Alternative Model**

The next theories and models help explain the dynamics of tribal communities. The circle figure in the Indigenous research model (see Figure 13) helps explain the Native communities in moving from the survival of the people’s languages and culture to including spiritual practices. The circle also represents the history and the words selected, which are different in terms of Western research terminology (Smith, 2012). This model was also discussed in greater detail within Chapter 2. The circle is significant because it represents life and that all things in the circle impact each other. As described by Smith (2012), the circle indicates all things are interrelated and each blends into the
next. A circle also implies that ideas flow and one single change can impact all. The parts of the circle are equal and no part is superior over the other. It is prevalent to this research method, but so is the alternative model discussed next.
The alternative method or model reflected in Figure 14 helps bring some new insight into the cultural aspects of the Native community. The introduction to an alternative educational model is similar to the medicine wheel, but differs in some aspects. The circle represents a holistic approach; however, the distinctions are made between the mental, spiritual, Creator, and physical aspects. Usually in the medicine wheel, there is an emotional component, but within this model, the focus is on the Creator. Usually in textbooks, the focus is on the emotional aspect instead of the spiritual and creator component. A major addition to this model is the heart in the middle of the
circle that represents unity. Many times within the Native culture, there is reference made to the heart as a guiding force when making decisions and dealing with the community. It is important to remember the hurt this population has encountered and refocus on the future direction. The circle in this alternative paradigm represents the circle of learning.

Another important concept that was also significant in the research findings was the cultural values. As displayed in the proceeding figure one of the major elements to the community is having the understanding of mainstream American values in comparison to the tribal community values, as these differ. Figure 15 displays how the mainstream characteristics impact education and help foster a linear way of thinking. This figure was adopted by Al Striplen (2012) and is used as a way to educate and explain mainstream educational systems.

*Figure 14. Alternative model. (Striplen, 2012)*
Characteristics of Mainstream Society Educational Values:

Uniformity
Age-appropriate
Authoritative
Science based
Pass/fail
Socratic (Q&A)
Achievement orientation
Competitive (win/lose)
Standardized/imposed dictated
Static/factual
Time (future) focused
Power/control/financial gain
Self Image-outward focus
Service for personal gain
Motivation: Fear/threat

(Striplen, 2012)

*Figure 15. Mainstream values.*

Table 4 explains the differences between Native cultural values and mainstream society values. As identified, a number of differences in the standard values focus on independence and scientific explanation. However, in the tribal values, the focus is on
cooperation and the appreciation of working together as family unit. The differences between the two are clearly exhibited.

Table 4

*Cultural Values & Traditions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Native American Values</th>
<th>Mainstream America Values</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Harmony with Nature</td>
<td>• Power over nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cooperation</td>
<td>• Competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collectivist Culture</td>
<td>• Personal Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-discipline both the body and mind</td>
<td>• Self-Expression, Self-disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family</td>
<td>• Scientific Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Follow the traditional ways:</td>
<td>• Future time focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dancing, songs, stories</td>
<td>• Clock-watching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patience</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Importance of Elders</td>
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Source: Garret (1994)

Since the Westernized educational model reflects a value system different from many Native American traditions and cultural customs, it is important to develop a different approach and model that best fits the needs of the population. The mainstream educational model approach is usually linear, similar to the banking method of education. A new developed model would help represent a collaborative approach toward education.

According the Freire (1995), the banking method of education does not allow for an exchange of information to occur between the oppressors and oppressed. The more students work at storing deposits of information, the less they develop the critical consciousness that could help transform the world. This banking method of education is still utilized in many formalized educational institutions today. Some attitudes of this
banking approach mirror an oppressive society by the following actions: the teacher teaches and the students are taught, the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, the teacher acts and the students have an illusion of acting through the action of the teacher, and the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, set in opposition with the freedom of the students (Freire, 1995, p. 54). This method of education does not increase a desire for knowledge, it hinders the creativity of the student. A more culturally responsive environment would clearly help the student to think critically on societal matters. The banking method of education is similar to that linear approach as it reflects a standardized and compartmentalized way.

