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**Understanding Leadership's Role in Inclusive, Culturally-Appropriate Recreation Programming in
K'atlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve and the Town of Hay River, Northwest Territories**

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Understanding Leadership's Role in Inclusive, Culturally-Appropriate Recreation Programming
in K'atlodecche First Nation/Hay River Reserve and the Town of Hay River, Northwest
Territories

by
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B.A., University of Alberta, 2005

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THESIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	4
Introduction	6
Rationale	7
Literature Review	7
Theoretical Framework	11
Methodology	14
Methods	17
Analysis	18
Thesis Format	19
References	21
Paper 1: The Role of Leadership at the Swimming Pool in Town of Hay River, Northwest Territories: How Discourses and Behaviours Intersect to Influence an Aquatic Environment	26
Paper 2: Displacing Authoritarian Leadership in K'atlodeeche/Hay River Reserve, Northwest Territories: The Influence of Dene Women's Egalitarian Leadership on Colonial Discourse and Practices within the Summer Day Camp	59
Conclusion: Parting Words	91

Abstract

This thesis employs Foucaultian and postcolonial theories to identify, discuss, and trouble discourses surrounding leadership styles in two communities in the Northwest Territories: the Town of Hay River and the nearby community of K'atlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve. The thesis is composed of two papers. The first paper analyzes the tendency of lifeguards at the Hay River swimming pool to embody an authoritarian leadership style. Further, this paper discusses how an authoritarian leadership style can foster an unwelcoming environment for Aboriginal patrons. The second paper looks at Dene women's leadership in K'atlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve's Summer Day Camp and discusses its impact on one particular EuroCanadian leader. Both papers shed light on the necessity for southern-based, Euro-Canadian recreation leaders to understand Aboriginal communities' practices and norms surrounding culturally appropriate ways of leading in order to plan and implement effective and inclusive programming.

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Introduction

The ethnographic case studies contained in this thesis examine leadership styles within two unique recreational programs. During my six weeks in Hay River, Northwest Territories in the summer of 2006, I worked along side the Hay River swimming pool's lifeguards to identify the leadership style that the lifeguards employed in order to better understand how the lifeguards' leadership style influenced Aboriginal youths' experience as patrons of the aquatic facility. In addition, during my time in Hay River I sought to understand how a lifeguard's leadership style might have an impact on local Aboriginal youths' willingness to participate in aquatic programs and seek future employment at the local pool.

While volunteering for duration of six weeks with K'atlodecche First Nation/Hay River Reserve's (KFN/HRR) Summer Day Camp (SDC), also in the summer of 2006, I sought to identify both discourses and practices surrounding Dene women's leadership style, as well as the SDC's supervisor Eurocanadian leadership style. In addition, I wanted to better understand the ways in which the local, Aboriginal women who worked as assistants at the SDC contributed to its success and served the community's needs, especially given that the official supervisor was a Eurocanadian male from southern Canada.

Both studies were designed to identify and discuss the leadership styles that were utilized by employees in two northern locations (Hay River and KFN/HRR) and cultures (Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal). While I acknowledge that research in general and academia in particular draw on and privilege colonial way of knowing and being, I believe and I hope that this thesis illustrates that these same ways of knowing and being can be troubled and interrogated to enable the acknowledge and respect of Aboriginal ways of knowing being. I believe this to especially be the case when a community-based participatory approach is implemented and fostered in a good,

thoughtful, respectful and careful way. I used such an approach to identify the leadership styles in both Eurocanadian and Aboriginal leaders. In so doing, I attempted to open up conceptual space to better understand how cultural discourses and practices can influence a person's leadership style and capacity to provide appropriate and inclusive programming for Aboriginal youth and communities.

Rationale

Within the field of sport and recreation there has been a dearth of research pertaining to women's leadership (Frisby, 1992; Henderson, 1992), especially concerning Dene women. Forsyth (2005), Giles (2004; 2005), Horn-Miller (2005) and Paraschak (1995) are a few scholars whose studies have help to broadened our understandings of Aboriginal women's lives by discussing their involvement in sport, recreation, and health services. The topic of women's leadership, and particularly Aboriginal women's leadership, within sport and recreation is a marginalized area in academia. The two papers contained in this thesis address voids in the current literature by surfacing largely suppressed discourses surrounding Eurocanadian and Dene women's leadership within two disparate northern communities. By doing so, the papers open up conceptual space to acknowledge Dene women's leadership styles, critical roles, and influence within two recreational programs. These papers reflect my experiences in Canada's North, where I spent six weeks in the Town of Hay River's swimming pool and the community of KFN/HRR's Summer Day Camp.

Review of Literature

Growth of Leadership Theories

Leadership theories have traditionally focused on men and have been developed or built upon either trait, behavioural, contingency, or transformational theories. The variety of leadership concepts often creates a situation where leadership becomes conceptually abstract and

ultimately ambiguous (Pfeffer, 1977). The subjective nature of leadership is represented by the diversity in leadership discourses used in leadership theories. Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994) stated that current leadership models are developed from, and designed for, white educated males working in the Western workforce. As such, current leadership models reflect the exclusion of non-Western cultures. The discontinuity between leadership models and the diverse groups for which they are intended can only be breached by the creation of new leadership models that are more representational of different cultures and thus more culturally appropriate (Horner, 1997; Wilson, George, & Wellins, 1994).

Male-Domination in Sport Leadership

Connell (1987) argued that gendered divisions of labour are interwoven with, and mutually supportive of, divisions of power and authority among men and women. Within the field of sport, there are cultural beliefs that support ideologies that perceive male leaders as more appropriate for leadership positions in sport (Burke & Hallinan, 2006). Not surprisingly, one consequence of such beliefs is that men continue to dominate leadership positions related to sport and physical activity (Burke & Hallinan). Burke and Hallinan effectively linked male domination to the socialization that perpetuates the patriarchal belief that men have superior sport knowledge, skills, and elicit more from their athletes in terms of performance and productivity than do their female counterparts. Just as gendered discourses have been found to create conceptual hierarchies between males and female leaders in sport (Burke & Hallinan), I argue that discourses concerning leadership can also create hierarchies. In the case of the NWT Aquatics program, in addition to gender-based discourses, the discourses on leadership are also culturally-based.

The NWT Aquatics Program

The NWT Aquatics Program (NWTAP) has historically hired southern Canada-based lifeguards/aquatic instructors to run waterfronts and above ground pools throughout the NWT during the summer months. In the Town of Hay River, aquatics programming has changed from being conducted in a seasonal pool to a year-round small pool, and now to a year-round, municipally operated and funded swimming pool where I was located during the first six weeks of my research. Originally, the NWTAP was established and began to institutionalize aquatics in 1967 by delivering leadership training as well as water and boating awareness to various northern communities across the NWT (Szabo, 2002). However, the NWTAP's southern and Eurocanadian ideologies have been found to set-up a culturally-based hierarchy that enforces Eurocanadian leadership styles through, but not limited to, required certification and hiring criteria (Giles, Baker & Rousell, 2007). Like the Town of Hay River, the community of KFN/HRR has a history of hiring a southerner to operate its waterfront program (Szabo).

Summer Day Camp

Within KFN/HRR's, NWTAP has become locally run and swimming lessons are now a part of the community's Summer Day Camp (SDC). Like the original NWTAP, the SDC hires a southern lifeguard/aquatic instructor each summer to provide programming for local youth. The SDC diverges from the original intentions of the NWTAP, however, because swimming is only a smaller component of the SDC's overall programming. Generally, the SDC provides a variety of Dene and Euro-Canadian crafts and recreational activities through the summer months. KFN/HRR is where I spent the last six weeks of my fieldwork. The SDC provided my study with a window into Aboriginal women's leadership in recreation, as the SDC has historically hired two local Dene women as camp assistants (Government of the NWT, 1995; 1996).

Women and Leadership in Sport and Physical Activities

Scholars (e.g., Forsyth, 2005; Giles, 2004; 2005; Horn-Miller, 2005; Paraschak, 1995) have begun to contribute to literature pertaining to Aboriginal women's involvement in sport and recreation by documenting and analysing different aspects of Aboriginal women's lives and their past and present experiences in and of physical activity. As a result, there has been a disruption of meta-narratives serving white male interests that continue to dominate academic literature. The disruption is facilitated through resistance created by the recognition of discourses and counter narratives produced and used by women. It is hoped that the papers contained in this thesis will contribute to the existing disruption and erosion of narratives serving males interests by surfacing Dene women's leadership practices in recreation. First, however, it is important to examine briefly the historical context that informs such practices.

Aboriginal Women and Colonial Implications

Despite facing innumerable obstacles related, but not limited, to colonial ideologies supporting and enforcing patriarchy, hierarchies, as well as paternalistic discourses and practices, Aboriginal women have been inarguably marginalized but not defeated by the Government of Canada (Cassidy, Lord & Mandell, 2001; Lawrence & Anderson, 2005). Indeed, Aboriginal women across Canada continue to provide leadership in a variety of capacities and contexts, ranging from numerous community programs to negotiating treaties and banning the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCBs) (Nichols, 2004; Kafarowski, 2004; Langford, 1994; Thurston, Meadows, & Legendyk, 2004). My goal for this thesis is thus to infuse these often silenced voices into the broad area of leadership and, more specifically, the area of recreation in order to disrupt metanarratives that have presented leadership as an area reserved for white, middle and upper-class males in southern Canada.

Theoretical Framework

This project employed a two-prong theoretical framework that draws on Foucaultian and postcolonial theories. These theories align and inform one another by either focusing on power relations at the site of the individual (Foucaultian) or at the site of the locality (postcolonialism). In addition, each theory also can be utilized to focus on different modes and forms of power relations to identify areas and strategies for change (Weedon, 1987) and surface previously marginalized discourses surrounding Euro-Canadian and Dene women's leadership in two communities in the NWT.

Foucaultian Theory

Foucault (1975) stated that discourse is the site where power and knowledge come together to claim authority and exercise power that serves certain interest groups. Furthermore, he asserted that individuals circulate power through discourse production that informs and perpetuates claims to truth that come to be accepted as common sense/dominant discourse. Nonetheless, regimes of truth are inherently limited due to the fact that one can only represent a single truth or belief system. As a result, regimes of truth oppress alternative ways of knowing the world. Conversely, claims of authority that exercise power/knowledge that challenge and or resist dominant discourse can result in conceptual room where alternative discourses can exercise power/knowledge that acknowledges alternative truths (Foucault).

Giles and Forsyth (2007) have argued that Euro-Canadian researchers, like myself, can make valuable contributes to decolonizing Western research by utilizing Foucaultian theory in a responsible and sensitive manner. Foucaultian theory helped me to maintain a broad lens that actively incorporated power relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples throughout my data collection and analysis in order to acknowledge colonial regimes of truth that have marginalized women's leadership. Moreover, Foucaultian theory also helped me to

acknowledge power relations between myself and informants, between communities, as well as between informants, which assisted in the surfacing of non-dominant discourses surrounding Euro-Canadian and Dene women's leadership and influence in both the Hay River swimming pool and KFN/HRR's SDC.

An important strength for my research project that is associated with Foucaultian theory is how Foucaultian theory aligns with and complements postcolonial theory. More specifically, when Foucaultian theory is combined with postcolonial theory it actively takes local knowledge seriously, which was of utmost importance for my research. While Foucaultian theory can be employed to create conceptual space for non-dominant discourses on leadership, conceptual space does not necessarily equate to or result in behavioural and structural change. Therefore, it was necessary to utilize another approach, a postcolonial one, to enhance the probability that change could occur.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory began a movement whereby research focused on colonized groups and on legacies associated with colonialism. Postcolonial theory does not denote "a time after colonialism, but rather for me it represents more an aspiration, a hope, not yet achieved. It constructs a strategy that responds to experience of colonization and imperialism" (Battiste, 2004, p. 1). Postcolonial theories examine the various impacts of colonial discourses upon ways of knowing and power in order to enhance local agency of those who have been colonized. By studying the local history of the colonized, and not the colonizer's history, local residents' agency increases (Goss, 1996).

Various scholars have developed different aspects of postcolonial theory which have expanded applications and the development of practical solutions. Said (1979) and Bhabha

(1994) both shaped the development of postcolonial theory by utilizing poststructural elements found in the work of Derrida, Foucault and Lacan. Said (1979) employed and reworked Foucault's discourse analysis to explore how the East (the Orient) was "constructed in relation to the west in terms of discursive practices" (p. 240). Said's greatest contribution to postcolonial theory was his study of binaries (though some might challenge that his work simply enforced the Occidental/Oriental binary). The study of binaries offers a critical apparatus that concentrates on the intellectual and pedagogical ramifications of imperialism. When a space is opened up for "Other" discourses, strategies can be developed to move beyond discourse and into action. More recently, Smith (1999) explained that academics employ postcolonial theories for two primary purposes. Firstly, postcolonial theory can be utilized to decolonize or "write back" to Western academia. Secondly, postcolonial theories have been used to identify and broaden understandings regarding how colonialism has influenced Aboriginal people's lifestyles and ways of knowing and experiencing the world (Smith, 1999).

