A Summary of Constructed Principles of the Saulteau First Nation

by

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Abstract

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to put forth a summary of principles that reflect the local knowledge of the people within the Saulteau First Nations Community. This summary of principles is a tool of compiled oral knowledge that reflects community values and mind-sets and which might offer tangible solutions to guide community protocols, program development or to possibly frame future policies.

Principles are the highlighted expressions or codes of conduct that express cultural meaning to a people. Principles help make sense of and instill ethics or morals within a community. These cultural belief systems continue to be practiced through hunting techniques and patterns and by exercises based on beliefs that reveal a value system originating in the spiritual relationship with the natural life forms, animals, plants and spirits. Within the practical motions lie the spoken and unspoken codes, principles, values and beliefs of the people. This allows the community to determine its values and articulate important teachings that give expression to notions of cultural identity. The summary of constructed principles of the Saulteau First Nations Community is as follows:

1. *wahkowtowin*	"We are all relatives" (Art Napoleon).
2. *kiyâm*	To let go is a necessary concept in the process of healing.
3. *kisiwatsoon*	Compassion is a necessary quality that instills harmony connecting the community.
4. *matinawewin*	An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure prosperity from the Creator.
5. *nisohkamakewin*	Somebody that helps is vital for community survival.
6. *ka nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak*	"You are a servant to the people" (Art Napoleon).
7. *nihiyew tapsinowin*	"We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Stewart Cameron).

The principles link local forms of knowledge necessary that may guide imposed policies and structures. Further research will be beneficial to the people and should also reflect the range of cultures that have formed the community's ancestry within the present day Saulteau First Nations Community.

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Dedication

In memory of my *nimosôm* (grandfather)"Slim" Theophile Garbitt. In honor of the new life of my *nitôsim* (nephew) Jordan Theophile Metz-Hetu. This thesis is dedicated to my *peyakoskânesewihk* (family): Jean-Paul, Ruth Rena (Garbitt), Billie-Jean, John-Paul, Renee, Kevin and Marcus.

Introduction

> We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other, and harmony amongst ourselves. To me that does not mean going back into your teepee. We have a right as a people to evolve with respect and honor and maintaining our values, principles and our laws. Who we are! Our languages! I think we can evolve in a good way without harming the environment. One day our people will start to wake up [...] there is an answer somewhere for our people and that is our laws. Our laws will bring us structure. Our policing, our game warden, our forestry people...stem from the pipe, the sweats and the signing of the Treaty (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

In this quote, community member Stewart Cameron stresses both the value and necessity of using local cultural knowledge. The language, the customs, the bush practices are integral to who the people are within the Saulteau First Nations Community (SFNC). Indigenous principles can be developed out of indigenous practices. I repeat Cameron's words mentioned above: "Our laws will bring us structure...stems from the pipe." What Stewart has presented is a teaching and understanding that a symbolic relationship rooted in the ceremonial smoking of the pipe that offers direction and teaching to the people.

One example of a necessary expression of gratitude for the *manito*[1] is reflected in a practical motion such as the respectful gesture of tobacco offering. This offering is intended to make merit that will ensure good hunting and prosperity. This act of offering tobacco is necessary so that *manitowatamowin*[2] would be garnered in hopes that the *manito* would gift the hunters and gatherers with animal and plant life offerings. This cosmological system depended upon the peoples' prayer, humbleness, faith, gratitude, skill, and above all thanks. Ceremonies such as these are based on practical exercises that may seem mundane, but are necessary customs. An offering is given for the gratitude felt for life provided and the giving of thanks for all of life's forms and offerings of sustenance by *manito*.

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[1] *Manito* as defined by the Alberta Elders Dictionary and an understanding prevalent in our community is, "Sacred power of God; the basic mysterious quality of the universe" (p.71) Waugh, Earle. *Alberta Elder's Dictionary*. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1998.

[2] *Manitowatamiw*: Inspiration of the spirit power (p.71)

hunting practices continue to provide a foundation for a belief system that is alive and must be applied into the institutions that have been imposed.

This thesis despite being written in the form of western discourse, attempts to articulate and offer a summary of Saulteau First Nation principles. These principles were meant to incorporate culturally relevant concepts that have meaning to the people within the SFNC. Indigenous cosmologies, concepts and metaphor have had assimilative devices (i.e. Indian Act) and varied acts of a colonial nature imposed upon them. As a result, they are commonly discredited as superstition, myth or "story" without being recognized as valid and useful to the foundation of a system.

However, these "stories" are rooted in the community's body of Indigenous knowledge and despite the effects of colonialism this knowledge is lodged firmly in both the memory and current practice within the community. This body of local knowledge continues to be sought and utilized by spiritual seekers, youth and knowledge holders. Despite the onslaught of colonialism by way of settler, industrial and resource invasion, "traditional" practices and the values, beliefs and customs tied to them continue to be sought, exercised and remembered.

Taiaiake Alfred reminds us that Indigenous people must consciously strategize and find methods that incorporate Indigenous value-systems and world views into existing governance systems. There are insurmountable contradictions and problems delegated by the Department of Indian and Northern Affair's (DIAND) Indian Act system[3]. What is paramount is that these constructed principles must be reflective of Indigenous values, beliefs and customs. The importance of culturally reflective principles is that it is within Indigenous intellectual institutions that Indigenous people will be able to find direction, solutions and meaning of extrapolating tools that may be used to guide current structures in this process of decolonization.

Mind, Body, Spirit[4]

Mind, Body, Spirit form the different sections representing the three realms of the human spirit. They represent the three sections of *the Braid* of a sweet-grass stick. We

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[3] *See* the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People for an extensive account of the Indian Act system.
[4] The Cree Medicine Wheel teachings identify four realms. Emotional, Physical, Spiritual and Intellectual. However, is this thesis I have sectioned three of the four realms into components of three to symbolize the three parts of a sweet-grass braid hence the fourth chapter becoming the braid. I have seen Beth Brant use a format similar to this in one of her writings that incorporated the four spheres to a human spirit: intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical.

must seek to keep each of these realms both clean and balanced. Each realm must be strong on its own but when woven together this braid can not be broken.

1. *Mind* is the first of the four chapters and it introduces the framework of the entire thesis. This chapter tells the reader how the motivation of gathering principles was born and the process of how it developed. This first chapter includes the purpose of this thesis, how the thesis question emerged and how the data was compiled and processed to construct the principles. The analytic techniques of color-coding and data selection followed by the process of filtering the mass of the data material is explained. My personal journey of this research process is filtered throughout this chapter. The concrete step-by-step process of this research process is presented. The Indigenous research design chosen as a methodology is explained and a rationale is provided. The purpose of the chapter titled *Mind* is to set the foundation for the framing of the second, third and fourth chapters.

2. *Body* is the chapter that gives a physical and historical description of the SFNC. *Body* explores the first truce made between the Cree and Dunne Za followed by the Saulteau trek inspired by Kakagoguance. The cultural melding of the three nations that constitute the present day SFNC is explored in the section of identity in order to fully understand the complex and unique cultural make-up of the community. The geographical placing of the SFNC is described. The development of Treaty no.8 is also explained in order to understand how its impact on the Treaty 8 boundary within the province of BC. The elders account adds to the pre-existing elder's account in Treaty 8-Alberta that is understood, by Indigenous people as a "treaty of peace and friendship."

3. *Spirit* is the cultural context of this thesis. It is within this third chapter that the words of the knowledge holders from the SFNC are presented. *Spirit* presents not all of the data gathered but the material that was organized into themes. These themes were then constructed into seven principles. *Spirit* is the compilation of selected quotations from the original interview guide that were partial transcriptions of the 26 interviews that were conducted during the late winter and spring of 2001.

4. The Braid

Mind, Body and *Spirit* chapters come together to conclude the fourth chapter called *The Braid*. This chapter encompasses the entire braid and presents three

possible options for the future application of the principles constructed within this thesis. The Braid weaves together all of the gathered data from the oral interviews that were constructed into tangible principles. The braid concludes by providing practical options. The applications of Indigenous principles are both useful and necessary in order to make future agreements more reflective of what is deemed as cultural importance to the people within the SFNC.

All nations have relied upon their own "traditional" systems of governance for thousands of years.[5] The task then, is to continuously build upon protocols, structural development, and program development based cultural values. Cultural systems have always changed, altered and adapted. The incorporation of Indigenous principles as the basis on which to build foundations of protocols, code of conduct, structures and programs is the transition that must happen in a move towards autonomy.

1. *wahkowtowin* (relatives) "We are all relatives" (Napoleon, 2001).
2. *kiyam* is a necessary concept that should be recognized as a cultural tool.
3. *kisēwatisiwin* is a necessary value that instills harmony within the community.
4. *matinawewin* An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure future prosperity from the Creator.
5. *nisohkamakewin* Somebody that helps is a vital quality for community survival.
6. *nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak* "You are a servant to the people" (Napoleon, 2001).
7. *nihiyew tapsinowin* "We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Cameron, 2001).

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[5] See, Taiaiake, Alfred. *Peace, Power, Rightousness an indigenous manifesto* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999) . Hugh, Brody. *Maps and Dreams* (Douglas & McIntyre: Vancouver, B.C. 1984); Dara, Culhane, *The Pleasure of the Crown: Anthropology, Law and First Nations* (Talon Books: Burnaby, BC, 1998); Robin Ridington, *Little Bit Know Something: Stories in a Language of Anthropology* (Douglas & McIntyre: Vancouver, 1989).

Treaty 8 Territory Northeastern British Columbia[1]



[1] Canada, Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, Surveys and Mapping Branch.1991. *Canada, Indian Treaties.* The National Atlas of Canada, 5th edition, Map 15.6. Scale 1:7 500 000. Ottawa, The Branch.

1. Mind[1]

Introduction

This section presents the purpose of this thesis as well as how the thesis question was developed. I explore my own personal motivation and responsibility in terms of the impetus of this thesis. A section on ethics and politics considers the process of how the ethical review was conducted in conjunction with the University of Victoria's ethics committee. The relevance that the principles offer is as a reference of cultural knowledge of the Saulteau First Nation Community[2] (SFNC). An extensive review of the literature frames the research within this thesis. Robert Williams Jr. presents the argument that Indigenous "treaty-making existed prior to settler invasion." This argument, applied to the SFNC oral narrative and standard western historical documentation affirms that the peace truce established between the Cree and the DunneZa was made in this fashion as well. This truce was made prior to the arrival of the fur traders that was then followed by the treaty-makers. The Indigenous research design, which is presented in this section flows from an Indigenous paradigm. The data collection and analytic techniques used are explained.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to put forth a summary of principles[3] that reflect the local knowledge of the people within the SFNC. This is merely a part of the ongoing task of documentation and research necessary for the people from the SFNC. Community members began compiling and documenting oral history some years ago. Art Napoleon,

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[1] This first chapter explains the process of how this thesis question emerged, developed and then was carried out. *Mind* is the envisioning of this entire journey and the framework for the thesis that is presented hereinafter. *Mind, Body, Spirit* are the three of the four realms to a person. It is said that you are to recite this recognition of the four realms when you braid sweet-grass. The intention is to garner strength.

[2] The contemporary Saulteau community not only includes Saulteau descendants. It actually consists of descendents of Cree, DunneZa and Saulteau people. When I speak in reference to the "Saulteau First Nation" community I am referring to the community at large, that is an "inclusive community." Although the community consists of descendents from three differing nations, the community of three cultures continues to recognize itself under the colonial title of "Saulteau First Nation" community. The Cree arrived into the Dunne Za territory ahead of the fur traders. The community began its amalgamation with the arrival of the Saulteau people (led by the prophetic leader Kakakoguance) into the DunneZa territory. It is this process of historical occurrences combined with the treaty-making and the introduction of the reserve system that has led to the inter-marrying and evolution of the three different nations that make up the community that continues to refer to itself as "Saulteau First Nation".

Fred and Mary Courtoreille, Grandma Davis and Della Owens are a few amongst many contributors of such written texts. They have begun the meticulous task of transforming oral memory, story and testimonies into text. This transformation of oral knowledge into written text builds a discourse, a canon of knowledge that originates from the minds and the experiences of Saulteau, Cree and Dunne Za people of the community.

The process of gathering and adding to the Indigenous[4] "voice" has already begun and must continue. There is a need to continue collecting Indigenous knowledge, these beliefs may be transcribed into textual forms that capture a sense of the practical motions and principles of the SFNC. This thesis builds from these narratives and begins the construction of principles[5] that originate from the *very* words of the community members themselves.

This gathered information forms not only a basis for developing principles but also contributes to the entire canon of intellectual resources that may be used in education or curriculum development. The process of infusing culturally specific principles into political structures currently in place to reflect the culture, beliefs and values is (as Taiaiake outlined) one step in the move to begin developing systems that reflect, offer meaning and give expression of the culture of the people. The concepts that are carried within both the experiences and the blood memory[6] of a people need to be expressed.

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[3] By principle I mean in the same sense that is explained by the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. A principle is, **1 a :** a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption (pg. 926).

[4] I have chosen to capitalize the "I" when I use the term Indigenous. I am using it as a proper pronoun and not as an adjective describing a people. The Webster dictionary defines *indigenous as,* "[L] *indigenus,* fr.Lindigena, n.,native, fr. OL indu, endo in, within] 1 : Having originated in and being produced, growing, living or occurring naturally in a particular environment or region 2 : Innate, inborn ***sin*** see NATIVE, p. 592 Dr. Stephen Greymorning also capitalizes the term Indigenous in his PhD thesis *Indigenous North Americans and the Ethnocentrism of the Courts: A Cross Analysis of American Custom Law with Canadian Culture and Law.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1992, p. 1.

[5] My own abstraction of this concept of gathering principles that are viable for different re-constructions or frameworks originated from Taiaiake Alfred's text of Peace, Power, Righteousness. Taiaike talks about, "abstracting core values and principles from the vast store of our traditional teachings, selectively employing those aspects of their tradition that are appropriate to the present social, political and economic realities…" (Alfred, 1999:81). It is this very statement that best captures the intent of this thesis, to gather knowledge based on Saulteau teachings that may be re-constructed as viable principles or simply to serve as an example of a process that transports cultural knowledge into contemporary instruments or frameworks.

[6] Edna Manitowabi first expressed the concept of "blood memory" to me. Edna is professor of *First Nation Women* and *Culture and Community* at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. It refers to the ancestral knowledge that is stored and carried within us and speaks to us throughout our lives, guiding and teaching us. An example could be when a song comes to someone. The song we carried inside of us comes to be heard when we are ready to hear it and the sing it to the people.

This is necessary in ensuring that they are practiced, reflected upon and most especially exercised in the future developments that nations may embark upon. A transformation from the oral to the written is the challenge for the present generation. This demands pragmatic exercises that will allow for a natural process for recognizing beliefs, values and principles that reflect the community.

The themes gathered in this document were developed by way of interviews with individuals from the community. Excerpts of their narratives were extracted to present a framework of constructed principles based on the knowledge of the people. These constructions of principles are not a cage that does not allow for cultural change, transition or evolution. Instead principles are limitless and these are merely seven of the numerous available principles that exist within the community. This is an incomplete exercise that needs to be a continued process in an aim to alter the systems currently in place to make the content more reflective of cultural values, beliefs and customs. The construction of principles is the most tangible exercise that acts as a bridge between cultural relevance and colonial imposition and expectation of English language translation from Cree[7] terms and understandings that originate from the SFNC.

It is within examples such as the Saulteau prophecy story that oral narrative has given direction to the community. This narrative is based on the oral re-telling of the vision given to Kakagoguance who lead the Saulteau people. It is important to stress the act or practice of re-telling this oral narrative. This is how oral knowledge gets transmitted. The narrative gives shape and continues to give direction to individuals within the community. This vision must be carried forward. We have a responsibility to our origin stories as descendents of ancestors who dreamed us into existence and prophesized the path of our future that lead us to the here and now of the SFNC. This responsibility is a principle that we must heed in memory of the prophet Kakagoguance's vision.

Fred Coutorielle, Josephine Walker, Minnie Garbitt, and most elders in this community tell the story of the Saulteau trek that brought the Saulteau-Cree people to the original territory of the DunneZa. According to this origin story this vision inspired the

[7] The SFN community is a Nehiyawewin (Cree speaking) community. Northern "bush" Cree who speak the "Y" dialect of the plains Cree language. Most Saulteau, DunneZa and Cree are Nehiyawewin Cree language speakers.

peaceful inter-marriage of the Saulteau-Cree and Dunne-Za. In the following excerpt, Grandma Davis[8] exhibits the oral narrative and demonstrates how she passed it down. Grandma Davis recited a chant, translated by her daughters Madeline Davis and Violet Appassassin that tells the story of the vision of great grandfather Kakagoguance:

> Her grandpa died hey! Then he got up and told his kids – he dreamed about the future for his kids. The future was going to be better and longer than where they come from. He gave that prayer to his son and he gave it to her (Madeline Davis and Violet Appassassin, taped interview: 2001).

This vision was shared with Grandma Davis (and many others) re-told in hopes that it will be carried forward by most descendents of Kakagoguance. It refers to the oral narrative of the Saulteau "trek" and the impetus of the move to the Twin Sisters area. This vision is expected to be both respected and heeded. It continues to be taught and generations continue to heed its original instructions.

SFNC continues to live a bi-cultured existence. By this I mean in a relationship upon which a partial dependence upon the land for sustenance continues. This relationship is one of the many sources where Indigenous world-view flow from. It is attached to the value-based practices of hunting, fishing and gathering. The land is utilized based on this philosophy of resourcefulness. The knowledge and the community's collective understanding of itself come from both the knowledge and exercises practiced out on the land, in the bush, and are rooted in the language. The culture is reflected in this collective knowledge.

This brings us to the origins of this thesis. The intention was to create a document that reflects an exercise of gathering culturally based principles that originate from the insights, values, customs and practices of the member's lives. Indigenous Knowledge that originated from local human resources. This summary of principles is a tool of compiled oral knowledge that reflects community values and mind-sets and which might offer tangible solutions to guide community protocols, program developments or to possibly frame future policies.

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[8] Grandma Davis passed away during the fall while I was writing this final draft. Although we, as a community lost a central matriarch, her knowledge and stories continue to be heeded and orally re-told by her descendents and the community at large who were privileged to have learned from her.

tangible solutions to guide community protocols, program developments or to possibly frame future policies.

Colonial institutions and their policies have created a divide within our community. The rift exists because of the attempt to meet the demands of the Indian Act[9] that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND) expects in exchange for monies supposedly intended to build "Band[10]" infrastructure; this is misleading because DIAND actually demands the opposite of this. DIAND insists on imposing foreign Canadian policy in order to maintain control. At the same time it attempts to justify that the move towards "self-government" is underway because Indigenous people are carrying out the tasks. The contradiction lies within the conflicting intention of the colonial power and the plight of Indigenous nations fighting for independence and autonomous determination. We are urged not to build infrastructure but instead we are forced to build on and implement DIAND administrative policies, with only slight changes that serve to justify Indigenous intentions. Ultimately, the expectations of DIAND's policies are the parameters that the Band must continue to follow.

The idea of the power to govern our own selves does not lie in the permission of DIAND to say that we can. This assertion originates in the cultural pride and assertion of knowing who a people are and what our responsibilities in this life are. What we must not forget is that the ability to determine the future for ourselves does not originate with the permission granted from DIAND.

As we watch the culture of our community continue to re-invent it self, we must not get caught up in confining ourselves to "essential" notions of who we are[11]. This is usually an expectation that grows from the world outside of the reserve boundaries. In

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[9] See, RCAP chapter 9 entitled *Looking forward, looking Back* that details an extensive historical understanding of what was once called *the Gradual Civilization Act for Indians* now contemporarily recognized as the Indian Act. First Nations "Bands" must exist with the guidelines that DIAND policies put forth within their formula for monies in the Royal Commission for Aboriginal People, 1995: Chapter 9).

[10] The term "Band" will be referred to when speaking about the "Indian Act DIAND" reserve relationship. The term "Band" is what is used within First Nation communities in reference to the reserve "Band" or community that may exist even outside of the reserve boundaries to include all of its members of that First Nation "Band." This term is colonial in origin and use.

[11] I ask that the reader take into account that there have been extensive historical changes that have occurred since contact and colonialism which have indeed been saturated within most communities. This does not mean we have to become apathetic and perpetuate colonialism. Colonialism has occurred and our society

perpetuates colonialism and perpetuates the battle that many nations continue to combat and resist.

Community members continue to exercise the value-based principles reflected in the age-old practices of hunting and gathering and within a respectful relationship with all *manitous*[13]. What I attempted to do in this thesis was to gather SFNC notion of values and principles. As such, this research serves as a continuation of a process that has already begun. Since the community must find solutions to our own issues, it makes sense that the answers lie in the mind, body and spirit of the people who continue to carry and exercise this very body of knowledge[14].

We need a conscious strategy that continuously develops knowledge that reflects SFNC cultural goals and a historical narrative that sustains the culture that the Creator gave to us. This body of knowledge is not intended to remain fixed in this presentation of principles. Rather, this is my own attempt to construct principles that are based on themes that emerged from the analysis of each interview. In turn these principles may be used as tools to dismantle the assimilative machine like the Indian Act that seeks to saturate the Saulteau community. This is my attempt not simply to add Indigenous color to the colonial world that surrounds us, but to allow a glimpse of the dynamic principles that exist within the community that are exercised in peoples dynamics and protocols amongst one another and the relationships held with the exercises in the bush.

1.2 **The development of the thesis question**

The key conversation that helped identify the necessity of seeking values, beliefs and customs began from a conversation that I had with Stewart Cameron. In essence we talked about "Indian laws" and the "bush ways." We both concluded that future research needed to be conducted that would speak to what these laws are, however, there is great difficulty in simply asking what these laws are. Contemporary laws are often confused when I seek the answers to laws that are based more on "traditional law." An exercise that seeks to construct what those laws would need to be carried out over a great period of

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[13] *Manito* as defined by the Alberta Elders Dictionary and an understanding prevalent in our community is, "Sacred power of God; the basic mysterious quality of the universe" (p.71) Waugh, Earle. *Alberta Elder's Dictionary*. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Press, 1998.

[14] Within the existing "Declaration of Saulteau First Nations" there is a clause that reads," Whereas; The basic goals of the SFN are A) To preserve SFN cultural identity, language and values…" (Whiten, 1995).

time and it would need to have the constructive input of people who carry such specific knowledge. However, much thought occurred about how to ask questions that would assist in developing this question that spoke to SFNC values, customs and beliefs[15].

Heudenosounee scholar Taiaiake Alfred speaks about the importance of principles and gives a clear explanation of how principles that originated from the Great Law guide Mohawk contemporary political institutions. In the Heudenosounee example the *Kaienerekowa*[16] became a source of reference of principles based on traditional values that guide Mohawk institutions and contemporary laws. This process of identified here had direct influence on the impetus of this thesis. The Saulteau First Nation community also has its own principles that are based on values, beliefs and customs that continue to be exercised out on the land more so than they are discussed in a tangible sense. What is referred to (in an oral sense) is a world-view and a "Saulteau way" differs from that of the *Moniyawak* (white-man) way. Through the gathering of this Indigenous knowledge from within the community I intended to gather a community's sense of values, beliefs and customs to construct principles from this community. I then began asking the questions, "What are SFNC principles, beliefs and values?"

Constructing tangible principles that reflect values, beliefs and customs spoke to the notion of the community developing its own solutions by putting forward its own notion of itself. Culturally relevant values, beliefs and customs have intentionally been omitted from DIAND's framework of governance for Bands. As identified a practical were principles that could be applied in a broad sense to these existing systems to make them more reflective of the culture of the people. Continuous development of principles also provides value to the community's body of existing knowledge. What is important to maintain is that the exercise within gathering principles is itself a valuable and necessary

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The Statement of Principles can be recognized as principles that speak directly to this goal of further identifying and preserving values that are based on the beliefs and customs of the SFNC.

[15] When I speak of "Saulteau" values, beliefs and customs I am referring to the three nations that constitute the Saulteau First Nations' community not solely values that are rooted within the confines of essential Saulteau culture. As previously mentioned this includes the descendents of the three nations that include Saulteau, Cree and Dunne-Za nations and each of the languages within the Saulteau community.

[16] Gerald Alfred best explains the Kaienerekowa in his text *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors* as… "…the legitimate expression of political principles and as the central reference point for the derivation and validation of traditional values" (Alfred, 1995:20-21). The *Kaienerekowa* originates in oral law. Characterized by its democratic process and both it's consensus-like and participatory decision-making process. It is generally referred to as "The Great law of Peace."

process that needs to be focused in upon. Constructed principles need to be rooted within the knowledge of the community members.

1.3 **Personal Motivation**

My interests in exploring Saulteau principles' are three-fold. My interest in Saulteau principles is based on a personal responsibility. I am a *Nehiyawk Iskew*[17], a Saulteau-Cree/Franco woman. My identity was formed from my experiences of being partially raised in Moberly Lake, BC and then outside of this community within the general non-Native society. I feel a certain responsibility to the community that I have originate from. Conducting research within my community gave me the opportunity to return to Moberly Lake. Returning to Moberly also gave me the opportunity to be a student of my community members as a whole. It also offered me time to be with my relatives and community members. This project will constitute as credit for my thesis in the Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance. Most importantly, this thesis is intended to be of benefit to my community and contributes to the already growing body of textual knowledge that is based on oral contributions.

1.4 **Utility of the Research**

The utility of this research developed from a personal conversation I had with previous Chief Stewart Cameron. This conversation identified a general goal in which the final thesis question developed from but it was initially based upon this initial dialogue.

The community can determine how it intends to utilize the interviews (raw data) in the future. I have invited the community to use the final thesis as a reference for information. This document is also intended to serve as an education tool in a number of different ways, for example as a curriculum guide, as reference, or generally for any future research as a tool that reflects the Indigenous Research Methodology used and the inclusion of the Indigenous Paradigm.

I am from Moberly Lake returning to conduct research with my community. I have to always be aware of this history and maintain integrity in the intention and approach to the Indigenous research that I wished to conduct. I did this by explaining to my community (via non-formal dialogue) in the local Moberly Matters newspaper. I wrote a

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[17] *Nehiyawk Iskew* means Cree woman in our community.

one-page explanation of my thesis and a call for interviews. I gave all interested parties the formal proposal that outlined the entire research process. The purpose of my communication to my community was to explain the intentions and goals of my research.

I revised the set of questions twice to make them more appropriate, accessible and open-ended to the individuals being interviewed. I put forward a submission of the research that was to be undertaken. I received approval from the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). HREC demands a thorough and thought-out process when involving research with "human subjects," who were my interviewees (my community). I was granted approval after the 6-week approval process was successful on February 28, 2001 to begin conducting interviews.

1.5 **Principles**

When I speak of principles based on values and beliefs I am speaking in general terms of principle-based understandings upon culturally specific understandings that reflect cultural meaning, order and conduct. These notions assisted in constructing a conceptual lens of the principles. Colonization has had a great negative impact upon the natural process that allows an opportunity for natural growth and adaptation of traditional systems of knowledge. The natural evolution of "traditional" principles has been influenced and manipulated by colonialism. This adaptation has altered what would have been a natural process because of colonial forces that ignored the wealth of knowledge, principles and philosophies that are entrenched within each nation's culture and language. Principles are the highlighted expressions or codes by which the people within the Saulteau community help make sense and instill ethics or morals within a community.

Further research will be beneficial to the people and should also be reflective of all the cultures that have formed the community's ancestral descent within the present day SFNC. These cultural belief systems continue to be practiced by way of hunting techniques and patterns and by exercises based on beliefs that reveal a value system originating in the spiritual relationship with the natural life forms, animals, plants and spirits. Within the practical motions lay the spoken and un-spoken codes, principles, values and beliefs of the people who live within the present day SFNC.