An inclusive approach to education would help encourage and promote different ideals within the Native American community and in the population. It is critical a more inclusive teaching approach to all cultures can help the community to work together. The next model examined is the holistic approach developed by a Native American community member. This model is represented by the circle, since the circle has great cultural meaning within the tribal community. The alternative model helps explain the different aspects of traditional culture and knowledge. Near the model is a list of words explaining the important values within the Native American population and community. Figure 16 represents a new paradigm.
Diverse life experiences
Nature: the true teacher
Sharing/cooperating
Full Awareness
Knowing self
Service without expectation
Balance/Healing
Now (present) focused
Reality: Spirit/Creator
Motivation: Harmony, Oneness with Creator

Figure 16. Alternative transformational leadership model.

A newly created tribal leadership model was developed based on the research findings and the holistic/alternative model. Since the circle represents the meaning of life
and that all things are equal, the circle can be used to help examine and explain the relationships within tribal governance. Many of the participants believed it was critical for the tribal leader to have an understanding of working together. There were also significant discussions on tribal culture and traditions and the fact that all things are connected and the circle represents how each strand is needed for balance (Portman & Garrett, 2005). In tribal leadership, one of the main goals is to work for the community, and the circle symbolizes the importance of community involvement within leadership. An important and significant value in tribal leadership is spirituality and the respect for the elders. As mentioned previously, a major theme within tribal leadership focused on the elders and their role within the Native community.

Another important factor mentioned by participants was the significance of empowerment, included as well. A majority of the participants reflected that the role of leadership and tribal council is to provide a way to empower and teach the next generation of leaders. The tribal council members interviewed in this study disclosed their long-term vision and goals for their tribes programs and services and some best practices in tribal leadership. Almost all participants in the study stated that the essential part of tribal leadership was for a leader to work with other tribes and communities to collaborate on various programs. In the middle of Figure 16 is a heart with the word collaboration because this was a major theme in the research and a major aspect of tribal leadership.
Since all three leadership approaches could be observed and applied toward the understanding of tribal leadership, they are included in the circle. Another major element in the research findings was the combination of the three leadership styles. Those leadership styles were servant leadership, shared leadership, and transformative leadership. There is no specific order of these three leadership approaches; however, from the research findings these leadership styles were observed. A major theme across the participant responses was the fact that tribal leaders focused on the communities’ needs. Servant leadership is providing services to the people, and clearly this was a critical element of leadership. There was also a focus on the future goals for the tribe, which directly related to the component of transformational leadership. A number of participants believed it was the leader’s responsibility to think about the vision and help establish change within the tribe. There was also a reference made to the recognition of having role models within the realm of tribal leadership, clearly exhibited in the transformational leadership approach as it focuses on the future and helping groom new leaders. As a majority of the participants stated, for tribes to move forward and focus on the future, they need to recognize the past situations; hence, all elements in the circle are equal as all are connected. “Tribal Leadership moves in a circle in which everyone in the circle is treated with respect. The circle is the leader past, present, future” (McLeod, 2002, p. 10).

The last leadership approach represented in the figure was shared leadership. Many times within tribal governments, there is a team approach when making decisions
impacting the entire community. As stated by a few participants, for tribal leaders to move forward, they need to consult with the tribal members and discuss options before making decisions. Many of the participants, in this research study also revealed that for decisions to be made, oftentimes the tribal chairperson will consult with the other tribal council members to determine the best approach for the tribe. There was a discussion on the communication styles and disagreements between tribal council members. When the tribal council has a difficult time making a decision, what usually happens is the decision is left up to the community members to determine the best resolution, a representation of the shared leadership approach. All of the aforementioned leadership approaches and findings within this research have helped to provide insight into future recommendations of action for tribal leadership and education

**Recommendations for Action**

Tribal leaders are expected to uphold their traditional and cultural values but to also understand the needs of the Native community. Tribes are separate and distinct peoples with unique histories predating the United States as a political entity, and the recognition and respect for tribal sovereignty has roots dating back to the earliest contact of when the first Europeans arrived (Johnson et al., 2000). It is critical to understand the perceptions of tribal leadership and the impact of education and cultural knowledge on it. In this study, participants were asked for their recommendations as to what they believe to be an essential element of leadership. The interview data collected from this research study, along with the researcher’s knowledge acquired through the literature review and
the researcher’s involvement within the Native community all offered recommendations at the K-12 educational level, as well at the higher educational level. The first recommendations focus on ways to expand knowledge and educational learning objectives with regard to tribal leadership within the higher educational realm, as this is critical for the community. Several participants in this research study mentioned a need for education in regard to the tribal leadership role.