One limitation of postcolonial theory is that it has a history of neglecting the larger picture, which contextualizes local situations and discourses. For example, rarely does postcolonial theory account for the influences of capitalism (Goss, 1996). As a result, postcolonial researchers can neglect crucial variables that continue to perpetuate colonial discourses. Goss has argued that through discursive means scholars "have sought to go beyond colonialism and have failed to address adequately which historical influences and conditions remain" (p. 247). As a result, "few people have set in process projects of decolonization" (p. 247). There are multiple variables that continue to influence colonized populations and that require critical thought. For example, issues of gender equity and access to resources are not necessarily included in postcolonial theory. These variables can also influence local peoples by

differing degrees and are possible points of articulation that postcolonial theory often renders irrelevant because of its strict focus on colonial influence. Hence, Foucaultian theory can be interwoven to bring about a lens that can focus on non-colonial influences; thus, Foucaultian and postcolonial theories complement each other and combine to form the ideal theoretical framework for the study at hand.

Methodology

The methodology that informed this study is a combination of case study, ethnography and community-based participatory research (CBPR). In qualitative research, a case study “aims to understand the case in-depth in its natural setting, and recognizes the complexity in its context” (Punch, 1998, p. 150). The social phenomenon that was of interest to this case study is leadership.

The ethnographic approach that was used for the case studies at hand focused on observable behaviour and the discourses surrounding women’s leadership in the Hay River swimming pool and KFN/HRR’s SDC. The concept of culture, which Spradely (1980) refers to as a shared set of meanings, is central in ethnography. “Cultural knowledge that any group of people have is their knowledge map. Ethnography has developed with anthropology as the central strategy to study culture, and many anthropologists consider cultural interpretation to be ethnography’s main contribution” (Punch, 1998, p. 160). By using an ethnographic approach I was able to identify the leadership styles employed by both the Hay River swimming pool’s and KFN/HRR’s SDC employees. Any identifiable dissimilarity can be used to identify sites where further analysis can explore points denoted by counter discursive struggles (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). As such, these points of diversion informed recommendations to enhance

program delivery through possible revisions to the currently employed leadership model by attending to cultural disparities.

Community-Based Participatory Research

Community-based participatory research was also used to inform the case studies. Before community-based participatory research can be initiated, however, the researcher needs to establish credibility and trust by spending time building relationships with community members (Hecker 1997; Jacobson et al., 1998). Community-based participatory research “is a philosophy and method that seeks to engage people and communities in all phases of research from the conceptualization of the research to the dissemination of the results” (Fletcher, 2003, p. 32). A strength that is intrinsic to community-based participatory research is its proclivity to engage community members in the research process through consultations, including focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Local knowledge and local understanding(s) of the issues at hand obtained through formal and informal consultations with community members can enhance the community’s sense of investment and ownership in the research process and findings (Ortiz, 2003). Consequently, community members can help to design interventions that are informed by their knowledge systems and cultural ideologies (Fletcher, 2003). Fletcher stated that:

As a philosophy, CBPR is inclusive of different ways of seeing the world. It incorporates multiple perspectives. It recognizes local knowledge systems as valid on their own epistemological foundations...It takes a priori assumption that research and sciences are not value free. They can be used to help people help themselves in their daily struggles or they can be used to subjugate local opinion and action. (p. 32)

Hall (1992; 2000) has focused on the “participatory” portion of community-based participatory research to explain why and how researchers need to consciously study and negotiate power relations. It is necessary to negotiate power relations so that both researchers and participants can unmask and reveal power. When power is negotiated the researcher and participant can be of equal status and practice in power sharing. When power is shifted through knowledge seeking and surfacing, the researcher’s position as an expert is destabilized, and with increased participation there is a diminishment, though likely never the disappearance, of unequal status between the researcher and the informants (Jacobson et al., 1992). Research has illustrated that when power is shared the findings of a study are more likely to improve the lives of the oppressed and disempowered (Hall, 1992).

A potential limitation to community-based participatory research is that community members’ participation often carries more significance for the researcher than it does for the participants (Stone, 1992). The act of participating can be time consuming. As well, oppressed populations may need to invest the majority of their time into acquiring the basic necessities, instead of participating in the research (Agudelo, 1983; Rifkin, 1987). Consequently, potential participants who may possess rich information are “relatively inaccessible... [and] can easily be left out” (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1673).

While remaining cognizant of its shortcomings, CBPR was employed throughout my research process. For example, I initiated community consultations and gained community approval and support for the studies contained in this thesis. This approach was employed through consultations with elected members of both KFN/HRR and the Town of Hay River. In addition, I attempted to utilize a community-based approach to maximize community involvement through culturally-appropriate protocol to minimize the chance of breaching

cultural protocol. Due to the study being conducted during the summer months, which is when many community members leave town, it was a challenge to engage the community beyond interviews and one focus group in each community. Regardless, specific methods were utilized to surface and compile rich data.

Methods

Each tool was carefully chosen to ensure a logical progression from theoretical framework to data generation and analysis. Due to the small population in KFN/HRR and the Town of Hay River and the time constraints, 29 individuals participated in semi-structured interviews a focus group. Purposeful sampling was used to locate a sample population that was composed of Aboriginal women who were identified as community leaders, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal male and female lifeguards as well as local recreational directors. In addition, snowball sampling was employed with existing informants to recruit future informants through their acquaintances (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004). In total, eleven individuals (9 women and 2 men) ranging in age from approximately 15 to 75 years of age were interviewed. In addition, 18 individuals ranging in age from approximately 12 to 85 of age (9 women and 9 men) participated in one of two focus groups.

Each focus group and individual semi-structured interview was recorded on a cassette. Furthermore, a resident of KFN/HRR who was fluent in both South Slavey, the local Dene dialect, and English was hired as an interpreter and research assistant, thus ensuring that unilingual Slavey speakers (e.g., Elders) had the opportunity to participate in the project. The length of each interview session ranged from forty five minutes to an hour and half. The individual interviews were conducted in a safe, private location that was chosen by the informants. The

focus groups were held within the Town of Hay River and the community of KFN/HRR's boundaries at locations that were accessible to all participants.

I also conducted extensive participant-observation during my six weeks in the Town of Hay River and my six weeks in KFN/HRR. Participant-observation purportedly involves immersing oneself in a culture by participating in the lives of the research participants, while also striving to maintain a professional distance (Fetterman, 1998). The "professional distance" aspect of participant-observation has positivism at its core and, as such, I actively sought to build meaningful relationships with the participants in the research described herein in a manner more fitting with my CBPR methodology.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis was employed to examine power, gender, political and language relations represented in the collected data. Discourse analysis is a form of textual investigation that studies recorded communications through the analysis of text, while accounting for contextual influences (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997); when these variables are identified, the researcher can articulate and examine how their combined interactivity regulates what is and is not said, and, by whom, as well as investigate how language and text are used to serve certain interest groups (Brown & Yule, 1983). Discourse analysis also aids in identifying not only what is said, but also what is left unsaid. All recorded communications obtained during the focus groups and interviews were transcribed. Once the data were coded and organized, I analysed the data to identify contradictions or resistance to dominant discourses.

Thesis format

This thesis is presented in the "stand alone paper" rather than the "traditional thesis" format. Both chapters employ Foucauldian and postcolonial theory as theoretical lens to

understand the research project's findings; consequently, there is some unavoidable overlap between chapters (and this introduction). The first paper derives from the preliminary phase of the research that took place in the Town of Hay River over the course of six weeks. Initially, this segment of the research project was an attempt to understand why Southerners continue to be recruited to work in aquatic facilities throughout the NWT, with a particular emphasis on identifying and defining their leadership styles as lifeguards. However, during the first two weeks of fieldwork I began to look beyond identifying what type of leadership styles the lifeguards employed due to observations that indicated that lifeguards were altering their leadership style when Aboriginal youth were utilizing the swimming pool. As such, I moved towards critically addressing how lifeguards' leadership behaviours and the discourses that informed these behaviours had an impact on whether or not Aboriginal youth felt welcome at the pool.

The second phase of the research project took place in KFN/HRR. This phase of the research project sought to identify Dene women's leadership style(s) at the SDC. In addition, the study sought to identify how the Dene women assistants' leadership style influenced the SDC's programming as well as the Eurocanadian supervisor's leadership style, which in turn influenced the community-based program. While I realize that one cannot generalize from findings based on two individual's leadership behaviour, I nevertheless believe that my research findings are important in helping to understand the importance of women's roles as leadership in Dene communities and also in helping southern Euro-Canadians to understand how they can better engage Aboriginal communities in recreation programs.

Overall, both studies contribute to current literature by broadening understandings surrounding leadership styles and their influences on recreation programs in northern Aboriginal

communities. Certainly, given the health challenges faced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada's north, we cannot underestimate the importance of providing Aboriginal youth with strong, culturally-appropriate leadership.

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The Role of Leadership at the Swimming Pool in Town of Hay River, Northwest Territories:

How Discourses and Behaviours Intersect to Influence an Aquatic Environment

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Abstract

This paper examines the ways in which the authoritarian leadership style used by lifeguards on the pool deck at the Hay River Swimming Pool influenced Aboriginal youth's use of the facility. In particular, this paper questions if the cultural dissonance found between Aboriginal and Eurocanadian leadership skills, demands and styles result in lifeguarding appearing to be an unattainable and unappealing employment opportunity for many Aboriginal youth in Hay River. Foucaultian and postcolonial lens were used to understand how a lifeguard's leadership style and institutional racism can influence Aboriginal youth's use of a local pool and their considerations of lifeguarding as a potential job.

Introduction

A couple of weeks into my employment period/fieldwork at the pool in the Town of Hay River, I step onto the deck to start my shift for the day. As I walk on deck, I am warned about two youth that are regarded by some of the pool staff as “trouble” or “a pain.” I look over to see who the lifeguard is gesturing to, and it turns out that they are two young boys. They are making their way from the change room over to the hot tub that is on the opposite side of the pool. On my next walk around the pool I stop at the hot tub to talk with the two boys, who turn out to be brothers. During our chat I find out that a relative drops them off at the pool a couple of days a week, and after a few hours the same relative picks them up. The eldest of the two boys is very diligent about keeping track of time, so as not to miss their ride. I know this because one of the first questions he asks me is what time it is. They are too young to tell time by the clock that is hung on the wall next to the hot tub. So for the duration of their time at the pool they periodically ask me, “what time is it?” I’m impressed that at such a young age these boys are so responsible, probably due to necessity. I don’t, however, interpret their questioning as being “trouble” or a “pain.” Later, I inquire into why they were seen by my fellow lifeguards as such and I am told that they ask what time it is ALL THE TIME...One’s conclusion as to whether this is a sign of “trouble” or “a pain” is a matter of perspective. So what is it that led some of my colleagues to negatively perceive these boys, and what is it that led me to the contrary?

During the summer of 2007, I undertook a research project where I worked along side

other lifeguards at the swimming pool in Hay River, Northwest Territories (NWT). This was part of what was initially an attempt to understand the reasons why so few Aboriginal people work in aquatics in the NWT, with a particular emphasis on identifying what type of leadership style was predominantly employed by the facility's lifeguards. My early observations presented an opportunity to look beyond simply identifying what type of leadership styles the lifeguards utilized. Instead, I began to critically address how lifeguards' leadership behaviours and the discourses on which these behaviours are based had impacts on how welcoming the swimming pool was perceived to be by Aboriginal youth, and how it subsequently influenced their desire for future work at the Hay River pool.

Situating the Research

The Town of Hay River has a history that spans over a century. In 1892, Chief Chiatlo brought a group of approximately sixty individuals to the southern bank of Great Slave Lake to build log cabins and commence agricultural practices (Town of Hay River, 2004). In 1893, Chief Chiatlo asked missionaries to join the permanent settlement. The Anglican Church sent Reverend Thomas Marsh to the area, who was later joined by members of the Roman Catholic Church. After Marsh's arrival the settlement commenced building a church, residential school and nursing station (Town of Hay River). By the 1930s a vibrant fishing industry was in operation, the United States Army had built a gravel runway, and the Hudson's Bay Company had established a post for trading. In 1949 an all weather road was built linking the Town of Hay River to Peace River, Alberta (Town of Hay River). Following these developments, the Northern Transportation Company Limited established its main branch in the Town, consequently opening up opportunities for major trucking companies to operate out of the Town of Hay River (Town of Hay River). In 1962 the Canadian Coast Guard also chose Hay River as its main site for

operations that reached from Saskatchewan to the Arctic (Town of Hay River). In addition, a railway was completed in 1964. All of these expansions resulted in connecting the Town of Hay River to southern Canada and establishing the Town of Hay River as the “Hub of the North” (Town of Hay River). The Town of Hay River’s growth was not limited to developments in the commercial and governance sectors, but also included growth in recreation programs and facilities – most notably for the purpose of this research, a swimming pool.