Identifying principles of the Saulteau community that can be used within the existing systems or more importantly to give expression and meaning of the SFNC within a system that is imposed upon the community by DIAND. This allows the community further determination of what makes sense to the community and what is culturally important as teachings that give expression of who the people are. The usefulness of the principles is to provide a link between local knowledge that need to guide imposed policies and structures. A summary of the constructed principles is as follows:

wahkowtowin "We are all relatives" (Art Napoleon).

kiyâm To let go is a necessary concept in the process of healing.

kisiwatsoon Compassion is a necessary quality that instills harmony connecting the community.

matinawewin An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure prosperity from the Creator.

nisohkamakewin Somebody that helps is vital for community survival.

ka nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak "You are a servant to the people" (Art Napoleon).

nihiyew tapsinowin "We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Stewart Cameron).

1.6 **Literature Review**

It is important to frame principles with a conceptual lens. I am approaching the research question with the premise that all nations are entitled to act in a "self-determining" manner. Indigenous people continue to struggle for the mere right to determine and decide who we are and what we intend to do. This becomes especially arduous when the monies and policies are pre-formulated and determined by the colonial government. Most Indigenous communities are in the midst of determining how we are to govern ourselves, despite the enforced framework from DIAND.

Although SFN has a unique Band "custom" system that allows a representative from each family to have a voice within the Indian Act system, the political framework that is enforced within the Band council is structured on that of the dominant Euro-Canadians' idea of "chief" and council. The administration hierarchy that it entails is also reflective of this alien system. There are certain aspects of the organization that are

unique and reflective of the Saulteau family kinship order. The family system was an attempt of cultural organization chosen by SFNC rather than having a system that is completely controlled by DIAND. Each family "elects" a family figurehead whose role is as a communication representative and spokesperson for that family. There is one councilor for each of the five major original families of the Band.

Colonization has had effects upon the communities' culture. This will be the assumed premise upon which we will begin the process of re-framing the principles with the SFNC. The intent was not to focus on the myriad of colonial political complications that DIAND offers. The intention was to be able to discuss in a tangible manner the relationship that is based on beliefs, values and customs that form the basis of constructed principles that is the focus of this thesis. It is upon this premise that we will begin this critical literature review.

I was inspired particularly by the oral narrative that was powerfully presented in the following text, *The True Spirit and Original Intent of* Treaty 7 – Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council with Walter Hildenbrandt, Sarah Carter, and Dorothy First Rider. The intention of this text was to present the two conflicting historical understandings that exist about Treaty 7. There exists a pattern of misunderstanding between Indigenous nations and the Canadian government. One of the reasons why this problematic relationship exists is because there are two different understandings historically held in terms of what the treaty was meant to ensure and then the implementation of these treaty terms and the relationship that continued between the state and nations was based upon a "paternalistic relationship" and a policy of assimilation. The text weaves a very complete Indigenous perspective on both historical and political issues that have been intentionally omitted from history. It further serves to be just and sincere to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, despite the fact that it is written from the political stance of the Indigenous signatories to Treaty no. 7.

I was particularly inspired by the presentation of the oral testimony as well as the analysis that attempts to explain each testimony. In specific terms of the Treaty 8 narrative that is presented within this thesis the framing of the historical development of the adhesion made to Treaty 8 allows for a deeper understanding of some of the contemporary complications that will be addressed in the second chapter, namely

jurisdictional issues. The historical archival documentation presented in the *Body* chapter provides an oral and historical narrative rooted that tells us how the Cree then the Saulteau came to be in the traditional territory of the Dunne Za people. This gives a deeper understanding when formulating how the SFNC includes descendents of three nations. The historical explanation and oral narrative presents a chronological understanding of how the SFNC community came to be an amalgamated community of descendents of originally three nations.

The text, *In the words of the Elders: Aboriginal Cultures in Transition* edited by David Newhouse, Don McCaskill, and Peter Kulchyski, inspired me because of the un-tampered presentation of the elders' text. This affirmed for me the necessity of presenting the elders' narratives. Due to space and the inability to present all of the interview narratives I could only select certain quotes for presentation within this document. Unlike the testimonies that were completely presented with the text *In the words of the Elders.*

Gerald Alfred explores the value of Mohawk nationalism and the contemporary Indigenous political movement in his book, *Heeding the Voices of our Ancestors.* Alfred poignantly presents his in-depth analysis of the Mohawk community which has held this position in defiance of the dominant system of governance since the enforcement of the 1890 Indian Act system. Alfred illustrates the dichotomy that exists between traditionalism and the Indian Act mentality. Instead of a continued rift between the Mohawks of Kahnawake fused the two ideologies to begin a relationship that combined both necessities and expectations and created a unique system that worked for both parties:

> The evolution of the band council and the community itself since this period is the story of infusion of a traditionalist orientation into the imposed structures and philosophy of government among all segments of the community. In essence, since the early 1960s the band council has displayed a great dynamism in its adaptation of traditional Mohawk values and principles and the rejection of the Indian Act mentality by all leaders - band council as well as Longhouse (Alfred, 1995:131).

It is this infusion of traditional philosophies into "imposed structures" that signifies a clever and resourceful move to utilize traditional knowledge. Alfred also illustrates an important point that became a motivator within this thesis, which was to frame and

develop a notion of SFNC principles. Alfred outlined that without a firm or clear framework in which to base the nation's future institutions the framework of governance is weakened. A community must reflect upon its own traditional principles to re-invent its own institutions. The continued exercise of seeking direction from the values, beliefs and customs to mobilizing the enormous body of local culturally reflective knowledge needs to be carried forward in order to utilize the traditional knowledge that forms the essence of Indigenous political bodies.

In *Maps and Dreams,* Hugh Brody, an anthropologist who has done extensive ethnographic research in the northeast area explains the theoretical protection that Treaty 8 holds. This view of the treaty is held in the minds, psyche and culture of Treaty 8 signatories maintained by both provincial and federal laws. Hugh Brody explores the value of the treaty and offers an explanation of the contention that exists in relation to Treaty 8. Brody also affirms the understanding maintained by the local people:

> The people have a right to hunt, fish and trap in "unoccupied Crown land," and can do so without regard to seasons and other restrictions designed to limit sport and trophy hunting. The treaty for what it may be worth grants the region's cultures, at least theoretically, a continued existence. It established, in the form of laws and regulations minimal continuity between the bands of today (Brody, 1981:30).

Here, Brody writes that the treaty is a point for negotiation and protection of Indigenous "rights." This discussion and debate provides insight into the complexity within the relationship and the different understandings held between native and non-native people. An Indigenous perspective offers values that are held by the people who uphold the treaty such as honesty, respect, and integrity. These values have acted as principles that have guided the relationship that the Saulteau people have had with the settler culture outside of the community. These values are the expected reciprocated relationship the nations wait patiently to be returned in the relationship had with them.

Gordon Sebastian, a Hagwilget band member, exemplifies the possibility of maintaining our own Indigenous systems of governance and justice within the text written by Dan Smith titled *The Seventh Fire.* Gordon Sebastian states that the Hagwilget clan and House chiefs avoided the provincial system altogether and this was viewed as "technically shady within Canadian law, but always correct behavior in our law" (Smith, 1993: 206). Smith is referring to the decisions of the clan and House chiefs to remedy the

"dysfunctional occurrences" in their communities. This community sought its own cultural customs and systems to resolve justice issues within its own community which needs to be a motivation for further work conducted by communities.

Mathew Coon-Come identified in his text *On the land* that the Cree are a people and they see themselves in relation to the connection held with the land:

> We have our own language, culture, traditions, and laws, and a profound relationship with the land as hunters, fishermen and trappers. That way of life is still thriving and it supports our families (Hodgins and Cannon, 1995: 6).

This continued existence and relation to the land is a tangible statement that begins the process of identifying how principles emerge based on the relationship with the land. The sustainability and relationship that relies upon the respect held for the land is what many Indigenous people still maintain as a central focus for the survival of the people.

Michael Asch identifies in his text *Home and Native Land – Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution,* the link that beliefs hold to their root in custom, for example in the custom of sharing food. He recognizes this relationship within the hunting process:

> ...the distribution of country food as a rationale to continue the custom of traditional sharing among band members. This institution which characterizes many contemporary native societies, is even among the more urbanized Shuswap, crucial in linking band members into a cohesive unit is based on traditions and values that are unlike those found in the Canadian mainstream (Asch, 1984: 21).

Asch identifies that rooted in the process of sharing the meat amongst neighbors is the system of reciprocity and this is a value to be recognized. Reciprocity and sharing of sustenance forms the basis of a traditional Indigenous belief system. It is this very process of tying concepts based on beliefs exercised in livelihood practices that form the fundamental values that principles are based upon within this thesis.

In *Into the Rapids* Ovide Mercredi outlined the fact that Bands have begun the process of "asserting their jurisdiction over gaming, and finding investors to help them set up operations (Mercredi, 1995: 226). This process of action affirms that we as Indigenous people are "asserting jurisdiction" and seeking alternative venues of cultural maintenance through economic prospects and ventures. This process is one of the many impetuses of this research. Developing a framework of principles that may be used to guide institutions or education is a political act necessary for active scholarship.

Antonia Mills narrates and presents the process of her research in *Eagle Down is our Law.* The challenge she undertook was to conduct ethnographical research, which would later become legal evidence, based on oral testimony in Gitksan-Wet'suwet'en communities. The importance and relevance of this text in relation to my own thesis is the challenge that Mills encountered by the court's undermining of oral testimony. The insights and lessons she shares, based on her experience with court proceedings, is beneficial to all researchers. The struggle for recognition of the validity of Indigenous knowledge that Mills identified throughout the trial is a strong reminder that the dominant culture continues to undermine and discount Indigenous knowledge. Mill's most daunting challenge was to present Gitksan-Wet 'suwet' en knowledge in a manner that would be recognized, respected and validated within the court justice system and a dominant society that continue to discredit Indigenous knowledge and oral testimony. These are *real* issues that each researcher must face and consider in the presention of the evidence gathered from Indigenous communities.

Robert Williams Jr., a brilliant Indigenous scholar, puts forth new concepts and an entirely new framing of how Indigenous nations exercised diplomacy in his text *Linking Arms Together-American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace* 1600-1800. Williams demonstrates how the sacred pipe, which may also be reflective of the Cree sacred pipe ceremony, demonstrates Indigenous views on "law and peace." Williams states that, "In American Indian visions of law and peace between different peoples, the pipe itself was sacred, therefore legal text" (Williams, 1999: 94). We can apply this concept of "Indigenous diplomacy" which Williams discusses at length, comparing it to the historical occurrences that happened at "Unchagah" between the Cree and DunneZa and the smoking of the sacred pipe at the signing of Treaty no.8. In SFNC the pipe-smoking process ratified and affirmed the understanding and view of the relationship between the Indigenous nations and the settlers.

Authur J. Ray in his article in the *BC Studies* offers a historical re-contextualization of the avoidance of integral fiduciary obligation that the provincial and federal governance parties continue to place blame on one another as a governing body. By further avoiding accountability and stalling any chance for a real relationship or dialogue to emerge that respects all parties. Upholding the relationship between the Crown and

Indigenous communities was obviously not part of the bargain that the treaty commissioners anticipated after Treaty no. 8 was signed:

> The issues of fiduciary obligations towards Indians had arisen as a result of a series of armed confrontations that had taken place during the late nineteenth century.... Canadian officials blamed the province for the troubles, saying they were caused by the stingy reserve land policy. The provinces countered with the allegations that Native peoples were upset because Canada had done little for them (Parker, 1999: 36).

Arthur J. Ray has compiled an extensive historical report on the lack of responsible government which has been demonstrated both provincially and federally in the historical relationship with communities. Ray insists on addressing the historical root of misunderstandings.

In a curriculum resource package researched and developed by Napoleon & Associates titled *First Nations of the Upper Peace: An Overview of the Post-Contact Period,* the general belief brought forward, mostly by oral testimony of the elders, is that Treaty no. 8 was not a "cede and surrender" treaty. Instead the treaty was to affirm a harmonious relationship based on a treaty of peace:

> First Nations of the Treaty 8 region have always believed Treaty no.8 to be a living document based on the principle of sharing, peace and co-existence. According to Treaty 8 Elders, there was never any talk of surrender during the times of negotiations. The agreement was understood to be primarily a peace treaty, with the understanding that the Native way of life would not be disturbed. Aboriginal leaders today continue with their efforts to have the original "spirit and intent" of the treaty recognized appropriately by the government and the courts (Napoleon, 1997:48).

The above statements clearly indicate the general view held by Saulteau elders and contemporary leadership. This testimony affirms a counter-narrative and of a "treaty of peace and friendship."

Peace, Power, Righteousness: an indigenous manifesto written by Taiaiake Alfred puts forth the importance of the notion of "self-conscious traditionalism." Taiaiake demands a critique of oneself and then of the community in which one belongs. This process makes individuals accountable not only to themselves but also ultimately to their community. It is this approach that we all must consider if we are to de-colonize ourselves and un-shackle the socialization cages that have been imposed upon us as

"indian" people. It is important to be aware of the weaknesses caused by colonial pressures and influences that sought to undermine "tradition" and the culture of Indigenous people. These questions become an important part of the process of empowerment and deconstruction.

This literature review provided a conceptual lens in which questions; methods and considerations from this aforementioned body of works have offered guidance and a manner of framing my own research. For example *In the Words of the Elders* this text has offered direction and affirms the necessity and validity of oral knowledge. I decided to engage my own work drawing upon but not limited to the parameters of this literature review presented here.

1.7 **Indigenous Paradigm**

In researching Indigenous issues, Linda Smith suggested the following lens for an Indigenous paradigm:

> When Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, and people participate on different terms (Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999: 193).

This research design combines several aspects of an *Indigenous paradigm*. What makes this paradigm "Indigenous" is the manner in which I view the world and apply this to the research I am conducting and the motivations I have in doing so. I come from an Indigenous and mixed-blood experience and relate to the world in a manner that incorporates Saulteau values. It is important to note that these tenants can be utilized by non-native people as well not only Indigenous people, in fact it is a methodology as that is aimed to be holistic and culturally relevant to conducting research in communities and could be used by all people.

In the article titled *Aboriginal Epistemology* Battiste and Barman state that, "For Aboriginal People, first languages and culture are crucial components in the transformative learning process" (Battiste-Barman, 1995: 102). This statement becomes the crux of my work as an Indigenous researcher and the role that I feel I am responsible for. I am not doing "Indigenous research" simply because I happen to be Indigenous. In

every facet of my research work I am faced with the imperial and colonial aspects of western research and knowledge within Indigenous communities. Questioning colonialism in Indigenous issues is an example of how I interrelate and question the world around me.

Linda Smith speaks to the issue of how imperialism is interwoven with the indigenous experience:

> Imperialism frames the indigenous experience. It is part of our story, our version of modernity. Writing about our experiences under imperialism and its more specific expression of colonialism has become a significant pocket of the indigenous world (Smith, 1999:19).

I am faced with the choice of perpetuating colonialism or using certain aspects of Western knowledge to strengthen and transform our knowledge. Ristock and Pennell define empowerment research as "an approach to research that seeks to effect empowerment at all stages of the research process through critical analysis of power and responsible use of power" (Ristock and Pennell, 1996:9). It is this critical questioning that is the foundation of Indigenous research methods.

An Indigenous paradigm is my lens and the relationship I have to this thesis project. My Indigenous paradigm includes my position as an Indigenous woman doing Indigenous research in an Indigenous community and the dynamics and politics of this entire relationship. Indigenous research as a methodology includes, to paraphrase Linda Smith once again, "changing the process of research, which happens when Indigenous people become the researchers themselves, and in control of what is being researched".

My paradigm is also last and most importantly my spiritual or intuitive "way of seeing." My teachings tell me that Indigenous knowledge also originates from my "blood memory" experiences that I've received and from my own experiences in life. My paradigm has also been influenced by my mixed blood reality. My identity partly flows from my French father. The other layer of my identity flows from my Saulteau-Cree mother. I have a root in both these realms. These world-views shaped me. My own perspective emerges as an individual that is based upon my own experiences and the identities that I am. My schooling was entirely in western British Columbia within the

institutional public school experience. Indigenous peoples continue to survive an intentional genocidal assault attempt to omit Indigenous history.

1.8 Indigenous Research as a Methodology

In *Indigenous Research Methodology: Exploratory Discussion of an Elusive Subject,* Cora Weber-Pillwax identifies that "indigenous research methodology is and has always been the central structure of support for the creation of indigenous knowledge" (Weber-Pillwax: 1999:31). Weber-Pillwax is stating this is the structural support that Indigenous knowledge. Weber-Pillwax identifies seven different principles that embody an Indigenous methodology. These are the values that have guided the thesis structure of this research.

1) the interconnectedness of all living things,
2) the impact of motives and intentions on person and community,
3) the foundation of research as lived indigenous experience,
4) the roundedness of theories in indigenous epistemology,
5) the transformative nature or research,
6) the sacredness and responsibility of maintaining personal community,
7) the recognition of languages and culture as living processes.

(Weber-Pillwax, 1999:32)

Indigenous research methodology is holistic and interconnected and encompasses lived experiences while maintaining integrity to the community. An Indigenous research methodology involves the discussion of my identification as an Indigenous woman.

It is also critical as it consciously recognizes political acts and implications. The political aim is to look beneath the surface of things in a manner that is unconventional. To me this deconstruction is conducive to an examination of the colonial implications and assimilative forces upon Indigenous people's lives.

IRM is most importantly a set of principles that have guided attitudes and helped to break down the positivistic and imperial academic research notions that continue to bombard communities and the "knowledge" that comes out of them.

I used Indigenous research as methodology in many practical ways during this research. One example that illustrates how I was sensitive to Indigenous protocols was in the manner in which the participants were selected from the community. In my selection

of the participants I encouraged the community to informally select one another. This approach was rooted in Indigenous customs.

I began my first interview with my kohkom who then suggested I interview people she regarded as credible sources. The next interviewee would tell me whom they deemed knowledgeable. People naturally would offer "advice" and guidance as to whom was a respected individual who possessed cultural or bush knowledge, and was credible. There were clearly individuals who are known as *kiyaskisk*[18] or tellers of "tall tales" whom I was also told to be aware of, so there is a natural system that operates in the community which functions upon honor an honor system and is based on one's credibility amongst your peers.

In the *Report of the Indian Understanding of the Negotiations of Treaty 8*, Michael Asch and Wendy Aasen have constructed a system upon which Elders were selected as experts in the passing of oral knowledge based on their own research in relation to Treaty 8. They have identified, 1."Direct knowledge" as an individual being present at an event and thus possesses first hand knowledge of an event. 2. "Indirect Knowledge" as, "experts derives knowledge from key individuals who were present at the time of the negotiations and still hold a clear memory of events"[19]. The following titles are the manner in which the "affirmation of expertise is advanced" presented by Asch and Aasen. This is illustrated in six categories: "assertion of possession of stories, public affirmation of knowledge, self-knowledge, self-knowledge of limitations of expertise, truthfullness and confidence, crediting sources, and richness of detail (Asch and Assen, 1999: 5). Asch and Assen further illustrate their 6 criteria for expertise by giving an example of an elder's account and provide a rationale for the six groups.

In the case of this thesis my basis for selecting interviewees relied on the credibility of having one or more individuals identify certain people to be interviewed. It was not only elders that were selected to be interviewed but rather this selection included different community resource people and youth. What I did want the interviews to be strictly limited to elders accounts or testimonies. Instead, I wanted to gather knowledge from various age groups from people who had different roles that people within the

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[18] Kiyaskisk is a liar (Alberta Elder's Dictionary, pg. 352) A person who tells tall tales is commonly recognized as kageeaski which means "don't lie!".

[19] Asch and Aasen provide detailed categories intended to qualify the data collected.

community. What I did rely on was the giving of credibility from the community members themselves, regardless of age. I took the opinion of interviewees and of people who then deemed one another as credible sources. I did not want to solely choose the interviewees myself. I did invite all interested participants who wished to contribute their knowledge on Saulteau values, customs and beliefs to be interviewed. I then would ask the interviewee who they thought would be a good source and who would want to conduct an interview. I would then gauge this suggestion by asking others who they thought would provide some traditional knowledge. Ultimately I would ask this person if they wished to be interviewed.

Based on the six categories put forward as a manner of identifying the expertise by Asch and Assen, I found that the process I used in my own research of seeking credible sources would be classified under category: 3. "Self-knowledge and limitation of expertise." Asch and Assen explain, "As experts, elders are careful to point out what they remember, what they remember being told to them, when they do not remember a particular point, and when they are offering a personal opinion (Asch and Assen, 1999:6). Within my own research when I asked certain interview questions about customs or practices, if an interviewee did not ever exercise this certain practice or a custom that was tied to this belief, then they would pointedly state that they never did this exercise. This would indicate to me that the interviewee was exercising and honestly practicing the "limitation of their expertise." The interviewee would sometimes suggest another credible source who might have engaged in this practice and advise me to contact them for an interview.

The twenty-six interviews took place during the months of April – June 2001. These testimonies occurred mostly in the homes of each individual. One was conducted in the Del Rio hunting and trapping territory. The interview with George Desjarlais was conducted on a trip to Hudson's Hope. We also took a drive to the vicinity that overlooks the twin Sister's general area and then onto the West Moberly First Nation reserve. An awesome discussion occurred at the hunting and trapping cabin of George and Alice Gauthier in the Sukunka hunting territory.

Once I was given direction as to who to approach for an interview, I would present the traditional tobacco offering, which is given when someone is seeking knowledge,

advice or direction. It is uncommon for an elder to refuse this request especially if it is made with honest and open intentions. I would then give the women a gift offering of a blanket and I gave the men a small knife. I unexpectedly received a teaching about the knife when it is given as a gift. Earl Pronto and George Desjarlais both explained this teaching to me in a similar narrative. The teaching in summary went as follows: when you are given a knife the person receiving the gift must give a gift in return. The intent is to seal the bond of the relationship that exists so that the knife cannot hurt your friendship or relationship in the future.

Interviews most often occurred in the home, or in physical settings that held either spiritual or political importance to the Saulteau community. One interview with Simon Redhead occurred on a hunting trip, an interview was conducted with Alice Gauthier at her trapline cabin and even one on the highway to the Dawson Creek chuck-wagon races. Every interview visit, funeral, celebration, feast and social provided context and acted as a setting for the gathering of information that related to customs, values and beliefs of the SFNC.

1.9 **Rationale for the design chosen**

The method used in collecting non-formal interviews and oral testimony is a qualitative method that is in line with the goals and motivations of this project. The approach of revisiting sacred and other non-conventional areas of significant importance within the community is an example of how the qualitative elements of place and other elements of sacred physical spheres are being framed and presented in a the dominant discourse as a place of significance that has meaning to people and their culture. Recognizing these sacred areas physically affirms the continuity of ceremonial importance, cultural significance and conduct to the land and place of this territory.

I am continuously attempting to forge a link between Indigenous knowledge and that of a western paradigm, which applies a different format for acquiring knowledge. I tried to make this process appropriate by considering non-conventional considerations such as cultural significant areas and space. This was my attempt to make this research more appropriate in the holistic manner in which I approached this research.

1.10 The Journey of my qualitative approach

I lived in Fort St. John for the first three months of my stay in the north, in order to carry out research at the Treaty 8 Tribal Association office. I gathered relevant research material and located previous interviews that had been conducted. I commuted to Moberly Lake, where the Saulteau First Nation community is (on the east side of the lake) on weekends, and spent my time there reconnecting with my larger extended families (who I usually only see at weddings, funerals and large necessary gatherings). I later moved to Moberly Lake, motivated by the loss of my great-uncle Bob, whom I had grown quite close to in my first three months. I began preparing various people in the community by explaining to them what my thesis was about and the type of information I would like to talk about. During this winter and early spring there were many deaths that happened – seven that I can count. The community was heavily hit by these losses. These deaths combined with political dissention over the power of leadership kept the community in a volatile social and political state.

I proposed this idea with previous Chief Stewart Cameron who gave me the support needed to proceed. Subsequently after formal clearance from the thesis committee I gave a ten-page version of my proposal to both the current Chief and to the council as well. My intention was to receive feedback as to what my goals were as well to make them aware of the process at hand. I received a letter acknowledging my thesis research and offering documents and information that I would be entitled to view as a Band member. I wanted community awareness of my thesis research, their suggestions, their guidance, input and access to information.

Returning to Moberly Lake SFNC on the weekends, I began the talks with various people within the Band Council, and with the previous chief(s), community people and my own relatives and elders. I consulted with my two community resource contacts, Art Napoleon and Stewart Cameron for direction and feedback on different issues and I was grateful for their availability and offerings.

I provided a re-introduction of myself to the community, to remind people of who I was and who my relatives were. I gave a synopsis of my thesis and the research I wished to conduct. I gave examples of the questions I would be asking and what the intentions would be and how the final thesis might be valued and later used. I gave the Indigenous

Governance Program contact information. I also volunteered my supervisor Leslie Brown's telephone number, my phone number and the entire committee e-mail addresses contacts (as well as my own). I provided my own local contact number for further questions or information.

Initially I had the support of previous Chief Stewart Cameron. Out of respect, I sought to garner acknowledgement for continued support of my research from the new council and this was granted (see Appendix 3).. I began preparing the interview guide and went about deciding who was best to approach for interviews (credibility of interviewees) and the protocol that I should use, i.e. tobacco, blanket, knife as a traditional honorarium.

As mentioned earlier, the community people themselves chose, amongst their neighbors and peers, who would be valuable to contact and knowledgeable about the land and cultural practices. This manner of selection highlights an unconscious act of leadership as the community indeed selected its own people without any sort of electoral process or popular vote, instead the community pushed forward by nomination, identifying their own resource people. I then proceeded to contact the individuals by telephone. I had already begun months of unrecorded dialogue with my Kohkom, my uncle Bob (who passed away), aunts, uncles and community people about ideas of conducting some of the interviews out on the land, trap-lines. It was during this time that I decided to begin interviewing people beginning with the eldest. I decided to do this because of the unexpected loss of my Uncle Bob, who was interested in sharing his knowledge. At the same time I recognize that the knowledge has been passed on to the hunters, nephews, nieces and children within the community. My Uncle Bob offered me in the few months throughout our oral discussions, the relationship he had with this land, place, people and animals. I hope that the knowledge that he offered as a "gift" to me will re-appear in this document.

1.11 **Oral Testimony - Strategy used for qualitative methods**

Slim and Thompson explored different types of interviews in these methods of collection:

> The most wide-ranging form is the individual life story. This allows a person to narrate the story of his or her whole life in its entire dimension: personal, spiritual, social and economic. Another kind is the single-issue interview that seeks to gain testimony about a particular aspect or a period of a person's life. As Chapter three

> showed, the objective might be to hear about someone's working life, perhaps with an emphasis on indigenous knowledge... In addition to individual interviews, oral testimony can also be collected in focus group discussions, community interviews or by diary interviewing (Slim and Thompson, 1995:63).

The method of collecting research on Saulteau principles was most appropriately oral interviews and more specifically "single-issue testimony," that Slim and Thompson explains as a more specific, shorter and detailed process which is useful in the oral history interview process. The discussion of life and story was appropriate in this thesis because this is how most Indigenous people generally discuss or relate principles and philosophies of their lives.

After arranging an interview with the individuals appointed I would then proceed to explain the process and the logistics of where and how this information was going to be used. I developed a reader-friendly summary of the two-page consent form that needed to be signed. The two-page standard UVic form was far too technical and lengthy. I explained the consent form in detail and advised people of where and how their interview was going to be used and it that the interviews would later be stored at the Muskoti Learning Center. Each participant was advised about a series of issues ranging from non-confidentiality, how the information would be used, where it would be later stored and what purpose the information was being gathered for.

1.12 **Data Collection - Interviews**

A framework for questions was developed (later revised twice) to guide the informal interviews and begin the process. The questions were revised on three different occasions and I ended up bringing both questionnaire sheets to the interview and showing them to people who then made the decision as to which type of questions they liked to respond to or which of the two interview guides spoke to them. I found there were two types of interviews. Those who liked questions and provided answers and those whom needed very little urging to begin sharing their knowledge. The final questions were more general and centered on themes (see Appendix 4). These questions seemed to be clearly understood and garnered relevant responses regarding principles and how they function in everyday life.