**Curriculum in Higher Education**

**Recommendation #1:** To incorporate and consider a curriculum on tribal governance within the higher education level and create a certificate program or degree program specializing in tribal leadership and governance. This type of program should also affirm the cultural aspect and connection to the tribal land.

I think we have to teach a formalized Master’s program once you go through a Mathematics and English course like a WPE course similar to Sacramento State as a way to get a formalized education, so we can compete at a par level not saying you can’t compete, but go through a BIA level and then create a specialized program a unique program for tribal leaders, because I think San Bernardino is doing a great job of bringing up tribal leaders down in Southern California, but one needs to be done on a more broader level with a tribal governance specialization. (Matt)

These types of tribal leadership training and classes would help prepare members of the community for that leadership role through analysis and critically thinking. The types of classes could consist of tribal sovereignty, finance, and budgeting all with the specific focus on Native American communities and tribes. Additionally, participants suggested courses on communication styles, collaboration, and trainings on self-identity and culture, as most participants believed such elements are critical in tribal leadership.
It would be instrumental for tribes to focus on their uniqueness and foster an acceptance of the various First Nation Cultures as a way to gain greater understanding of all tribes. Having a class that discusses the different cultural attributes of each tribe would also allow students to gain a better understanding of working together and how to properly engage with other governments. Another focus of this program could be similar to that of business management, but with a heavy focus on tribal leadership and business management. Additionally, there were some other classes mentioned by participants, such as a need to learn about California tribal history and understanding the operation of tribal program administration. This type of program could potentially be introduced at the two-year college or also at the four-year college, depending on the students’ needs, and could be a certificate or degree program. The program could consist of three or four semesters. Currently, the University of San Marcos is working on establishing a tribal leadership program to address these needs of the community. This type of program would not just be applicable to the Native students, but to all students to educate and bring an awareness of tribal governance and politics to the entire community. The next recommendation focuses on the tribe communities creating their own educational programs.

**Tribal Leadership Training**

**Recommendation #2:** To implement a specific training program within the tribe itself relating to tribal leadership and education, language, and cultural preservation by having a component focused on helping individuals and tribal members identify their
gifts. Implementing a strengths-based training that is culturally grounded would allow individuals to expand on their talents and skills, as well as their future with their career goals and paths.

It’s important for tribal leadership, to be trained on funding opportunities and the BIA, and their whole process, the 638 and housing. We need to learn more of what's out there regarding housing and education and healthcare because we as Native people have rights to all of those services, just like anyone else. And we as Native people have opportunities to work directly with governments to ensure that our tribal people are supported. (Thomas)

This type of training would be beneficial for tribes to educate its tribal members on the funding and operation of tribal business. Some tribes today have established tribal leadership programs on their reservations dealing with youth training and different aspects of funding and other services provided by the tribe. Another major tribal leadership component is to create language programs for its members. There was a statement about the revitalization of language within tribal leadership.

Language and revitalization is huge across the board, I would like to see that come at the forefront a lot of tribes try to get that and I’m not sure, but I know every tribe’s different and I do know that especially my tribe in the area, I’m from the South Dakota area and I do believe it’s very neat to see a language program operated. It would be a dream to have fluent speaking students in high school and I know there’s still some out there. If that became the norm that would be amazing and it would do amazing things that I think we don’t even realize right now, it would change a lot of things. (Christina)

For the most part, many tribes are already establishing language programs as part of their cultural committees. It is a critical cultural attribute already being worked out; however, language should be integrated with a focus on tribal leadership as well. More individuals may become interested and involved in trying to expand the services offered
within the community. Research has suggested that the tribal language commissions and cultural authorities have mandated cultural language learning including leadership training, language, and certification. For many tribes, such programs hold great promise in the areas of education community and youth development (Pease-Pretty, n.d.).

In general, these types of educational services could overall impact tribal leadership and again help with the cultural identity connection. Due to the historical trauma, there is a huge push to reclaim language within the community. Many tribal leaders within California are trying to implement language programs on their reservations. An example of a local language program is with the Yocha Dehe Wintu Nation, as they offer a language program within their school system. They introduce children to the dialogue and teach language in the classrooms. The researcher has knowledge about this particular program through previous involvement with the tribe. Another participant also mentioned his tribe is currently focusing on language instruction and is teaching classes to their tribal members. Introducing different career fields to the youth and by further developing programs in various areas will help expand on skills and trainings and will make the community stronger.