The Town of Hay River opened its first above ground pool in the summer of 1968. Unfortunately, the pool burnt down after two days of operations when the arena that was housing the pool was engulfed by flames on July 4, 1968 (Mowat, 1968). The following year a waterfront program was started and operated for roughly three months during each summer until 1972. During the year of 1972, the same year that year-round pools started to be constructed in Yellowknife and Iqaluit (formerly also known as Frobisher Bay), a year-round pool came into operation and offered recreational swimming and instructional opportunities to Hay River residents. This swimming pool in Hay River operated until September, 9, 2006, when it was replaced by a larger year-round swimming that is a part of a multi-sport complex (Town of Hay River). The pool serves as a regional centre for aquatic training, with many smaller communities relying on the expertise of the Hay River pool staff to train and certify waterfront and pool staff in other communities that have been or continue to be affiliated with the NWT Aquatic Program (NWTAP).

NWTAP

The NWTAP is the NWT’s longest running and most popular recreational program (Szabo, 2002). To date the Program has officially been in operation since 1967 and swimming continues to be a popular recreation activity for NWT residents. The Program came into

existence because reports from NWT Health and Welfare showed an average of twelve drowning accidents per year, making drowning one of the leading causes of accidental death in the North (Szabo, 2002). In addition, the waterfronts and beaches across the NWT were primarily unsupervised.

In 1967 the Government of the NWT began to formally institutionalize aquatics in the NWT by funding the NWTAP, and the Program later devised two main objectives: drowning prevention and leadership promotion. Roland Gosselin, a former Government of the NWT employee who worked closely with the NWTAP for many years, stated that, initially, drowning was not the Program's largest area of emphasis, even though it was the impetus for the program. Instead, the focus was on recreation and leadership training (personal communication, June 29, 2006). Eventually, the NWTAP began collecting drowning statistics. A trend emerged from the statistics that illustrated that the NWT's alarming drowning rates were approximately ten times higher than the national average (Szabo, 2002). Shortly after, the NWTAP added an additional objective, which was to decrease the NWT's drowning rates.

The NWTAP offered aquatics programs throughout the NWT that were either held at waterfronts or in seasonal above-ground pools that were constructed for the summer months. The individuals hired for the purpose of operating and facilitating the NWTAP have historically been and continue to be recruited from southern Canada (Giles, Baker, & Rousell, 2007). In 1985 the NWTAP attempted to create leadership development strategies in the hope of enhancing and promoting aquatic leadership for northern youth between the ages of twelve to fifteen (Sanche, 1986). Due to a shortage of northerners who were trained as lifeguards and swimming instructors, individuals were recruited from southern Canada to run the seasonal above ground pools, waterfronts or year-round pools. These employees were provided with

guidelines that were meant to help them to recruit and train local youth to be future aquatic leaders. The guidelines loosely stated that the aquatic supervisors should “encourage the training and employment of local people in summer pool positions” (Szabo, 2002, p. 30). Despite the Program’s objectives and guidelines related to training northerners and developing local capacity, most individuals hired for the purpose of operating and running the NWTAP have been and continue to be from southern Canada. Indeed, Giles et al. (2007) stated that, “[t]he lack of local aquatics supervisors unequivocally illustrates the NWTAP’s historic and current inability to develop and sustain local leaders despite 40 years of operation under Euro-Canadian leadership” (p. 22).

One explanation for the lack of local leaders could be the differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ways of leading that have been found to result in difficulties in providing leadership training to Aboriginal youth. For example, Giles et al. (2007) and Giles & Baker (2007) have shown that these differences arise and are represented in the way the NWTAP structures knowledge and the type of knowledge transfer that it employs with respect to leadership style, training and program content. Furthermore, when fundamentally different leadership styles and ways of knowing the world come in contact, cultural dissonance can result from this interaction. Cultural dissonance can arise from and be perceived in the ways that people behave, speak, learn, lead or by the values and norms that are held by a particular group of people. At times, however, cultural differences result in cultural and/or conceptual clashes that impede knowledge transfer (Black, 2006) and thus, for example, the training of future aquatic leaders.

Cultural dissonance has been reported by both southern supervisors and Aboriginal community members who have participated in the NWTAP. In 1985 a report was compiled with

the hopes of improving the NWTAP's leadership training. This report highlighted barriers and successes that were being experienced by southern aquatic leaders who were spending summers in the North attempting to develop local aquatics leaders. In addition, the report aspired to provide guidance for southern supervisors to enhance future leadership training endeavours. However, these seemingly good intentions were cloaked in hegemonic ideals that privileged southern Euro-Canadian concepts of teaching, leadership and course content. For example, the report stated that the, "teaching methods used in other locations in Canada are not always successful in the N.W.T....in the past, Pool supervisors have found students inattentive, unmotivated, 'mentally not capable'. WHY IS THIS?...[and that] current teaching materials have a particular 'southern bias'" (Sanche, 1986, p. 7). Not only does this quote illustrate the teaching materials' shortcomings and cultural biases, it also illustrates the assumption that because students are inattentive and unmotivated they are inherently "mentally not capable" of gaining aquatics certifications. Rather than lacking the mental capacity to learn water safety, this paper seeks to understand if, instead, it is the cultural dissonance found between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian leadership skills, demands and styles that results in lifeguarding appearing to be an unattainable and unappealing employment opportunity for many Aboriginal youth in Hay River.

Literature Review

Leadership Theories

Leadership theories have traditionally focused on men and have been based upon either trait, behavioural, contingency, or transformational theories. The variety of leadership concepts that are in existence often creates a situation where leadership becomes conceptually abstract and ultimately ambiguous (Pfeffer, 1977). The subjective nature of leadership is represented by the diversity in discourses used in leadership theories and illustrates the poststructural stance that

there is no one “Truth” (Weedon, 1987) and hence no one kind of leadership. Hogan, Curphy and Hogan (1994) stated that current leadership models are developed from, and designed for, white educated males working in the Western workforce. As such, current leadership models do not account for the ethnic diversity that comprises our rapidly changing work environments, and instead reflect the exclusion of non-Western cultures in Western leadership models. One solution for the current discontinuity between leadership models and the diverse groups for which they are intended would be to create and use new models that are more representative of a variety of leaders, which, in turn, would result in the model being more culturally appropriate (Horner, 1997; Wilson, George, & Wellins, 1994). In turn, aspiring leaders whose beliefs and behaviours do not align with white, educated, male ideals surrounding leadership styles would have a greater chance of attaining leadership training and opportunities.

Culturally Sensitive Approaches to Leadership

Horner (1997) has argued that if leaders are to be successful in leadership roles, they must understand the current cultural environment, and specifically groups’ desired goals and the meanings that are attached to these goals. Schein (1985) found that for leaders to be successful, they need to be able to identify an organization’s cultural context and have a clear understanding of what the cultural context within the organization means to its members. Up until now the NWTAP has not taken steps to ensure that recruited southern aquatic leaders understand how local residents define and perceive leadership. Instead, it has been assumed that because the NWTAP’s leadership model (which is derived from lifeguard and swimming instructor training models developed by the Lifesaving Society of Canada and the Canadian Red Cross Society) works in southern Canada, it will also work in remote, Aboriginal communities in Canada’s North; this is, however, problematic. In light of these research findings and the limited success

that the NWTAP has had when attempting to develop local aquatics leaders, it is imperative that the leadership model used by the NWTAP reflects communities' cultures and values.

Baron's (1995), Malloy and Nilson's (1991) and Nichols' (2004) research represent three significant studies that indicate why it is important to study cultural definitions of leadership. Baron's research focused on cultural management and how it is an important aspect of leadership. Baron argued that it is necessary for a leader to understand her/his employees' cultural characteristics and to have a capacity to adapt to the employees' specific cultural needs while meeting the organization's goals. Baron's research also illustrated the resulting success on the part of organizations as a whole when an organization incorporates the employees' cultural customs into its operations. Nonetheless, the "application of these ideas is difficult, in part due to the organizational specificity of culture and the difficulty in defining culture. One conclusion that can be drawn is the leaders need to work within the culture to be most successful" (Horner, 1997, p. 273).

Taking cultural dimensions of leadership out of business culture and placing them in an Aboriginal healthcare setting, Nichols (2004) worked with Native American nurses and found that the nurses' notions of community leadership were significantly different in comparison with Euro-American ideologies. The nurses defined leadership as meaning being active within their community as a friend, mother and as a caregiver. Leadership for these women was also found to require self-actualization, spirituality, and a vision, as well as the ability to listen, communicate, inspire, role-model, and mobilize people.

Moving into the sport sphere, Malloy and Nilson's (1991) research examined leadership styles for Aboriginal youth within the realm of sport. These authors conducted a study that compared the leadership behaviour preferences of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal athletes who

participated in a volleyball championship hosted by the University of Regina. The study found that Aboriginal participants preferred their coaches to embody less autocratic behaviour than did the non-Aboriginal participants, and that both Aboriginal athletes and coaches reported that having strong communal and kinship ties is of great importance. Malloy and Nilson's findings are similar to those of Nichols' (2004) in that both studies indicated that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples display different preferences for and ways of leading. Both studies also highlighted the fact that leaders, regardless of their specific job description, need to have a strong connection to and support from their community. In addition, both studies showed that Aboriginal leaders are more likely to be supportive rather than dictatorial. The above findings are of particular interest to this paper because recruited (typically white) southern aquatic leaders continue to use Euro-Canadian leadership styles to run aquatics programs in Canada's North. I argue that by doing so the NWTAP fails to understand how lifeguards recruited from the South can foster an environment of exclusion that can prevent Aboriginal youth from receiving aquatic training and feeling welcome while utilizing an aquatic facility.

Theoretical Framework

Concepts and theories stemming from Michel Foucault's work can be utilized to explore meanings associated with power, knowledge, subjugated knowledge, and discourse, all of which are important to the study at hand. To understand a particular phenomenon, in the case of my research, leadership, it is necessary to study the systems of knowledge that produce discourses about the phenomenon, i.e., those pertaining to leadership. As a result, it is also necessary to employ postcolonial theory to inform Foucaultian theory to ensure that discourses produced by local Aboriginal people are acknowledged and taken seriously (Goss, 1996). Postcolonial theory can open up conceptual space to understand how power and knowledge work together to shape and control discourses and practices

surrounding leadership in the swimming pool in Hay River. Postcolonial theory does not denote “a time after colonialism, but rather...represents more an aspiration, a hope, not yet achieved. It constructs a strategy that responds to experience of colonization and imperialism” (Battiste, 2004, p. 1). As such postcolonial theory can be utilized to examine the various impacts of colonial discourses upon ways of knowing and power relations in order to enhance local agency of those who have been colonized (Goss). Postcolonial and Foucaultian theories are interwoven for this paper to form a theoretical framework that can address colonial legacies and move towards decolonizing leadership discourses.

Knowledge production is steeped in power relations. Foucault (1975) understood power as something that cannot be given, exchanged or recovered; instead, power circulates through individuals and is the site of articulation in discourse. Foucault also stated that discourse is the site where power and knowledge are brought together, because power and knowledge join together and surface as discourses that are produced to serve the interests of specific groups. An important characteristic of the power/knowledge nexus is that “relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse” (Foucault, 1975, p. 93). Due to the fact that there are various ways of knowing the world, there is an inherent limitation to all discourses; one discourse cannot represent truth for all individuals and cultures. Hence, if dominant discourses go unchallenged, alternative ways of knowing are subjugated, and dominant discourses maintain their authority and control over power/knowledge production. Foucault (1975) theorized that subjugated knowledge, which is knowledge that has previously been discounted, can surface when non-dominant discourses resist or challenge dominant discourses. Challenging dominant discourses can result in conceptual space where alternative discourses can be exercised to claim

power, authority and truth, which can potentially result in discourse production that acknowledges alternative truths.

Some may argue that Foucault's (1975) work is too tightly associated with a European perspective to be of use in research with Indigenous communities. Instead, I follow Giles (2005) and Giles and Forsyth (2007) who argued that when a Foucaultian approach is used in a sensitive and responsible manner, one can understand power, subjugated knowledge, disciplinary practices, and constraints in a way that valuable contributions can be made to research conducted with Aboriginal peoples, particularly when conducted by non-Aboriginal scholars. Furthermore, when Foucaultian and postcolonial theories are interwoven with one another, the researcher's capacity to acknowledge the various power relations that are present in research, including relations that exist between the researcher and the community, and the differences between communities and community members, is enhanced.

Given that the NWT has been - and to great extent continues to be - a place of colonial domination by Euro-Canadians, a postcolonial approach is important to the project at hand. Postcolonial theory began a movement where research began to focus on colonized groups and on legacies associated with colonialism. Both Said (1979) and Smith (1999) have shaped certain aspects of postcolonial theory and its application. Said (1979) explored how the East (the Orient) was "constructed in relation to the west in terms of discursive practices" (p. 240). Arguably, Said's (1978) greatest contribution to postcolonial theory was his interrogation of binaries (though, arguably, he reinforced binaries with Occidental/Oriental). The study of binaries offers a critical apparatus that concentrates on the intellectual and pedagogical ramifications of imperialism. When a space is opened up for "Other" discourses, strategies can be developed to move beyond discourse and into action.