In the text, *Listening for a Change Oral Testimony and Community Development*, Hugo Slim and Paul Thompson, the researchers relate the importance of learning the social norms, taboos and customs of communication. Simply presenting a list of

questions and expecting responses is a standard western notion of interview and dialogue. What is more natural in an Indigenous context is a free-flow conversation that may involve two or more people. These differences in the approach of conversing and interviewing were critical considerations for the success of achieving the results in respect to Saulteau principles. This process allowed people interviewed to be comfortable and in control of the discussion. It was the interviewee who decided what information to share with me.

I would then explain the interview questions and I would go through the questions one by one and talk about them, explaining further what I meant and giving examples. I would leave it up to the interviewee to choose either an open-ended format where I would lead the dialogue or a pointed question and answer style. I explained to people that the questions were merely to be used as an interview guide and as a springboard for direction in our conversation.

My own age in this context automatically put me in the position of student and the interviewee in the role of teacher. In the text *Community Research as Empowerment: Feminist Links, Postmodern Interruptions* Janice L Ristock and Joan Pennell present a reader friendly exploratory text that utilizes practical manners of conducting research and different tools of analysis for communities. In chapter nine Joan Pennell examines her own role as well as the content of the interviews. She asked for feedback from the participants and the transcribers to make her aware of her role as interviewer. These sorts of questions and situations that cause the researcher to subject her/himself to self-critique and constant awareness of their position and power is important in the data analysis because the researcher is the lens through which the documentation will be viewed. This is both a powerful and problematic position to hold.

This holistic and open-ended approach of an IRM was incredibly beneficial to me and it was unconventional in the sense of an anti-imperialistic dynamic between the researcher and the interviewee. I had the sense that because I was university trained I had assumptions of difference put upon me. This is strictly my personal subjective perception based upon one or two comments made in passing. I accepted that this is my reality as it is part of my identity. I am "same but different." However, after a cup of tea and questions about my mom, dad, brothers, sisters *and* a sharing of myself mixed with

standard Cree joking and teasing I had the perception that I was privileged and entitled to information that an "outsider" would not have been gifted with immediately. I am a granddaughter of a boisterous matriarch within the community and a relative to many. There was an understanding of the importance of the work that they were "gifting" to me to compile for them so they could view it later. I felt like I was working for them and that by recording their honorable life experience I was in turn privileged because of the role/task I was allowed to carry out. There was also a sense of pride instilled in the interviewee when each was asked to provide cultural narrative and Indigenous knowledge. I noted that the questions were evolving and not static and that our dialogue could go wherever they wished to take it. However, I did consciously try to steward the dialogue process to relevant information that was conducive to this thesis.

I encouraged people who had questions themselves to participate and propose them and many did throughout the interviews. For example Della Owens questioned, "What is tradition? What do we mean when we ask this?" Della was referring to the chronological/historical placing of tradition. This leads to another consideration of the questions themselves, did traditional acts happen when she was a child? Do they continue to happen? Is tradition reserved for a time when only the elders remember? Art Napoleon posed questions on who might or should be considered an "elder"?

In all aspects of this project I was open to change. I was the principal researcher, who was attempting to carry out research in a highly volatile and ever-changing political environment within the community.

Each interview was from 45 minutes to 90 minutes in length. The interviews were structured and conducted in a manner that was to be open ended and natural. The material was expected to be given in a free manner. I hoped that it would naturally evolve from the talks had. Although I had a list of ten questions ranging over different topics areas - all returning to beliefs, principles and customs – the questions were revised three times resulting in both concrete and thematic approaches to asking. The questions were not developed in a manner to have right or wrong responses but simply to be used as a starting place or a source of focus.

1.13 Interviews

The different sectors of the community were assumed to form a fair representation of the entire community. I received an interview with at least one person from each family in the community. Granted, some families were more represented than others. I later concluded that there were no apparent themes that emerged from family patterns. I decided that organizing and framing by order of family was not valid because the material was not being patterned upon family order.

Saulteau First Nation Member Participants:

1. Davis: Josephine Walker, Victoria Davis, Grandma Davis, Harvey Kiyah Earl Pronto. **5** participants
2. Napoleon: Art Napoleon, Della Owens, Mathilda Heibert, Clifford Napoleon, Melvina Whiten, Melva Sorel and Frank Savard. **7** Participants
3. Gauthier: Oliver and Lillian Gauthier, George and Alice Gauthier **4** participants
4. Desjarles: Henriette Landry, Harriette Kristoffy, Minnie Garbitt, Helen Paquette and Tylene Paquette. **5** participants
5. Courtorielle: Stewart Cameron. **1** participant

External Saulteau First Nation interviewee participants:

1. Simon Redhead (Sturgeon Lake First Nation)
2. Reg Whiten (Married to a Saulteau First Nation Band Member)
3. George Desjarles (DunneZa -West Moberly First Nation)
4. Margaret Campbell (Saulteau and Dunne Za – West Moberly First Nation)

1.14 Analytic techniques

The techniques that I used to analyze the data are based on Indigenous principles, values and beliefs. The central questions were made in order to try to determine what are different forms of contemporary Indigenous principles, where do they originate from and how do they operate? I sought patterns that emerged from the data in the form of themes that seemed to give people, us, direction in how we conducted ourselves, how we go about doing things based on protocol and customs. This is what I was always looking for. I focused upon and tuned in to reoccurring concepts and patterns within conversations and especially, repeated patterns and practices that happened when we were out on the land or driving through the bush. These experiences form the manner in which people talk about hunting and the bush way, this manner of framing becomes the manner in

which I frame and analyze my own gathered data and re-present as data based on the interviews with the people.

The interviews were first transcribed not verbatim but as close to the natural form of the interview as possible. The word-for-word format was not necessary because I only extracted the segments from each interview that were valuable in developing themes that would later be developed as a principle. I selected these quotes if they had any value or relation to the research question. I indicated each break in the interview by way of an ellipsis [...] This was transformed into the interview guide that consists of the 21 partially transcribed interviews.

I transcribed the interviews by selecting and extrapolating certain quotations from the interviews. Later after the themes were arranged in a summary they were presented in the third section, which I called, *Spirit*. This section was an attempt to present the data-gathered. It contains the segments of quotations that stood out to me as being valuable and necessary to the understanding of values, beliefs and customs behind principles. The entire interviews are not presented instead I selected quotes that I thought were directly related to or of value regarding the thesis topic and presented it by organizing it into themes. Initially there was a copious amount of information organized into more than thirty headings that included a free-flow of ideas that were both themes and some principle-based headings.

I decided (with wise advice) to narrow these ideas even further into principles that stood out for me in the whole process. Throughout my whole research experience there were key concepts and questions I kept returning to and, when I think of my experience these were the most rewarding teachings. The most important learning experience I had as a university educated Band member returning to my community for a lengthy stay as a researcher was centered around renewing relationships and about family. I am not only referring to my immediate family but to the larger community, who are extended relatives. The other teachings that stood out for me were about ritual offerings for merit making, community dynamics, language and culture. The data was narrowed even further

into seven[20] principles that could encompass the broad range of ideas of the themes that emerged.

Ristock and Pennell engaged in creative analysis by moving back and forth from their own evolving theories, defining themes and developing questions that emerged from the analysis. Ristock works at developing "inclusive communities[21]" by following four principles:

1. expanding dichotomies;
2. speaking with those about whom I am speaking;
3. appreciating discourses; and
4. displacing logic

These four principles advance a critical analysis of power by increasing the range of possible constructions of reality and thus disrupting the usual binary (either/or) oppositions (Ristock and Pennell, 1996:80). This method is the approach I used as a consideration in my methodology and the approach I took in analyzing my data. I moved from transcribing to developing themes while returning to the transcripts of the interviews.

The interview data was to be analyzed in a manner that allowed themes or principles to emerge. These themes were based upon what naturally emerged from the interviews. What are the key terms or themes embedded within the narrative? What are key terms within the language that was repeatedly used? How are they expressed in relation to principles?

To paraphrase Slim and Thompson who explore that, "memory is a process of editing and selecting and hindsight plays a large role in this process." This is a consideration that I bore in mind when analyzing the material gathered from interviews. However they describe the importance of these memories when compared to other evidence:

> ...One testimony can be compared with another, the variations in accounts, which might be thought a weakness, can be turned into a special strength, an insight into how people make sense of their lives and social worlds. Indeed, it is this very

[20] Seven is a sacred number in a pan-Indian sense. It is said to be the number of generations ahead and behind us that we are supposed to be always consciously regarding and planning to care for. It instills accountability to future life and sustains the generations to come.

[21] Building "inclusive communities": bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and social positions while at the same time constructing a firm identity as participants in a process based on respecting separate identities (Ristock and Pennell: 1996: 18).

> mixture of the subjective and the objective which makes oral testimony such a rich source of information, revealing as much about values and perceptions as about material realities (Slim and Thompson, 1995: 141).

It is the significance of themes, certain words and phrases in both Cree and English that were examined and gauged in relation to how often they occurred or if they would be useful as a belief, concept to formulate a principle. The ideas within the themes that emerged stood out clearly or reoccurred.

The placing of myself offers the reader a deeper understanding of how I framed my data within my own lenses. This affects how I reflected upon the material around me, Part 2 looks at the process of **reflection** of the data. This is where I "lived with the data" as explored in the analytic framework section 1.6 "living with the data" meant sifting through the material that had been color-coded to identify re-occurring themes and trying finding ways to organize these themes once they were recognized as a theme. Originally there was an incredible number of themes. I had to narrow the themes and this meant personally selecting what theme generally reflected the large amount of material within the interviews gathered.

The diagram offers a conceptual glimpse of how I consciously placed myself amidst the data. I adapted this model from the *Conscientization Model* in the text *Becoming an Ally* by Ann Bishop. This model was intended to give the reader a sense of my biases by exposing myself in a personal manner that will allow the reader to understand how I have processed the material. Too often qualitative material in the social sciences is left without the presentation of the researcher's biases and their "lenses" or ways of seeing the world. Giving the impression that the material is entirely "objective" and barren of subjective interpretations misleads the reader. Rather, people subjectively analyze, interpret and process information around us.

1.15 **Affirmation of Significant Areas**

The use of different physical settings of significance (i.e. trap line, Twin Sister vicinity, Saulteau hunting territory, etc.) in which to conduct these interviews was aimed at providing a continuous affirmation of oral testimony. The different symbolic settings might also provide atmosphere and trigger what is known as "blood memory," re-awakening the stories and teachings that is carried within about the land and conduct in

relation to the land. The different physical settings included the general area of the Twin Sisters Sacred site, various community member homes and Alice and George Gauthier's Trap lines cabin. These settings provided an ambiance and atmosphere for the political affirmation of our sacred sites, and the very settings that oral testimony speaks about.

1.16 **Analytic Framework**

The theme section is broken down and discussed at length in the section called *Spirit.* Initially I had to "live with the data" as suggested by my supervisor Leslie Brown in order to have the data resonate within my own mind so that I could reflect and decide what stood out. The ideas that pushed their way to the surface are summarized in the *Spirit* section. The second step was to provoke and examine the ideas that needed further analysis. These ideas would later be organized into a theme and then constructed as a principle. My goal was to tease out the principle that I hoped would originate from the thematic data section. Some of the themes were Family and Community, Rituals, Generosity, Leadership, Bush life, Laws and Teachings. The themes allowed me to develop a way of framing and organizing the incredible amount of data gathered from the 26 interviews and the 21 themes that were narrowed but initially grew out of the numerous ideas within the interview guide, identified in the data. The themes became obvious. My intention was to have themes develop independently while recognizing that questions have already framed them.

First, I had attempted to organize the interview data by categorizing the individuals into their family groups. The purpose was to reveal obvious patterns within the data. The only family who had consistent teachings was the Napoleon family, and their teachings about "kiyam." This affirmed the distance of the Napoleon teaching and the pattern of family teachings. While it was not as detailed as the teaching given by Della or explained by Mathilda, Clifford Napoleon (relative) also spoke to the same understanding of Kiyam when I asked him about Kiyam in the interview. What is outstanding is that there existed a pattern of a teaching that emerged and existed amongst these two separate but related family groupings. Other than this one family who also had other thematic patterns emerge, arranging the data by family was not a manner in which I sought to find patterns of knowledge. The following figure is meant to make some of my biases transparent so that the reader can better understand how I processed the data.

Following the family-based organization of data, I began to repeatedly review the data so that I would be able to find obvious themes. I did this by highlighting direct quotes from the interview data and writing in the margins. For example, in Stuart Cameron's interview he talked about a teaching on morality that he received from his Kohkom, "There were *Wasakaychuck* stories that taught right and wrong [...] that is where a lot of our laws flow out of." Beside this highlighted quotation I wrote "morals" as a possible theme. I then searched for other data related to morality so it possibly could become a theme, where a principle could later be developed. Although valid, it was not a major focus because of the copious amount of data it was not selected as a final theme. I continued this process throughout the 76 pages of single spaced interview data.

Once the data was highlighted and classified into possible thematic ideas, I began to color code the ideas into themes such as language, laws, roles, ritual, offerings, songs, ceremonies, leadership, etc. I was able to identify these color codes with "pink-stickers" that identified a code which was a theme. I then organized the data, which now became segments of the partial transcriptions into a theme section, which later became the *Spirit* section. This presentation of the data was selected because it had its own cultural relevance that needed to be presented on its own as from the individuals' interviews.

The *Spirit* section is a presentation of the 21 themes that emerged. The principles were then constructed upon these themes. The numerous themes and ideas of the data presented in the first half of *Spirit* emerged the principles.

The latter half of the portion of the *Spirit* is a summary of the seven Saulteau principles. I examined all the thematic sections and I asked myself what principle emerged - one that summarized the essence of the ideas. Family was a prominent theme as it was a central question from the interview guide. I needed to select a direct quote or if one could not be found then to construct a statement that would encompass such as, "You are your family" when describing to an academic advisor the theme of family. He then made me realize that I had identified the principle within the theme of family. This principle was later revised to, "We are all relatives" by Art Napoleon. This principle better depicts and reflects the large extended family of the community, and the responsibilities that might come with it. I then decided to select the most important

concepts, values or rituals (such as Kiyam and Kisiwatsoon and Offerings). That was explained directly from the language as well as the concept attached to it, added was the value of such a quality.

In the final construction stage, in an attempt at consistency in order to provide the Cree language the theme or principle might have emerged from (for example Kiyam and Kisiwatsoon) I asked Art Napoleon to provide additional translation to the final constructed principle. It is important to recognize that these interviews were conducted (with the exception of Grandma Davis) in English. Generally the Cree language filtered throughout the actual interview and the interviewee would take the time to explain terminology and concepts as well as certain terms in the language, however because my own understanding of Cree is very limited, the interview was conducted in English. I asked for translation of principles 1, 6, and 7. The characteristic details how the principle were extracted from the interview guide that was summarized into themes then either transplanted as a direct quote or extended into a principle statement, or simply constructed to reflect the themes gathered. This characteristic explains the principle. From the themes came principles each with examples that elaborate upon to explain their value. I also detailed the theme from which each principle emerged. I concluded with the necessity and value that the principle presents.

It is important to recognize that I am conscious of the existing arguments that speak about the strengths and weakness of recording oral knowledge and presenting it as text. The researcher is aware of these arguments and instead I have consciously chose as many members of my community have to engage in researching and documenting oral knowledge from our community to be used in a proactive and manner that allows knowledge to change, evolve, grow and to not remain as fixed nor be presented as a narrow presentation of oral knowledge instead this is an evolving exercise that will continue to grow, change and evolve as the culture will within the SFNC.

Conclusion

This brings us full circle to the purpose of this *Mind* section, which was intended to expose the process within this thesis. The merit of revealing the IRM, methods and approaches to gathering the data is a valuable exercise that shares with future researchers a process that was learned from carrying out this exercise. The development of the

research question emerged from a dialogue that happened between Stewart Cameron and myself. The question was identified as a need to be explored and carried out. The research process that I chose was intended to be as relevant and appropriate to research that must be conducted with Indigenous nations. The gathering of data and the analytic process of interpreting and the process of making sense of the information must also be presented so that the reader understands how certain conclusions emerged. The end goal was to construct principles that are based on the interview data that summarizes the themes that emerged from the entire data.

This section titled *Mind* was the visioning, the purpose and the process of carrying out this research so that I was able to construct the principles based on the themes that emerged from the community interviews. I also intended to expose the process or the journey of my research experience so those future researchers may find the methodology used within this process a valuable exercise within itself.

2. Body[1]

Introduction

The *Body* section paints a physical description of the landscape and locates the SFNC within the "provincial boundaries" Treaty 8 territory of northeastern British Columbia. Some of the major historical incidents such as the first peace truce of *Unchagha,* tell us about the nature of the relationship between the Cree and the DunneZa prior to settler arrival. This truce demonstrates that truce making had already been occurring amongst Indigenous peoples long before the settlers arrived into this territory.

The fur trade, Klondike gold rush, and settlers' farming intentions, were some of the motivating factors for the Commissioners arrival into northeastern BC to secure the adhesions to Treaty 8 made at Lesser Slave Lake. These historical occurrences give an understanding of the impact on what was once called the "East Moberly Reserve no 169" that is recognized in the contemporary as "Saulteau First Nation."

Michael Asch and Wendy Aasen refer to the Commissioner's reports on the dialogue had between the Commissioners and the different nations that were signatories to the making of Treaty 8 at Lesser Slave Lake, "The Commissioners' report is in itself an admission that many assurances of promises made by the commissioners were not incorporated in the text of Treaty 8" (Asch and Aasen, 1999: 62). Much of the treaty debate is centered upon the discrepancies of two understandings held, which have emerged from the original Treaty 8 negotiations[2]. I do not intend this debate to be the crux of this chapter, nor this thesis. However an understanding of the developments of the Treaty itself and the impact it had historically upon the communities. Some of these occurrences and issues will be explored in more terms of the development of the adhesion made to Treaty 8 in the northeastern portion of Treaty 8 within BC[3].

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[1] *Body* is the title given to this second section because it gives a physical description based on historical occurrences found within textual documents and historical research, mostly provided by the Saulteau community and Art Napoleon's extensive curriculum and historical writings. Treaty 8 Tribal Association also has an extensive body of historical data that it has within its information warehouse.

[2] see Wendy Aasen. Treaty 8 Tribal Association. 1993. "*Treaty 8 Tribal Association: Brief to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples."* Files, Fort St.John, B.C. n.d. Aasen examines the text of the Treaty in a clause-by-clause analyses.

[3] This chapter seeks to provide merely an overview of the existing in-depth research that details the "indian understanding" and the non-native interpretation of the original Treaty 8 text. See (Price, 1987; Price and Smith, 1994; Mair, 1999 (1908), Asch and Aasen, 1999; Crerar and Ptryshyn, eds. 1999/2000).

The chapter concludes with different Saulteau elder's sentiments offered in relation to the Treaty which was supposed to be "treaty based on peace." These accounts add to the pre-existing wealth of documented elders testimonies. This chapter seeks to highlight some of the historical events that shaped the development of the contemporary SFNC.

2.1 Contemporary Saulteau Community Setting

The Treaty no.8 boundary within the province of British Columbia is a territory that seven different nations are located within. The seven nations that share this territory are as follows: Saulteau First Nation (*Anishnaube, Nihiyawak, DunneZa)*; West Moberly (*DunneZa, Nihiyawak)*; Doig *(DunneZa)*; Blueberry (*DunneZa)*; Prophet (*DunneZa)*; Halfway (*DunneZa*) and the Fort Nelson Band (*Slavey)*).

Location

Twenty-eight kilometers north of Chetwynd is Moberly Lake. The Saulteau First Nation community is located on the eastern shores of Moberly Lake commonly called referred to as "the Lake." SFNC's sister reserve, West Moberly First Nation lies on the western shores of "Moberly Lake." The SFNC faces the prophesized mountains, *Kawneshousteeguaw Anishineewatchea,* recognized as the "Twin Sister Mountains," which was re-named Beattie Peaks by settlers[4]. The community is located 28 kilometers north of Chetwynd. *The Lake*[5] is twenty kilometers south of Hudson's Hope and about 100 kilometers southwest of Fort St. John on Highway 29, just off of the Alaska Highway. Moberly Lake is located on the eastern side of the Rocky foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Surrounding the community is rolling foothills. This is where we once buried our ancestors high in these small rolling foothills. It is closest to *Manitouna* (Heaven).

The surrounding foothills are covered in jack pine, birch and poplar. In the distance lie the more rugged Rocky mountains that are usually snow-capped year round. The setting is stunning but what is most important is the spiritual significance of this land, which is explained in the oral narrative of both the Cree and DunneZa ancestors who were guided to this area to co-exist. *The Lake* is cold, deep and described as "bottomless." It has always and continues to provide a bounty of the numerous fish

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[4] see, Treaty 8 Tribal Association. 1992. "*The Two Mountains That Sit Together/ Upper Moberly Land-Use Report.*" Files, Fort St. John, B.C. n.d.

species that have sustained the communities. The Moberly river flows into Moberly Lake from the west and leaves to the east.

. Dominion surveyor D.F. Robertson first surveyed the lands for the East Moberly reserve in 1914[6]. The colonial surveyor formally established the reserve on the confirmed date of September 19, 1918. A confirmed allotted 7, 646 acres of land in the Memorandum of Agreement that occurred between the Dominion of Canada transfer of lands back to the province of British Columbia on March 22, 1929[7].

A documented population count, in 1998 numbered 359 members living off reserve and 331 living on reserve (Saulteau Community Profile, 1998:7). *Muskoti* Learning Center is located in "the flats" area of the Saulteau reserve. It offers some education programs and a "Cree-ative Wonders" Day care program. There is a Community Health Nurse who conducts visits to the reserve. The *Astipi* Center provides various social services. The Band office continues to build on its administrative infrastructure and is a place for elder's meetings and the office of Chief and Council.

The Map on the following page locates the Saulteau First Nation community, as well as its seven neighboring nations that share this Treaty 8 territory of northeastern BC. Treaty 8 territory is also recognized as the "Peace River Block" lies within the "provincial" boundaries of British Columbia. Saulteau First Nation was formerly known as East Moberly 169.

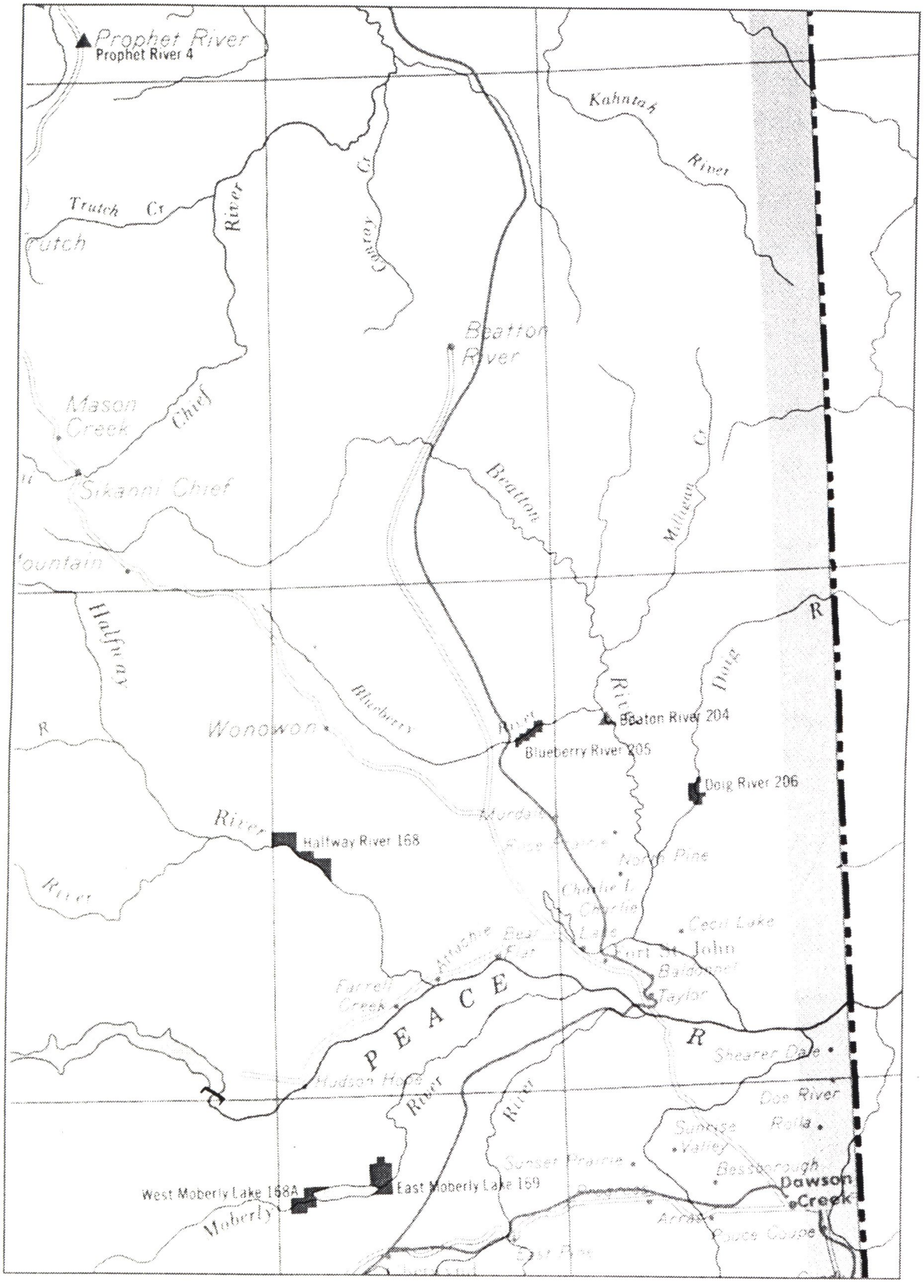
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[5] I borrow this term "the lake" from *Bush Land Spirit – Our Elders Speak,* edited by Art Napoleon (Twin Sisters Publishing Co, Moberly Lake, BC 1998: 1).

[6] East Moberly Lake No 169 O.C.p.C.808 7 April 1918, quoted in the "*Notes on the present state of understanding and research on Treaty 8"* (Union of BC Indian Chiefs, Vancouver BC, 1973), 1.

[7] Privy Council Order 208, February 3, 1930 *Schedule of Indian Reserved in the Railway Belt and Peace River Block in the Province of British Columbia.* Union of BC Indian Chiefs files.

Saulteau First Nation Community[1]



[1] Canada, Energy, Mines and Research Canada, Surveys and Mapping Branch. 1984. *Canadian Indian and Inuit Communities. British Columbia.* The National Atlas Database Map Series, Map no. NADM – 5, Scale 1: 2 000 000. Ottawa.

2.2 Identity

The seemingly complicated issue of identity amongst people who self-identify with one or all three cultures proved less difficult to explore than I had anticipated because people choose to self-identify as being a descendent of one, two or all three of the nations that form an amalgamation of the contemporary SFNC.

People stress the importance of self-identification with one, two or three cultural descents. Generally it is considered that they are living within a community that, at the present time, calls itself "Saulteau First Nation." Each member is a person who might be Beaver-Cree, Saulteau-Cree, or simply Cree. There are some families that are even of Iroquois descent but it is primarily these three cultural descents that people identify with. Within these different or individual cultural self-identification lines also exists a cohesive "glue" that binds the people - this being Cree *(Nehiyuk)* language. While there are currently debates about what to call the community in an effort to respectfully acknowledge all three cultures, it is accepted that each person has the right to self-identify with whichever culture they are a descendent of.

An explanation as to why the current French colonial name of "Saulteau First Nation" exists is to give honor to the Chief Bill Desjarlais who was Saulteau. Fred Courtorielle states:

> Every year the Indian Agent would come to Moberly with a Catholic priest to try and give treaty money to the people. For three years my grandfather Bill Desjarlais, refused to take treaty money. Finally around 1914, Bishop Joussard spoke with Grandfather and convinced him to take treaty money (Napoleon, 1998: 32).