The next recommendation from the research findings within this study is the fact that there needs to be an implementation of a tribal leadership curriculum within the mainstream educational system with a focus on grades K-12 to create an awareness about tribal leadership government and sovereignty. As found in the research, the current
mainstream public education is doing an inadequate job of educating students in the area of tribal government.

**Curriculum in K-12**

**Recommendation #3:** Implement and introduce a K-12 curriculum with a specialized focus on tribal leadership and government in public education instruction. By adding an element of tribal leadership to the standard curriculum, all students would benefit from learning about the tribal government structure and functions. There should also be a discussion on First Nation’s history and California history. The classroom curriculum should include the accurate events of cultural invasion and how this impacts tribes within the Nation. The curriculum would also include ways for tribal leaders to visit the classrooms and give the educator new knowledge or help with existing knowledge regarding tribal history within local areas. This type of curriculum would be culturally responsive and also address the needs of the Native American students and community. As mentioned by a few participants, the K-12 experience was not always positive, and the limited discussion on Native American people and tribes could be improved. The following comment reflects a participant’s perspective on tribal leadership within the mainstream classroom.

So I think if tribal leaders spend more time not just on their own education but educating the younger generations. As we talked a little bit about going into fourth grade, because that’s when we are learning about California Indians, but if tribal leaders can visit a school this could help spark interest in some students. (Sage)
The research reflects data that once a student establishes a strong personal connection to the people working in a specific field, the students are more likely to take an interest in that subject area. In tribal leadership, it is critical for role models to help engage students in that field. As mentioned before, a transformational leader serves as a role model (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). It would be beneficial for tribal leaders to present in the K-12 classroom to educate students on tribal government; the leader would serve as a role model and may also spark an interest in other Native students so they are able to see the possibilities and options for future endeavors. The last recommendation discussed focuses on mentorship.

**Mentorship Program**

**Recommendation #4:** Implement a mentor program with Native American high school students during the summer and offer the students an internship experience within tribal leadership. According to the feedback and additional findings in this research study, another recommendation would be to start an early introduction program for Native American high school students. If the school district established and focused on building a partnership with tribal leaders, students could get direct supervision in the field by working within their own community. A few participants mentioned that if leaders reached out to more school programs, many students would be impacted. This type of modeling program would lead to empowering the youth at an early age about their own tribal government system. Many of the participants in this study mentioned they would like to see tribal members get degrees and certificates in a variety of areas so the person
could come back to work within their own community, and this recommendation could assist with education. This leads into the next element and areas of further study.

**Implications for Further Study**

For tribes to take their places within the global market, there must be a focus on tribal training and development as well as cultural knowledge in various fields to help prepare the next generation of tribal leadership. It is crucial to fully understand the unique dynamics of each tribe and understand the types of communities and history. This study showed the powerful elements of tribal leadership and the value placed on education. Primarily, the study identified the factors impacting tribal leadership and tribal communities and allowed for powerful insights. It is critical to continue the effort of increasing the knowledge base on tribal leadership and to bridge all tribal communities by promoting collaboration and education for all. To continue the effort in educating the community and increase the number of high school graduates, it is critical for students to see the connection to their community and their role within tribal leadership. Future research is discussed in more detail according to the research findings.

**Implication #1: Compare and contrast tribal leadership with those tribal leaders who have received a formal education degree to those who have a strong sense of cultural and tradition.**

This would be an interesting study to observe various backgrounds of different tribal leaders. In such a research study, participants would include a small number of tribal council members who had not received any formal higher educational degree. All
participants in this study would have different perceptions and educational backgrounds as well as cultural knowledge and traditional knowledge; however, all would share a high value of education and leadership attributes. It would be interesting to observe the different forms of educational backgrounds tribal leaders had that helped them in their leadership roles. The tribal leaders’ experiences must be further studied to understand the different forms of education and circumstances impacting the tribal communities. In particular, documenting the experiences of those who made a decision to take on the role as tribal chairperson would be a critical issue to examine for this population since there is limited research in this area.