More recently, Smith's (1999) work illustrates how Indigenous scholars have and continue to "write back" to Western research methodologies, institutions and intentions. Her work acknowledges that research is an activity that is produced and supported through power structures that work to privilege and serve colonial interests. Furthermore, her work highlights the necessity for Indigenous research and scholars to continue to challenge Western research and scientific regimes of truth. By doing so she theorized that Indigenous research, with its agenda oriented around social justice, can reclaim control over Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Accordingly, Indigenous research as "processes of peoples" necessitates transformation, decolonization, healing and mobilization to continue to move towards self-determination, which is its main goal.

Giles (2005) has argued that non-Indigenous researchers, like her and me, have a place in postcolonial research and can contribute to the decolonization of Western academia. She argued that decolonization can be brought about by interweaving Foucaultian and postcolonial theory to form a unique theoretical lens that can help non-Indigenous researchers conduct valuable research with Indigenous communities "in sensitive, responsive, and responsible" (p. 12) manner. By doing so non-Indigenous researchers can contribute to the surfacing and privileging of subjugated ways of knowing and being that can challenge and criticize colonial regimes of truth. Furthermore, the use of an approach informed by postcolonial and Foucaultian theory allows for the acknowledgement of power relations, particularly between colonizer (e.g., southern-based lifeguard) and colonized (young Aboriginal patron), and also allows for the recognition of the ways power/knowledge, via discourses and behaviours, are used to create and sustain privilege or lack thereof, in aquatic settings. Thus, despite being a Euro-Canadian researcher, I believe that an approach informed by Indigenous approaches to research as well as

Foucaultian theory can make a contribution the project of decolonization, which includes the decolonization of leadership practices at, for instance, a northern swimming pool.

Methodologies and Methods

Ethnography was the methodological approach employed for this study. Ethnographers write about and describe people and culture by “using firsthand observation and participation in a setting or situation. The term ethnography refers both to the process of doing a study and to the written product” (Ellis, 2004, p. 26). One strength of ethnographic studies is that they can create space for participants, such as Aboriginal youth, to speak and be heard. Another strength is that ethnography can be used in “exposing, critiquing, and transforming inequalities associated with social structures and labelling devices (i.e., gender, race, and class) [that] are consequential and fundamental dimensions of research and analysis” (Barton, 2001, p. 906).

During the fieldwork phase of my research I lived and worked in the Town of Hay River for three months during the summer of 2007. While living and working in the Town of Hay River I sought out opportunities that would allow me to build relationships and trust with community members, as well as to engage in participant observation, specifically as an employee at the local aquatics facility, where supervisors and staff knew that I was conducting a study. Participant observation and informal conversations with community members were two of the key methods that were utilized for data collection. The time that I spent building rapport and trust with patrons and pool employees proved to be extremely helpful for my research. I found that interacting and being available within and outside the pool environment allowed participants to choose the time and space for interaction with me. Indeed, informal/unstructured conversation proved to be the most informative of all the methods utilized and provided the richest data sets for this study. Other methods that were used included archival research, interviews, and one

focus group. Importantly, before commencing an interview or focus group I obtained informed consent from all participants and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s).

Seven individuals ranging in age from approximately 15 to 65 years of age agreed to be interviewed. In addition, 10 individuals ranging in age from approximately 12 to 35 of age also agreed to participate in the focus group session. In total six females and one male participated in interviews, while five females and five males participated in the focus group. The main focus of each interview and the focus group was to ask participants about the type of leadership style they felt the pool environment promoted and about the kinds of leadership style lifeguards employed while on the pool deck. When initially asking interviewees about leadership styles, more often than not participants were unsure of how to respond; specifically, they did not know what I meant by leadership style and how they pertained to the pool. Common responses were, “[u]m as far as how aquatics increase the amount of local leaders or how...I am sorry I don’t...?” (Christy Davis, personnel communication, July 19, 2007) or “[l]eadership, um...?” (anonymous personal communication, August 28, 2007). These responses illustrated two important points: the necessity to use alternative means to identify and differentiate leadership styles, and that leadership is an extremely broad and poorly understood concept. Moss (1988) supported these findings when he stated that, “there is no agreement about what leadership is, why it occurs, how it is developed, or how it should be assessed” (p. 1).

Regardless of the lack of a single, coherent understanding of leadership in academia and the public alike, I needed to bring about a clearer concept of leadership before I could effectively ask participants to identify and differentiate leadership styles in the Hay River aquatics facility. Accordingly, I utilized the three leadership styles identified in Lewin, Lippert and White (1939). Each of the three leadership style’s unique characteristics provided a framework for the

participants to identify which leadership styles were being employed in the Hay River swimming pool. While, certainly, this approach to categorizing leadership is dated and somewhat simplistic, it provided a useful heuristic for enabling participants to understand leadership. According to Lewin et al. there are three leadership styles: authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic) and delegative (laissez-fair). These authors defined authoritarian leaders as people who give clear and concise directions, enforce a clear hierarchy between themselves and followers and make all decisions with little to no input from other group members. Authoritarian leaders provide personal praise or criticism to group members and engage in-group activities for demonstrative purposes only. When leaders take advantage of this style of leadership, they are often perceived as being bossy, controlling and dictatorial. A participative leadership style is characterized by offering guidance to group members while also seeking direction from others. Leaders that follow this style of leadership still reserve the final say in all decisions. In addition, participative leaders provide objective praise or criticism to group members and partake in group activities through a supportive role with minimal engagement in the activity. Lewin et al. identified individuals using participative leadership styles as being the most effective leaders. Lastly, delegative leaders leave all decision making up to group members and offer little to no guidance. Delegative leaders provide minimal to no praise, criticism, or interaction with group members. Furthermore, this leadership style often results in inadequately defined roles and a lack of overall motivation. Using the above information, I created a pamphlet that outlined the above three leadership styles and used it during my interviews and focus group, asking the participants, who included pool staff, patrons, and parents of patrons, to identify which leadership style(s) was/were used by lifeguards on the Hay River pool deck.

Results

I watch my fellow lifeguards that are on deck with me as they shake their heads when two youth enter the pool. When this type of exchange occurs between lifeguards it is a way to informally indicate to one another that we need to keep a close eye on the incoming youth. These two Aboriginal boys are known as regular troublemakers at the pool. They are aware of what the lifeguards think of them and of the extra surveillance that is placed on them. Throughout the youths' time at the pool they manage to run on deck, run up the slide stairs, cause the slide to overflow, exchange dirty looks and words with the lifeguards and wrestle with one another more times than I can count. Yes, they broke various rules and regulations during their time at the pool, but they had a lot of fun and no one was hurt - including themselves. The only thing that I observed to be hurt was the lifeguards' sense of competence and leadership capacity due to their inability to maintain an orderly, predictable and organized aquatic environment - or in other words, their inability to exercise power to attain desired results. Meanwhile, the youth successfully exercised power and broke the pool's rules and regulations without hurting themselves or others. The youth exercised power by effectively contradicting and resisting notions of authority and surveillance that justify and legitimize the pool's rules and regulations as well as the lifeguards' authority.

In this study I found that the discourses and behaviours that were produced by many lifeguards at Town of Hay River's swimming pool promoted and supported the utilization of an authoritarian leadership style through the use of rigorous rules and regulations. Furthermore, I was told and also witnessed how an authoritarian approach to leadership, especially when

abused, resulted in some Aboriginal patrons perceiving the pool as an unwelcoming environment. Of particular interest to the project at hand is how some of the pool's staff modified their authoritarian leadership style upon the entrance of certain Aboriginal youth into the pool.

Authoritarian Leadership

While working at the pool and engaging in conversations with lifeguards and community members, I observed how lifeguards appeared to automatically follow a specific set of rules and regulations that were predetermined and predominantly inflexible, which are both characteristics of an authoritarian leadership style. Supporting my observations was a statement made by a pool employee Rebecca Thompson, who explained that each lifeguard, "has an assigned task and you really cannot deviate from those at all even if the tasks may not be assigned to the person best suited to them" (personal communication, June 25, 2007). Furthermore, when an authoritarian leadership style was enacted there were certain behaviours that were associated with maximizing the lifeguards' ability to maintain control over patrons. For example, common authoritarian behaviours that were embodied by the majority of the lifeguards included shouting, commanding, keeping surveillance over patrons, as well as maintaining and monitoring access to and control over aquatic toys and equipment. These behaviours are part of the larger skill-set that are acquired and refined through training in order to attain certification and employment as a certified [National Lifeguard Service (NLS) certification] lifeguard.

Furthering the support and embodiment of an authoritarian approach to lifeguarding is the training and certification process that is required to become a NLS lifeguard, which entails knowing what, how and when to determine what course of action is necessary of oneself and others (Lifesaving Society of Canada, 2005), which also fosters an authoritarian approach to

leadership. Participants who were lifeguards stated that there was a certain leadership style that was perceived as more appropriate while on the deck lifeguarding. Rebecca Thompson shared with me that, “as a lifeguard you are in a position of authority, so I think you have to be able to communicate that through, you know, through body language, through your, your verbal communication” (personal communication, June 25, 2007). Thompson went on to explain what leadership techniques helped to enhance her lifeguarding abilities while on deck:

I am loud and rowdy [laughs] and I think the experience I have [as a lifeguard] has sort of made up for that [being a female], so I have learned to be more assertive and more um, you know, more, there’s more presence than I used to have...I think for a lot of them [lifeguards]...they are more set in...one type of communication style, you know, they tend to be the ones who tend to be very authoritative, very sort of in your face, they tend to make great lifeguards. But they scare the snot out of kids when they are teaching. Whereas the ones who are a little bit softer a little more shall we say touchy feely, um, feel good types tend to have trouble enforcing the rules as lifeguards (personal communication June 25, 2007).

Not only were authoritarian leadership techniques considered acceptable at the Hay River pool, they were also perceived as being professional and were thus promoted as appropriate conduct. On the other hand, the opposite approach, denoted by walking over to a patron and talking, not shouting, were predominantly perceived as soft and highly ineffective, and those employing them were thought to have “trouble enforcing the rules as lifeguards.” Hence, it was deemed more acceptable for the staff to promote and embody an authoritarian leadership style, which was assumed to ensure that the facility operated to a large degree in a predictable, organized and

orderly fashion. However, an authoritarian leadership styles influence is not confined to the facility's order and predictability. I found that an authoritarian approach has the potential to have an influence on patrons' desire to be in the aquatic environment.

Modifications to an Authoritarian Leadership Style

On numerous occasions I observed how the pool was often an unwelcoming environment for many youth using the aquatic facility, but I had not heard someone speak about until a community member talked about the pool and how the facility was perceived and experienced by some Aboriginal youth in the community. That information, included below, was pivotal to my research because this individual did not shy away from sharing with me what was not formally talked about by any other informant, but was something that I observed almost every day while working at the pool:

Davina: As a lifeguard I find the pool to be extremely restrictive...

Judith: I am so glad to hear you say that because I thought it was me, honestly.

I was, like, maybe I just have something against that building or something but...it's not a good place. But, anyway I tried to encourage kids to go to the pool 'cause I loved the pool as a kid and as an adult. But they say it's not fun, they don't like it. (Judith Reid, personal communication, July 10, 2007)

As mentioned above, when a lifeguard embodied an authoritarian leadership style her/his behaviours predominantly included shouting, commanding, keeping surveillance over patrons, as well as maintaining and monitoring access to and control over aquatic toys and equipment. However, I observed that when Aboriginal youth entered the pool, lifeguards began to abuse their authoritarian approach to leadership. Accordingly, common techniques utilized by the lifeguards in response to the Aboriginal youths' presence was *increased* shouting, commanding,

heightened surveillance, as well as an escalation in threatening to suspend access to aquatic toys and the pool.

In contrast to some patrons' perceptions regarding the lifeguards' enforcement of extreme rigidity as being unnecessary, the lifeguards were more likely to deem such behaviour necessary to avoid having certain accidents or incidents occur while on deck. For example, a senior lifeguard stated that, "I would stop it [any potentially dangerous behaviour] before it gets there [to a point where the youth could become injured] because I know what is going to happen" (Beth Smithers, personal communication, July 08, 2007).

The lifeguards, to some degree, used disciplinary techniques to maximize control, prevent accidents and/or incidents from occurring while lifeguarding. Nevertheless, there appeared to be a disconnect between what lifeguards perceived they were doing (i.e., providing a safe environment) and what the some Aboriginal patrons perceived (i.e., the unnecessary use of disciplinary practices in an attempt to control them and to stop them from having fun). Moreover, when lifeguards enhanced/abused their authoritarian approach it was found to negatively influence how some Aboriginal youth perceived the aquatic environment, and in turn appeared to influence whether or not they would consider the pool for future employment opportunities.

Leadership and Future Employees

Some community members noted the lifeguards' authoritarian leadership style and how this specific approach influenced the aquatic environment and future employees. Judith Reid, who is Aboriginal, shared that she perceived the pool as being, "very, very strict...very limiting around where kids can go and where they can't go and what they can do...In fact my kids don't even like to go to teen swim because it's not fun" (personal communication July 10, 2007).