Art Napoleon indicates that the East Moberly reserve was once the assigned title given by DIAND but it was later changed to Saulteau First Nation. Napoleon stated, "DIA started referring to is as the Saulteau Band, because when they signed the Treaty in 1914, it was mostly Saulteau people they were dealing with" (Napoleon, taped interview, 2001). The name changed from East Moberly Reserve #169 to "Saulteau First Nation".

The community's understanding of how it has melded to form the present day community is based upon the cultural descent of these three nations. What must be recognized is that all three nations have been woven together and are in the contemporary connected by inter-marriage.

2.3 The Cree language commonality

The common thread that weaves the communities together in this community is the Cree language spoken by most people, especially of the adult-elder generation. Some people are bi-lingual, speaking DunneZa as well. Most of the generation aged forty-years and older are first-language speakers of *Nehiyawewin*. This is a strength that binds the community by providing a thread of commonality amongst the people who may differ by cultural lineage. The *Nehiyawewin* is the predominant language spoken of the Indigenous languages. To illustrate a point of self-identification based on language, Vernon Lalonde shared, "I consider myself mostly Cree because that is the language I speak fluently. Personally, I have a little bit of Beaver, a bit of Saulteau and Cree" (Lalonde, taped interview: 2001).

What is evident within the identity of the Saulteau First Nation Community is a firm sense of self that reflects agility, resilience and traditional bush/cultural knowledge that SFNC members hold. Rooted in the memory of the people is a cultural self-knowledge that has insulated the culture by providing a strong foundation for the SFNC identity in the present. This strength, in turn, is used in the stance SFNC holds against the pressures of assimilative forces. Pervasive pressures are thrust upon the SFNC by government policy that is maneuvered by federal monies and power. Nonetheless, SFNC resistance affirms an identity that is rooted firmly within the SFNC's own cultural norms, institutions and practices.

These practices are hardly intellectualized in a Western sense rather people exercise these practices daily. Bush life is considered an important practice of the lifestyle of the SFNC. These age-old traditions continue to maintain a livelihood that relies upon the value of respect given to the environment, animals, and land. Each season brings a myriad of opportunities for hunters to search for moose, elk, caribou, beaver, rabbit, etc. The community continues to dry meat, tan hides and to maintain these modes of livelihood those are valuable and practical to our everyday lifestyle. The community continues to gather berries, roots, and vegetables to dry, can, and store for the upcoming

winter. Some of these "traditional" patterns of sustenance have obviously changed and evolved, but the SFNC continues to maintain as appreciation for bush lifestyle[8].

2.4 Historical Development of Moberly Lake

The first non-Native "explorer" found himself in a relationship of dependency upon the local Saulteau, Cree and Dunne Za people. According to local oral accounts a different version exists. Henry John Moberly's arrival seemed to only affirm in historical "tales" the so-called "discovery" of "Moberly" Lake. The "visitor's"[9] survival was dependant upon the knowledge of the Indigenous people's territory he had wandered into. The DunneZa have always hunted this territory. The Cree entered this territory ahead of the fur traders driven by the economy of the fur trade. The Saulteau later followed their own leader Kakagoguance, instigated by settler pressures westward. What is forgotten in non-Native textbooks is that all three nations existed on this territory long before Henry John Moberly's arrival into the "Moberly Lake" area[10].

The spiritual culture of the community is a complex one. Art Napolean tells us that the Methodist missionaries were the first to enter the Peace River territory. In 1890 the very first church erected was a Catholic one built in Fort St. John[11]. The strong remnants of Catholicism in the "Moberly Lake" area was a result of Father Jungbluth's[12] extensive stay and his good relations with the local Indigenous nations. His permanency began with the building of the Mother Theresa Church in 1939. Catholicism was successful in its indoctrination largely because of Jungbluth's fluency in the both the *Nehiyawewin* and *DunneZa* languages. The remnants of some Catholic customs and beliefs remain but are

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[8] see, the *"Treaty 8 (BC) Land-Use Report* compiled by Reg C. Whiten on behalf of the Treaty 8 Tribal Association for the RCAP in 1993. Based on the Treaty 8 Land-Use Assembly held at Charlie Lake, BC. This document based on predominantly oral interviews provides the fundamental arguments and stances held by local Indigenous people from the communities, regard and use of the land. Themes such as land and livelihood protection, health, self-reliance and self-determination via Treaty 8 are discussed. This document is valuable in that it provides a sense of the communities' relationship to the land and the resources.

[9] I borrow this term from my colleague Denise McDonald who first applied this appropriate label to Simon Fraser in her own Master's thesis.

[10] see, *Bushland Spirit: Our Elders'* speak text tells the Indigenous account rather that the Eurocentric misconception given. Without the medicinal knowledge and age-old subsistence abilities of the local Saulteau, Dunne Za and Cree people, Henry John Moberly would not have lived to have "Moberly Lake" inappropriately named after his so-called "discovery".

[11] *see,* Napolean and associates, "Missionaries in the Upper Peace." p. 57

[12] *see, Youngblood of the Peace*, for a more detailed account of Father Jungbluth's Catholic infiltration and relationship had with the surrounding communities' of the Treaty 8 area.

fading. At the present both Catholicism and Indigenous ceremony/ritual are practiced in a "dualistic"[13] nature. There has been a re-vitalization of pan-Indigenous sweat lodge ceremonies, sun dances, powwow, traditional regalia and medicinal uses and practices once deemed "illegal" by the Canadian government[14].

2.5 *Unchagha:* The first Truce made between the Cree and DunneZa

The process of making a respectful truce intended to bind a common understanding between the two different nations, Cree and DunneZa. This was not a new process for most of the Indigenous nations. Price states, "Aboriginal nations also entered into treaties among themselves, such as the treaty between the Dakota and Ojibiwa communities in Manitoba in 1866" (Price and Smith, 1993-4: 54).

Art Napoleon outlines that the first peace truce *Unchagah* was bound by an elaborate pipe-smoking ceremony ratified at the confluence of the Peace River in 1790[15]. This event reveals that truce making was not a foreign process. It is merely the indigenous and non-indigenous understandings of this process that clash in contemporary times. These important historical factors also lend us a deepened understanding of how the cultural fabric of the present SFNC has developed into that of an "inclusive community"[16]. This is reflected in the successful melding and inter-marriage of the Saulteau, Cree and the DunneZa people.

It is a safe assumption to make that Treaty 8 was understood in a similar fashion based on peaceful co-existence. *"Unchagha"* a pact of peace, was affirmed by the smoking of the peace pipe and ratified by elaborate diplomatic ceremony that was held at

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[13] Art Napoleon applied this term when he explained, how spirituality is practiced with Catholicism.

[14] see *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Ceremonies on the Prairies,* by Katherine Pettipas. This text offers an incredible historical narrative of the process of imperial policy; wardship and actual laws that were aimed at eradicating religious practices such as the Sun Dance and Giveaway ceremonies from the late 1800's-1940.

[15] see, Napoleon and Associates curriculum developed as a *First Nations History guide titled First Nations of the Upper Peace River area.* Napoleon & Associates for School District 60. pg. 21 "Here pipes were smoked, and the eastern Beavers made peace with their opponents (Cree) from across the river. This point of land they called *Unchagha* or Peace Point. And the memory of it was still fresh enough in their minds by the time the white man came, that he, too, called it Peace Point and the great river the Peace River." See also T8TA TARR Genealogy Project 1994-1995. Compiled by Gilbert N.Capot Blanc., pg.33

[16] "Inclusive communities" is what Ristock and Pennell refer to as, "bringing people together from diverse backgrounds and social positions while at the same time constructing a firm identity as participants in a process based on respecting separate identities (Ristock and Pennell, 1996:18). It is this idea that applied in the SFN community allows different self-identification to occur while recognizing one community is shared and lived in.

"Peace Point" (English translation originally derived from the DunneZa term). It was made with the invading Cree nations to establish peaceful co-existence. Treaty 8 was made in a similar fashion in terms of peaceful co-existence.

Robert William in his provocative text *Linking Arms Together-American Indian Treaty Visions of Law and Peace* 1600-1800 presents various accounts of American Indian diplomacy: "In American Indian visions of law and peace between different peoples, the pipe itself was sacred, therefore legal text" (Williams 1999: 94). The point Williams is illustrating is that the ceremonies and the laws that flow from them are just as sacred and as valid than "legal text".

The significance of smoking the peace pipe that both Williams and Cameron speak to, affirm that there is an understanding held between people. As Price, Williams and Cameron mentioned I would further suggest that this same understanding of "truce-making" would have later been applied when the nations entered into negotiations with the Commissioners. Treaty-making was more than likely made in a similar fashion to the truce-making that occurred at Unchagha, between the Cree and the DunneZa.

In the curriculum resource developed by Napoleon & Associates entitled *First Nations of the Upper Peace: An Overview of the Post-Contact Period.* Napoleon outlines that the major changes to the northeast area began with expansion by the Cree ahead of the fur trade. Napoleon states, "The earliest known Cree migration into the DunneZa (or Beaver) territory along the Peace River in the Northern Alberta is estimated to have occurred during the mid-1700s, although some historians and researchers suspected it was earlier" (Napoleon, 1997:84). Napoleon places the date of the Saulteau arrival into the area (listed in chronological format) as 1885, "The Saulteaux were led to Moberly lake by their spiritual leader Kakakoonkanis…[17]. It has been said that the reason for this trek was due to the growing aggravated relationship with encroaching settlers, and the Riel "rebellion" [18].

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[17] Napoleon, 1997: 91.

[18] see, *The Peacemakers of Hudson's Hope* by Edith Kyllo (1973) p.9. There exists an extensive oral-based textual documentation of the "trek." For further references based on oral narrative see, Fred and Mary Cortourielle's story *Roast Moose and Rosaries* for first-hand oral narration of Kakagoguance's vision. See, again *Bushland Spirit: Our Elder's Speak*

2.6 Historical events of adhesions to Treaty 8 within northeastern BC

The Treaty 8 territory within the present day northeastern British Columbia is an adhesion to the territory that was originally negotiated under Treaty 8 at Lesser Slave Lake, in 1899[19]. The "ceded" territory would also be included (secured by adhesion making) and would include the nations within the northeast territory of British Columbia (according to the dominant narrative held on Treaty 8). Rene Fumoleau's narrative in regards to the Treaty text details the area that the Treaty 8 was to cover:

> On a map dated January 12, 1898, Indian Commissioner Forget outlined an area that had considerable activity in mining matters. It covered the valleys of the Athabaska and Peace River north of the Treaty 6 area, and valleys of the Nelson, upper Peace, and upper Liard Rivers in British Columbia (Fumoleau, 1975:59).

The Treaty 8 territory in northeastern BC was identified as Territory "A" within British Columbia. The rest of the territory, which fell mostly in Alberta and portions of the southeastern North West Territories, was authorized by the Dominion Order-in-Council, PC 2749[20].

The inclusion of northeastern BC into Treaty 8 was apparently without great consideration in the interests of the settlers, as Fumoleau states, "Moreover this was the route taken by many miners and prospectors headed for gold fields in the Yukon (Fumoleau, 1973: 59).

Charles Mair's text *Through the MacKenzie Basin* allows a first-hand eyewitness account of the dialogue between Indigenous signatories and the Commissioners. and occurrences that are not solely limited to the narrowed textual interpretation of Treaty 8. His "official" role was one of the two Treaty 8 Commissions' secretaries[21]. The official "bargaining" of Treaty 8 at Lesser Slave Lake was finalized on June 20-21, 1899. David Leonard stated that the conclusions to the Treaty 8 negotiations would have adverse affects upon all nations living within the Treaty 8 territory, "Henceforth, all other

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[19] Treaty No. 8 Made June 21, 1899 and Adhesion Reports, Etc., Land Publications No. QS –0576-000-EE-A-16

[20] 1984. Canada, Privy Council, Order-in-Council (O.C.) No. 2749, 6 December 1898. Quoted in *British Columbia Indian Treaties in Historical Perspectives*, Ottawa, and Ontario. INAC QS-3294-000-EE-A2

[21] David Leonard in the introduction to Charles Mair's account of the Treaty 8 Commission affirms that Charles Mair was appointed Commission Secretary by David Laird (Mair, 1908, 1999: xxvi).

northern bands or Indian families would be required to either adhere to the terms established at the Lakehead or remain non-treaty Indians" (Mair, 1999:xxvi).

The Peace River Crossing, Fort Vermilion and Fond du Lac were secured with an adhesion to Treaty 8 made by Indian agent Laird. Ross and McKenna secured adhesions at Little Red River, Fort Chipewyan, Smith's Landing, Fort McMurrey and Wabasca. Mair's account of the events to secure the adhesion is as follows:

> The Beaver chief, who was present, did not adhere, saying that his band was at Fort Dunvegan, and that he could not get there in time…But when the Commissioners were within twenty-five kilometers of the Fort they got a letter from the Hudson's Bay Company's agent telling them that the Indians had eaten up all of their provisions there, and had left for their hunting grounds with no hope of their return for another seasons. They therefore returned to Fort Dunvegan, and took the adhesion of some Beaver Indians, and then left for Lower Peace River (Mair, 1999:65).

The Commissioner's report identifies the Slavey and the DunneZa were the signatories to Treaty no.8 in the adhesion made in 1914[22]. Arthur J. Ray adds to the lack of provincial involvement. He states, " In effect, by voicing no opposition to Treaty 8, British Columbia had informally acquiesced to it without having to make a precedent – breaking decision about Aboriginal title" (Ray, 1999: 38).

The assistant Indian agent for the Lesser Slave Lake Agency, Harold Laird stated that:

> …there were 300-320 "indians" who traded at Fort St. John and Hudson's Hope, of whom 150 had never been admitted to treaty. As well there 23 Saulteaux Indians situated at the east end of Moberly Lake who had never been taken into treaty. Finally during the summer of 1914, those Indians located at Moberly Lake, numbering 116, and 34 Saulteax (Cree) were brought into treaty. While some of the Fort Nelson Slaves and Sekannies signed a formal adhesion to Treaty 8 in 1910, the evidence suggests that the Hudson's hope and Saulteaux bands were merely admitted to treaty (Madill, 1981:51).

As indicated in the above citation the "Saulteau and Hudson's Hope Indians" were merely admitted under Treaty. This is consistent with Saulteau documentation as documented:

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[22] "Report of Commissioners for Treaty 8," Treaty No. 8 Made June 21 1899 and Adhesions, Reports, Etc. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966[1899], 20. Commissioner J.A. MacRae, who stated that he was asked by the "Beaver" and the Slavery to be brought into treaty, reported the 1914 DunneZa adhesion to treaty 8.

> There was no formal record of the Saulteau First nation taking adhesion to Treaty 8, nor is there evidence that an interpreter was present to explain the terms of the Treaty, or even if the document itself was present. There is therefore no basis upon which to believe that the Saulteau Cree fully understood that by taking Treaty they would, in the Crown's eyes, be giving up aboriginal title to the land. Today it is still passed down by the Elders that this was a peace treaty, not of surrender, but one of peace and friendship, based upon mutual coexistence and the sharing of all resources, including land (Saulteau Community Profile 1997:2).

As identified in the above quote the Saulteau nation did not actively participate in adhesion making. Instead what is understood is that due to the ramifications of being under the territory of Treaty 8, the Indigenous nations understood that they were to share this territory under the assumption of it being one based on "peace and friendship".

The Indigenous understanding and the crux of the grievenences of Treaty 8 as identified by Price and Smith are commonly held by both the Indigenous neighbors on the BC and Alberta provincial boundaries. This common Indigenous understanding in regards to Treaty 8 is as follows:

> Signing Treaty 8 was an act of trust on the part of Aboriginal people. They were reassured by the commissioners and the mediators (traders and missionaries) that their main concerns would be honoured, and they had made it clear that they would not sign unless hunting, fishing, and trapping rights were guaranteed (Price and Smith, 1994: 60-61).

Smith identifies that the very notion of entering treaty was made upon an act of trust and "good faith" on part of the Aboriginal nations obviously this has not been upheld and fulfilled by the government parties. The federal Crown and its provincial extension have not fulfilled their obligations in honoring this agreement; instead a breech of trust and integrity to the original "spirit and intent" has occurred and the nations who are affected by treaty text ask for a "redress for this situation."[24].

2.7 Treaty 8 BC: Jurisdictional Issues

The new province formally entered Confederation in 1871, and as Brody reminds us, "one of the conditions for joining Canadian Confederation was the completion, within a decade, of a railroad from eastern Canada to the Pacific Coast."[25] Arthur J. Ray explains

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[24] Price and Smith, 1994: 87
[25] Brody, 1988:117.

further that the building of the "railway belt" from the East Coast to the Pacific was a motivating factor for the transfer of Dominion lands:

> In theory, according to the terms of the 1883 agreement with British Columbia, the Dominion government had access to 3.5 million acres in the Peace River area. The terms of this agreement specified that the province would transfer a block of Crown land in northeastern British Columbia to Canada as contribution towards the cost of building the Canada Pacific Railway. There are two likely reasons for Dominion officials not having taken these lands into account when they approached British Columbia about making Treaty 8. First, the Peace River block was not surveyed and transferred to Canada until 1907. Second, it was Canada's policy to locate reserves as close to Indian's traditional settlements as was possible (Ray, 1999: 42).

Arthur J. Ray suggests that disputes continued over the responsibility of policing costs and the maintenance of law and order within its provincial boundaries. Ray details the jurisdictional struggles that the province was considering in terms or recognizing the Indigenous nations within the northeast:

> On the one hand, it involved recognizing the existence of Aboriginal title in British Columbia territory and compensating Indian nations for its extinguishment. This flew in the face of provincial policy, which was firmly set against such recognition. On the other hand, a blatant provincial move to block the treaty would pose serious risks for British Columbia. Among other things, it would threaten the peace in the northeast, undermine the federal-provincial policing agreements, and strain the relations with the federal government at the time when the province was seeking financial assistance for various Klondike-related projects (Ray, 1999:38).

Ray demonstrates, that initially the province did not want to compensate the nations for extinguishment or recognize their existence but with the impetus of economics it was swayed. The province had an interest in settling the northeast region. The province was swayed into accepting the adhesions. It would accept that the Treaty 8 boundary and reserves would fall within its provincial boundaries.

To further illustrate other federal-provincial complications Aasen identifies another area of contention. This lies in the (again) confusion over the jurisdiction which, in this case, exists in the undefined "lands reserved for the Indians" within the federal enforcement of section 91 (24) of *Constitution Act 1867* [26]. Aasen explains that the

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[26] See Wendy Aasen's extensive research and clause-by-clause analysis of Treaty 8 and these issues that differ from slightly from the Alberta Treaty 8 history. T8TA Brief to the Royal Commission, 1993. Treaty 8 Tribal Association, Fort St. John. p 114-115.

province of British Columbia historically justified its disregard of Federal responsibilities to the Indigenous nations maintaining the argument that the Natural Resource Transfer Agreement did not apply to them:

> Because British Columbia entered Confederation with control of natural resources, the *Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* (1930) did not apply to British Columbia. In other provinces where the NRTA was in effect, it required those provinces to make lands available for the Land and other Treaty entitlements of First Nations. Because it did not apply in British Columbia, however, the Provincial Government *has not considered itself obligated in law to make lands and other resources available to the Federal Crown for the purpose (Aasen, 1993:115).*

Aasen states that in this situation, the allotted lands were permitted to four bands in the northeast because the allotted lands were already set aside before the transfer back to the province occurred:

> Four Reserves were set aside from this land in 1914, before the Peace River bloc was returned to the province in 1930. Since the Federal government no longer controls the land, any outstanding Treaty Land Entitlements, Hunting Fishing Trapping claims, subsurface rights, or any other natural resource-related, Treaty-based claims cannot now be resolved without provincial cooperation"[27].

Aasen, Brody, and Ray have identified some of the major historical occurrences that detail some of the unique events that affect the Treaty 8 nations within the province of BC "treaty 8 boundaries." Some of these differences are rooted in federal – provincial legislative relationships and land transfers. The unilateral legislative encroachments continue to create jurisdictional confusion as both federal and provincial governments continue to pass the onus of responsibility onto the other level of government power.

2.8 Changes to Livelihood

Economic prosperity of this "frontier land" began with the onslaught of agricultural developments. As a result the settler populations began to increase. Brody illustrates:

> There were surges of settlement into the region after World War II, during the Depression, after World War II, and then again in the 1960s, when the British Columbia Railway reached Dawson Creek and Fort St. John. Economists now

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[27] Aasen, 1993:115

[27]See Wendy Assen's T8TA Brief to the Royal Commission, 1993. Treaty 8 Tribal Association, Fort St. John, p 115.

> consider the regions agricultural potential to have been nearly reached (Brody, 1981: 121).

The Treaty 8 territory of northeastern BC became the area of permanent residency for the seven named nations. The nations that once moved seasonally around their territories became stationary and reliant upon government services brought on by different factors with the demise of the fur trade[28]. Hugh Brody illustrates some of the changes that the fur trade had upon the general economy and lifestyle of the nations within this territory that furthered the relationship of dependency upon government provisions:

> ...the postwar markets fur market was buoyant. High prices for fine furs persisted throughout the Depression and remained high afterwards, despite yearly fluctuations and some gradual decline...Once again, world economic circumstances had caused a movement of population that affected lands and lives far away from the centers of powers (Brody, 1981: 87).

The registering of traplines due to White competition had an impact that would later give more control of Indigenous hunting and trapping purposes to the provincial regulations. These effects are expanded on. Brody states:

> During the 1920s government officials began to map trapping areas. These were then given to individuals or to families who, in return for the purchase of an annual trapping license, acquired and exclusive right to trap their "registered traplines." This system was first introduced in British Columbia...These registered traplines were an attempt to introduce an orderly White presence in the wilderness, and were also held to be the way of protecting limited wildlife resources from excessive harvesting. They were equally an attempt to bring what were considered the Indians' unusual economic practices into line with ideas of ownership and exclusivity in the interests of rational production for a market economy (Brody, 1981:88).

Ironically, the original intention of treaty signing was said to ensure that Indigenous modes of livelihood would remain untouched. The introduction of the trapline system had direct ramifications upon the freedom of access to the entire territory for hunting and trapping purposes. The dependency brought on by sedentary reserve life and laws that

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[28] see, Hugh Brody's *Maps and Dreams* for a historical account of economic changes to the fur trade economy of northeastern B.C.

limited the movement of the people furthered the paternalistic relationship between Indigenous nations and the Crown[29].

In the interview I had with Art Napoleon he also identified some of the reasons the transition from a lifestyle that allowed a nation to move freely around its territory into a stationary one of the reserve, altered the culture of the people:

> Now you are all forced on reserves living a sedentary lifestyle coming from a society that- was once nomadic – you'd probably get pretty sick of each other, that combined with social ills [...] you have disaster written all over it (Napoleon, 2001:24)

Napoleon poignantly identifies a combination of social ills and change in lifestyle as factors affecting the change in the community's lifestyle.

The relevancy of the trapline declined as the economy changed. The use of the trapline must also be recognized in that its practices are still exercised by some families for sustenance. Although declining, the trapline is still an income to some trappers. With these changes a continued reliance upon the mainstream wage economy continued. Brody notes that these changes began in the 1960's:

> Those who continue to hunt and trap do so from a single, permanent base camp. But the animals harvested and the seasonality of the harvests – the Indian Year – have stayed the same. For some bands, this change has increased their reliance on the occasional and seasonal wage labour that has been a part of their economic mix since the early days of the fur trade. For other bands, notably those at Moberly Lake and Fort Nelson, it has meant a more regular commitment to wage labour (Brody, 1981: 194).

Expansion and developments into the Treaty 8 territory continue to this day. This illustrated the blatant ignorance of the livelihood consideration for the nations who continue to hunt, trap and fish and find sustenance from the land. In addition Oil, Gas, Mineral, Forestry, Hydroelectric projects, are some of the identified industrial impacts that continue to have an environmental impact upon the ecosystems of the animals that the nations continue to seek the subsistence from. Completed in 1970 the W.A.C. Bennett Hydroelectric Dam flooding which affected the ecosystem and migratory patterns of animals upon which the nations subsisted. The flooding also involved the relocation of

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[29] see, Prisoners of Grass by Howard Adams for an in-depth understanding of the process of "civilization" the significant historical occurrences and the overall institutional process of the reserve system followed by residential schools that assisted in the attempt of cultural genocide, told from an Indigenous perspective.

certain Sekani "bands"[30]. Development and encroachment often compromise an Indigenous mode of life, ironically this was supposed to be guaranteed within the Treaty, was the protection of a way of life – the bush life. Instead further encroachment occurs and infringement continues to happen affecting the SFNC.

2.9 The elders' account

Generations of oral tradition by the elders has always affirmed that we would pursue our way of life, language and sense of self. It is a belief and argument that continues to be upheld in support of Indigenous intentions within their territory and within the contemporary Treaty 8 area. The purpose of this section is to provide additional SFNC elders' accounts of their understanding of the treaty relationship that has developed. It is important to note that even recent accounts of oral testimony reveal that the elders had no knowledge that they had "ceded the land" as the treaty adhesion stipulates. Wendy Aasen states:

> At a workshop held by TARR in 1992 designed to explain the terms and conditions of the Treaty, the land surrender clause came as a complete surprise to many who, in contemporary times, thought that the land provision segments of the document referred to sharing the land with non-natives. At an interview conducted with Madeline Davis (June 12, 1993) the interpreter Amy Gauthier, could not explain in Cree the words, "cede, release surrender, and yield up rights to the land" (Aasen, 1993:28).

The nations hold a narrative that is rooted in the oral historical understanding of what the treaty guaranteed. The belief that is affirmed by of the elders of differing nations of the Upper Peace area is that Treaty 8 was not a "cede and surrender" treaty. Instead the elders regard Treaty 8 simply as a peace treaty that was negotiated by the aforementioned nations that now affect the lives of the people living within the northeastern boundary of Treaty 8. Art Napoleon explains the treaty understanding that is held amongst the people:

> First Nations of the Treaty 8 region have always believed Treaty 8 to be a living document based on the principle of sharing, peace and co-existence. According to Treaty 8 Elders, there was never any talk of surrender during the times of negotiations. The agreement was understood to be primarily a peace treaty with the understanding that the Native way of life would not be disturbed. Aboriginal leaders today continue with their efforts to have the original "spirit and intent" of

[30] see Hugh Brody, 134: 1981

> the treaty recognized appropriately by the government and the courts (Napolean 1997:48).

The understanding of the Treaty as a "peace treaty" is affirmed and upheld by the DunneZa, Cree and Saulteau Nations within the Treaty 8 boundary in British Columbia. A continued struggle to have the original "spirit and intent" of Treaty 8 recognized is a continuous struggle.

Fred Courtoreille, a respected Saulteau elder (who passed away this past winter 2001) affirmed the following:

> There were promises made by Indian Affairs at this time. One promise was to survey fifty square miles for our reserve. This promise has not been kept to this day. Our reserve is only four square miles (Napolean, 1998: 32).

Fred Courtorielle's testimony affirms the Indigenous resistance to the treaty and the absence of promised lands and territory. Many more contested debates exist regarding the failed promises. These debates are in oral discussions. Some of the affected areas include present day trap lines and the issues surrounding provincial game wardens attempts to enforce provincial hunting regulations upon "treaty indians."

Minnie Garbitt[31], an elder in the community speaks to the issue of the understanding of the treaty of peace. Minnie affirms that the treaty was indeed believed to be a peace treaty. She states:

> Treaty 8 is a peace treaty. We can hunt all over. In the 60s we had more freedom and we lived all over – we didn't live on reserve. My mom she wanted to live on the reserve but my dad (a non-status Indian) was unable to live there and he didn't want to. The Indian agent wanted her to sell her rights. One day when my dad was gone the Indian agent came and she did sign away her rights. The Indians lived all over the land from Dawson Creek to Fort St. John. They wintered all over before the rations began from the Indian agents. I think we have the right to be Treaty Indians. It's our treaty land. The Indians have the right to do whatever they want (Taped interview, April 1, 2000).

