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Voices from the forest: leadership revealed through care, shared understanding, and imagination

Don Kraft

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Voices From the Forest: Leadership
Revealed Through Care, Shared Understanding,
and Imagination

A Dissertation Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education

Department of Leadership Studies
Organization and Leadership

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Don Kraft
San Francisco, California
Spring 2009
This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate’s dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Dissertation Abstract

Voices From the Forest: Leadership Revealed Through Care, Shared Understanding, and Imagination

Although much has been written about the topic of leadership, there has been little research on the topic of leadership within indigenous peoples. This research project explores leadership with indigenous leaders and follows a critical hermeneutic research protocol for inquiry and analysis as delineated by Herda (1999) and draws upon the theories of Ricoeur (1981, 1984, 1992), Heidegger (1962), Gadamer (1979), Habermas (1984), and Kearney (1998, 2004).

The study focuses on an ontological framework of leadership that is currently unavailable from prevailing research orientations – one that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding, social imagery, and that embodies spiritual ideals. This framework mediates current leadership theory with an enriched approach for leaders to find in others new ways of being.

The findings from this work represent a beginning to an understanding of leadership from a different approach; one that differs from individualistic and selfishness to one of collaborative, communal, and selflessness. It is an approach that incorporates the knowledge and experience of indigenous people, grounded in a deep sense of spirituality with others and nature.

The project hints at a hermeneutically informed leadership approach that is aimed at creating a way thinking about possibility needed by leaders today. It is an approach which incorporates the experiences of indigenous leaders and can be appropriated to
other organizational contexts; a leadership framework that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding, and imagination within a foundation of spiritual ideals that provide others the capacity to act, speak, and have their voices heard. It is leadership as a way of being; a way of acting in relationship with others.

Don Kraft, Author

Dr. Ellen Herda, PhD, Chairperson,
Dissertation Committee
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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

If you are coming to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you are coming because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

Santiago Kawarim, Achuar Leader, 2004

Photograph 1 – Achuar Territory – Don Kraft

Introduction

The destruction of indigenous culture and our natural environment has reached global proportion. Alarm about the extinction of our forests and species, the damage of balance of our Earth’s climate control system, and most tragic, the disappearance of indigenous cultures, is now capturing the attention of people around the world. This situation calls for leaders of indigenous peoples who call the forests their home to defend the environment not only for the survival of their people, but for all of us.
**Statement of Research Topic**

This research study explores leadership as a way of being by engaging in conversation with indigenous leaders to uncover why they care for others, how they build and establish relationships through shared understanding, how they imagine new possibilities for a better future, and how spiritual values contribute to a leader’s success with leading others.

My research concentrates on leaders of indigenous people in Northern Thailand, the Mlabri, and the Southern Amazonia area of Ecuador, the Achuar, as well as those leaders in the modern world who have formed relationships and partnerships with the people from the forest to create a more sustainable world. In addition, this research investigates current leadership theory and practices that have been successful with establishing new thinking on the topic of leadership.

**Background on Research Topic**

The world is undergoing major social, political, economic, and environmental transformations causing the extinction of our natural wonders and traditional cultural ways of life. According to Rain Forest Action Network, more than an acre-and-a-half of rain forest is lost every second of every day. That’s an area more than twice the size of Florida that is destroyed each year. If present rates of destruction continue, half our remaining rain forests will be gone by the year 2025, and by 2060 there will be no rain forests remaining.

This destruction is driven by a complex web of social and economic forces from the modern world – a view that is ignorant of the value of nature and the people who call the forest their home. This selfish need for “more” and the destruction of our
environment is based upon short term financial gain resulting in long term costs for us all. This, however, represents one view.

Photograph 2 – Destruction of Northern Amazon Territory in Ecuador - Pachamama Alliance

Indigenous peoples see things differently. After living in the forests in harmony with the environment for centuries, they are guided by the wisdom of traditional culture and spirit embedded in nature. Their view of the natural world is one of an interconnected web and each of us plays a role in this fragile life.

Our success as a world community will rest upon our capability to combine the views of both worlds – modern and traditional – into a fusion of horizons that blends the modern world with that of the wisdom of indigenous culture. This is the commitment and a way of thinking about possibility that is needed by leaders today.

The forests are home to approximately 50 million indigenous people throughout the world. Some non-government organizations (i.e., Pachamama Alliance, Amazon Alliance, Rain Forest Action Network) are forming alliances with them to create solutions to keep indigenous cultures intact and learn from them, while also trying to enable them to work effectively with the rest of the world. Past ideologies toward indigenous people according to Eurocentric and Western thought and practice are no longer – and perhaps were never – appropriate. Vincent Tucker (1999: 22) describes this
view as the “process whereby other peoples are dominated and their destinies are shaped according to an essentially Western way of conceiving and perceiving the world.”

Tucker’s argument calls for an approach that rethinks and reformulates this challenge by constructing an integrative view that sees the possibility of new models that “emphasize process and dialogical exchange” that rids us of the “concepts of culture that are elitist, holistic or relativist” (Tucker 1999: 22).