Furthermore, she went on to share that her daughter, “has never really looked at it [the pool] as a great place to work, I think partly because it is very regimented in terms of the types of roles that people have” (personal communication, July 10, 2007). Certainly, the staff’s regimented and authoritative leadership style, which was heightened with Aboriginal youth, did not escape notice.

Certain techniques were reported to, “scared the snot out of [the] kids” (Rebecca Thompson, personal communication, June 25, 2007), and can be argued to align with an authoritarian leadership style that is often perceived as being bossy, controlling and dictatorial (Lewin et al., 1939). Of particular interest are my observations regarding the way that the majority of the Aboriginal youth avoided lifeguards while using the facility, and how this related to the ways in which Aboriginal youth reacted against any attempts made by lifeguards to impede the youths’ access to certain aquatic toys, equipment, or activities. I was not the only one who observed this situation. A local Aboriginal mother who frequented the pool also observed the tenuous relationship between many lifeguards and Aboriginal youth.

During one of my shifts at the pool I had the opportunity to ask this mother whether or not she observed a difference in the way that lifeguards interact with Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal youth. In a soft but stern voice she said, “oh, we see how they treat us differently” (anonymous communication, August 17, 2007). In addition, Judith Reid also shared that she has witnessed many lifeguards’ negative attitudes towards Aboriginal youth (personal communication, July 10, 2007). Certainly, the lifeguards who modified their authoritarian leadership approach to be more severe when Aboriginal youth entered the facility contributed to whether or not many Aboriginal patrons perceived the aquatic facility as welcoming.

Discussion

The fundamental question that this project was originally designed to answer was, “what type of leadership style is being used by lifeguards in the Town of Hay River?” This question seemed simple and straightforward; however, it created space for more chaotic issues to surface. As time passed it became increasingly clear that a lifeguard’s leadership style was related to how s/he exercised power while on deck. Furthermore, I observed how these two factors (leadership and power) influenced whether or not many Aboriginal youth felt welcome at the pool. As a result, the research study moved beyond leadership styles to broader questions surrounding how one’s leadership style and ways of exercising power can result in institutional racism that can influence whether or not an aquatic facility is perceived as welcoming and an appealing place for future employment.

Leadership in an Aquatic Environment

Many of the Aboriginal youth who were patrons at the Hay River pool were perceived by lifeguards as threats to their ability to ensure and maintain a safe aquatic environment. At various times I observed lifeguards expressing frustration or irritation when Aboriginal youth used the facility. Many Aboriginal youth, especially the ones living on the nearby reserve who came into town to swim, were often the ones perceived as the biggest threats to the lifeguards’ ability to maintain order and safety. The lifeguards’ roles in contributing to the youths’ behaviours were unproblematized, when in fact both the lifeguards and the youth co-created and often strained the relations that resulted in the swimming pool becoming a place where many Aboriginal youth felt unwelcome. Nonetheless, lifeguards as community role-models and employees hold a unique position of responsibility and influence that is expressed through their leadership style. In turn, their leadership style and how they exercise power/knowledge can contribute to eliminating or

exacerbating tense relations between lifeguards and many Aboriginal youth. These strained relations pose a unique challenge for the Hay River pool and also provide insight into why the NWTAP and the Town of Hay River still predominantly rely on recruiting lifeguards from the South.

Leadership and Exercising Power

The use of an authoritarian leadership style aids in the implementation of certain technologies, such as disciplinary techniques, that aim to shape patrons into what Foucault (1975) referred to as docile bodies. Foucault described a docile body as one “that maybe subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (p. 136). Certain techniques have been developed and used to discipline and shape individuals into docile bodies. These techniques can be used to dominate and control people and, as such, align with an authoritarian leadership style and its goals to command, direct and control. Furthermore, in an aquatic setting an authoritarian’s need to control also necessitates the identification of individuals who might destabilize the lifeguards’ ability to exercise power; as a result, certain individuals are labelled as troublemakers.

Once troublemakers were identified by the staff, I observed how the lifeguards moved toward using an excessively authoritarian leadership style that took advantage of their position of authority in order to enhance their capacity to command and control. Thus, many lifeguards used disciplinary techniques characterized by increased yelling, commanding, and surveillance of certain patrons who more often than not were Aboriginal youth. As such, the lifeguards were afforded the opportunity to exercise their power in such a way as to demand the performance of apparently safe behaviours. When the Aboriginal youth at the Hay River pool resisted becoming docile bodies, situations often arose where certain remarks and behaviours produced by lifeguards led to the creation of an environment where Aboriginal youth did not always feel

welcome. For example, lifeguards often stated that toys would be taken away or not provided or access to the pool suspended if the lifeguard-approved norms of decorum were not followed. In addition, increased surveillance was often placed on (predominantly Aboriginal) youth who were identified as troublemakers. Disciplinary techniques like yelling, disapproving looks, time-outs and suspending access to the facility were frequently used to enforce dominant discourses that aligned with the pool's rules and regulations. These means of disciplinary techniques were perceived by the lifeguards as necessary in order to maintain a safe aquatic environment.

The use of the disciplinary techniques outlined above often had the opposite effect than they were intended to yield. For example, I observed Aboriginal youth actively resisting and/or contradicting lifeguards when the lifeguards increased their surveillance. Hence, many Aboriginal youth reacted against the lifeguards' attempts to dominate them by teasing to or actually breaking the pools rules and regulations. Rather than surmising that the Aboriginal youth were inherently incapable of behaving "properly," it is fruitful to examine the ways in which the lifeguards' controlling behaviours elicited the youths' responses.

Situating Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Relations

Concerns about non-Aboriginal control over Aboriginal peoples extend far beyond aquatic environments. The Government of Canada has facilitated linguistic, cognitive and cultural imperialism by establishing laws such as the Indian Act and the development of residential schools. The above examples are only two of numerous actions that were intended to indoctrinate Aboriginal people to non-Aboriginal ideologies, thereby attempting to abolish traditional knowledge and culture represented in Aboriginal people's value systems, practices, languages and worldviews (Cassidy, Lord, & Mandell, 2001; Government of Canada, 1996).

Colonialism and its associated practices can also be found in the field of aquatics. Every day I observed how dominant discourses about unruly and undisciplined Aboriginal bodies actively lent discursive authority to Euro-Canadian lifeguards and their perceptions of safety and decorum when they were deciding what was and was not acceptable behaviour in the pool. When rules and regulations are breached a lifeguard is automatically warranted to take action in order to maintain a “safe” environment. These actions, as noted above, are steeped in dominant, Euro-Canadian discourses that are based on hegemonic ideologies that prescribe who is at high risk of causing trouble, which often appeared to be denoted by one’s ethnicity.

Moreton-Robinson (2004) astutely stated that, whiteness has assumed the status of an epistemological a priori in the development of knowledge in modernity by universalising humanness. Whiteness as an epistemological a priori provides for a way of knowing and being that is predicated on superiority, which becomes normalised and forms part of one’s taken for granted knowledge. (pp. 75–76)

Discourses in circulation at the Hay River pool often served the interests of the Euro-Canadians employees (whiteness). My research findings suggest that one of the main factors that led to an unwelcoming environment for some Aboriginal youth is the fact that the swimming pool staff is Euro-Canadian/southern-based in its approach and the employees are predominantly non-Aboriginal peoples. Thus, the Town’s facility is operated for and by Euro-Canadian southerners based upon programs and discourses that are produced by and serve predominately Euro-Canadians/southerners’ interests or concerns, which results in the fostering an aquatic environment that facilitates judgment and condemnation through institutional racism.

Institutional Racism

Cole (2004) defined institutional racism as, “[c]ollective acts and/or procedures in an institution or institutions (nation-wide, continent-wide or globally) that intentionally or unintentionally have the effect of racialising, via ‘common sense’, certain populations or groups of people” (p. 39). Cole further explained how common sense works when he stated that, “[t]he rhetoric of the purveyors of dominant discourses aims to shape ‘common sense discourse’ into formats which serve their interests” (p. 39). While lifeguarding, I witnessed many incidents of institutional racism that often resulted in disciplinary actions directed towards Aboriginal youth based on the “common sense discourse” that some patrons, specifically Aboriginal youth, are more prone to disrupting the maintenance of a safe and controlled aquatic environment than other patrons. These dominant discourses result in an apparently common sense call for increased surveillance by lifeguards directed towards Aboriginal youth. These beliefs informed the discriminatory behaviours enacted by the lifeguards that were explicitly directed towards Aboriginal youth who were under the lifeguards’ watchful eye. Such surveillance elicited even more “problematic” behaviours (i.e., resistance) from the young Aboriginal patrons. Issues surrounding institutional racism require immediate consideration in order to begin to identify probable causes of and ultimately stop the perpetuation of destructive ways of knowing and interacting with Aboriginal youth in an aquatic setting.

Foucaultian theory (1975) argues that at some point the non-dominant discourses in circulation can gain enough authority to be able to effectively challenge and change dominant discourses/common sense. It is hoped that the challenges to dominant discourses contained in this paper will provide conceptual room where alternative discourses can be exercised to claim power and authority, which can result in discourse production that acknowledges and represents alternative ways of knowing, being, and most importantly for the study at hand, leading.

Returning the Results

In December 2007 I returned to the Town of Hay River to present my results and to receive feedback from participants and the general public. When I presented the results there was initial resistance from the attendees to the idea that some of the pool's staff members were producing discriminatory discourses and the idea that there was actually a need to eliminate such practices. After some discussion, the managers decided that the staff should receive awareness training regarding what role(s) one's leadership styles play in supporting and perpetuating discriminatory discourses. The manager requested information on racial stereotypes, their impacts, and how to break down racial barriers in order to create a more welcoming environment for all participants, especially Aboriginal youth. In addition, the manager astutely suggested that the lifeguards could stop basing interactions with Aboriginal youth upon past experiences (regimes of truth). Consequently, it was suggested that lifeguards could resist dominant discourses that tend to determine who potential troublemakers are by fostering interactions on a day-to-day basis that does not carry such histories. Hence, management recognized and supported the need for the incorporation of alternative ways/techniques of leading to adapt the lifeguards' current leadership style. It was hoped that such changes could result in an aquatic environment that is more welcoming and enhance the possibility that Aboriginal youth would spend more time at the pool and later consider undergoing training and attaining future employment as a lifeguard.

Conclusions

This study facilitated the identification and documentation of the leadership style that was embodied by lifeguards at the Hay River swimming pool, as well as the related consequences for Aboriginal patrons. Hence, this study enhances current understandings of leadership in the realm

of recreation and leisure, specifically aquatics. In particular, this paper sheds light on the ways in which certain forms of leadership can be used to facilitate exclusion and to excuse institutional racism in the highly restrictive and controlled aquatic environment, which, in turn, may dissuade potential Aboriginal youth from going to the pool, becoming skilled swimmers, and from undertaking lifeguard training. Addressing the shortage of northerners who become lifeguards is thus more complex than building swimming pools and offering training. Recreation professionals must invest time in understanding and adapting to the cultural contexts in which leadership programs – such as lifeguard training – are offered if such programs are to be successful in attracting, training, and retaining Aboriginal youth.

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Displacing Authoritarian Leadership in K'atlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve, Northwest
Territories: The Influence of Dene Women's Egalitarian Leadership on Colonial Discourses and
Practices within a Summer Day Camp

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Abstract

The ethnographic study contained in this paper adds to the scant amount of literature pertaining to Dene women's leadership. More specifically, this paper identifies and discusses two Dene women's ways of leading as assistants at the Summer Day Camp (SDC) in K'atlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve, Northwest Territories. This study found that the women's egalitarian leadership style influenced both the success of the SDC's programming and the southern supervisor's leadership style, ultimately resulting in the SDC's community-based programming. In addition, this paper deconstructs authoritarian leadership to broaden understandings of Dene women's leadership style.

“It is hard to explain a lot of the Dene culture, therefore we can’t just talk to you and expect you [the researcher] to understand. A lot of our culture has to be lived and experienced to understand.” (Daniel Sonfrere, Elder, August 22, 2007)

This paper seeks to identify and discuss Dene women’s leadership and does so in the context of the Summer Day Camp (SDC) in K’atlodeeche/Hay River Reserve (KFN/HRR), Northwest Territories (NWT), Canada. Because there is very little research discussing Aboriginal women’s leadership, and even less articulating Dene women’s, this particular area of academic literature is still in its infancy; nevertheless, the scant literature only scratches the surface of the vital roles and the influence that Dene women have in their communities and on their nations’ overall health and well-being. Indeed, as the Native Women’s Association of Canada (2007) has stated, “Aboriginal women are the backbone of their communities and Nations and that the wellness and strength of the women are reflected in their communities and Nations” (online). The study contained herein uses Foucaultian and postcolonial theories to help to broaden current understandings of Dene women’s roles and styles of leadership in an effort to begin to erode the apparent invisibility of and ignorance associated with Aboriginal women, and especially Dene women, and their invaluable roles as community leaders.