In this testament Minnie Garbitt affirms that there was indeed great resistance from her mother to move on to the reserved lands. Minnie also tells us that her mother viewed the reserves as impractical.

Bob Paquette[32] affirms the belief that the ancestors perceived a lack of value or practicality in the reserved lands provided to the hunting people. He states:

> The reserves are stockyards – like a jail. Remember they put us here like a jail. They took us off our lands. The drilling will spoil everything…spoil our lakes. They started drilling over there – but we stopped it for now. We have some problems with the game warden. He accused us of hunting and killing moose on private property. We told him though it was crown land – it's o.k. Because we are treaty Indians! So we have problems with the game warden trying to prove something (Robert Paquette, taped interview).

The reserve system as articulated by both Minnie Garbitt and Bob Paquette was seen as impractical, while Clifford Napoleon regards it as a sanctuary given to the people of the SFNC[33]. Clifford's argument is that the reserve system offers a homeland – a base for people, despite the social realities brought about by colonialism.

Indeed there have been devastating changes because of the reserve systems; on the other hand these tribal homelands have provided a strong sense of self for the communities that survive and affirm themselves today. Reserve systems have provided a basis for combating assimilation.

Former Chief Stuart Cameron outlines an idea about SFNC related to the reserve. According to Cameron Indigenous nations are willing to negotiate the sharing of this territory but that the nations within must be consulted in respect to the spirit and intent of Treaty 8:

> The outstanding treaty issues include land claims, trapping compensation, compensation for resource activities on aboriginal land, resource revenue sharing land and co-jurisdiction…Lets deal with these issues once and for all. Otherwise there is going to be conflict[34] (Alaska Highway News October 27, 1999).

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[31] Minnie Garbitt in a telephone interview discussed the true meaning and understanding of what the treaty was meant to be: a treaty of peace. April 1, 2000. Minnie is 68 years old and continues to live in the community of Moberly Lake, B.C.

[32] Bob Paquette disclosed his opinions in a taped interview held April 1, 2000. Uncle Bob passed away this past late winter 2001. He was a renowned hunter, trapper, fisherman and cultural keeper. He was born close to the land and lived his life accordingly. He passed his knowledge on to his sons and many nieces and nephews.

[33] Personal Communication. April 1, 2000. "We got reserves. If we weren't treaty where would we be… In town!? The treaty gave us everything. We don't have to have licenses. We work for forestry sometimes. If we didn't have treaty we wouldn't be able to hunt because where would we be? We would have to buy land – but this is our land" (Personal Communication April 1, 2000).

[34] Gauthier, Gerald. This commentary was taken out of an article titled, "Local Chiefs issue ultimatum to government." Wednesday, October 27, 1999. Alaska Highway News

According to Cameron the sacred laws rooted within the traditional philosophy, language and mode of life are what the treaty was founded upon and it should be heralded as such. Cameron suggests:

> Our belief is that the Treaty (8) is a peace treaty. The treaty was made under the sacred laws there are stories and teachings that accompany it. Everyone has a role to govern him or herself in an honorable way – bring these together. How we hunt. How we eat – feast…it all stems from the sweats and the sun dance (Personal Communication April 1, 2000).

This perspective of Cameron suggests that Treaty 8 continues to be viewed as an agreement that needs to be upheld and respected by non-Indigenous people.

2. 10 Contemporary Debates

Indigenous nations have been viewed as "obstacles to development" by the dominant society. The treaty is a double-edged sword, much like the Indian Act. On one hand it provides space and language in the dominant legal discourse to negotiate what the treaty proposes. The treaty's promises, which the government has failed to uphold or maintain is also documented here. On the other hand, it is rooted in the process of the domestication of laws and in imperial, one-sided judgement that racially favors colonialist intentions. Indigenous jurisdiction and rights to the use of the territory is continuously imposed upon. Overall the treaty has ensured the exploitation at the interest of the federal and provincial parties, and continues to do so.

Neither the federal or provincial government has given honorable consideration to the Indigenous understanding. Indigenous nations have not been given the chance to share these understandings in the present boundary of the province of BC. The provincial government has not respected the "spirit and intent" of Treaty 8. The lack of definition and purposeful ambiguities have instead allowed further encroachment upon the natural resources in the Treaty 8 boundary. The pillaging of the waters, forests, animals and earth has aggravated natural migration paths, disturbed sensitive and inter-connected ecosystems and forever altered the rich habitat that Indigenous people and animals have existed within and respected since time immemorial.

Elder Charlie Cryingman[35] (now deceased) of the West Moberly reserve considered with foresight the consequences of industrial invasion. The current destruction has caused mass change to the land that has been detrimental to the ecosystems of the entire hunting territories.

> ...all the wildlife is getting, gone away because all kinds of happening again...it is gone away...with dams and all this different pipelines and that developments that are coming...found three deer dead and then one moose...maybe eat something from the seismic lines came in...there is roads all over the place...a lot of moose could be destroyed by people...that is our living...what is going to happen to our children and grandchildren and grandchildren...that is the only living we have known. So what is going to happen to our kids if all that game is gone? I guess we will starve (T8TA: *The Two Mountains That Sit Together*/Upper Moberly Land-Use Report: 119).

Cryingman's foresight and critical urgency (even today) reflects the issues that the Indigenous nations continue to fight for. What is frightening is the prophetic truth of his words, as these issues are now the contentious battles within the community. Now the Bands are at a crossroads and decisions must be made now – whether to protect or alter our mode of life and whether to ensure the continuance of a lifestyle or further accommodate the interests of industrial exploitation by becoming partners with industry.

Indigenous nations of the Treaty 8 territory hold an oral narrative that speaks to the understanding that Treaty 8 was a peace truce. Similar to *Unchaga*, the truce was to ensure harmonious relations between two different nations. The Treaty was also meant to ensure and protect the Indigenous mode of life and to respect the territorial boundary of the area while acknowledging the sharing of the land.

Most Indigenous nations believe that the land, animals, waters, forces and human beings were each given a task and a responsibility and that we are to live in a humble respect adhering to these inter-connecting principles that instill harmony within a community. These principles flow from the very relationship the SFNC has with the land, animals and spirit world that are relied upon for sustenance and as a livelihood.

Richard Daniel captures the understanding of the treaty relationship which was based on fundamental principles:

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[35] This excerpt was reprinted from, *The Two Mountains that sit together document.* T8TA, 1993.

> The treaty was not so much a precise legal definition of Indian rights under Canadian law as a compact or set of fundamental principles that would form the basis for all future relations between the Indian people and the government (Daniel, 1999: 99).

Indigenous signatories have maintained that the relationship was one that was not restricted to the narrowed clauses within the text of the treaty. The relationship was a pact of "peace and friendship" and the livelihoods of the nations were to be protected. The current and continued contentious debates reveal that there are differences, in understanding the scope and intent of the Treaty.

The account held by the Indigenous nations regarding the understanding of the treaty tells us that it was a "treaty of peace." What must not be misconstrued is that the SFNC 'way of life' is not free from outside pressures under the guarantees of Treaty 8 nor has it been unaffected by assimilative changes. Each day the nations in the north are forced to accommodate industrial encroachment of "Treaty 8 rights" that was suggested to ensure and protect the livelihood of the nations.

Conclusion

It is important to understand the historical developments of this region in order to have a scope of the unique cultural make-up of the Saulteau, Cree and DunneZa people of the SFNC. Without understanding this historical context all overlook some of the historical occurrences that shed light on the current complications the community faces in relation to external provincial and federal governments. The principles of Indigenous truce making exemplified at Unchagha and further explained by both Robert Williams and Stewart Cameron tells us about the important principles reflected within shared understandings and oral agreements between people. Body shares the non-native historical development of the area as well a balanced presentation by the Indigenous voice. The Indigenous voice shares an understanding based on
peace and friendship" that offers to the reader an understanding that another world-view exists that is based upon values, beliefs and principles that the people hold. This is exemplified in the SFNC understanding of the "treaty of peace." This *Body* section leads into the next section called *Spirit*. *Spirits* presents the *very* words of the people interviewed. The interviews form not only the essence of this thesis but constructed principles that grow from the data gathered in the interviews.

3. *Spirit*[1]: Themes that emerged from the five families

Introduction

The purpose of this *Spirit* section is to present the community's narrative. Data was gathered in an interview process during the spring of 2001. The most difficult task in presenting this data was deciding what to select, present and finally with great reluctance what had to be left out (due to space constraints). The most critical data that captured the essence of the entire bulk of the oral knowledge was chosen and presented as organized themes.

These were three steps that allowed the final seven principles to develop. Some principles came directly from the raw data, as a quote from an individual, for example "We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" is a direct quote from Stewart Cameron. The teaching of the value *Kisēwatisiwin*[2] was a Cree term first explained by Vernon Lalonde. The value stood out as principle but had to be further developed into a statement. All of the principles originate from the raw data. First the material was complied into a theme and then into a principle such as offering of thanks it originated from the themes of offering of thanks and rituals. Many themes originated from the raw data but remained simply as a theme. The final seven principles reflect the 21 themes that follow below.

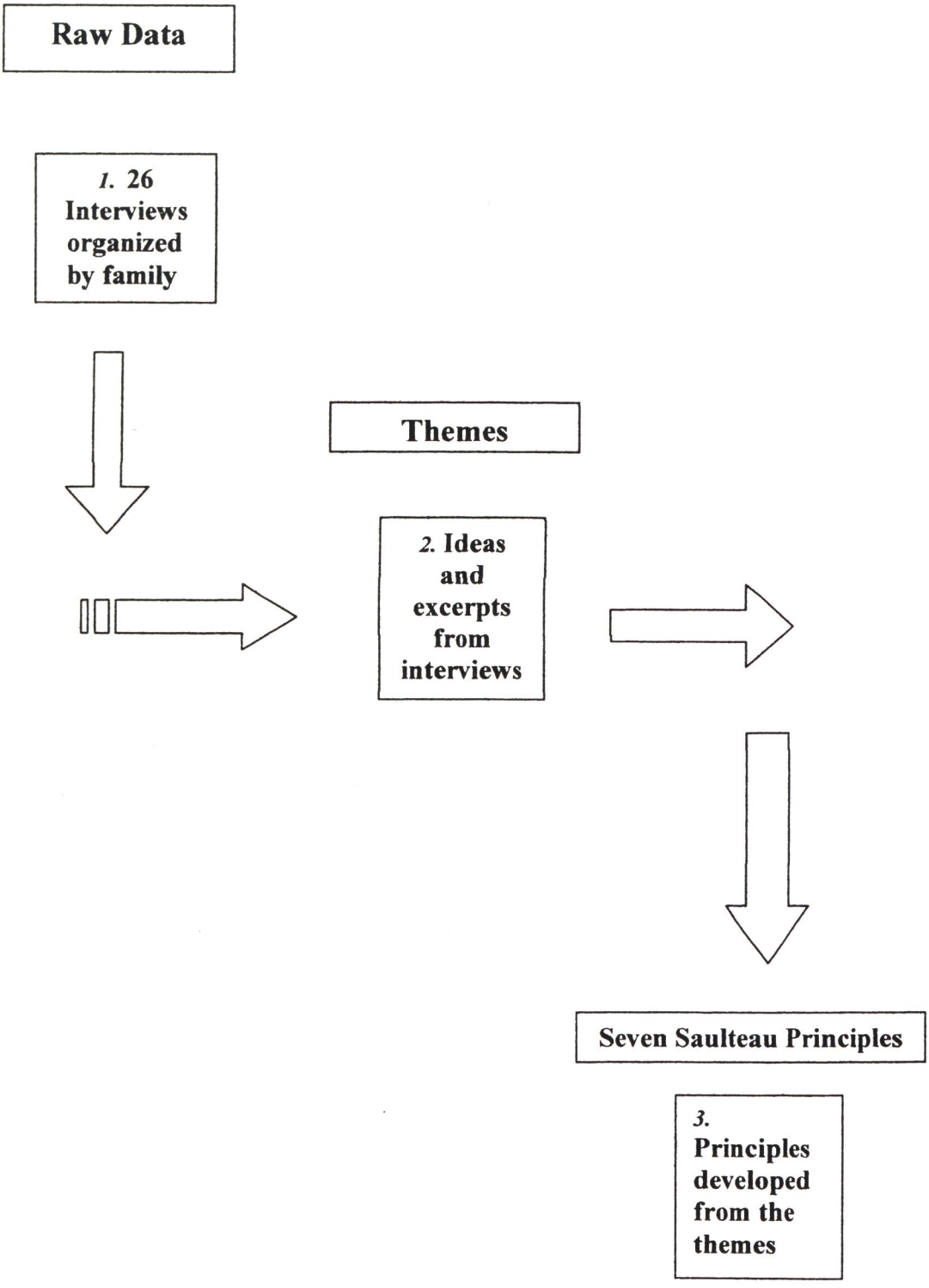
Figure 2 on the following page gives a conceptual understanding of the process.

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[1] Spirit was the appropriate term to apply to this section. First, I did the Mind section as a methodology. Second I did the Body section to describe the physical location and a placing of the historical markers. This adds a deepened understanding of the contemporary narrative. It is within the spirit section that the words of the community people and the elder's speak directly to you the read. The seven constructed principles grew out of the thematic presentation of this oral narrative. The final and fourth section is the braid which weaves together a practical application and options to consider in applying principles in the future of structures within the Saulteau community.

[2] *Kisēwatisiwin*: Compassion. This term first identified by Vernon Lalonde in the interview data was then located within the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Curriculum. (Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: 1992, p.17).

Figure 3. Raw Data Process into Themes into Principles



1 *wakohtōwin* and *nītisānak ōki*[3] Kinship

When I ask myself what was the most moving experiences that I left the community with I kept returning to relationships. The bonds that I share with my family that is extended to the larger community, are based on kinship ties. My extended family, my "community as a whole" assumes a deep connection to me as I do to them. It is because of this kinship connection and the shared history that we all walk in but we are held accountable to one another. One of the research questions specifically asked about family. Community members spoke explicitly about their experiences in relation to their own family and in connection to shared experiences with other families within the community.

Relationships are the thread of the community tapestry. Without these relationships there is no material to form the cloth that links us all to a common history and experience. All of the grandparents of the SFNC share close blood relations and, if there is no blood connection, deep lines of loyalty have been forged from their experiences of interdependence and simply of survival. Everyone is connected in some manner, if not directly by blood, then by distant extended family bonds. Such a principle is reflected in the familiar statement, "We are all relations." We are all one large family. This principle has a larger philosophical meaning that speaks to relationships and one large family being symbolic to this community as a whole.

I wish to highlight the strength and power of the family and blood relations that connects each of the families. Through inter-marriage the community shares a history within the contemporary named Saulteau First Nation community, we are bound to one another. There is the inner circle of the family dynamics. Then there is the level of families relating with one another and finally there is the dynamic of how the community breathes as a whole. There is a complex system functioning in my community which affects the different spheres of community dynamics that command an individual's response to a situation.

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[3] The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations curriculum: 1992, p. 21.

2. *nepewâyawin*[4]Humility

Humility is a value that is expected of an individual. "Bragging" or boastful qualities are not looked upon highly within the community. This notion of humility is demonstrated by the term, "*Ki-a-know-me-mut.*" Art Napoleon shared this teaching when he explained that this term refers to somebody who thinks they are more than what they are (arrogance). This term reflects the importance of humility and the importance of not boasting about yourself in a way that makes you someone or something above the people. Stewart Cameron also told us that his grandmother also insisted upon humility, and in of this is a sacred law. He says:

> [...] through the sacred law you become humble about whom you are. You don't have to boast or brag [...] Granny used to say people would talk about you in a good way. Bragging brings about negativity, strife and conflict - so you have to be humble (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

3. *kihcîmitowin*[5]Respect

Art Napoleon said that the term used for respect is *kihcîmitowin (kee-tiim-oh-win).* Art said that it wasn't talked about much in a philosophical manner. Instead, it was exercised and used in examples of how to treat people, animals and in our relations to the spirit world. Respect is a value that exists in different forms. Respect exists in gesture. It even exists in the form of relationships or as a way of relating to beings. Respect is a value that is echoed in discussions by community members in terms of respect being a necessity that must be extended to elders and respected as forms to the basis of relationships amongst people and neighbors. Respect is also talked about in the form of acknowledgement to the Great Spirit, animals, plants, medicines and people. Respect for all life was echoed in discussions regarding life, spirituality, tradition and the practices of culture in ceremony and everyday survival. Art Napoleon outlined the importance of respect as a teaching he received from his Kohkom:

> Respect would be number: one. Respect for life forms. One of the teachings was to never look down on someone regardless, even if you wanted to judge them

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[4] The correct spelling of humility was found in the Alberta Elder's Dictionary, University of Alberta Press, 1998: p. 330.

[5] The correct spelling of the term was located in the Alberta Elder's Dictionary. p. 404.

> based on their appearance. Everyone had something to offer. These people might be more gifted. You might be surprised at what they know. (Art Napoleon, taped interview: 2001)

Earl Pronto discussed the respect necessary in ritual gestures, when making an offering to the grandfather spirits:

> Some put an offering of tobacco or some take some meat and make an offering to all the grandfathers. We still do that here we do it a little different. That is what we do. We make an offering. We smudge it and leave it out by the sweat lodge. In that way we share with people who come if they need a home, if they need food. Many people here still carry that one which is a real good part of our culture (Earl Pronto, taped interview: 2001).

Earl talks about the offering of tobacco to the grandfathers. It is a gesture of thanks for the meat provided and for all the provisions given to human beings. He also talks about smudging and offerings made out near the sweat lodge. Respect is a principle that many members mentioned. Respect was talked about as a necessity for relationships to be forged amongst people.

Respect exists not only between human beings but equally so between the animals, plants, spirits and the land. Respect is a way of regarding the land not just as an inanimate entity but as another relationship. This is where the respect lies in a relationship. Examples were given about the respectful regard necessary in acknowledging the earth; reflected in the practical motions the elders say we must learn. One example of such practical knowledge is how to function in the bush and how things are properly carried out in the bush. Indigenous survival depends upon giving this respect.

4. *ēkawiya pakicim kīcayisīniw*[6]Don't look down on someone

Another teaching is that one should never looking condescendingly at another being which includes animals. This was a belief or custom that emerged from the interviews. It is said that when you think negative thoughts or say them aloud about an animal, the animal can hear and understand you. Art Napoleon explained that his grandmother taught him never to think he was above another person and never to mock or make fun of

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[6] *ēkawiya pakicim kīcayisīniw* meaning: Don't put down your fellow man is the closest translation to this phrase that I found within the Saskatchewan Indians Cree study guide, p.17

another individual, because he could not have any idea of their capabilities. I asked him about a Cree word or direct translation for the word "respect" and he explained that his grandmother did not talk about respect, she demonstrated it and used it with examples of how to treat other people. Art explained that, "she didn't really use that word but I know that is what she was talking about. The phrase she used was *Ki-oh-tah*. [Don't ever look down on somebody] That included animals. I know with a lot of other families it is not really practiced anymore. These are probably a mixture of Beaver and Cree teachings" (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

Mathilda Heibert and Della Owens both speak about the importance of relationships between people. They were taught this principle with the intention of maintaining harmony and respect among people. These ideals were demonstrated in moral teachings, stories and through direct explanations, but mostly through examples that their mother Suzette Napoleon, demonstrated. The kind treatment of others was a priority that was always heralded and expected. In the teachings it was a teaching that stands out for both of these women.

5. *Ki-a-wee-pin* Don't throw yourself away

Art Napoleon shared a teaching he received from his Kohkom, Suzette Napoleon. It is centered on self-respect and it is expected to be extended as respect for others. She taught him not to take life for granted. This was connected to how you treated yourself and your body and the teaching about the importance of not neglecting your person. Her sage advice also reflects an understanding that we must take care of ourselves as individuals to be of good sound mind and body in order to be of value to the whole community:

> Respect for people. Not judging…and respect for animals and respect for man, because we are not really much as an individual. We are not supposed to take life for granted [...] life is a gift from the creator and don't throw it away... so she used to talk about that don't throw yourself away; in other words don't neglect yourself! *Ki-a-wee-pin-so*: Don't throw yourself away (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

Ki-a-wee-pin-so. Don't neglect yourself! This is a teaching about our own individual care. This principles expresses the importance of self-love that is important in the holistic relationship people have to their families and to the community. Suzette recognized the importance of self-respect and care and in turn how this was an act that would make an individual responsible to their family and a positive contributing member of their

community. She certainly believed that this was a wise value to instill in her children and grandchildren.

6. *Sakihitowin*[7] Love

Sakihitowin is another value that is necessary for a strong community. First instilled in children, love is rooted in the relationship with the parent. Love is then extended out into the community. Della Owens explained how love is intertwined with respect. Love is a value she was raised with and one that she has instilled in her own daughters. In the interview she expressed this value further:

> Respect and love kind of blend together. *Sakihitowin* means to love one another. How can you love yourself and at the same time hate another person. If you want to teach your kids, maybe not the same rules that you were taught – respect and love comes in there somewhere (Owens, taped interview:2001).

Sakihitowin is a value that many people talk about in terms of the respectful treatment of themselves and in turn the treatment of other people. Love, respect and trust form the foundation of every healthy individual and thus are qualities necessary in forming the foundation of individual, family and community.

7. *Ka kwayaskwesihcikewin*[8] Honesty

Honesty is a quality that surfaced repeatedly in discussions about "how to live life in a good way." Individuals responded by speaking about the value of honesty in their interactions with people and all life forms. Vernon Lalonde stressed that even if you lied to people, you could not lie to the Creator because the Creator and your ancestors are always watching. Vernon Lalonde explains the concept of the presence of the Creator who stops us from being dishonest. Vernon states:

> You can't fool the Creator. You can fool people but you can't fool the Creator. I was taught to be honest and to be fair. I think in order to do that you have to think about everyone - not just one person. You have to be fair to all and that is the only way it will work. Sure people have individual rights but you have to think about the whole the bigger picture. What is best for people, everyone. Co-operation. People co-operated a long time ago. They helped each other (Lalonde, taped interview:2001).

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[7] The correct spelling of the term was located in the Alberta Elder's Dictionary. p. 355.
[8] *ibid,* p.329.

In his belief the truth will always be pushed forward and therefore honesty is valued within the community. Trust was earned through a history of honest interrelations with people. You needed an honest judgement and oral recall in a society that depended upon the reality of the land, animals and spirits; rather than on "tall tales" of elaborate conquests. Honesty was a necessity because belief in people was based on trust.

8. *ē nanaskomohk*[9] Give thanks

The theme of ritualistic offerings emerged from the interviews and was based on a question about beliefs, customs and "Indian ways." An illustration of such rituals is the burning of one's hair. Because it is a part of the body, it is connected to the spirit, and can be used to do medicine upon a person – both good and bad spiritual medicine. Another ritualistic offering emerged as an example of a necessary offering made for reciprocity. Good luck was needed for future hunting. This was achieved by the hanging of the moose head in the tree. The teaching around this is first to give honor and thanks to the spirit of the moose. The second impetus is to make certain that the lingering spirit of the moose is not disrespected. To make certain that it is not stepped on; the head is hung high in a tree to be honored. This ritual is enacted to garner luck and make merit so that the hunters will be blessed once again when they need sustenance because they have handled the body in a respectful manner.

Minnie Garbbitt illustrated how this concept of reciprocity works between animals and the human offering of respect:

> First of all when you kill a moose, you cut the head off and put the head where you can't step on it. Especially a woman she can not walk near the head and then when it is skinned you take the eyes and the hide and the ears and everything and you look for the tallest tree and you hang the whole head part. [...] She [her mother] would talk to the creator and say we are out of meat and when my dad goes out to hunt and the moose actually stands there for you. The animal stands there so you can kill it! Another thing is if you misuse the head – it is bad luck. You won't be able to get rid of the moose. If you throw it around or let the dogs eat it. It is bad luck, you won't be able to kill a moose for a long time (Minnie Garbitt, taped interview: 2001).

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[9] *ē nanaskomohk*: to give thanks. This term was found on p. 19 of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Student Vocabulary Cree Curriculum.

Minnie demonstrated the understanding that humans have of the animals, their self-love and the gratitude necessary for them. Some rituals which explain gratitude for the successful hunt are tobacco offering or the hanging of the head in the tree or cutting a piece of the heart and burning it in the fire. It is also said that you are not to speak badly about animals because they can hear and understand what you are saying, especially the bear who is regarded as a brother to humans. There is an unquestioning sense that if the utmost respect is not given in thought, ceremony and physical treatment there will be repercussions in the future success of your hunt.

Art Napoleon explored the important philosophy of sharing which is based on communal considerations when one is out on the land. This was a form of reciprocity that ensured that there would be food and a cache of supplies at the next trap-line if people were in need:

> If somebody needed a cabin they would go and spend a few days and bring food and help erect their home. There is just so many teachings related to the use of the land. Like trapping and making sure the cabins were not locked. Making sure there was food in case somebody got lost …the sharing was always there! It is only in this generation that it has stopped. No one has time (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

Art reminds us that only in this most recent generation has a change come about in terms of sharing. Trust combined with reciprocity is how this concept operates. Without co-operation people had more of a difficult time, hence this value was vital because it would determine your survival. Art commented further on the necessity for consideration to be extended to the next hunter:

> Back then they were surviving. Without co-operation and helping one another our life would have been a lot harder (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001)

This recent change allows us to understand the social chaos created in a community that results from the forced changes of wo/men gatherers and hunters in the forced alteration of their traditional livelihood practices and patterns.

9. Taking Care of the dead – Ancestral care and honoring

This theme is about the act of honoring and remembering. According to the belief in making the spirits happy you make an offering. It is a simple gesture made with deep

respect that reflects the importance of honoring the memory of those that have passed on. Josephine Walker shared her concept of this by stating, "When you want to make the spirit - to be happy. You make things for them and put it in the fire and talk to them. This is for you to eat and I want you to be happy with that." It is such honoring in the present that reminds us that we walk in the history of all those that have gone before us. The people have then brought the memory of their ancestors forward to the present are in this ritualized belief.

10. *nîkânîwin*[10] Leadership

People were asked a question about why leaders were chosen and how this was done. I asked about spiritual leaders and who they were. I asked what the difference was between a leader today and a leader in the "old days." I qualified the question of leadership, to that of a more "traditional" concept by explaining that the type of present-day conventional political leadership was not what I wanted to explore, but rather how people used to lead in the "old days." The people painted a different picture of how a community's dynamic once functioned. It is understood that each of the four seasons offered a bounty of food and animals that the people depended upon for gathering and hunting which would dictate the movement of the people. The families would organize themselves by choosing to winter with distant relations or close family, who would share the harvest and help one another.

Women played important roles in leadership. For example, woman led, and still lead in the home and within the larger community. They are the organizers, the dry-meat rack owners, community counselors and nurturers. Women also carry the primary role of raising and socializing the children. Language is transferred from the mother's tongue to her children, as are her concepts, teachings and values. Women's roles as leaders are still acknowledged in the domestic sphere.

The detailed discussion on leadership was framed by people's "traditional" recollection of how leaders led. This knowledge was given through the oral narratives of the interviewee's parents, given to them and in turn given to me. In essence, they say we

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[10] *nîkânîwin*: leadership. The Alberta Elder's dictionary p. 350

are all leaders. Every individual in the community has a responsibility to lead in the areas that they excel in. Each one of us had a role pre-destined for us. Some are leaders in a spiritual sense and some are leaders based on a skill or gift they posses. This notion of leadership as indicated is more reflective of how people led within the community as a social organization, rather than the current understanding of leadership as designed by the Indian Act. As indicated by both Art Napoleon and Earl Pronto leaders were people that led, based on a skill, for example[11]. Because of the saturation of the Chief and Council notion of leadership, often the discussion would return to the contemporary idea of leaders.