**Implication #2: Further study tribal leadership in terms of gender differences.**

As stated previously, a great number of women have filled tribal leadership roles and according to history, women were part of the early forms of tribal leadership. It would be beneficial to explore the gender differences in leadership styles to gain more insight into the dynamics in leadership. It would be important to understand the essence of American Indian leadership as defined by the power of women and the potential implications of leadership and mentoring needs of women (Portman & Garrett, 2005). As mentioned in this research study this is an area that needs to be explored in greater detail. In the research on Native American women leadership roles, it was found that oral traditions consist of modern research findings in that Native women demonstrate high levels if independent thinking and leadership skills by women displayed innovative strategies to accomplish the needed task (Portman & Garrett, 2005). To further explore
the current number of women who hold leadership positions on tribal council would also be a critical aspect of leadership. It would be important to document their stories and life experiences.

**Implication #3: Explore the impact of funding on tribal leadership**

As mentioned by a few participants in this study and from the data collected, funding played a major role and influence on tribal leadership. Funding was a critical element, as it determined the types of programs and services a tribe could provide. There was mention of gaming revenues; however, many of the participants mentioned other ways to generate funding to help stabilize the tribal government. Another important element of funding is federal recognition and non-federal recognition of a tribe. Those federally recognized tribes are able to apply for more funding sources, which possibly allows them additional benefits as tribal members. It would be interesting to compare a tribe with gaming revenue versus a tribe with non-federal recognition status and also examine the types of services each tribe provides based on their allocated funding. A major concern identified in this research study was that sometimes there is no funding guarantee; therefore, it can be difficult for tribes to plan ahead to implement programs.

It would be beneficial for a study to analyze the different funding sources as a way to identify some of the major resources within tribal communities. Also mentioned in this research study was that tribes should work together across the board because together as a team they could help support each other financially with certain programs.
It would help to have research conducted on the tribal funding needs of each unique tribe and report on the status of funding available for tribes.

**Implication #4: Develop a pilot program on the topic of tribal leadership and conduct a longitudinal study on the population.**

Implementing a pilot program over a period of time would allow for data to be collected on successful tribal leadership programs and allow a comparison of those tribes that would receive trainings to those that would not receive any training, determining any differences within the tribal communities. If a sample pilot program was created to address the needs of the community, this could be a model for other programs. From this particular research study on tribal leadership many of the participants described the need for trainings on leadership and the type of classes that would be beneficial. From these findings, a pilot program could be created, developed, and implemented within the community to receive feedback on the needs. It would be critical to have components of identity, cultural awareness, and also leadership management and skills.

Additionally, developing a pilot program or a potential model would help serve as a guide to other tribes in the surrounding areas of tribal leadership. If data were collected and analyzed on successful and best practices of tribal leadership programs, this would help provide funding for tribal leadership programs as well. It would be helpful if a sample model of tribal leadership programs could be created and implemented on a national level. If a survey was done on tribes across various states and feedback was received by different tribal governments regarding tribal leadership, many tribal
communities could be helped, and programs could be built that further developed leadership trainings and skills.

Implication #5: To incorporate surveys within the tribal communities and collect data on tribal leadership.

Collecting data and creating surveys will help identify the significant areas of tribal leadership. The development of a survey could help with collecting a mass sample of feedback from various tribes and could also help identify some major priorities in tribal leadership. The feedback and observations of community members could provide recommendations to the types of knowledge and skill sets needed within the Native community. This would also help focus on specific elements in tribal leadership that could be passed onto future generations of tribal leaders.

Implication #6: Expand on the ways to inform others on the topic of tribal leadership such as the focus on non-public educational strategies.

This would be an interesting way to help inform and educate the greater community on the topic of tribal leadership. Publishing more articles on the topic and writing more textbooks on the topic will help inform greater society about the history of tribal leadership and acknowledge the governmental power. It would also be helpful to conduct workshops and culturally centered gathering as well as have an instructional day at the museums within the regions to focus on the early forms of leadership. The community would benefit greatly from this type of educational exchange and would also allow for others to take interest in the leadership field.
Implication # 7: Examine resiliency theory in relation to tribal leadership and education.

This theory would be helpful when analyzing tribal leadership as the community has encountered many tribulations; however, the Native people developed skills that promoted their resiliency. A future study could explore tribal leadership from this theoretical lens, as it would provide greater insight into the field of leadership and education. This theory could help explore positive ways in which tribal leaders have adapted to oppressive conditions within their learning environments or within the realm of leadership. It would be beneficial to this study as many of the participants identified ways in which they responded in order to deal with the trauma and adversity.