Review of Literature

Situating the Research

The NWT’s first reserve, KFN/HRR was negotiated in 1974 by Chief Daniel Sonfrere. The Reserve consists of fifty-two square miles on the south shore of Great Slave Lake: “The Reserve is a vibrant and prosperous community with a Band Membership of 525 and on Reserve population of 270” (Deh Cho First Nations, 2004, online). According to former Chief Sonfrere, “In the past, we did not live here. We live mostly at Buffalo Lake. We would come into town

[Hay River] by boat in the spring and go back in the fall” (personal communication, August 22, 2007). Since KFN/HRR was established as a First Nation the community has gone on to develop various successful business operations that include the Ehdah Cho Store (retail), Evergreen Forestry, and Tu Cho Gha Contracting and Office leasing. Various other organizations have been established and still flourish in the community: the Dene Cultural Institute, Nats’jee Keh Treatment Centre, and the K’amba Carnival Committee and the Summer Day Camp (SDC). Each summer KFN/HRR hires a person from southern Canada to plan, implement and manage the SDC, a day program for youth who live on the reserve, from May until the end of August, after which time the supervisor – typically a university student – heads back to the South.

SDC

The SDC offers numerous southern-based and Dene-based cultural teachings and activities for local youth. In addition to a supervisor hired from the South, the community of KFN/HRR also hires two local residents to assist the supervisor in creating the SDC’s programming. According to available records and residents’ recollections, the assistants have predominantly been local Aboriginal women (Government of the NWT, 1995; 1996). The SDC provides a safe and supervised environment for youth ranging from approximately five to fourteen years of age who live in the community of KFN/HRR. The SDC primarily offers opportunities to participate in a variety of crafts, cultural and recreational activities, including water-based activities, which thus require the supervisor to have swimming instructor and lifeguarding qualifications. In addition, the SDC provides healthy snacks and as well as a lunch to all participants throughout the weekdays. Though the SDC has seen yearly turnover in the supervisor position, stability – and I will argue leadership - has been maintained through the repeated hiring of two particular female Aboriginal assistants.

Western Leadership in Sport and Recreation

Research exploring leadership principally includes women in one of two ways: through the examination sex differences or by disregarding them all together (Korabik, 1990). Both methods have been detrimental to women pursuing leadership roles within the field of sport (Burke & Hallinan, 2006). Recent research has started to breakaway from the above approaches by focusing on women as leaders through frameworks influenced by Foucault's understanding of the power/knowledge nexus (Burke & Hallinan, 2006) and through cultural frameworks (Paraschak, 1995; Schroeder, 1995). The success of the above research studies illustrates both the necessity of studies that broaden understandings of women's leadership and that the theoretical framework employed in the paper at hand is both appropriate and useful.

Aboriginal Women and Traditional Roles

Aboriginal women's traditional roles in Canada have been unequivocally affected by colonialism and patriarchy. The Indian Act, which was instated in 1878, was one of the early steps taken by the Government of Canada that resulted in the proliferation of patriarchal ideologies and the control of Aboriginal women's roles, identities, and movements on and off reserves (Forsyth, 2005; Horn-Miller, 2005), all of which were and continue to be enabled through exercises of power. The Indian Act was used by the Government of Canada to force the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples, who were thought to be inferior and uncivilized (Cassidy, Lord & Mandell, 2001). The Indian Act created a paternalistic role for the Government of Canada that resulted in Aboriginal peoples being stripped of their political sovereignty (Cassidy et. al., 2001). This document has had lasting ramifications for many Aboriginal peoples; however, due to the embedded patriarchal ideologies, the impact has been and continues to be greatest for Aboriginal women.

The sexist nature that was and continues to be embedded in the Indian Act was founded on notions that were rooted in racism and patriarchy (Government of Canada, 1996). For example, Aboriginal women “were not allowed to vote in band elections, could not own or inherit property, and were treated as the ‘property’ of their husbands in many contexts” (Government of Canada, online). In effect, the Indian Act allowed the Government of Canada to legally create a platform that gave Aboriginal women recognition through others, such as their husbands. The indirect recognition of Aboriginal women through a male figure-head produced discourses and hierarchies that worked to perpetuate and support paternalistic and patriarchal control over many Aboriginal women.

Section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act systematically stripped Aboriginal women of their Indian status when they married non-status males. Section 12(1)(b) allowed the Canadian government to unjustly proclaim that if an Aboriginal woman married a non-Indian she and her children automatically lost their status. In contrast, and clearly illustrating gender discrimination, males with Indian status retained their status regardless of who they married, and passed their membership onto their wife and children (Government of Canada, 1996). Jeannette Lavell, an Ojibway woman from the Wikwemikong First Nation, was the first woman to challenge section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act (Harvard-Lavell & Lavell, 2006). Thirteen years later, in 1985, Lavell finally won her Supreme Court challenge against the Government of Canada (Harvard-Lavell & Lavell). As a result, Bill C-31 came into existence in an attempt to rectify past injustices by allowing the reinstatement of those who lost their status. “However, the process and criteria for first-time registration are confusing - and still offensive, because authority to determine who can be recognized as a status Indian still lies with the federal government, not with Aboriginal people” (Government of Canada, 1996, online). Hence, even though several amendments have

been made, the Indian Act and its legacy continue to shape many of the roles and discourses associated with Aboriginal women.

Research focusing on Aboriginal women in Canada has started to explore their leadership roles. Thurston, Meadows, and Legendyk's (2004) research examined Aboriginal women's strategies to improve health interventions and programs in various communities, including reserves in Alberta, Canada. The researchers' findings illustrated that the women's efforts primarily focused on enhancing the health and wellness of other community members and that they facilitated a community focus by being positive role models within their communities and families. In addition, the study found that through external education, women develop different tools and take these tools back to their communities to help bring about positive and healthy change. Women also learn about traditional knowledge and ways and pass this knowledge on to their community as a form of healing (Thurston et al.). Thus, Aboriginal women are often positive role models and leaders in their communities who work towards enhancing their communities' overall well-being.

Nichols (2004) studied Native American nurses and found that each nurse had a unique definition of how leaders lead, all of which differed significantly from Western notions of leadership. The nurses incorporated a holistic worldview into their definition of leadership, which included spirituality and well-being. In contrast, Western definitions of leadership state that a leader is supposed to provide instructive motivation or domination over other individuals in order to obtain a specific objective or level of productivity (Drath & Palus, 1994). These two distinct approaches to leading reflected how one's belief-systems and cultural context can influence one's ways of being, knowing and most importantly, leading. In addition, literature

also illustrates that Aboriginal women and men take on different leadership roles depending on the context and the type of issue that requires attention.

Formal versus Informal Leadership

Langford (1994) found that male Chiefs deal with issues of sovereignty and occupy formal positions as band and council representatives. Aboriginal women recognize that these are important issues that require attention; however, Langford also found that Aboriginal women believe that there needs to be a balance between attention given to social, economic and cultural issues. Due to their informal leadership positions at the local familial level, Aboriginal women have not been given recognition for their pivotal role in issues such as negotiating self-governance with the Government of Canada (Langford). Consequently, informal leadership roles held by Aboriginal women can result in the marginalization of their voices and in turn obscure their leadership contributions. Other examples of informal leadership roles carried out by Aboriginal women include leading community events, health, finances, household matters, education and curriculum development (Status of Women Canada, 2003).

Egalitarian Leaders

Hassan and Silong (2008) have shown that egalitarian leaders are primarily concerned with establishing connections and relationships that are built upon mutual respect and trust. As leaders their role is not to make decisions for others; instead, they encourage a decision-making process that fosters open dialogue and consensus before decisions are made (Hassan & Silong). In addition, egalitarian leaders present themselves as community resources that are "open and supportive and non-authoritarian to other people's needs" (Hassan & Silong, p. 367). Women are commonly associated with an egalitarian leadership style, especially since the professions that they occupy predominantly focus on 'helping' others (Wood, 1994). Historically, and still

today, Aboriginal women continue to assist their communities and nations by incorporating certain characteristics of the egalitarian leadership style described above (Langford, 2004; Nichols, 2004; Thurston et al., 2004).

Recent research has opened up discussions regarding Dene women; however, these studies have not taken steps to move beyond simply identifying women's historical or current roles in Dene communities (e.g., Fox, 2002; Goulet, 1998; Mease, 2006). Fajber (1996) studied Dene women's roles as healers/nurturers in the community of Fort Good Hope, NWT. Her study stands alone as it discussed the pivotal roles that many Dene women occupy as community healers that guide their community towards enhanced health and wellness. Nonetheless, because past research focused predominantly on male leaders while overlooking or marginalizing women's roles as leaders, more research is required to widen our narrow understandings of the ways that Dene women lead, which forms the backbone of their communities and influences those around them.

The above literature has illustrated that Dene women might experience leadership differently than, for example, southern-based, Eurocanadian men, due to their gender, culture and worldviews. Thus, it is highly probable that there are differences between Eurocanadian day camp leaders and Dene day camp leaders, and between male and female Dene day camp leaders. These differences can provide invaluable insight into what leadership approach/style could be used to enhance a southern supervisor's leadership and also to implement culturally appropriate programming in northern Dene communities like KFN/HRR.

Theoretical Framework

Foucaultian and postcolonial theories inform the research study presented herein. Foucaultian and postcolonial theories are brought together in this paper to create a theoretical

lens that can focus on both the site of power relations and discourses (Foucaultian), as well as at the site of the locality/community (postcolonialism). When Foucaultian and postcolonial theories are interwoven conceptual space is opened up that can be used to help to better understand how colonial discourses have influenced Dene ways of understanding and experiencing the world. Furthermore, this theoretical framework can also provide insight into how and where Dene discourses have resisted or challenged colonial discourses. As this study seeks to understand how Dene women's leadership was displayed in a SDC that was run by a Eurocanadian man, it is important that this study's theoretical framework provides the basis for understanding how colonial and local discourses interact and influence one another through the exercise of power/knowledge.

Foucault (1975) understood power as something that cannot be given, exchanged or recovered; instead, power circulates through individuals and the site of articulation is in discourse. The circulation of certain discourses results in individuals accepting those discourses as common knowledge/truth that can then dominate the individual's ways of knowing and behaving. Nonetheless, there are numerous ways of knowing and experiencing the world. Hence, all discourses are intrinsically limited, as one discourse cannot represent all cultural and individual belief-systems/truths. Furthermore, experience/thought "is produced in the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and the forms of subjectivity available within a particular culture" (Ambrosio, 2008, p. 266). Thus, changing one's cultural location can necessitate alteration(s) to one's subjectivities, influencing discourse production and practices. In addition, Foucault (1988) also explained that individuals can alter their ways of knowing and experiencing the world (subjectivities) through "technologies of the self." Technologies of the self permit individuals to effect their own means or with the help of others a certain number of

operations on their own body and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immorality (Foucault). The above aspects of Foucaultian theory are vital to this paper as they helped to surface the Dene assistants' leadership style, while also providing insight into how the women's discourses and culture influenced the southern-based supervisor's work and behaviour.

Some academics argue that Foucaultian theory (1975) is inappropriate for research that focuses on Aboriginal topics and/or people because his theories and concepts are too closely linked to Western/colonial discourses. However, Giles (2005) and Giles and Forsyth (2007) explained that Foucaultian theory can make valuable contributions to academia especially when utilized by non-Aboriginal researchers, like Giles and me, who work with Aboriginal people and communities. When Foucaultian theory is employed in a responsible and sensitive manner it can contribute to the decolonization of Western discourses by critiquing power relations (Giles & Forsyth), as well as discourse production. Furthermore, when Foucaultian and postcolonial theories are interwoven it can enhance the researcher's awareness of the different types of power relations that might exist between community members, between communities and between the researcher and the community.

Postcolonial theory began a movement whereby research focused on colonized groups and on legacies associated with colonialism. For example, Moreton-Robinson (2004) stated that:

it is white myths of progress and development that need to be confronted and/or resisted, for although modernity may have been beneficial to western society, it has gone hand-in-hand with repression and exploitation. This repression has been especially savage on colonized groups as enlightenment philosophy embraced ideologies that justified processes of colonization and assimilation. The colonizing

project was seen as 'right and just' as it brought 'primitive' societies up to par with 'superior' civilizations. (p. 3)

Smith (1999) described postcolonialism as an "analysis of imperialism" that "writes back" to colonialism from the margins in order to "decolonize our [Indigenous] minds, to recover ourselves, to claim space in which to develop a sense of authentic humanity" (p. 23).

Furthermore, Smith explained that scholars have employed and continue to employ postcolonial theories to conduct two types of critiques the uniquely work towards the above objectives.

Firstly, scholars utilize postcolonial theories to draw upon the notion of authenticity in order to document and understand how Indigenous peoples knew and experienced their world before colonial contact and influence. Inherent to this use of postcolonial theory is the perspective that "[Indigenous peoples] did not ask, need or want to be 'discovered' by Europe" (Smith, p. 24).

Secondly, postcolonial scholars use postcolonial theory to critique and analyze how Indigenous peoples were colonized and what colonization means to their past, present and future.

This paper utilizes elements of both critiques described above in order to more fully understand Dene women's leadership by taking into consideration their traditional and current roles as leaders in KFN/HRR. Furthermore, by fusing postcolonial and Foucaultian theories together a theoretical framework is formed that can acknowledge colonial legacies within the community's SDC as well as move towards recognizing and decolonizing Dene women's leadership by surfacing discourse surrounding their roles as community and SDC leaders.