Kakagoguance was indeed a spiritual leader. He was not the conventional political leader or chief working inside the confines of the Indian Act system. This is not to say that a spiritual person can not exist as leader within these parameters. Nor does it suggest that it is an easy task to meld spiritual beliefs within a colonial framework, let alone find a balance to exist within it. Rather, a few generations ago our community listened and responded to the vision gifted to one individual person. This spiritual leader was recognized then by the people in his community, who were guided by his vision to seek sanctuary in the Twin Sister mountain area.

Earl Pronto expressed that each person possessed different skills and had something to offer. Some were assigned a role based on skill and for some a role was pre-destined to them naturally, "People chose leaders because they showed that specific talent. They are what they call natural leaders" (Pronto, 2001:36). My interpretation of what Earl is saying is that whatever quality may have shined within a person became obvious to the elders and community members and this person became known for their skill. They would lead in this area of knowledge.

George Desjarles, from the West Moberly reserve illustrated the point that there are leaders in different facets of the community. George also teaches us that the community's idea of structure is based on a notion of survival and dependence upon one another:

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[11] I wanted to look at leadership in the old sense. How did we once lead? This idea of leaders exists amongst other nations as well. It has been said by Art Napoleon and Earl Pronto that leaders are all people with different gifts or talents to contribute.

> Everything was structured around how do we survive the best. They had one main person that they relied upon and it was usually an elder, someone who they considered wise in the community and a lot of times this man was usually a holy man or a shaman (George Desjarlais, 2001:75).

George also told me that these holy people were called *Mamatowitz,* meaning this man had special powers. A person who possesses spiritual power and knowledge is valued and deeply respected. These people are considered necessary catalysts for a community. A leader in this "traditional" sense is a person who possesses spiritual knowledge or visions that were gifts to them. This is lodged in the community's memory of how leaders were selected. Such a principle and practice of leadership activities was seriously undermined due to the colonial expectation that determines "indian" leaders according to Indian Act policies.

Art Napoleon identified that there was already a traditional system in place before the formation of the East Moberly Reserve by the Saulteau leaders. He identifies that this system of reverence for the spiritual leader operated on the principle of respect for the spiritual power and knowledge that an individual may possesses:

> The Saulteau people that came here they had a traditional system in place before the reserve was formed. They had a pretty common one – the main leaders were the spiritual leaders – the visionaries – the prophets – those were the real leaders, not a leader in the sense of setting policies. Out of respect for the knowledge they carried. That was traditional leadership. If you look at the traditional systems long ago the spiritual leaders were the most influential, not the chief. It was the spiritual leaders, and so that when they formed the reserve they would have had more tradition in place but they had the Band system imposed on them, so I think that is where the politics really start [...] (Napoleon, taped interview:2001).

Art also shed light on the process of colonial imposition brought about by the alien Indian Act system in which the policies suffocated, or at least limited, the opportunity of principles and value based concepts to naturally evolve.

The chief "consulted" and learned of the people's needs and their opinions by going from house to house. Victoria Davis affirmed this further by stating that, "the chief used to go around from house to house and ask people what they want...how people think about this...Is it ok with you?" (Victoria Davis, taped interview: 2001) This "consultation" served many functions which is not beyond gathering important

information necessary about the needs of the people. It was also a social function and an expression of diplomacy. These meetings were a time for people to reconnect and affirm kinship ties, and share oral story and knowledge. These consultative meetings were opportunities to extend hospitality and share meat, berries, and medicines and gathered goods. This is the benefit that most visits bring about within the community not just between a leader and the people but amongst all.

George Gauthier talked about decision making. For example, to respect and question sources as to how it would be decided where the fall hunt plans were to happen and with what family and whom? George responded by telling us this was a process of planning. They chose the hunters that could carry out the task:

> Yeah they had decision makers – the old people [...] there would be one leader all the time for one camp [...] like if they were hunting – like where to make dry-meat? They would go in the fall to make dry-meat and stuff for the winter. There weren't too many moose in them days. My dad would tell me that. Talk about what they were going to do about the moose and they would pick the best hunter. They picked out the one they figured could do the job (Gauthier, taped interview: 2001).

Because traditional communities focused on survival, they would choose an individual within a group who could accomplish the necessary task of finding sustenance for the families. The individuals would all seemingly accept this. This procedure obviously reflects the nation's communal goal, rather than meeting individual needs. This reflects a community-minded thought as first and foremost.

George Desjarles talked about the decision making process by explaining a non-structured process that adapted and moved yet worked to address decision making for the collective. There were un-written laws that were understood by all people and he provided this through the example of thievery. He explained how the community became your judge until you redeemed or changed their understanding of your qualities or "mistake":

> There was a structure and there wasn't a structure. In order to explain it you can say it was a decision making process [...] Yes there were laws that governed certain things. There were things you don't do and things you do. You were not allowed to take another person's possessions. It is being shamed and being identified as a community thief and everybody knew who you were and they knew not to trust you and if something went missing you were the only one blamed. Your freedom to visit other people was restricted [...] Honesty was a

> large, large part of what determines survival. A group survived by working together as a team. Now, if you don't have a team to work with you your chances of survival is pretty minimal (George Desjarlais, taped interview: 2001).

11. Roles

When discussing the roles of men and women and whether or not these roles were different, Art Napoleon shed light on this topic from his own family's experience. He explained that both genders performed the tasks needed to be done, "People had different roles – it was never about one role being more important than another [...] It is not about chauvinism at all. We had different tasks..."(Napoleon, taped interview: 2001). Art makes a point that there were certain roles that naturally evolved to be practiced more by women, such as dry-meat making. Hunting was a task that men were more able to do hard-work, but it is untrue to say that women did not hunt and trap, as it is untrue to say that a man's role was not to make dry-meat or even make moccasins.

Simon Redhead, a member of the Sturgeon Lake Band in Alberta, has lived in this territory for more than sixty years. He summed up what many of the elders have spoken to me about, regarding which parent they learned their skills from; that often it was the parent of the same sex. Simon also identifies how that they learned through practice and hands-on learning: "Me and dad would go hunting. We hunted rabbits and snared rabbits and ducks and fish. The women – they stayed at home. They would get a moose make dry meat and dry fish" (Simon Redhead, taped interview: 2001). Simon identified a standard understanding about what the different sexes learned, but most importantly he tells us that they would go with the parent and learn the skill by doing it at a very young age.

Mathilda Heibert identified that changing roles was not taboo, and was instead practical:

> I helped mom lots at the dry-meat racks, cutting up the meat and can the meat. In some families (for example the Napoleon family) people had defined roles – but they certainly were not confined to this role. Della, her job was inside...There were lots of times when we made hides and my brother Ted would be there helping us out (Mathilda Heibert, taped interview: 2001).

Mathilda affirms that indeed there were assigned roles, but the genders could also cross roles and lend a hand at whichever task needed to be carried out. This is further

affirmed by Della Owens, Mathilda's sister who shared the same understanding but in a separate interview:

> What we were taught was that men do go hunt but I have known my other aunts, they went hunting too [...] in our family every single person had a role. My role was to stay inside and keep the kids and do the cooking and Mat's role was to help my mom at the dry-meat" (Della Owens, taped interview: 2001).

What is clear is that although roles were assigned to the children in the Napoleon family according to their natural capabilities and gifts, they were not confined by gender. There was indeed a loose system in place that the men were most often hunters and women more often the dry-meat makers. However there were no laws saying that women could not go hunting and men were not forbidden from carrying out a woman's task when it needed to be completed. Individual roles were based on practical factors such as capability and necessity rather than insisting upon a rigid cultural custom that would not be useful to survival on the land.

Minnie Garbitt confirms that women were also trappers and hunters: "My mom used to tell me that my grandmother used to trap [...] A lot of women could hunt [...] They both hunted in them days. The first thing a woman knows is how to snare rabbits. That is what we were taught (Minnie Garbitt, taped interview: 2001).

Victoria Davis is a shining example of a successful hunter, fisherwoman, and trapper. She tells us she learned about trapping from living out on the land and going to the trap-lines with her father. Victoria has hunted, trapped and snared since her young childhood and continues to do so. She told me that she loves the feeling of anticipation when she checks the traps. She gets excited to go and see what she has caught and she thinks it is a valuable way of life. Victoria expressed the importance of the youth maintaining traditional trapping roles before they become "history." This was an interesting and clever way in which she phrased this. My interpretation of what she means is that without exercising these skills they become textbook materials to merely be read about or romanticized rather than exercised. She expressed that people will need these skills if hard times come.

Josephine Walker is another skilled trapper and hunter. Her mother, Madeline Davis and other women also used to hunt and trap. This de-bunks any rigid generalization about

formal gender role division but it does not rule out that there were indeed patterns that genders followed whom in turn passed their skills down to the same sex offspring.

Although it was a flexible system that expected the men to catch the moose, quarter it and return it to the vicinity of the dry-meat racks, the racks themselves were more specifically women's domain. The meat was given into the possession of the woman to do with as she pleased. The meat became her monetary possession to divide, trade or cache for the coming months. Henriette Landry explained that her understanding of the woman's role was connected to the dry-meat making. Women generally held this role, but most importantly Harriette identified the value of the role attached to this space:

> Dry-meat racks were the woman's role [...] I think the women were the total keepers of the dry-meat. They even had to get their own wood. Once the meat was brought in they were on their own. I believe the dry-meat racks were the sole possession of the women [...] Dry-meat racks bring families together [...] It teaches you patience. It teaches you perseverance (Henriette Landry, taped interview: 2001).

Lillian Gauthier talked about growing up and the skills her mother taught her. It becomes obvious that Lillian learned about the land and the practices by assisting her mother as her family moved in and out of the bush according to the seasonal changes:

> When I was about ten years old she started teaching me how to make hides, do beadwork. [She] show how to make hides. We move in August to the bush. We have packhorses but we walk and we don't come home until September (Lillian Gauthier, taped interview: 2001).

Lillian illustrates that the roles that I am merely analyzing here were taught as informal education by repeating each task until it was perfected into a skill. Knowledge of the land and how to live according with it also came from having lived out on the land or in close relation with it. When Lillian shares her life and the semi-nomadic way in which she lived with her family, we can see how and when she began to consciously recognize her own training and responsibility as a small child. Her sharing of this experience and what she learned from them becomes knowledge for us to reflect upon.

Mathilda Heibert is nostalgic as she remembers the pride and joy that her mother Suzette Napoleon (who passed away this winter) instilled in her as she taught her dry-meat making skills. Mathilda in turn passed on these skills to her own daughter, "What

she had taught me was that my pride and joy is over there at the dry-meat rack. I am used to making dry-meat and cutting up meat. Pauline has go that too. She is into that too! *kakiyak Ottii* (making dry-meat)." Mathilda shared her respect expressed what her mother had taught her and the confidence in the skills that she now possesses as a traditionally skilled and capable woman as a result of her mother's teachings.

Stewart Cameron spoke to the issue of sacred roles in relation to gender "There were certain things they did when a boy became a man and when a girl became a woman. There were certain things my grandma used to talk about and why they did those things because everyone had a role – a sacred role" (Cameron, taped interview: 2001). What Stewart was addressing is the responsibility that we are born to. This is a pre-destined role for each one of us. The rituals tied to the gender people were born into carries a responsibility of this role as well. As example of such knowledge that Stewart's grandmother passed on to him about roles and responsibility was:

> She did everything. She hunted. She trapped. But everyone had a role. [...] They were taught at an early age, the man would even learn the women's role. [...] It was about survival. All of those things were taught - that is why women know how to hunt and trap as well. I think a lot of the leaders were chosen by their abilities and as they were growing up as a child. Grandma said they were watched. [...] They picked their leaders if they were walking a good walk. [...] They lived in harmony with the sacred laws. People were more respectful of each other more respectful of themselves (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

Cameron stressed the importance of every individual having a necessary role in the inter-connected tapestry of the community. He reminds us about the survival aspect of each one of our roles. Out of necessity we knew how to carry out the role of the opposite gender. He was nostalgic about the respect that seemed to exist in a more profound and apparent way. He reminds us of the value of this respect and the importance of extending it to others.

The understanding of roles is broad and responsive to each family's situation and need. Roles may vary from dry-meat makers, spiritual people, moose-hide makers, builders, trappers, bush-workers, fishermen, guides, teachers, organizers, etc. These roles have changed, and have been placed somewhat in limbo between the modern Western demand for cash-based workers such as loggers, oil and gas monitors, environmental protection workers and social and community developers.

12. *Sakahk-ma-chee-wun*[12] Bush life

Bush-life was identified as a distinct theme and the discussion of the bush, culture, language and "way of life" is filtered throughout all of the interviews and is very much the core to this research. Many Saulteau people could not fathom a life without the bush. It has been said that "without the bush we are no longer a people." This expression signifies the importance of the bush and its importance as the core to which we are.

Rooted in ceremonies is a process that honors the sacred laws demanding respect and gratitude for the gifts that the land provides. These gifts are the sustenance provided by *G-chi Manitou*. The teachings that guide the people are from *G-chi Manitou*. These teachings are received with gratitude because they direct our conduct, and tell how to live our lives in a sacred manner. Loving in a sacred manner means with responsibility and respect, with a philosophy of non-exploitation to guarantee the sustainability of the animal, plants, and forces. It is within ceremonies that honor the earth and forces that direction is given, answers are found for our questions and direction is granted from the Creator.

The Bush life offers teachings about the roles and responsibilities that both men and women have. These roles tell people what their tasks are in regards to gathering and hunting. The land, animals, humans and natural forces have a sacred relationship with one another. In honoring this relationship we are given gifts, and direction on how to relate to one another and give honor to the life provided. Disrespecting this sacred relationship causes an imbalance in creation.

Oliver Gauthier speaks about what he liked about the land and how he feels when he is out on the land, "Well that is my life. That is the reason why I don't give up on my life. It still doesn't come out of me [the feeling of the land] I still go out in the bush"(Oliver Gauthier, taped interview: 2001). Oliver's sentiments towards the land tell us that without the land he is without life. The land is his life. Life is the umbilical cord to the land.

Tylene Paquette, a young woman in the community shared some sage advice about the land and the necessity of practicing the skills and ceremonies connected to it. She learned, under her own self-motivation, about herself as a Cree woman. She is in my

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[12] This is the phonetically spelled term for bush-life. I was not able to find it in the Alberta Cree Dictionary

opinion a necessary and healthy community thinker. Tylene commented about whether we could still exist as a Saulteau community or culture without the land upon which to practice our way of life. She advised:

> Well you have to modernize yourself and you have to adapt. If you're in the city and you knew all your traditions. If you know and practice it, you will get there somehow. As long as you don't neglect it, as long as you go and experience it. You can go and be anything you want as long as you have that (Tylene Paquette, taped interview: 2001).

Tylene was referring to the cultural practices and rituals celebrated in connection with the land. She stated that whatever those may be for each nation and culture, as long as they are remembered and honored then we are accountable to the culture we were born into. Cultural self-knowledge and fundamental skills can be practiced and honored and shared wherever a person may go. Being centered, by knowing this, will inevitably allow one to be successful. You grow from knowing where you are rooted, by knowing the culture that sustains you.

The bush-life and the practices that originate from this life must be nurtured and carried forward. Grandma Madeline Davis shared her thoughts of whether or not these practices are important to exercise. She said that continuing this way of life is embedded in the vision of Kakagoguance. Violet Apsassin interpreted the Cree words of Grandma Davis, "She would be happy if someone would teach them about the bush-life. Because her grandpa dreamed about that as well." The vision had by the prophet tells the people that this land was to provide sustenance and protection in times of need.

Simon Redhead, a 70 year-old traditionalist is still working hard. Not only did he tell me about the bush, his love for the land and the way of life it provides, but he displayed it on hunting trips. He listed his dedication to the bush and hard work (which he loves) as the reason why he has had such a full and long life. Simon goes hunting and checks his traps on a daily basis. His father Francois Laurence taught him all that he knows about hunting and the bush-life. His father was also a renowned possessor of medicinal knowledge, which is a skill Simon wished he had learned more about. Simon noted that every single plant life has a purpose and use. Simon shared old hunting stories

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but it clearly is a term used within the Moberly Lake Saulteau Cree community.

with me during many hunting trips (drives). The extent of his knowledge and narrative about the landscape is incredible. For example, we would drive in any direction within the territory and Simon would remember a hunting trip he shared with another "old timer" and with many people who have already passed on. He could describe the land and the different ways in which it has changed with the seasons or a difficult winter. Simon's descriptions of the land all had reference to his own experience, layered with rich skill and techniques he had learned over the years. At the same time he would be give sage advice on what to do once you've killed a moose and how to make a proper offering. He also told me things that many old, old elders have told me, such as if a cow was killed while carrying a calf, the fetus would be honored taken in gratitude. This was not only a delicacy but also a gesture of respect for the life given. Simon continues to spend every summer in the bush or at a trapping cabin near *the Murrey.* He can be found down one of the many other rivers, lakes and traditional use areas.

13. <u>Pride in self-discipline</u>

Pride in self-discipline is a principle. The way of life of the people within the community shows perseverance, determination and resilience. Henriette Landry speaks about the necessary sacredness of the bush-life. She reminds us that one reason the bush life is appreciated is because such incredibly hard work is required for the resources you harvest from the land. There are echoes of ideas such as "nothing comes easy" and that because the way of life is more difficult it gives a sense of achievement and value in acquiring your harvest. Landry explains:

> Sakahk-ma-chee-wun (Bush-life) but when you say that there is sacredness to it. I guess because we have a real connection with land and the bush life. When you are out you are not harming the environment you are not wasting food. I guess when I hear the elders really talk about it you have to work for everything you have. You are more respectful of your food. It is a whole different way of life and I wouldn't understand it if I didn't know how to talk Cree. Out there is like roughing it. When you say Sakahk-ma-chee-wun, there is sacredness to it. It touches your soul, because out there you have to work for it. Once you get it then you have to work it in preparing everything. The elders used to say being out there that was our bible. You could hear the wind. Grandfather wind talking to you [...] everything is more sacred because you are doing what god created for you. [...] It gives you peace of mind and it brings you closer to the creator (Henriette Landry, taped interview: 2001).

Henriette reminds us that the community's actions and life patterns are based on bush practices and naturally move with every major change in the ecosystem. Changes to the land within the territory continue to determine community lifestyle patterns.

Many people in the community talk about "hard times ahead" or the possibility of times of distress when we will need the skills of the bush. Melva Sorel and Melvina Whiten explore this in a dialogue together:

> We are not going to have [hydro] power forever, and we are not going to have money forever [...] to be honest with you I think we should be prepared – this is what Kohkom said – Over and over, all the time. That we are not going to have good times. We are also going to have bad times and we have to be prepared!" (Melvina Whiten, taped interview: 2001).

Similar sentiments about prophetic times of difficulty were expressed in many different ways, coupled with the understanding of the importance of maintaining the bush life. This understanding of "hard times ahead" is a fundamental premise within the vision granted to the prophet Kakagoguance. The hard trek to find sanctuary within the Twin Sister mountain area is expressed as a fundamental thread in the tapestry of the community oral narrative. Violet Appassassin translates what Grandma Davis remembers about the oral prophecy narrative, "Her grandpa dreamed when they were up there. He dreamed about this area up here. This is why they came up here...She said, "If they lie – I am lying" This is the place that he dreamed of. This is where he brought his kids" (Violet Apsassin, translating for Madeline Davis, taped interview: 2001). The bush-lifestyle continues to mirror the people. Rooted in this story are teachings of hardship and survival. The qualities of hard work, resilience, strength and ingenuity are among the character traits that have shaped the people.

Harvey Kiyah, Frank Savard, Oliver Gauthier, George Gauthier, Simon Redhead and Boycee Gauthier are a few of the many hunters who attested to the richness and value of being out on the land and the necessity of youth exercising and retaining these skills. Respectful understanding comes only from an appreciation of the land; it can barely be expressed, let alone articulated. It is rooted in experience and practically demonstrated. Clifford Napoleon stated that some of the most important skills the youth should retain are bush skills. It is seen not only important but necessary that the people born into this

culture carry forward the skills that were gifted to them to survive in case of "hard times ahead."

Vernon Lalonde provided an eloquent summary of the faith exercised through ceremony and a continuation of the practices of the bush life. Because the Creator gave this way of life to the people within the community, it is the people's task to carry this knowledge forward, to seek it out, to retain it and to utilize it:

> *NH: What do you think about these bush ways, why do you think they survived for so long?*
> VL: We have to have faith in the Creator, because he provides life. We have to keep praying. Keep giving thanks. Give our kids compassion. We are going to needs those skills again…things are happening…there are signs out there…we are going to need our old skills back, the beliefs that we have we have to embrace them until we die and we can never let them go. We were given those gifts. That is what we are going to have to do, to survive. The vision that *Kakagoguance* had (twin sisters over there) the land is going to provide life for us. That is why the vision is important – it is going to get tough. The vision was important. So it is important for us to maintain those skills. We have to look after ourselves we can't have anyone else do that for us…These are resources, all of those things the bush, the trees, the grass, the water, those are all cultural resources they enhance our culture, they support our culture. They support our way of life, the animals – that's our resources - they are our cultural resources. Our way of life, that's our education. That is our institutions. That is our store out there. That is our bank (Vernon Lalonde, taped interview: 2001).

Lalonde was direct in pointing out that cultural education stems from the bush-life and that this forms the foundation of local institutions. Lalonde conceptualizes the land as the future. In his metaphorical reference to the land as a bank, he is also reminding us that the future of community cultural survival depends on how that "bank" is monitored, how it is harvested and who the beneficiaries will be.

Oliver Gauthier and Lillian Gauthier adamantly expressed throughout their interview that it was necessary for the youth to learn the skills of the land - skills they themselves have taught their children. They worry that other youth will not be able to function out on the land and that this knowledge has to be acquired from listening, watching, learning, living and exercising these practices. George Gauthier (Oliver's brother) reminded us of his wish for the youth to learn the bush life, "The first thing they should learn is how to respect people, how to respect others and how to survive in the bush. That is a big thing for me because I am a bushman. I lived in the bush my whole life." George noted that it

is not simply a matter of whether or not the youth should be learning these bush practices, but whether or not the youth want to learn about the bush.

Alice Gauthier shared her love for the bush. She shared that it is a good feeling to know what you're supposed to do in the bush and that she has a similar opinion to her husband that the youth must know these practices for the "hard times coming." Both Alice and George worry about these survival skills being carried forward and they both question how able-bodied the youth will be without them.

Tylene Paquette described the bush as a source for more than just food and medicines. Tylene articulated the values that are learned in the process of hunting and gathering:

> The bush-life is very important. There are so many things that the bush has to offer you. Anything that grows out there is important – some value. [...] I believe in the hard work. Everything in the bush or traditional life is hard. There is no easy way. Then it was hard. It was hard for a reason. It taught us patience and more respect. I love the hard work. I love the challenge. I am not scared to tackle anything. I believe that hard work is one of the values that we need to learn (Tylene Paquette, taped interview: 2001).

The older community members also echoed the ethics of hard work that are spoken about here. Reflected in the words of elders who experienced a great deal of time on the land is a relationship focused on reliance to the land. Discipline was necessary for the acquisition of food and shelter from the land. Obviously, this process of bush living teaches people that food, shelter and clothing is not given to us, it is a process that must be achieved through the hard-earned bush skills necessary to gather these goods. Tylene reminds us that a value such as patience, grows from the practice of bush skills.

14. *Soke-tus kee* Hard work

Sisters Harriet Kristophy and Minnie Garbitt expressed this work ethic that was necessary for survival. Their parents instilled these ethics in them. Minnie clearly explains that this is quality a child learns, "It is bad to be lazy because they don't believe in that. Even a lazy woman, they think: "what are they good for?" It is important to contribute. These comments are a sounding horn to the qualities that were not accepted nor tolerated. Hard work was a quality that community depended upon. It was not a matter of qualities that people liked it was a necessary mode of life in order to survive. Minnie displays how the quality of hard work was socialized and maintained, "It is

disgraceful to public if you are lazy and if you are bad too, they don't go for that – that is one of their customs." These clear statements identified what qualities you needed, that is determination, drive, and an ethic of hard work. *Soke-tus kee.*

Earl Pronto talked about working hard as a young child. He tells us that the ability to work hard was instilled in you as a small child. It was a necessary mode of life. If you weren't taught this then you certainly would not exercise it. Hard work is a general expectation within the community and a quality that most people take pride in and talk about:

> I think with work, if you are not taught to work as a young person then you won't work when you get older because you weren't taught. They took us out trapping taught us how to set up a camp and take care of the animals and never to kill something we didn't use (Pronto, taped interview: 2001).

Earl explained further that a small child began assisting his parents at a very young age and was taught that being helpful was a positive contribution. He was taught not to waste or exploit meat or valued sustenance, in combination with working hard.

15. *paspîwin* [13]Survival

Clifford Napoleon is a traditionalist in every sense of the word. His life relies upon a continued relationship with the land and he is renowned for his many talents and areas of expertise such as beadwork and moose-hide tanning. He is sought after for his valuable skills and is often commissioned for dry-meat making. Clifford identified an important skill his mother taught him by saying, "She taught us how to survive!" He also talked about the importance of the land, "If we don't have the trap-lines, where the hell are we going to hunt?" Clifford is assertive as he boldly stated that without the land, without the trap-lines within this territory the people will not be able to practice their bush-life and be able to survive off the land.

Victoria Davis connected the health of the youth to their knowledge of themselves and the bush, "I want the kids – all of these kids –(know) how to survive for a living. Instead of being a drunkard out in the street - a drug addict – how to survive out in the bush.... and on and on to their children." Victoria's words demonstrate the obvious connection between the health of a community and its cultural self-awareness, especially

for the youth. She also recognized that in order to pass on these practices, which she has learned and deeply appreciates, they must be embraced by the youth and exercised by the non-practitioners.

16. Laws and Sacred Ceremonies

Dance, song, ritual, sweats, pipe-ceremonies and general offerings of respect to the *manitous* (spirits) are the different practices I referred to throughout this discussion. The necessity of ceremony is that it offers valuable principles to guide individuals within a community. The process of these rituals found within ceremonies, has been minimized due to the infiltration of Christianity and colonial laws that outlawed their practices.

Josephine Walker described the first moose kill of a child. A ceremonial feast and a distribution of the kill then followed it. Harvey Kiyah said he carries out a ritual, that many other hunters continue to enact, by cutting the bell (the tuff of skin and hair between the neck and the chin). The hanging of the moose in a tree as offering to the spirits is another example, similar to the hanging of the tuff (the bell) of the moose or other parts of the animal's organs in the tree is a ritualistic offering of thanks. This act is a gesture of thanks to the moose spirit and a respectful honoring process to the creator. They are also done to guarantee assurance of luck in the next kill.

Art Napoleon explained that his grandmother Suzette Napoleon lived her life by the teachings. He referred to it as a Beaver way of teaching:

> She [Suzette Napoleon] was not really a ceremonial person. She didn't smudge or show any of that. She still had the belief system and the old stories. The Beaver stories and there is a form of teaching, some people call it (inaudible). It is a type of teaching. It is almost like sermonizing and in addition to it there was always a story. So she would always be giving us lessons. [...] She wanted us to live life a certain way and practice certain principles' (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

Art's grandmother did not demonstrate an elaborate life of ceremony, instead she incorporated Catholicism with her own Indigenous beliefs. Art explained the resilient manner in which individuals in the community continued to practices traditional spirituality after being Christianized. Through his grandmother's stories, Art learned morals that provided principles that he and his family exercise to this day.

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[13] *paspîwin:* survival. This term was found on p. 441 of the Alberta Elder's Dictionary.

17. *Nehiyawewin*[14] Cree Language

There is enormous value placed upon language retention and the youth's future use of the predominantly Cree (and DunneZa) local languages. Fear was echoed throughout the interviews and discussions held with the individuals in the community. The insecurity stems from the reality that a great majority of young people today (0-30 years of age) are not learning the language. English has almost become the first language of the youth. The language speakers indicate the importance of understanding cosmology and world-view through meanings within the language. Particular values may be words or meanings that only a certain language has, or a concept that is repeatedly stressed with the culture's dialogue through narrative and conversation.