Reflections from the Author

Since background influences the way in which perceptions are created, it is significant to mention and introduce the role of the researcher regarding this study. The researcher is a Native American student from a federally recognized tribe within the local region of Sacramento. The researcher is currently working within the Native American community, has a relationship to a vast majority of people within the region, and is related to one of the research participants in this study. The researcher also has first-hand knowledge on tribal leadership due to a close family member being involved and serving on tribal council for the last five to seven years. It was because of the first-hand knowledge and close family member’s experience in tribal leadership the researcher was moved to study tribal leadership and education. Since a very young age, the researcher
has been involved in many cultural dances and has also participated in the Indian Education program. The researcher is the first one in her family to become a doctorate candidate in her family and the first to obtain a graduate degree as well as within her federally recognized tribe. The researcher holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Communication Studies with a minor in Sociology and a Master’s degree with two specializations of school and career counseling. It is because of the researcher’s involvement in the community and family recognition that the researcher was able to establish trust with the participants in this study. Trust is an important element within the community as discussed previously; due to the trust, many participants were willing to share their stories and observations of tribal leadership.

To some extent through the researcher’s college experience, she was able to share her cultural knowledge and traditions, as well as maintain a strong sense of cultural identity. It was not until later years in college and from working within the Native community that the researcher started to pay close attention to the needs of the American Indian community. It was through her college experience that she started to explore and recognize the need for education within the community. By observing the high school dropout rate within this population, education became a critical element. When examining the higher educational rates of Native students completing college degrees, these rates were much lower when compared to other populations. It was in the statistical research that the researcher took an interest in learning and exploring the tribal leadership role.
The researcher also took note of the types of training she has received within the Westernized school system and, similar to the participants, she received a limited education on tribal government. The researcher herself was not taught about tribal government until later years and was also given limited history in her own K-12 educational experience within the public school system. It was not until the family teachings and the passing of cultural traditions that the researcher was informed of the tribal leadership role.

It was through the researcher’s professional experience of working with the community and also recognizing the poverty rates and health care needs that the researcher was influenced to contribute new knowledge to the community regarding tribal leadership. The current work experience of the researcher and her involvement within a local Tribal TANF program allows her to work directly with community members and families. It is through this work that the researcher is able to identify the community members’ needs. It is the hope for the community to gain further insight into the topic of tribal leadership and education from this research study.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, still more research is needed on the topic of tribal leadership and the impact leadership has on education and cultural knowledge. The findings presented from this research helped explain and analyze tribal leadership. The themes identified in the study helped explain major elements and recommendations for future work within tribal communities. As mentioned previously, The U.S Department of Interior’s Bureau
of Indian Affairs (BIA; 1990) estimates there are 564 tribal entities recognized and eligible for direct funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs by virtue of their status as Indian tribes (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1990). California alone has about 112 federally recognized tribes and the overall percentage of the Native American population is 1.9% (Humes et al., 2011). The topic of tribal leadership impacts many tribal communities, and this particular research focused on tribes within California with a minor exception of one participant. Most of the eight participants were either members from local federally recognized tribes or lived and resided in the Sacramento region and worked in the community. There was a mixture of community members, tribal council members, Indian Educators, and students.

The findings in this research study also helped identify some new forms for education and new ideas and developments for tribal leadership programs. A number of participants also agreed the promotion of education was significant to the community members, and there needed to be an increase in the awareness about tribal government and sovereignty rights. A majority of participants believed that two kinds of knowledge needed for the tribal leadership role is a formal educational background and a traditional and cultural knowledge background. All explained the value of education and the promotion of tribal awareness as well as integration into the mainstream educational system. Again, all the participants felt strongly that the following components of leadership were important: trust, collaboration, importance of elders, the impacts of oppression, tribal tradition and cultural knowledge, leadership skills, educational values,
and identity and funding, as well as communication styles. All the aspects within tribal leadership are critical as well as learning about a holistic approach. Additionally, many of the participants also felt that educating all students about tribal governance would help bring new insight to the field. Many participants in the research study believed there should be more focus at the K-12 level regarding tribal governance and history of Native people.

Subsequently, participants mentioned the need to integrate a certificate or degree program at the higher education level to prepare students on tribal governmental systems and to prepare Native students for the tribal leadership role. A number of participants also felt that the early forms of tribal leadership should also be recognized. As the graduation rates of American Indian students continue to be of high concern and priority for the community, many tribal communities are instilling requirements for their membership and many tribal leaders are developing ways to reclaim their education in their own communities as previously discussed. Some tribal leaderships are integrating concepts through language and youth programs. It is through the implementation of these types of programs the community members will be better prepared for the tribal leadership role.