Methodologies and Methods

In this project I used both ethnography and community-based participatory research as methodological approaches. Ethnographers write about and describe people and culture "using firsthand observation and participation in a setting or situation. The term ethnography refers both

to the process of doing a study and to the written product” (Ellis, 2004, p. 26). Community-based participatory research was also employed throughout my research process. Fletcher (2003) noted that community-based participatory research “is a philosophy and method that seeks to engage people and communities in all phases of research from the conceptualization of the research to the dissemination of the results” (p. 32). A strength that is intrinsic to community-based participatory research is its proclivity to engage community members in the research process through consultations, including focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Local knowledge and local understanding(s) of the issues at hand obtained through consultations with community members can enhance the community’s sense of investment and ownership in the research process and findings (Ortiz, 2003). Consequently, the members can help to design interventions that are informed by their knowledge systems and cultural ideologies (Fletcher, 2003). For example, I conducted community consultations and gained Chief and Band Council’s approval and support for this study prior to its start. Furthermore, because the research study was community-based, it was flexible and allowed maximal community involvement and culturally appropriate protocols.

During the fieldwork phase of my research I lived and volunteered in the KFN/HRR for six weeks during the summer of 2007. While living and volunteering in KFN/HRR I sought out opportunities that would allow me to build relationships and trust with community members, as well as engage in participant observation, specifically while volunteering with the SDC, where supervisor, Michael Hundt, and the assistants, Pat Ross and Trisha Coon, knew that I was conducting a research study. In addition, by interacting with the SDC staff outside of the SDC environment I had the opportunity to build friendships that brought invaluable insights into the interviews, focus group questions, and protocol. For example, through informal conversations I

learned that inquiring about women's *roles* rather than their *leadership* better facilitated the surfacing of discourses surrounding women's leadership styles in KFN/HRR. In addition, I learned about how cultural protocols should be followed when asking for teachings and guidance from Elders. I found that when I allowed myself to be vulnerable and humble, by not making assumptions or judgments about peoples' ways of behaving and knowing, I was able to build relationships and trust with certain community members. These individuals were key to the study at hand as their insights and knowledge guided this study. Hence, by establishing respectful connections with community members I was able to obtain informed consent to conduct interviews and a focus group session.

In total I conducted four semi-structured interviews (3 female, 1 male) and one focus group session with seven Elders (three female, four male) and one adult woman, the research assistant, who contributed as a participant/facilitator. The information that I was given through these forms of data collection, in addition to participant-observation, helped to foster the surfacing of rich data surrounding Dene women's leadership and how their particular style was oriented towards community members' concerns and needs. Furthermore, the focus group was attended by local Dene Elders. The Elders' contributions, and particularly the oral histories they shared, helped to ground the study within a historical context by providing critical information regarding Dene ways of knowing and experiencing before and after colonial contact. Oral histories that were given during both the interviews and the focus group were extremely important sources of information and provided rich data. Oral histories have traditionally been and continue to be the means by which Indigenous peoples, "have inscribed their experiences on the historical record, and offered their own interpretation of history" (Perks & Thomas, 1998, p. ix). The final method for gathering data was archival research. The public library in Hay River as

well as the Dene Cultural Institute in KFN/HRR both contained books and articles that provided information on local histories and peoples.

The interviews and the focus group were designed to open up conceptual space to discuss two specific topics: Dene women's leadership style and how their leadership styles influenced the SDC supervisor and programming. The questions that I asked emerged from previous research that illustrated cultural dissonance between southern aquatic and northern Aboriginal leadership styles (Giles, Baker & Rousell, 2007). Giles et al. theorized that southerners' attempts to transfer aquatic knowledge and skills to local Aboriginal youth participating in northern aquatic programming was impeded due to southerners' and local Aboriginal people's disparate ways of leading and learning. Hence, the study at hand was intended to broaden understandings of Aboriginal women's leadership to better understand how one's leadership style can enhance and/or impede the southern supervisor's capacity to plan, implement and manage the SDC in KFN/HRR.

Results

Aboriginal Women's Leadership Style in SDC

After spending several weeks volunteering and engaging in participant observation along the side of the SDC's supervisor, Michael, and the two assistants, Pat and Trisha, informal conversations and observations began to surface information that indicated that the Dene women assistants for the SDC employed a very different leadership style than Michael. Accordingly I observed how the Dene women utilized an egalitarian leadership style along with experiential learning techniques while Michael employed an authoritarian leadership style. Michael reported feeling that his authoritarian leadership style was isolating him from the community, thus necessitating changes to his leadership style. He also shared that the adaptations that he made to

his leadership style enhanced his capacity to connect with Pat and Trisha and the broader community.

Periods of participant observation that were conducted when the assistants were leading activities provided key opportunities to learn about the assistants' egalitarian leadership style at the SDC. As mentioned above, Pat and Trisha appeared to intertwine their teaching and leading roles; consequently, their egalitarian leadership style placed them in the position of guider, not an authority figure as an authoritarian leader. In addition, the assistants' ways of leading and teaching incorporated cultural knowledge/traditions as well as a focus on community needs and concerns, which provided the supervisor with the necessary information and guidance to be able to successfully help lead, plan and implement a community-based SDC. The ensuing sections highlight the sequence of alterations that Michael made to alter his authoritarian leadership style to employ a more egalitarian leadership style. Indeed, the study's findings illustrate how Michael moved towards a different approach to leading by building friendships (connections), engaging in open dialogue, followed by the building of mutual trust and respect between him and the assistants. Ultimately, these changes placed the community first through the utilization of local expertise and knowledge that helped to fostered community-based programming.

From Isolation to Friendship

Prior to arriving in KFN/HRR, the SDC supervisor, Michael, had no previous experience or connections with Canada's North. Nonetheless, shortly after his arrival he noted that his "biggest challenge [as the SDC supervisor] was getting connections [because] any well run program always has its connections in the community" (personal communication, August 20, 2007). Hence, Michael noted that his ability to be an effective supervise was linked to his capacity to connect and build relationships with the community. Furthermore, before Michael

could make connections within the community he observed that he would have to adapt his current leadership style which was contributing to his isolation. For example, Michael reported that:

I had to change dramatically...[t]he dominant personality that I am, the leadership style [that I use]...I like to tell people what's going on and then make sure it happens...[instead I had to start]...talking more then just about work...and truly becoming a friend with them [the assistants] instead of just being co-workers...I think that was what I had to change the most because otherwise I would have been an island and I would have been an island that sank fast. (personal communication, August 20, 2007)

The above quote illustrates two important points. Firstly, Michael observed that the community of KFN/HRR, and more specifically Pat and Trisha, did not support or respond to his authoritarian leadership style, resulting in his seclusion from them. Hence, Michael's need to connect with the assistants preceded his decision to make "dramatic" changes to his leadership style in the hopes of eliminating his isolation. Secondly, the above quote illustrates that Michael initiated alterations to his leadership style by building friendships with Pat and Trisha.

From Friendship to Dialogue

Michael's connections with the Pat and Trisha enabled him to branch out further into the community, resulting in additional relationships with numerous youth and a few Elders. These relationships provided vital opportunities, upon which Michael capitalized, to engage in open dialogue and learn about Dene culture as well as how it could be incorporate into the SDC. Pat Ross observed how Michael had "opened it [dialogue] up [by asking] for a lot of input" (personal

communication, August 09, 2009). As a result, at least twice a week the SDC provided programming that incorporated cultural activities and teachings that were led by the assistants.

From Dialogue to Trust and Respect

When Pat and Trisha led cultural activities that taught the youth, for example, about the environment around them, or how to make dreamcatchers, beading or bannock, Michael and I had an opportunity to observe, experience and learn about the assistants' leadership style. When I asked Michael how he understood the Dene women's roles in the SDC, he explained that:

[t]hey [the local assistants/Aboriginal women] are the leaders that you have to have, 'cause if you didn't, your organization, or community, or whatever would fail...However...they are quiet and reserved...but they are...very good at what they do and without them the community would fail, any community would fail.

[They are v]ery good at guiding. (personal communication, August 20, 2007)

Michael's statement illustrates two points. Firstly, Michael observed that the Pat and Trisha were employing experiential learning techniques to effectively guide the youth through activities and to teach certain skills and knowledge. For example, when the assistants led an activity they created a learning environment where the youth could learn from watching, doing, listening and/or experimenting with the guidance of the assistants. In fact, the SDC dedicated one week to activities and teaching that focused on Dene cultural knowledge and practices. An Elder led and also employed experiential learning techniques to teach the youth about making offerings, trapping, drying fish, as well as for what local plants were and continue to be used.

Secondly, Michael's statement illustrates that he had a keen understanding of how critical the Pat and Trisha, as Dene women, were to the successful operation of the SDC. Certainly, it is not a stretch to say that Michael, Pat and Trisha established a certain level of mutual respect and

trust between one another. Michael's efforts to build relations, engage in open dialogue, learn about Dene culture and the community's needs, and ability to build trust and respect helped him to shift towards a more appropriate leadership style.

Community First

Pat and Trisha put the needs of the community's youth above personal or organizational agendas, a practice that they linked to Dene women's community involvement. For example, Pat explained that:

from my experience...I have had all types of jobs and you know sometimes I care about what kind of job it is and then other times I do not care because it is...a job, and I am...building skills and gaining experiences from them...women usually step-up [to do things and]...women seem to take the route for the community...they do the volunteering...they pull things together...they do planning and...they are always out there showing people that they're there
(personal communication, August 09, 2007)

Like Pat and Trisha, Michael learned to perceive the community's needs as the primary factor that should guide the SDC's programming. For example, I observed how Michael, Pat and Trisha shared the leading of certain activities; which resulted in programming that combined Dene and Eurocanadian crafts, and recreational activities/teachings that included aquatics – with only the latter being within Michael's area of expertise.

Discussion

According to Foucault (1975), when dominant discourses are produced and circulated they can function to suppress opposing discourses, ways of living, and ways of experiencing the world. Nonetheless, suppression does not equate to elimination because all individuals, dominant

or oppressed, maintain their ability to exercise power/knowledge that can contradict, reject, or support dominant discourses. Since contact colonialism has influenced the suppression of many aspects of Aboriginal people's way of knowing and acting, including the importance of Aboriginal women's roles (Government of Canada, 1996). Regardless, as illustrated in the results section of this paper, Dene women, like Pat and Trisha, have continued to inform ways of leading (egalitarian leadership style), appropriate programming (cultural content) and teaching/guiding (experiential learning techniques) in KFN/HRR's SDC that resist and challenge colonial/authoritarian ways of leading and discourses that prioritize men and Eurocanadian forms of leadership. In the ensuing sections, I employ Foucaultian and postcolonial theories to examine dominant (Western) discourses surrounding leadership and provide further insight into how and why the Dene women assistants' practices influenced the transformation of the southern supervisor's authoritarian leadership style and success of the SDC.

Troubling Dominant Discourses

Based upon Michael's description of the leadership style he used, he aligned with an authoritarian leadership style. When an individual employs an authoritarian leadership style she/he enforces a paternalistic hierarchy that places the leader on top who functions to make decisions, communicates commands to and control over the followers (Bass, 1990; Vroom & Yetton, 1973; & Yukl, 1989). However, after Micheal's arrival in KFN/HRR he reported that he decided that it was necessary for him to modify his leadership style because if he did not he "would have been an island that sank fast" (personal communication, August 20, 2007). Since many northern communities continue to practice group consensus (White, 2006), it is not unexpected that Michael felt isolated and decided to displace his authoritarian leadership style and to replace it with an egalitarian approach. Efforts to build relations, engage in open dialogue,

learn about Dene culture and the community's needs, and ability to build mutual trust and respect are all signs of an egalitarian leadership style (Hassan & Silong, 2008), one that aligns with the assistants' way of leading.

Historical Dene Discourses and Practices

Both of the SDC assistants, Pat and Trisha, embodied and modeled ways of leading that aligned with an egalitarian leadership style, which gave Michael the opportunity to listen to and observe leadership according to Dene cultural practices. According to the Elders who participated in the focus group and also according to academic literature, historically, Aboriginal communities, including Dene, have been and continue to be non-confrontational in their approach to decision-making/leading (Goulet, 1998; White, 2006). Decisions are predominantly reached through a process that expects each member to participate in meaningful sharing, listening, collaboration and compromise in order to reach consensus. Furthermore, northern Aboriginal societies tend to be non-hierarchical and egalitarian (White). In contrast, colonial governments utilize an alternative decision-making process that filters through institutional structure(s)/organizations based upon Weberian bureaucracy. Such an approach functions to centralize authority and decision-making processes and promotes patriarchal and paternalistic power relations. In addition, Weberian bureaucracy is founded on a premise commonly referred to as "command and control" (White, p. 408) that promotes and supports one-way communication from the top down.