The unspoken rules, laws and qualities of the culture are embedded within the language that the Creator gave the people. Some people say that without the Cree language we would still be "indians" but without our Cree language we have lost a part of who we were meant to be. George Gauthier shared the following:

> It would be nice not to throw the language away. The indian way of life that is our language. That is the way we came into this world. We are supposed to use that. If we don't use our language there will be no Indians left. There will be all white people. It doesn't matter if you are brown or any colour but you [will] still be using their language. You can't talk the language – Cree. So it would be nice to know how to use the language (George Gauthier, taped interview: 2001).

The language is an optic into the culture. It allows an appreciation that English translations can barely or adequately navigate. A firm sense of identity is reflected in Duane Walker's bold statements when he refers to himself as a Cree speaker. He is self-assured in his identity. This pride obviously originates from his first language as he shares, "I know my rights as an Indian and I know I can speak Cree and nobody is going to come around slapping me around, like a long time ago[15]."

Vernon Lalonde explained that language shapes your core and forms the basis of your identity: "Language is who you are. That is who you are! You have a solid ground. It is the language the Creator gave you. Gave me anyway. There is a lot in language. There

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[14] The term *Nehiyawewin* meaning Cree language is found on p. 280 of the Alberta Elder's Dictionary.
[15] He is referring to the residential school experience that attempted to forcibly prevent individuals in this community from speaking their language.

are a lot of words you can not say – you can't translate into English. There is more meaning to the Cree language." There are words, and thus concepts that can not be translated into English from Cree. This highlights the importance of having institutions rooted in the original language and perhaps carried out in the language.

Della Owens shared that the importance in Cree language was instilled in her at a young age by her parents, as they could foresee the infiltration of assimilative institutions in their lives:

> We had it drilled within my immediate family that language was so important. I remember my mom used to always say *Nee-ga-nees* (It is ahead of time). We are going to lose our language, our traditions, our values, and we are going to lose the custom itself and slowly it is happening. Look at the now-generation. No one speaks Cree. [...] Their identity is lost. [...] They know that they are Cree – they are Indians and yet some of it is being stripped from them (Della Owens, taped interview: 2001).

Della reminds us of the urgency of the rapid decline of language use. What she points out is that a part of our identity is lost then we will have more of a difficult time trying to identify with the values and customs inherent in the language. Her parents had prepared the children and armed them with the language so their identity could remain rooted in knowing who they were.

Robert Paquette (recently passed away on February 28, 2001) demonstrated the practice of respectful acknowledgement of the animals that he shared this territory with. Robert was a renowned hunter, trapper, fisherman and guide and the community lost an exceptional individual and an all around rich source of cultural knowledge with his passing. He explained how he communicated with a grizzly bear using Cree. In order to pacify the bear he respectfully talked to it, as he tells us in his dramatic re-telling of the event as it happened in the mountains:

> I kept talking to him in my Cree language. Finally he just started to walk away. So we went to get saddled and pack (the) horses and the hunter "Jim" asked me what I was saying? And asked me if I was talking "Bear-talk"? I told him I was telling the bear not to bother us and that everything would be OK. Well that hunter couldn't believe the bear listened to me, which I think he did!" (Robert Paquette, taped interview: 2001).

Robert knew that Creë was the respected language that the bear would understand. This would make sense in that this is the language that he has come to understand and relate to the bush and animal life around him. He leaves us with an unquestioned conclusion that the grizzly understood him, and the hunter's question that referred to "Bear-talk" tells us that this is how the occurrence played itself out. It was clear to the hunter that Robert was communicating to the grizzly, but in Cree. With the use of the language both he and the bear understood (as he illustrated) a request and wish was granted between the two beings.

Henriette Landry shared that her grandmother taught her never to lose the language. She was told that, "If I don't speak Cree then I will never know what it is to be Indian. If I lost the language and didn't teach my children; that they would never understand the full meaning of what Indian is" (Henriette Landry, taped interview: 2001). The principle that can be highlighted from this statement the importance of carrying language use forward and a pride in preserving its use. Language affirms a self-awareness of culture, which in turns strengthens identity. What language speakers repeatedly affirm is the importance of cultural awareness that stems from language.

Tylene Paquette, a youth, places language as one of the keys to cultural self-preservation:

> I think it is who we are, without it we are just any other people that speaks English. It is the most traditional thing that we have. I think it is important that we have that. The other things are there but your language is not, when it is lost – It is going to be lost (Tylene Paquette, taped interview: 2001).

Tylene reminds us that language is central to knowing the Cree culture. When the language is gone from the oral use, it is gone. She attested that language is one of the most traditional aspects of our culture, where some state that the bush life is key. They are intertwined and when they exist in isolation of one another they are weakened. They provide strength and a deepened level of understanding of meaning. Language describes the lay of the land, which allows a hunter to function in the bush. They are clearly tied to one another.

18. *awiyak kanisohkamakewin*[16] Somebody that helps

Henriette Landry shares with us this teaching of *Kanisohkamakewin*. She explains it as partly being a moral that was taught to her by her grandmother. She shared through her own example:

> It was things she said, *Kanisohkamakewin* It was partly a moral. You have to be a helper [...] It was part of respecting and helping people (Henriette Landry, taped interview: 2001).

The act of constantly helping others was a form of respect, given by contributing to those around you. It was necessary to be a contributing member within a family. This was partially connected to survival. You could not survive or function to your full capacity if all individuals within a family were not carrying their own weight and working to contribute to the well being of the family. You worked hard not to burden your family.

Earl Pronto discusses the necessity of contribution. It was assumed that even as a child you were to always be helping an older person, "Concerning work, we were all taught to work. We all went berry-picking then you were to go ahead and help that person with whatever it is..." Every person even small able-bodied children were expected to work and contribute at all times. This was and still is the expected norm. This is connected to the community's natural instinct for survival and to keep moving, gathering and preparing for the future.

19. Be-wit-ta-gwa-mo-shewan The spirits have come to give you something

Henriette Landry shared a deeply spiritual teaching about knowledge, gifts and teachings that the *manito* (grandfather and grandmother spirits) have come to share with people. Her grandfather taught this belief to her. He would explain to her that she might be receiving a warning about something or a gift in such a form. "I remember my grandpa saying 'be-wit-ta-gwa mo-shewan' the spirits have come to give you something or warn you about something and things like that were sacred" (Henriette Landry, 2001: 62). There is a Cree saying that, "everything happens for a reason." It is not just a cliché when we consider the deeply spiritual manner in which 'the people' within the community take in all happenings and consider them valid, whether they are

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16 Kanisohkamakwin was explained by both Mathilda Heibert and Henriette Landry as somebody that helps.

'supernatural' or not. There is no difference in whether these "teachings" or "incidents" occur in ceremony or in everyday, seemingly mundane rituals. They are all considered valid. Every incident, mistake and occurrence is meant to teach us something and is considered a "gift" because it gives you knowledge. According to this belief you must be open to receiving it or accepting it as such.

20. *nîmihitowin*[17] Dance

Traditional dance, song, and ceremonies ranging from pow-wow, community round dances, sun-dances, sweats, and various healing ceremonies have been re-introduced into the community. People never completely disregarded Indigenous spiritual beliefs, these were always acknowledged, but now what was once undermined by the church and viewed as pagan, "evil" superstitious is now a source of strength and renewal for the people. This source of power involves the ceremonial practices and the powerful cosmology attached to the rituals. Dance and ceremonial practices such as sweats and round dances, have become an expression of cultural pride and affirmation of identity for many people within the community. Many elders often talk about having never engaged in such activities as sweats and round dances (especially those elders raised in residential schools) in their childhood. They have now found their way to ceremonies and these Indigenous practices give them a sense of pride and belonging. Many feel inspired to remember and uphold the teachings given to them as small children, which have been both ignored and undermined by colonial institutions for assimilative purposes.

Tylene Paquette, a young traditional dancer in the community, expressed the feelings she experiences when dancing. She also shared how and why she has come to be a dancer:

> About 10 years ago, I started out with women's traditional [...] I don't do it much now but I will do it when I think I am going to forget or sick people. I will go because someone is sick, for people that can't walk or having a hard time. I will dance for them. [...]
> *NH: What do you get out of dancing?*
> TP: I have a lot of pride. I am a really shy person. I wouldn't get up in front of a crowd but because of the background, the history of the dance and why we do the dance. It is so important to me that I would dance in front of anybody (Tylene Paquette, taped interview: 2001).

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[17] *nîmihitowin:* dance. This term is found on p. 282 of the Alberta Elder's Dictionary.

Tylene shares with us the pride and confidence that she is inspired with when she dances. She talks about dancing for people who are sick dance as a form of healing and prayer. People dance for others to give them strength and inspiration.

21. The sacredness of women.

An older woman in the community will occupy a natural role as combined administrator, home organizer, advocate, funeral coordinator, peacemaker, grandmother, mother, aunt, sister and daughter. She has been a hunter, trapper, fisher-woman, dry-meat maker, gatherer, mid-wife, doctor, seamstress, farmer and counselor. The roles that she assumed are endless. In contemporary times, she continues to carry out these roles and in many ways she is a pivotal force that the large extended family circles around. She is sought after when knowledge needs to be affirmed or direction and decisions need to be made. She continues to maintain this position of power and it is not a role she has to struggle to hold, as it is one that she has earned and which she has rightfully honored.

There is a danger in romanticizing a reality that may not exist for many Indigenous women today. To say that Indigenous women (generally) live in an environment free from violence, abuse, and exploitation would be a contradiction to some "realities" the women live and experience. To say this would be naïve and dangerously minimize the level of abuse that many Indigenous women continue to experience in their lives. This would also undermine a necessary and slow change that is underway to demand respect and non-violence for women. Women continue to be susceptible to violence within communities and in urban environments.

A woman as a central figure within the family is a principle reflected in the five families. Each family has its own matriarch and each family honors this grandmother or aunt in the most humble and serving manner. They are constantly remembered and honored and taken care of (if they will let you). They each continue to work hard and live life to the fullest. Some of these women are the late Suzette Napoleon, the late Eva Napoleon, Grandma Davis, Molly Desjarlais, Lillian Gauthier, Mary Coutorielle, Minnie Garbitt, Victoria Davis, Virginia Lalonde, Edith Paquette, Josephine Walker and Alice Gauthier. These hardworking grandmothers are representative of matriarchs who have

always worked hard to provide and sustain their families. These women continue to contribute to the community and carry out necessary roles within their families.

Earl Pronto explored his understanding of the sacredness and respect given to the women's domain, "In our teaching the woman owns everything in the house. That is their domain. They have say over it. It is theirs once that animal is brought home it is usually skinned or quartered and carried home [....] same with the children they belong to the woman"(Earl Pronto, taped interview: 2001). Earl does not say that the woman can not exist outside of the house but that she is the central and administrator of what comes in the house and the children that leave the home. This is Earl's understanding of the teachings that exist in regards to women's domains and the men's duty to serve these needs. This example reflects the inter-dependence of the gender roles.

Stewart Cameron also sheds light on the sacredness of women. He shared a more traditional practice of reverence and treatment of women. His understanding is that they were directors and administrators in many ways. Women were sought after for advice and direction. Cameron denounced the stereotype about women doing all the work for the men, instead he put forward the idea that both men and women had a role. Once colonialism took effect, a breakdown occurred which was assisted by alcoholism, and the roles changed. "Indian" men began to exploit Indigenous women in a fashion similar to that of their settler male counter-parts. If one was to take the feminist position that patriarchy has facilitated the exploitation of white women, then one can see how this power imbalance emerges from within the colonial structure. It has had negative influences on both roles that Indigenous men and women held. The power imbalance between men and women left the women in a position to continue to carry the burden for all, including the men:

> Women in the Saulteau [society] were really important meaning they were held in high esteem because in the sacred role they played a crucial part. They were leaders in the background. When a man had trouble they would go to the women for guidance and the women would tell them what to do. Women were held in a sacred role by the men and the same with the men were held in sacred role by the women .You know the men did a lot of the heavy, physical work that is a bunch of malarkey. You know that myth about we were so smart because the women did our work, that is a bunch of malarkey maybe they did after the men were introduce to alcohol and all that stuff. That yeah the women had a heart so big that they had to care for their children because maybe her man couldn't because he

was an alcoholic. She did everything she hunted she trapped. But everyone had a role (Stewart Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

Awiyak Omeyowehowin[18] Seven Constructed Principles

The following principles summarize the essence of the knowledge gathered and presented in 21 themes that were explored in the research. Art Napoleon provided the full translations for principles 1, 6, and 7. Art revised principle 1 and put forth principle 6. Principle 7 was a direct quote from Stewart Cameron. Roxanne Tootoosis also explained that *wah-koh-to-win* means "relatives." The key values and teachings identified within principles 2, 3, 4, 5 originated as Cree terms from the identified community member interviews. They were then constructed into a statement by the researcher. Principle 4 originated from the theme of both rituals and offerings and was further constructed into a relative statement by the researcher. Each principle is presented, followed by a description of its characteristics. The characteristics detail how each principle emerged from the theme within the raw data. We can then understand the foundations for these principles as having originated from the communities knowledge and then further constructed by me into a principle statement. The seven principles are summarized as follows:

1. ***wahkowtowin*** "We are all relatives" (Art Napoleon).
2. ***kiyâm*** To let go is a necessary concept in the process of healing.
3. ***kisiwatsoon*** Compassion is a necessary quality that instills harmony within the community
4. ***matinawewin***[19] An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure future prosperity from the Creator.
5. ***awiyak nisohkamâtowin***[20] Somebody that helps is vital for community survival.

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[18] *Awiyak omeyowehowin* is the Cree translation for principle. By principle I mean in the same sense that is explained by the *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. A principle is, **1 a :** a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumption (pg. 926).

[19] *Matinawewin*: The act of offering something. The Alberta Cree Elder's Dictionary (pg. 78)

[20] *Awiyak Kanisohkamakewin*: somebody that helps out. As defined by the Alberta Cree Elder's Dictionary (pg. 326). The Saulteau-Cree term identified by Mathilda Heibert and Henriette Lanndry is phonetically spelled Ka-nee-so-ka-ma-tiin, however the first term was the closest "proper" translated term that I was able to find and for the sake of consistency I am trying to reference terms from this dictionary.

6. ***nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak*** "You are a servant to the people" (Art Napoleon).
7. ***nihiyew tapsinowin*** "We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Stewart Cameron).

1. We must remember we are all relatives

Within the theme of family and community relationships grew a principle that tells us how we are identified within a community's tapestry. Art Napoleon stated, "*We can't ever forget or stop being a part of our families or our people.*" Art also stated that the literal meaning for "we are all related" is *ki wahkomakanan*. This principle tells us that we are all part of a larger kinship system and part of the entire community or people. I decided to changes to term relations to relations. I also decided to use just the key root Cree term to be consistent with the other principles.

In contrast to non-Native communities, when you arrive in most Indigenous communities, you will be asked for your last name. The motivation for this is that your kinship name paints a genealogical map that tells a story of historical alliances, family unions and extended family relationships. Your last name (although colonial) reflects a family system that functions in the present. What this family system identifies is the dynamic and systemic way that the community has structured itself upon.

There exist *characteristics* of this principle, "We must remember we are all relations" These characteristics are in the elders or interviewees' testimonies and narratives that led to understanding this principle. We often hear that a universal Native value is that family is core and center within community. Family serves many purposes and among them is to act as a source for re-strengthening ties and as an institution that instills values, beliefs and teachings amongst it's children.

Earl Pronto identified that it is family that acts as teachers. The parents and the elders teach the youth about the land. It is also the youth's responsibility to seek this knowledge out. As teachers Earl shared that he and all traditionalist have a responsibility to pass on this knowledge:

> Well it is really as simple – [if] the traditional people do not share our knowledge and teachings with the young people, and take them out on the land and spend time with them - teach them! then we have neglected our duty to teach because it goes back to teaching and disciplining children. It is our duty. We were given the

> knowledge to share and if we don't share the knowledge then our children are less and know less (Pronto, taped interview: 2001).

Mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, moshem and kohkom, the elderly teaching generation have to teach the knowledge that they have been taught by their generation. Without these people teaching the youth, how can they learn? They are neglected by not being taught the skills of the bush. It is natural for children to want to learn. It is the effort of consciously teaching and or demonstrating skills that becomes the role and responsibility of the community.

Stewart Cameron talks about teaching as a responsibility of the parents. If the child did not learn and made mistakes in his life, he was not taught this. This mistake becomes partly the parent's responsibility to hold as well as the child. Every individual reflects his or her family to the community. Cameron tells us that his grandmother explained the aforementioned process to him:

> She says it is my responsibility about God and about being good because when you go out in the world and you sin; I will carry that sin for you. I will be doing the sinning because I never taught you. Otherwise when your children grow up and sin, you will carry all that sin. Now that I have told you this and I will tell you more, when you go out in the world; you are responsible. You can't blame anyone you have to be responsible for yourself [...] That is why those sacred laws are important so we can learn how to grow and heal (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

Cameron urges an autonomous act of accountability that each individual must have. Because of the responsibility attached to family accountability within a community, your actions do not only reflect you; they reflect the teachings given by your family. This concept becomes a method of socialization used to consider all of the actions we take because of the shame we bring to ourselves, we bring to our families as well. The accomplishments gained in life are extended unto the family as well. Stewart did go on to say that there is another level, where an individual's actions become accountable only to the individual in situations where he has been taught and where he clearly knows right from wrong.

Each family knows that in time of need, other families will be there to support one another. Neighbors will also be there to honor and respect a deceased family member or to celebrate a marriage or union. In former times neighbors and relations were eager to

help in the building of a cabin that might need to be constructed. It is this communal sense of family that has existed "since time immemorial," that becomes a tool to be used in contemporary times for the community to re-shape its own vision of itself.

Each family seems to have a sense of pride in taking care of their own members and caring for their descendents. Caring for the family was first and foremost followed by the generosity extended to guests. Melvina Whiten and Melva Sorel shared the teachings they received from their Kohkom, "The important one of course is family. Family – first! That is one of the qualities she [Eva Napoleon] had in addition to being hospitable to people who came to her house"(Melvina Whiten, taped interview: 2001). The entire Napoleon family echoed these gestures of care for the family and then extending their sharing and generosity to the larger extended families.

Earl Pronto illustrated through the example of his own family experience – including with his extended family his aunts and uncles - that they became his teachers when his parents were not around. These family dynamics have been passed down and continue to be used by him and his wife Penny within their own family:

> The importance of family is that families support one another, not just immediate but extended families. I spent much of my childhood with aunts and uncles with their teachings also, they share the same as my mother and father so half of my childhood was spent with uncles and aunts…So in our community – which was Paddle Prairie, at that time, all of our relations had a share in raising children and disciplining them. Which was right! To teach us right from wrong. The other thing we were taught was to listen when we were told anything about life or culture - or else if elders were talking. So we still practice that today. Our kids still spend time with their uncles and grandmothers (Earl Pronto, 2001: 32).

Pronto explained that when his mother and father were not present that his aunts and uncles were allowed to discipline their nieces and nephews. This was to ensure that the same rules and principles he was raised with at home were carried out and expected of him in the community and homes of his own. This shared role continues to be upheld within Earl's family but this does not necessarily mean it exists as a dynamic for the whole community. Earl's statement reminds us of the role that extended families can play within his own family.

2. *Kiyâm* (to let go) is a necessary concept in the process of healing.

Kiyâm is a Cree teaching that was explained by Della Owens. It is a quality and a concept necessary to foster harmony in relationships amongst people within the community. This concept is a necessary tool for survival and healing. The final principle statement was constructed by the researcher but the term and concept is explained by Della Owens.

Kiyâm means to let go. Although this term does not exist in the Alberta Elder's Cree Dictionary, it is very much an expression and concept that exists in the Saulteau community of Cree speakers. This concept speaks to the necessity of forgiveness. Kiyâm allows for an acceptance of all things that may happen in life. Events that cause pain, the concept of Kiyâm teaches us to accept these events as teachings and to move on. This gives people faith. Kiyâm is a quality that allows the occurrences that the Creator puts before us to be appreciated and accepted. Kiyâm teaches us to not be affected personally by people and their reactions to life's happenings. Kiyâm teaches us that we are not supposed to hold on to things in ways that do not matter, when there are larger responsibilities that we have towards one another as people. Kiyâm is about healing. Kiyâm is a sage teaching tool. It was grandmother Suzette who taught her daughter, who in turn taught her daughters this incredibly important tool. It is a necessary concept used to provide balance in the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional health of our lives.

In the interviews it was primarily Della Owens, Mathilda Heibert and Della Owens who talked about the principle of Kiyâm or "to let go." It is both a concept and philosophy and ultimately is was identified as a valuable principle that can be utilized in many facets of community social, political and cultural realms. Clifford talked about his mother Eva Napoleon using the term "*kiyâm*" in the same sense that Mathilda Heibert talked about her mother Suzette Napoleon explaining when and how to use *kiyâm*. This principle is used when any sort of disagreement, dispute or problem may arise. One may try to solve it but eventually is encouraged to let it go, let it be. You don't dwell on issues when they are solved, that is the end of that issue. It is finished. Mathilda explains how *kiyâm* was used in the context of disputes amongst people:

> She used to say kiyâm. Let them go. Let them be. They will be themselves. We don't bother anybody that is trying to be bad friends with us (Heibert, 2001:29).

The belief was that when the person calmed down then the dispute might be solved. If anger was extended towards people, they were taught not to respond to it, but to just let it go. They were taught not to engage with this negativity but to let the person be until another time.

Della explained not only the teaching she received *Kiyâm* but the origin of the narrative that is attached to this important principle:

> *Kiyâm* was an old Chief in Saskatchewan and his name came from his behavior and towards his outlook in life, meaning it is all right it is OK. It didn't matter what was going around in his surrounding [...] he would just say "*Kiyâm*," this is where my teachings come from with my mom. All through my life I used to always hear my mom say "*kiyâm.*" I used to always wonder why? Why let it go there was always question after question. I have never really known the answer cause when your small you wonder why let it go and you don't fully understand until you're an adult. Now I can see where my mom was coming from as an adult. It was a teaching tool, one simple word "***kiyâm***." Don't hang on to it! (Owens, taped interview: 2001)

In a community that is struggling to regain its strength and heal the dynamics amongst people and families, *Kiyâm* can be a necessary teaching tool for us all to practice in our relations with one another.

3. ***Kisēwatisiwin* (Compassion) is a necessary quality that instills harmony within the community.** Compassion is a principle needed to understand one another and maintain harmony in a community. It is a value that is fundamental to interdependence and survival of a community. In a community that has relied upon one another for compassion, it becomes necessary for neighbors and relations to live by this principle, to care for one another and to make certain there are enough provisions for all. Compassion is also a necessary tool today. It is needed in order to return harmony to the s tate of imbalance within the community dynamics that resulted with colonialism.

Vernon Lalonde explained that compassion is a necessary quality for a harmonious community. Compassion is necessary for people to understand and listen to one another in an empathetic sense in order to support one another. Vernon connected compassion to kindness and generosity. I asked him what term would lead us to an understanding of how respect functioned amongst people:

> VL: I think it would be compassion. ***Kisēwatisiwin*** (Chi-wat-soon) Compassion! I heard a lot of that in sweat lodges in ceremonies. They pray for that; so they can have compassion (Lalonde, taped interview:2001).

Compassion can be seen not only as value but a principle that is rooted in relationships between people. It is an act or gesture that is both given and received. Lalonde recalled compassion being talked about in healing. It is also necessary for us to understand one another and on the basis of place of the sweat lodge.

4. *Matinawewin* An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure future prosperity from the Creator.

Rituals that illustrate this principle include different offerings. Sometimes people offered small chunks of the heart or other organ parts of an animal to the fire or to the earth. Some people offered tobacco to the grandfathers and grandmothers for a kill they had just received. Some people hung the bell of the moose in a tree. Some buried it. Josephine Walker, Henriette Landry, and many other members spoke about offering of food in honor of the ones who have passed on. Many still burn a bit of their food and offer it to the fire each day as they cook as gratitude for all that is provided. What are they doing? In general they are **feeding their ancestors** who have passed on. It is a gesture of honor and of memory. It is performed so that those loved ones are not forgotten and you will remember all they have taught you. It is also an act for reciprocal luck or merit making so that the next time you are hunting or gathering, or searching the offering you gave for objects you do not take for granted are replaced and granted. Henriette Landry shared a ritual that her grandfather enacted, "I remember my grandfather taking a piece of the heart out and he would throw it in the fire and thanking the creator for giving him the skills and being able to feed his family"(Henriette Landry, taped interview:2001).

The gesture of respect and honor, extended through various rituals is a principle to be remembered and upheld. It is a form of acknowledgment that is held as a sacred act and a necessary source that we are connected to in some manner, whether it is for sustenance or spiritual remembrance.

Grandma Davis continues the practice of a Saulteau ceremonial ritual that was given to her by her grandfather. She recited a Saulteau-Cree mantra sung in a type of prayer about giving thanks for the life that has been provided[21] She also prayed for her family and gave thanks for the food provided to all. Each Sunday her large extended family and those who wish to participate bring tobacco in offering and gather at Grandma Davis's house for her "grandpa's church." She recited the songs her grandfather taught to her father, who taught them to her and then on to her grandchildren.

Grandma Davis passed some of her oral knowledge and "songs of thanks and gratitude" on to her grandson Vernon Lalonde. He, in turn, demonstrates his appreciation for the animals, plants and life forms that are connected and thanks is offered in turn by way of ceremony:

> These things the animals, the trees, the water…those are gifts from the Creator. Water is life. Air is life. The earth is life. The fire, the sun, those things carry life…these are gifts from the creator. These are these elements - four elements. But beyond that the Creator is the one who provides those things for us. So when I go into the sweat lodge. I point in the four directions. I offer the stem first. From the East where the sun comes up – brings new life, it provides a new day. The water, the thunder those are gifts the creator brought us, these are energies that provide life for us. The trees provide oxygen and these are the things people have to think deeply about. I give thanks for those gifts that we have and of course the earth, the mother. Maybe *nonee* (breast milk) we are doing the same thing when we take a moose or deer- she is providing for us. In understanding that. When we kill a moose we should give thanks to the creator because without the creators gift we wouldn't have these things. When we take a plant we give an offering, thanking the earth for letting us dig in her medicine bag. My grandmother has a vision - she was instructed to have a feast every year. She was to make soup out of the head of the moose. I was a trainee they call it an *Oskapees* (Spiritual trainee) training student to the elders'. My uncle did that and then he died and then I was being trained and now Maxi is being trained. See that ceremony that we do there is 2 pieces of fat and 2 pieces of meat and we offer it to the four element, four directions, four grandfathers. We give thanks, thanks for the meat and we made it for another year. We give thanks. We socialize. We laugh. We cry. That is what those feast are for this where the young people's minds get shaped. We still do that every year (Lalonde, taped interview:2001).

Vernon explained that ceremony is elaborate. Each process involved has a connection to the earth. Deeply rooted in ceremony is gratitude and recognition of the Creator for

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[21] This interview was translated by Violet Apsassin and Madeline Blue.

giving us the gifts of sustenance is. We are grateful for the four sacred medicines (tobacco, sage, sweet-grass and cedar). The people have been instructed to use these medicines in correlation with our cleansing rituals. We even thank the Creator for these rituals of thanks that we involve ourselves in. Without this gratitude extended we would be without the deep appreciation and respect for life and all living things.

The care and honoring of loved ones that have passed on, is another example of ritual. It is a way of recognizing the people who gave us life and helped give shape to our lived experience. Josephine Walker speaking in reference to the people who have passed on told of the importance of this feeding. She states, "They say that – they left us here people - [she is referring to people who have died] they are gone. **We have to feed them**. Just like we eat here. It is like that"(Josephine Walker, taped interview: 2001). This is a principle that reflects a strong connection to the ancestors that have passed on. The feeding of the spirits reflects the importance of our people and our ancestors. The homage that is made in honor of the dead is demonstrated by burning food to feed the dead; care and maintenance of grave-sites and spiritual places of significance and the offering of tobacco and various other forms of ceremonial activities.