A significant finding from this research also focused on the development of a new tribal leadership model consisting of the different leadership styles. The styles are servant leadership, shared leadership, and transformational leadership. All the theoretical frameworks within this study helped to explain leadership. Oftentimes in the community,
many tribal council members are elected into a role and tend to learn as they go along. It would be beneficial to have a training program to educate a number of tribes. It would be ideal to have a leadership model that could be utilized in a variety of tribal communities. Also, many participants felt the elder’s stories and lessons with accompanying knowledge on working together could help all across the board.

The overall results from this research will help expand on the knowledge in the area of tribal leadership, but also helped examine new approaches in education. The research supported new changes within the educational systems both at the K-12 level and higher educational levels. The research also helped to describe the insight into the leadership field. Many items were discussed but the major comments reflected by most participants were the focus on future generations of tribal leaders and ways to help promote leadership and education within the community. As described by a majority of participants in this research study, it is important for a leader to know his or her story and cultural background, as it helps with the purpose of the work providing service to community members. It is the elder’s lessons that remind us of the past, present, and future, as these are all important elements of leadership and can provide vision for the future endeavors of tribal communities.
APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in Research

You are being asked to participate in a research which will be conducted by Crystal Martinez, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Program at California State University, Sacramento. The intent of the research is to gather data on tribal leadership and its influence on education. It is my hope to learn about successful educational models and programs that can be helpful to the Native American community.

You will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview that will last for at least sixty minutes which will take place at an agreed upon location. If you decide to participate in this study you will be asked a series of questions relating to the topic of tribal leadership. The interviews will be audio and video recorded; however you have the right to choose not to participate in the interview. You will be provided with a full transcription of the session and we will discuss any further thoughts or clarifications needed as follow up to the first session. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to edit your portion of the video/documentary. The video/documentary will be used for the sole purposes of education and will be shown to Native American agencies and communities as a way to help educate the community. You will be contacted to schedule a meeting time and date for the interview.

You have the right to skip any questions and/or stop participating at any time without consequence. The long-term goal of this study is to help Tribal leaders identify certain educational programs that would be helpful to their tribe. There is no guarantee that you will receive any benefits from this study.

There is no compensation for participation in this study and there will not be any out of pocket expense for the participant. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If at any time you do not wish to participate and withdrawal all information will be destroyed immediately. The data will be kept in a locked file cabinet and destroyed within a year after the data has been analyzed.

If you have any questions, about this research, you may contact the primary researcher or by e-mail at . You can also contact Dr. Rose Borunda at (916)-278-6310 or at . You will be given a copy of this form to keep and your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in the research.
Signature of Participant ____________________  Date ____________________

I agree to have this interview audio taped □

Signature of Participant ____________________  Date ____________________

I agree to have this interview video-taped

Signature of Participant ____________________  Date ____________________
APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

Title: The perceptions of tribal leadership and the impact of education and cultural
knowledge: Examining Tribal Leadership and Education within the Native
American community.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you please state your name and tribal background?
2. Can you please describe your professional experience & role within education and
   or involvement within the Native American community?
3. Please share your history and what you have observed within the tribal
   community in terms of leadership and leadership’s role in education?

RQ1: What are the types of processes implemented by tribal leaders that can be utilized
   in order to reclaim education within its communities?
   Sub-Question 1: What are challenges that tribal leaders face?
   Sub-Question 2: How does funding impact leadership?
   Sub-Question 3: What types of training and preparation would be recommended
   for tribal leadership?

RQ2: How do tribal leaders, define educational success?

   Sub-Question 1: What are the types of services and educational programs that are
currently being utilized by tribal leadership?
   Sub-Question 2: What is tribal leadership’s involvement in education?
Sub-Question 3: What are some suggested ways for tribes to establish an educational program?

RQ 3: What values and traditions drawn from cultural knowledge are currently being utilized to help transform the next generation of leaders?

Sub-Question 1: What cultural traditions are necessary in order to successfully lead a tribe?

Sub-Question 2: What types of leadership skills, styles and knowledge are needed in tribal leadership?
REFERENCES