Decentering Weberian Bureaucracy and Authoritarian Ways of Leading

Weberian bureaucracy and authoritarian leaders are similar in that both enforce a hierarchy, one-way communication that is based upon command and control, and support centralized decision-making and authority. Furthermore, these approaches align to support an

authoritarian leader who ensures that followers do not deviate from the organization's or government's regulations and/or interests. Consequently, an authoritarian leader systematically isolates her/himself from other group members. When Michael arrived in KFN/HRR using non-dominant (for KFN/HRR) leadership practices, his ability to claim authority and exercise power as the SDC supervisor were severely compromised.

According to Foucaultian theory, and reported by Michael, once he was situated within a new culture and was exposed to Dene ways of being, knowing and leading, he arrived at a conceptual and discursive intersection. Hence, Michael had to choose whether to challenge and resist dominant discourses as an authoritarian leader, or to adapt his behaviour to exercise power/knowledge in the form of local and dominant Dene culture and thus become an egalitarian leader. Consequently, with the guidance provided by Pat and Trisha, Michael commenced transforming his previous leadership style. Furthermore, Michael's alterations illustrate the assistants' ability to effectively claim authority and exercise power/knowledge as informal leaders.

Colonial Impacts: Informal Leaders but not Powerless

Dene peoples were traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers, where men and women had equally important roles in their community (Goulet, 1998). Simplistically stated, in contrast to the past, community members currently live on a specified section of land known as a reserve that was designated by the Government of Canada, which became KFN/HRR. A specific section of Canada's government known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) administers and manage monies, programs and services to reserves through Band offices, which in turn distribute monies and run numerous services and programs for Band members. This colonial bureaucracy reinforces a hierarchical, patriarchal and paternalistic relationship with colonial government

officials (INAC) on top and the Chief, Band Council, and Band members underneath. The above structure is embodied in KFN/HRR's Band Office, which is headed by a male Chief who has six male Band Councillors underneath him. Not surprisingly, this form of bureaucracy has and continues to push women, like the SDC assistants, to the margins of formal leadership positions and restricts them to informal positions (Pilkington, 1992).

Maracle (2003) has stated that Aboriginal peoples themselves have internalized belief systems that are supported by Indian Act practices. This internalization perpetuates an ideology that perceives males with the title Chief or Band Councillor as de facto community leaders. "Many of us know that this is not always true, but public policy and negotiations with government continue to support this system of leadership, and often to the exclusion of women" (Maracle, p. 73); certainly, there are parallels between the situation Maracle has described, the SDC, and the Aboriginal community it serves. Women in KFN/HRR typically do not occupy formal leadership positions, which may have contributed to them not being viewed as legitimate candidates for SDC supervisor position. Indeed, despite being long-term assistants, it appears that no one had contemplated moving either of the assistants to the supervisor's position.

Despite lacking formal recognition, Neubert (1999) and Pielstick's (2000) studies reported that informal leaders, like the SDC assistants, can influence other group members as well as enhance formal leadership practices - like the displacement of Michael's culturally inappropriate authoritarian leadership style. Thus, even though colonial beliefs and practices have had lasting implications by marginalizing numerous Aboriginal women, like Pat and Trisha, their ability to lead through informal leadership positions as egalitarian leaders was not eliminated. That is why when colonial notions surrounding formal leadership are decentred, as this paper attempts to do, we can begin to surface discourse and

behaviours that highlight the critical and integral roles that many Aboriginal women occupy as informal and egalitarian leaders.

Dene Discourses and Practices in the SDC

The assistants' egalitarian discourses and practices circulated ways of claiming authority and power that aligned with KFN/HRR's members' historical ways of leading: through consensus and guiding. The circulation of Dene discourses and practices by the Dene women assistants in KFN/HRR, and in particular in the SDC, subjected Michael to dominant discourses that communicated Dene norms that enforced the need for leaders to build relationships, to engage in open dialogue and to build mutual respect and trust with community members. Hence, when Michael attempted to exercise power through authoritarian leadership by attempting to command and control, the assistants actively resisted him. Consequently, Michael found himself isolated from the assistants and the rest of the community. Michael, a southern supervisor, thus observed that it was necessary to employ what Foucault (1988) termed technologies of the self to successfully displace his authoritarian leadership style.

Technologies of the Self and Learning to Embody Alternative Discourses

According to Foucault (1988), technologies of the self permit an individual to displace certain ways of knowing, being, and acting in order to transform and attain an alternative state of being. In Michael's case, technologies of the self facilitated the displacement of his authoritarian leadership style as he built friendships and then connections that were followed by mutual trust and respect. These transformations led to a broadening of Michael's knowledge of KFN/HRR's community members' needs and concerns and also assisted in establishing a successful SDC that was community-based and focused. Consequently, Michael altered his authoritarian leadership style to attain another way of being. Furthermore, Michael's ability to effectively employ an

egalitarian leadership style troubles dominant literature that has a tendency to claim that an egalitarian leadership style is a female form of leadership.

Egalitarian Leaders

Whether a woman self-identifies as Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, research continues to understand female leadership styles predominantly through an egalitarian lens that unveils caring for others, open dialogue, collaboration and altruistic traits (Hassan & Silong, 2008; Langford, 2004; Nichols, 2004; Thurston et al., 2004; Wood, 1994). The research study at hand does not claim to transcend this line of thinking. Nonetheless, this study troubles the claim that one's egalitarian leadership style is derived from one's gender being female.

According to existing literature and the information given to me by Elders, Dene communities were historically egalitarian; every community member was interdependent with each other, their environment, and inherently equal (Goulet, 1995 & White, 2006). Secondly, as I have highlighted, Michael, a Euro-Canadian male, came to embody an egalitarian leadership style. These findings displace the claim that to be female is to be egalitarian and to be egalitarian is to be female. Hence, the above examples indicate that egalitarian traits and/or leadership style are not a consequence of one's gender; instead, I argue that an egalitarian leadership style might, to a large degree, depend on the origin of a leader's mandate. If a leader works for an organization, one's mandate is usually pre-defined and reflective of the organization's objectives. Thus, a leader seeks to fulfill the objectives by imposing the mandate and expecting individuals to follow and conform. As a result, the community's needs become secondary to attaining the organization's goals. On the other hand, if a predefined mandate does not exist, is open to interpretation, or is requested to be defined by the community, the leader can go to the group of concern and through a process of collaboration, open dialogue, consensus and mutual

respect, can define new objectives based on the community's concerns. In conclusion, I argue that the origin of responsibilities can necessitate the leader to command and control (authoritarian leadership style) or, alternatively, require the leader to seek out guidance and collaboration (egalitarian leadership style). Hence, it is highly probable that one's leadership style may be contingent upon to the origin of the leader's mandate, and not specifically his or her gender.

Conclusion

This paper has troubled colonial discourses and practices that continue to surround leadership in order to contribute to broadening understandings of Dene women's leadership. In particular, this study has found that the SDC assistants used an egalitarian leadership style and occupied leadership positions, despite the fact that they were not given the formal leadership position of supervisor. In fact, they were not only leaders to the program participants, but also to the formally recognized supervisor who hailed from southern Canada. This study has shown that one's leadership style can play a critical role in enabling or impeding an individual's ability to claim authority and exercise power/knowledge as a leader of a program provider in a Dene community – in this case, KFN/HRR. Certainly, this study's results reinforce the idea that in order to achieve success in an Aboriginal community, one needs to understand and adopt community leadership discourses and practices.

I would like to end here with two final thoughts. Firstly and ironically, it was the Aboriginal women who guided the developed of Michael's leadership skills – instead of the other way around, as is typical for a supervisor/supervisee relationship. Hence, it is important to remind oneself that sometimes the ones leading are the ones following and vice versa. Secondly, and of utmost importance to further research, is the need to displace the shadow that colonialism has cast upon many Aboriginal women, a shadow that marginalizes their critical roles as community leaders and limits their employment options.

It is vital that recognition and value is given to egalitarian leaders, especially women, so that they will have more opportunities to move from secondary/informal leadership positions to where they ought to and need to be.

An analysis of employees at a small summer day camp is typically not the site for gaining insight into the ways in which colonialism have influenced and continue to influence Aboriginal people's lives. Nevertheless, it is through problematizing the ways in which practices at something as seemingly insignificant and politically benign as leadership at a summer day camp that we can better understand and subsequently challenge the ways in which colonialism's long-reaching tentacles have influenced the world in which we live.

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Understanding Leadership's Role in Inclusive, Culturally-Appropriate Recreation Programming
in Katlodeeche First Nation/Hay River Reserve and the Town of Hay River, Northwest

Territories

Conclusion

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Introduction

Through my experiences leading up to the final draft of my thesis, I have unlearned as many, if not more, things than I have learned. In addition, I have developed an earnest respect for how the pursuit of knowledge through individuals' words and experiences comes with a certain responsibility to challenge misconceptions while dancing between different people's perceptions of right and wrong. My parting words attempt to interweave common themes from both papers to highlight certain findings that illustrate how colonial discourses and practices regarding leadership in recreational settings played themselves out in both the Town of Hay River's swimming pool and KFN/HRR's SDC. There are two critical points that surfaced in my research: that colonialism is not a thing of the past and that the Dene women who informed this study illustrated that colonial discourses and practices are not beyond challenge.

Colonialism and Imperialism

Smith (1999) explained that colonialism and imperialism are two concepts that are inherently interconnected, as colonialism is one expression of European imperialism. Furthermore, she noted that imperialism is commonly used in one of the following four ways: "(1) imperialism as economic expansion; (2) imperialism as the subjugation of 'others'; (3) imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization; and (4) imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge" (p. 21). The above categories capture the different ways that imperialist pursuits attempt to influence Others in order to move them toward imperialistic goals of ideological expansion and colonization. As I have shown, recreation programs should be viewed as places in which imperialist goals continue to be pursued.

Colonialism Still an Issue?

When I returned to the Town of Hay River to present the results and gain feedback regarding the research findings, I discussed how I had observed some lifeguards abusing an authoritarian leadership style, which resulted in racially charged discriminatory discourses and behaviours. Furthermore, the discrimination was predominantly directed towards Aboriginal youth who were utilizing the swimming pool. These actions were intended to prevent “trouble makers” from breaking the pool’s inflexible rules and regulations. In response to my observations, one attendee stated, “so what? this is nothing new and there is nothing that can be done, that is just the way it is!” The individual’s comment represent a form of apathy and ignorance that is widespread across Canada and needs to be addressed by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. Until people realize that expectations are often fuelled by institutional racism and stereotypes and that we all have a shared responsibility to one another as fellow community members to enable not oppress, it will be difficult to move towards decolonizing recreation programs, as well as the world in general.

Dene Women as Egalitarian Leaders

My research found that the two Dene women, Pat Ross and Trisha Coon, who were both from KFN/HRR and hired as the SDC assistants, used egalitarian leadership styles that supported experiential learning techniques. These findings align with Dene cultural ways of knowing, experiencing and leading (Goulet, 1998; White, 2006). In contrast, the study also found that Michael Hundt, who was recruited from the south as the SDC’s supervisor, initially used an authoritarian leadership style, which aligned with the Eurocanadian lifeguards/instructors at the Hay River pool’s ways of leading. However, when Michael entered an alternative cultural

locality he was met with resistance and, thus, was isolated from the SDC assistants and the broader community. It did not take long for Michael to realize that his leadership style was an issue. More specifically, the primary issue surrounding Michael's leadership style was the cultural dissonance between his and the assistants' leadership styles. The problems were eroded as Pat and Trisha guided Michael's transformation to a more egalitarian leadership style and, consequently, bridged the previous cultural gap. An egalitarian leader encourages open-dialogue and collaboration between community members while also building relationships and mutual trust and respect (Hassan & Silong, 2008). Thus, Michael, thanks to the assistants' help, was able to plan and implement community-based programming that was inclusive of Dene teachings and cultural activities. I suspect that the willingness to engage in deep and sometime uncomfortable learning that Michael displayed is the kind that is needed in many programs in Canada's north – notably, the Town of Hay River's swimming pool.

Giles, Baker and Rousell (2007) hypothesized that the Euro-Canadians' leadership and teaching styles could be creating cultural barriers that impede the transfer of aquatic skills and knowledge to Aboriginal youth. This thesis supports Giles et al.'s findings, but goes a step farther by suggesting that Euro-Canadian recreation providers can diminish inter-cultural problems by working closely with community leaders – be they formally recognized or not – in order to learn culturally-appropriate ways of leading and training within northern Aboriginal communities.

In Conclusion

I argue that the pages included in this thesis provide a window into how southern Canadians can become more capable of supporting community-based programs and services in Canada's north. I propose that an egalitarian leadership style would allow a Euro-Canadian who

is not necessarily competent in local and/or Aboriginal cultures to effectively plan and lead community-based programs. In fact, an egalitarian leadership style, due to its inclusive and collaborative approach, would encourage community participation from the bottom up. Such an approach will likely prove to be more effective in attracting local people to participate and seek employment in local programs, which will in turn develop local capacity. Developing local capacity and – more importantly, recognizing local expertise, such as the expertise of Pat and Trisha, will go a long way to ensuring that northern Aboriginal peoples will develop programs for residents of their own communities, which is undoubtedly the best way of ensuring that programs are culturally-appropriate and meet local needs.

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