Many people in the community have explained the importance of giving and the pride in being able to provide for one's self. It is the sharing that is of dire importance in these relationships rather than an egotistical self-recognition of charitable work.

The families and their interaction with the semi-nomadic patterns out in the bush reflect a leadership structure and a dependence upon one another in the bush. The principles of reciprocity, trust, respect, and integrity when transferred from life out on the land provide a healthy foundation for community infrastructure. In this sense the relationship of reciprocity is real but not an expectation.

5. *nisohkamâktowin* Somebody that helps is a vital quality for community survival.

Henriette Landry and Mathila Heibert both spoke to this principle. Henritette learned this principle from her grandmother and it was taught as a moral. The community members have prided themselves on possessing this important quality that was once a necessary act needed in a harsher climate. The living conditions demanded that people share their acquired goods with the common group. This was a reciprocal form of sharing in the sense that it was a community understanding that things should be given in a

responsible manner. Such a principle made a hunter or gatherer accountable to provide not solely for themselves or family but for the community of family pods. Sharing occurred in the sense that a carcass of a moose would be distributed after the matriarch had taken only what she needed as she'll know that there would be more meat in the future. During times of need the sharing of a kill or the community building of a home would be given out of compassion and honor.

In these interviews generosity extended by way of being helpful was talked about as a way of life and a manner of inter-relating with your larger extended family, neighbors and community. It was a quality instilled in people at a young age. Mathilda Heibert identifies this quality that emerged as a principle, directly from the interview material. Mathilda explained this quality of helping, "**Ka-nee-so-ka-ma-tin** that means I will help you out in whatever you are going to do" (Heibert, taped interview: 2001).

Vernon Lalonde talked about the dynamics of generosity and co-operation in a context of decision making. Co-operation is an important act, especially in a communal situation, whereby when families summered together where so with so many individuals lived closely together for a period of time. Helpfulness is necessary for a community that relies on inter-dependence:

> VL: Co-operation outweighed the other little stuff. It was better for everyone to co-operate, they knew that; they weren't stupid. Today it is a lot different. It is probably money that fools a lot of people. People want things for themselves and they don't really want to go to school. They want to take it. They don't want to work for it. They sit back and wait for the Band to give them something they are dependent on an entity (Saulteau Band) where the old people were independent. They didn't depend on someone to come and build them a house. It was better to co-operate it outweighed the petty stuff.
> *NH: Can you think of other qualities that you've learned that is important for Cree people?*
> VL: Again there is a word their Oh-to-tee-na-toon it means relationships. Like I talked about people helping each other a long time ago. You form a relationship or a bond with that person. Co-operation outweighed individuality. It was more beneficial to stick together (Lalonde, taped interview: 2001).

What Vernon stresses here is the principle of generosity and cooperation. Working together was a way of functioning that supercede an individual gain. Vernon talked about relationships and bonds that were formed from members of the community being dependent upon one another. This form of reliance in turn built trust, dependency and

accountability towards one another. People cared about respectful bonds amongst one another. It was a necessary manner of inter-relating that was valued in a community that was dependent on the cohesive functioning of all of the people.

Della Owens demonstrated the principle of generosity and community responsibility to which that her family adhered. The Napoleon family harvested their gardens and distributed their large goods to needy neighbors:

> Every fall time we would put bundles of the vegetables, my mom would go around and give vegetables to the 'poorest of the poor of the poor'. Even when my dad went hunting he would share the meat. My mom would take her share and my dad would go out and deliver the meat with the less fortunate. She always took care of people (Owens, taped interview: 2001).

A deep sense of self-respect is reflected in the actions of the matriarch Suzette Napoleon. This respect is what she extended by giving, sharing and distributing her vegetables in a humble manner and without question. This communal sense of responsibility is vital to a community's survival. Inter-dependence and support is necessary to move forward. It is a consciousness of survival manifested by caring for your neighbor.

Hospitality is a form of generosity that was extended in many ways such as the invitation to all to share in food, shelter and story. In nearly every interview, the people talked most about their parents and grandparents ensuring that this principle of hospitality was not overlooked. Melvina and Melva remember Eva Napoleon extending hospitality. Della Owens and Mathilda Heibert remember their mother extending this custom. All of the *Kohkoms* in the community still extend this gesture of hospitality. My own Kohkom always offers some tasty *bannock* or boiled meat and potatoes or *kakiyak*. Many individuals remember this gesture as one of the most memorable qualities and necessary acts of respect for all visitors. The word "*Mitzo*" is usually associated with people's memories of their parents and grandparents were always urging people to eat. Often it is considered disrespectful to leave a home without sharing in some food offered to you. Mathilda shares with us a reminder of her mother, "Mom, she would always have something on the stove. "Mitzo Poga Mitzo!" [...] Whenever someone came to visit they had to eat something" (Heibert, taped interview: 2001).

Art Napoleon affirms his aunts' memories of their mother and his grandmother:

> Even in the 60's we were considered semi-nomadic peoples. I remember how

> people treated one another with hospitality, whenever anyone came - food would be brought out. The tea would be brought out. It is custom you still offer it to them. Most people are poor they have nothing to offer so they offer them food [...] Stinginess in traditional society was frowned upon (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

If everyone in the community continuously gave and shared what they had acquired, it was understood that it would be returned in the future in some form or another but it was not expected.

6. *ka nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak* "You are a servant to the people". Art Napoleon

This principle reflects a sense of serving the people as Art Napoleon indicates in the following citation. The old leaders knew they were "servants" to the people and had to work to fulfill the needs of the people. In the interviews when people contemplated the role of "leader" as chief, it was generally agreed that there was more of an Indigenous style of "consultation" that happened in the past than today:

> One things elders will tell you is how the old leaders they went around and consulted they didn't say "consulted" but that is what it is. They went around and visited people talked about their concerns... It is more of a humbling form of leadership. **You are more of a servant** (Napoleon, taped interview: 2001).

Napoleon identifies that the "old leader" enacted customs of visitation and "consultation" that was a more "humbling form of leadership." This manner of visitation was an attempt to stay in connection with the people[22].

In this way the general community of people understood the importance of the desire to help and this was reflected in their actions of reaching out and embracing the people. The goal was to hear their needs and to know their goals. The principle suggests that from the moment you breathe life you have a responsibility to the people.

Leadership qualities were displayed in the carrying out of necessary tasks that needed. Earl Pronto explained how elders recognized these skills: "Our elders were able to recognize that in the children. Once they knew and understood that this child had this gift, these talents then they all joined in to teach him about whatever it was to help him. If they recognized that he was going to be a person who would spend a lot of time out on

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[22] I would like to recognize that the Mohawks also hold a similar concept in terms of leaders, see Gerald Alfred's *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors* (Alfred, 1995:89).

the land [...] they would then place him with the best hunter..." (Pronto, taped interview: 2001). All people have a role and a place in this kind of leadership and a necessary responsibility in carrying out their role.

The relentless move of the people to fulfill the instructions of Kakagoguance's vision tells us that there were very different notions of how a leader was to be followed. Cameron illustrates this point:

> Like along time ago my grandma used to say they had leaders (and one of those leaders was of course was Kakagoguance) but they were chosen in a sacred way through our ceremonies and a lot of the time they knew they were going to be leaders even before they were born. Because of our sacred ways! We were so powerful in that way, eh! Somebody would have a dream even 50 years before a child was born and he is going to do this, this and this. There wasn't only one leader there were many leaders for different types of things that the chiefs talk about. People who had wisdom in certain areas maybe socializing with people, getting people to get along - a peacemaker. Reminding people about kindness and goodness, and then there were hunters, and the leaders of the hunters [...] they were together they were all equal because they had a sacred law to govern themselves (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

Today the idea of following a vision gifted to you by the Creator might not be a conventional foundation for rallying political support amongst people who expect political rhetoric and "promises." Yet we might look to the dreams and visions gifted to people to act as catalysts for change.

The final principle is a direct quote from Stewart Cameron. Stewart stated that:

7. **"We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other"**(Cameron, taped interview:2001). This is the seventh principle that encompasses all of the beliefs presented. It was first cited in the introduction to this thesis. This principle speaks about the spiritual relationship that must be upheld and respected. Stewart stresses that a return to Indian laws will reinstate harmony amongst people.

Cameron adds further characteristics that describe the way to reinstate harmony is to return to the bush life. Stewart also speaks about ceremony and practice offering direction, teachings and cultural meaning:

> ...The bush, the land the animals that is us, not just us but for all people but mostly it is important to us [...] our language is connected to the land. One of the old timers talks about the land...you can hear it in his heart [...] That is our store.

> Once in a while you look outside (we're in Fort St John today) you'll see one of our people walking by on the street and they are drunk. Why? Because they have lost their land base! **The only way we can clean that up is to go back to our sacred laws, go back to our sweats, to the drum to the pipe.** [...] (emphasis mine) The bush is a vital part of that, I think we could got to a certain point...what would destroy us first the language or the bush. I think the bush would, if we lost the bush we'd lose everything. I think if we lost the language and maintained the bush we'd be ok but if we lost the bush it would be over. [...] That is where we are connected. That is where our laws come from (Cameron, taped interview: 2001).

In this quote Cameron identifies that traditional laws are connected to the land. These sentiments stress the importance of traditional livelihood and the practices of the bush life. Without the bush Cameron tells us that our ceremonial practices, our language and our sustenance would be diminished if not destroyed, as would we. These bush skills allow Indigenous people to make sense of the life around them. Stewart stated that, "this is were we are connected. This is where our laws come from".

Vernon Lalonde, in an orator fashion eloquently illustrated the holistic relationship that he as an individual holds with the Creator. In turn this has effects on his relationship with all the natural forces and spirit life. Lalonde also asks that we remember the vision given to "the people" by Kakagoguance. The prophecy is echoed in people's discussions about the "hard times ahead" and the responsibility the people have to maintain the skills and exercise the lifestyle of the bush if only to keep the knowledge alive for times of need:

> *NH: What do you think about these bush ways, why do you think they survived for so long?*
> VL: We have to have faith in the Creator, because he provides life. We have to keep praying. Keep giving thanks. Give our kids compassion. We are going to needs those skills again...things are happening...there are signs out there...we are going to need our old skills back. The beliefs that we have we have to embrace them until we die and we can never let them go. We were given those gifts. That is what we are going to have to do - to survive. The vision that Kakagoguance had (twin sisters over there) the land is going to provide life for us. That is why the vision is important – it is going to get tough. The vision was important. So it is important for us to maintain those skills. We have to look after ourselves we can't have anyone else do that for us...These are resources, all of those things the bush, the trees, the grass, the water, those are all cultural resources they enhance our culture, they support our culture. They support our way of life, the animals – that's our resources - they are our cultural resources. Our way of life that's our

> education. That is our institutions. That is our store out there that is our bank (Vernon Lalonde, taped interview: 2001).

Lalaonde illustrates a responsibility that the people have to the vision of Kakagoguance. The preservation of this area and territory is tied to this vision. Vernon pointed out that our culture is rooted in the land. He reminds us that without the proper protection of these resources within this area how can people continue to practice and harvest the gifts granted to them from this area for their ceremonial usage? Accountable resource management and preservation of all things that affect the Indigenous lifestyle and livelihood is necessary. This was outlined by the prophetic vision of Kakagoguance himself.

Earl Pronto talked about learning respect for the land from being in close relation to the land and using it:

> *NH: Do you think growing up did you learn respect from the land from actions or from how you were taught?*
> EP: It would be both. It was explained to me and it comes from using it – from being there and using the land – not to destroy it. Nature can repair itself. You need trees to build your home and your camp. You don't cut the whole bush down take what you need. It is the same with animals where you can't even kill an animal where it will haunt you or harm you [...] (Pronto, taped interview: 2001).

Pronto addresses another dimension that speaks to the importance of not exploiting the land. In this understanding there is a moral retribution that will be collected by the spirit of the animal. It will be returned to you in a manner where you will suffer from the lack of good hunting "gifts" that animals provide. This sense of moral retribution was instilled as a social norm to ensure that the natural resources were able to replenish themselves. However, in contemporary times the struggle in most communities lies in taking a share in harvesting the resources for monetary gain in order to survive in a cash-based society. Pronto concludes with a reminder that, "for thousands and thousands of years we have been living on this earth and have died on this earth. That is our connection. We in turn have to respect it and take care of it. Every person has a duty to take care of the earth" (Pronto, taped interview: 2001). What Pronto has identified is that the responsibility that we have as individuals who have found nourishment and flourished from the sustenance

of this earth. The care of the land is our responsibility, which binds us to these natural resources. It is a respect that exists within this relationship that binds people to the land.

Conclusion

The seven SFNC principles that were explored in the latter half of this *Spirit* section encompass the 21 themes first described in the first half of this section. The seven constructed principles were based upon these 21 themes.

These principles guide us in our actions. These words are echoed in the words of the knowledge holders within the community. A re-summary of the principles are as follows:

1. *wahkowtowin* "We are all related" (Napoleon, 2001).
2. *kiyam* is a necessary concept that should be recognized as a cultural tool.
3. *kisēwatisiwin* is a necessary value that instills harmony within the community.
4. *matinawewin* An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure future prosperity from the Creator.
5. *nisohkamakewin* Somebody that helps is a vital quality for community survival.
6. *nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak* "You are a servant to the people" (Napoleon, 2001).
7. *nihiyew tapsinowin*[23] "We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Cameron, 2001).

Spirit was the words of 26 interviews conducted with people from the community or whom have lived, hunted and continue a traditional livelihood in the "Treaty 8" territory. The objective of this chapter was to give the reader a sense of the depth of traditional knowledge that exists and the way of life that continues to be maintained in the SFNC. The documentation of oral narrative only serves to add to the developing discourse of local Indigenous knowledge gives cultural context and meaning to future developments.

[23] Translation initially provided by Art Napoleon.

4.The Braid: Mind, Body, and Spirit.

This thesis is a secure and interdependent braid. The *Mind* section was the vision, the birth and an outline of how each section would develop and what each component represented. The *Body* section offers the oral narrative, the geographical placing of the SFNC and historical account of the implications that the adhesion to Treaty no.8 has had upon the community. *Spirit* is the voice and words of the knowledge holders from the community. It is their spirit that continues to convey the same words and knowledge our ancestors passed down to us. This knowledge continues to sustain the community. This final chapter, the *Braid* ties the entire thesis together much like a braid binds all of its threads into one piece and proposes options for further developments and applications.

Mind, Body and Spirit form this concluding chapter entitled *The Braid*[1]. The purpose of the Braid is to weave together the *Mind, Body* and *Spirit* sections into a conclusion for this thesis. When the braid is woven together it serves a practical purpose much like sweet-grass and this weaving is also symbolized in the way our hair is woven. Without each of these sections, the braid could not have been woven. *Mind, Body and Spirit* - It is said that without reciting this prayer of mind, body, spirit as an offering of strength to the creator that this braid would be weak. Each section envelops the other stronger and finally bound tightly together.

The final *Braid* chapter proposes a sample of a generic Statement of Principles. I have decided to use a Statement of Principles simply as a format for framing these principles. It is not intended to be a binding or limited to the Statement of Principles presented here. The principles were simply fused into such a frame. Its application into future developments is up to the community to further and I have outlined five areas that may be considered. This chapter also recounts the purpose of this thesis. The Indigenous Research Methodology and Indigenous paradigm used as relative methods to this research considered the complexities involved when conducting research in an

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[1] The process of braiding and the actual braid is a symbolic process that represents the binding and threading together of all things. This is one of the reasons why Cree people braid their hair. I was taught that when I braid my hair I am supposed to pray and think positively while reciting in my mind "mind, body, spirit." The goal is similar to reciting a mantra in an aim to bring positive energy unto yourself and to offer protection for yourself.

Indigenous community. Cultural protocol and custom was paid attention to in an attempt to be respectful and mindful of the norms and expectations within community. The nature of the IRM used within this research is intended to be a positive contribution to the social sciences. This adds to a change in the traditional manner in which research has been conducted in the past and it stresses upon a process that must be recognized for others to consider as a salient, effective and appropriate manner to carry research out within the social sciences.

The constructed principles are presented within a Statement of Principles that reflect SFNC customs, beliefs and values (see the following sample figure 3). These principles may be looked to upon as principles that reflect values, beliefs and customs that are tools to alter and change current policy structures to reflect teachings that have cultural meaning to the people within the SFNC. Some examples might be 1. Protocols for conduct within the administration, 2. Structural development that builds on the foundation of these culture-based principles, 3. A resource tool for people outside the community wanting to further understand the values held within the SFNC, 4. Program developments, and 5. Policy development[2].

Future policy development must reflect certain values, beliefs and customs if the intention is to develop systems based upon Indigenous cosmologies. Building culturally specific principles into structures is a move to make such protocols, programs or structures more reflective of a community's cultural beliefs, values and norms.

Leslie Pal summarizes Frank Fischer and John Forester's notion of policy analysis and planning as the:

> struggle over the criteria of social classification, the boundaries of problem categories, the inter subjective interpretation of common experiences, the conceptual framing of problems, and the definition of ideas that guide the shared meanings which motivate them to act[3] (Fisher and Forester, 1993, 22).

Pal gives a positive sense in which policy may be thought of by suggesting that, "Policies are best thought of as creative solutions to challenging puzzles rather than just dry

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[2] See, Leslie Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis* (Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Thomson Learning, 2001).
[3] Fischer, F. (1993) *"Citizen participation and the democratization of policy expertise: From theoretical inquiry to practices"* p 42. Quoted in Leslie Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis.* Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Thomson Learning.

legislation and programs (Pal, 2001: 131). If one was to apply culturally based principles to certain problems or areas that that might need structuring or development, then the values and principles become the foundation of how to frame the exercise.

The application of value-based principles into current program developments becomes the next process for the community to further. The purpose is for the community to be able to determine how it sees itself and what it identifies as cultural value based principles to serve as foundations for future developments.

This gathered information forms not only a basis for developing and presenting principles but it also contributes to the entire canon of intellectual resources that may be used for general education or curriculum developments for the SFNC.

These principles are not limited to the seven presented here, instead they are but a few of the unlimited amount of principles that exist – there is no numerical constraint of what these might be. The constructions of principles are vast and limitless. Principles need only to be extrapolated and practically applied as concepts to policies that might need to be developed. The seven principles are in no way meant to limit or constrain the existing vast and continuous body of cultural knowledge that already exists within the community.

An exercise such as the one within this thesis is an example that a process based on research within the community intended to develop a sense of what some of the values, beliefs and customs are necessary to guide future developments. What needs to continue to happen at the ground level is a framing of principles based on values and cultural knowledge that continues this process that must be further fleshed out. The foundation for building structures and policies is the role the community must maintain.

The government constantly insists on inflicting legislation that only further diminishes control by attempting to lessen the capabilities of Indigenous governance structures. Value-based principles as teachings that guide and determine the systems to guide the development of programs make the content culturally reflective makes the current structure in place reflective of cultural beliefs, values and principles.

The options in this exercise give SFNC the opportunity to put forward its limitless principles that are based on community knowledge in whichever capacity they wish to use their own knowledge. The principles constructed within this thesis are meant to be a reflection (but are not limited to) the values, beliefs and customs of the SFN.

The process that occurred within the academic experience offers direction to future researchers in the social sciences who might reflect on the approaches used within this thesis. Such as the application of an Indigenous Research Methodology and the Indigenous paradigm I presented myself within. This approach seeks to be transparent revealing the practices I used. These methods seek to incorporate Indigenous protocols that are fluid and encompassing. IRM considers the "impacts of research on community," as well as "the transformative nature of research" as a few values of this approach (identified in Chapter 1 Section 1.8) Such approaches as the IRM used in this research endeavor seek to make research more applicable to an Indigenous reality. This is a refreshing approach that seeks to be sensitive to the needs of conducting research within community while meeting the rigor of academia. This exercise demonstrates the movement that occurs when research takes into account the sensitive complexities of a living community. The process of gathering research and conducting the interviews within this context allowed me as the Indigenous researcher to ask non-standard open-ended questions about lived experience, in a manner that allowed themes to emerge within the material.

It important to highlight the double-voiced narrative that has emerged which is unique and speaks to the two paradigms I have had to exist within. This research process sought to empower such approaches to empower the existing Indigenous narrative that emerged from the knowledge of the community and revealed in the personal placing of myself within this research process. This research endeavor was political and personal in every manner considering I had a variety of roles, responsibilities and audiences to appease.

I had the opportunity to conduct research in my community by first seeking to answer a question that grew from a dialogue that occurred between Stewart Cameron and

myself. As a result, I was able to conduct relative and meaningful research within my own community. This thesis was also an opportunity to affirm the knowledge of my community.

What is paramount about my teachings and the knowledge shared was that they were given to me so generously "as gifts" from the individuals interviewed. I was given the opportunity to be a student of these many teachers of my community. The research conclusions are not meant to be binding, nor are they intended to limit the knowledge of the SFNC rather they are intended to be an on-going development of values, beliefs and customs. This process of research is intended to be a valuable exercise and teaching tool. This research demonstrates that the exercise of transmitting cultural knowledge into the current context is both possible and necessary in the move of de-colonization. The research within my community was based on a practical need to give respect and to recognize my nation's knowledge.

Figure 3

(SAMPLE ONLY)

Statement of Principles

Principle 1

Wahkowtowin **"We are all relations" (Art Napoleon).**

Principle 2

kiyâm**: (To let go) is a necessary concept in the process of healing.**

Principle 3

kisiwatsoon **(Compassion) is a necessary quality that instills harmony connecting the community.**

Principle 4

matinawewin **An offering of thanks in honor of the provisions of life is necessary to ensure prosperity from the Creator.**

Principle 5

nisohkamakewin **Somebody that helps is vital for community survival.**

Principle 6

ka nisohkamowatwan kitôtîmak **"You are a servant to the people" (Art Napoleon).**

Principle 7

nihiyew tapsinowin **"We have to go back to our Indian laws and that is when we will have harmony amongst each other" (Stewart Cameron).**

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Summary of Consent Form for the Interview

- You are being asked to be interviewed because the community or myself (the researcher)
  believe you possess knowledge that would be beneficial to the Saulteau Research Project.

- These interviews will be used in the Master's thesis (report) being written by Nicole Hetu and can be used by you and the Saulteau First Nation Band Members.

- I will give you a taped version of the interview or a copy of the transcribed interview if you request or want it.

- You have the right to withdraw or stop the interview at any time or ask that your interview or certain words may not be used. You have the right to change your mind – at any time and for any reason!

- These interviews are not confidential and I am asking that you use you name and the information we will talk about is not sensitive or confidential. If you wish things talked about to be confidential please do not talk about them.

- You may contact my professor Dr. Leslie Brown at any time for more information or questions (250) 721-6275. You may contact me Nicole Hetu at (250) 888-8821 cellular. Art Napoleon and Stuart Cameron are the community advisors for this Research Project.

- This is a summary of the two-page consent form needed by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Consent Form. This form needs to be signed by you. The purpose of this form is to verify that I have consented with you and that you understand the purpose of this interview and where and how the interview information might be used. The interview data might be used in the Master's thesis that I am producing.

- Ay! Ay! Mussy! / Meegwetch for your time and contribution of the knowledge as a gift to this research project. You knowledge will be stored as a taped interview at the Muskoti Learning Center.

_____ _____

Signature **Date**

University of Victoria
Human Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL	SUPERVISOR
Nicole (Migizikwe) Hetu **Graduate Student**	**IGOV**	**Dr. Leslie Brown** **Dr. Taiaiake Alfred**
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):		

TITLE: **Saulteau principles based upon the historical knowledge of the people within the Saulteau community**

PROJECT No.	START DATE	END DATE	APPROVAL
033-01	**2/28/2001**	**2/27/2002**	**2/28/2001**

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the University of Victoria Ethics Review Committee on Research and Other Activities Involving Human Subjects has examined the research proposal and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

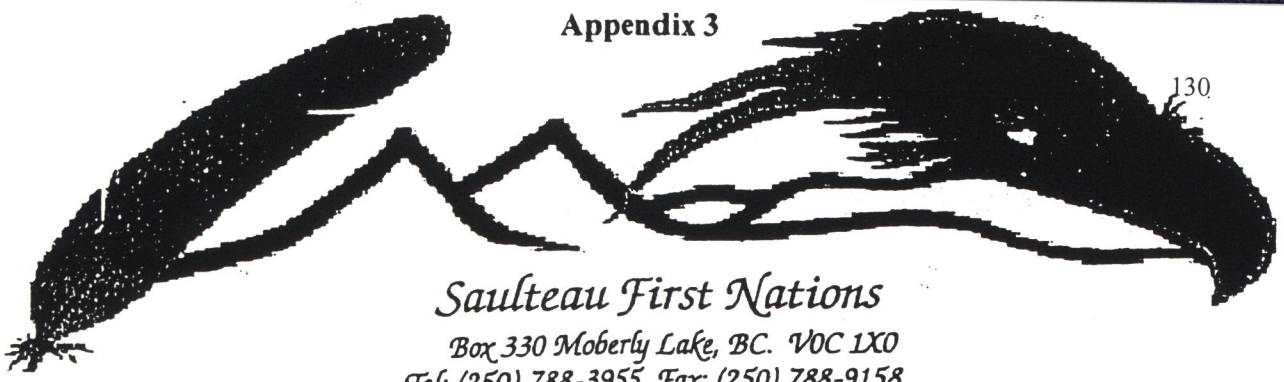
J. Howard Brunt,
Associate Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions/minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of "Request for Continuing Review or Amendment of an Approved Project" form.

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March 11, 2001

To Whom It May Concern,

Saulteau First Nations (SFN) Council is pleased to acknowledge Nicole Hetu's research efforts on the *Traditional Saulteau Principles*.

It is SFN 's intention to provide what information we can to Ms. Hetu for her research to be successful; although some information is confidential and we are unable to release such material to membership in general.

It is our desire to provide all members with support and encouragement when obtaining knowledge about their traditional history.

Sincerely,

Councillor Tammy Watson
Saulteau First Nations

APPENDIX 4

The Saulteau, Cree and DunneZa Community Research Questions

Revised May 20, 2001

What was it like before and what is it like now?

1. **Family**: What is the most important practice that you think is important in raising a family or being raised in family. What was your parent's belief about family? What is your belief about family? What is important about family? What is the most important practice of a family? What is the benefit of a healthy family? How can this be achieved? What is the goal of this practice? ... Belief?

2. **Children**: What is the most important practice in raising a child? What was the most important practice your parents exercised in raising you? What is the belief that came out of raising children? What do you think is important to know is raising children? What is the goal of this belief?

3. **Work**: What is the most important practice that your parents taught you about work? How did you do work and what kind of work or patterns did you do before? What do you do now? What belief do you hold about work and contribution? Where do you think it is important to contribute your work and how does this tie into community? What is the goal of this belief?

4. **Land**: What was the most important practice did your parents teach you about the land? How do you see the land? Why is the land important to you? What sort or practices do you engage yourself in today out on the land or in the bush? What belief did your parents have for the land? What belief do you have about the land? Do you think it is important for the youth to know this? What do you want the youth to know? What beliefs about the land do you hold and want the youth to hold? What is the goal of this belief?

5. **Food**: What was the most important practice your parents taught you about food and respecting food? How was food taken care of and gathered? How was life centered on food? How and what was your role centered on food and gathering it? What was your routine and what did you do in gathering and harvesting food?

6. **Hunting and Bush life**: What was the most important practice your parents taught you about hunting? How were you taught to respect the animals? How do we give thanks for the animals? What is your belief about hunting and the bush life? Do you think it is an important practice for the youth to know? Why do the youth have to know about hunting, trapping, fishing and the land?

VITA

Surname: Hetu Given Names: Nicole M.

Place of Birth: Chetwynd, British Columbia, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1999 to 2002
Trent University	1995 to 1999

Honors and Awards:

University of Victoria Fellowship	1999 to 2001

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Title of Thesis:

A Summary of Constructed Principles of the Saulteau First Nation

Author _____

Nicole M. Hetu

April 3, 2002