Only through solicitude and the appropriation of dialogue, relationship, language, trust, and respect of differences can discourse lead to a successful shared understanding; an understanding that occurs by engaging in the process of dialogue among equals, that incorporates each others’ experiences and views. As Tucker (1999: 23) explains, much needs to be done to produce new theoretical views “that do justice to the social imagery of Third World peoples without first reconstructing them in our terms before meeting them. A quote from Santiago Kawarim, an Achuar leader from the southern Amazonia area of Ecuador sums up the theme for cultural, environmental, and economic preservation through his own leadership: “If you are coming to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you are coming because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

**Significance of Research Topic**

Much research has been conducted on the topic of leadership with researchers trying to define leadership rather than assessing good leadership. There also has been little research on the topic of leadership within indigenous peoples.

The significance of my research is to uncover a different view of leadership that incorporates the wisdom and experiences of Mlabri and Achuar leaders that can be appropriated to all organizational contexts. I believe the Mlabri and Achuar narratives
contain useful approaches to leadership that can augment our current understanding of what makes a good leader.

Following a critical hermeneutic approach, the outcome of my research is to provide leaders a framework of leadership that is currently unavailable from prevailing research orientations – one that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding, social imagery, and that embodies spiritual values. This framework mediates current leadership theory with an enriched approach for leaders to find in others new ways of being. Through the possibility of seeing and understanding leadership differently a leader can see his or her own leadership differently and the regard self holds for others.

**Summary**

A need continues to exist for leaders who can think in new ways about leading – a call for leading as a way of being. Through an ontological approach to leadership, a leader can find meaning, embody solicitude and care for the other, reach shared understanding, and possess the power of imagining new possibilities.

Chapter One of my dissertation describes the need for finding a new way of leading. It also explains the focus of my research; exploring the indigenous view of leadership with leaders of the Mlabri in Thailand and Achuar in Ecuador. Background information about my research topic also describes the environmental situation and significance of my research topic.

Chapter Two provides background information about the Mlabri and Achuar peoples; their relationship with nature, their social communities, and the challenges they face with the encroaching modern world.
Chapter Three describes a literary review of anthropological research, specifically the movement over the past 30 years from a structural approach to current day interpretive anthropology, as a basis for the understanding of indigenous culture. It also includes a review of current thinking on leadership theory, which is used as a foundation for imagining a different approach to leadership.

Chapter Four explains the theoretical framework for the research, the research protocol, location of research sites, and information about the research categories, conversation questions, research participants, and an introduction to data analysis. It also includes a summary of the research pilot study and background of researcher.

Chapter Five provides the data presentation and critical hermeneutic analysis of the research conversations in terms of the three research concepts that frame the research effort. This Chapter also provides the voices of my conversation partners and their narrative that underpins this research.

Finally, in Chapter Six, a summary of research findings and implications are provided as well as suggestions and comments on how this research might influence further research on the topic of indigenous leadership.
CHAPTER TWO

ACHUAR AND MLABRI BACKGROUNDS

We want our children not to forget what we did in the past. To know the names of the trees, to know the food; what is good or not good to eat. To remember our traditions from when we lived in the jungle.

Ta Taw, Mlabri Leader

Introduction

The Achuar of Ecuador and the Mlabri of Thailand have similarities as forest people whose cultures emphasize their relationship with nature, community, family, and interdependence with the forest for survival. They also share the problems associated with the encroachment and destruction by the modern world onto their territories. As more and more of Earth’s forests are destroyed, so is the way of life of indigenous peoples. The following will provide a descriptive account of both the Achuar and Mlabri people and their communities and the challenges they currently face.

The Achuar – “People of the Palm”

The Achuar are an indigenous people located in the Southern Ecuadorian Amazonian rain forest. According to the Pachamama Alliance website, the Achuar nation of about 6,000 hold communal title to nearly two million acres of pristine rain forest in one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world. They
have been living in isolation for centuries until first contacted by outsiders in the early 1970’s. Their identity, traditions, and culture still remain intact as they live in harmony with their natural environment of the Amazonian rain forest.

The Achuar depend upon a healthy rain forest environment for their survival and have always sought to maintain the health and well being of their land. There are no roads within the Achuar territory and the area can only be accessed by small plane. Until recently, their land has been unaffected by oil operations, mining, and logging that have spoiled much of the Northern Ecuadorian Amazon. Fortunately, efforts made by leaders of the Achuar to align with others from the modern world have successfully kept the oil companies from destroying their territory. As a result, their land remains pristine and healthy.

Nature and the Achuar

Nature (the forest, animals, rivers, plants, etc.) is at the foundation of Achuar identity of self, others, and with Achuar spirituality and mythological beliefs. As Philippe Descola (1986: 93) describes from his research of the Achuar in the 1970’s, it is “obvious that the idea of nature as the domain of all phenomena occurring independently of human action is completely foreign to the Achuar.” According to the Achuar, all animals and plants have human-like attributes with a soul and an independent life. Every plant or animal has its own language and the Achuar can understand elements of this language. As Descola (1986: 93) describes, “humans and most plants and animals are persons with a soul and an individual life.”

Because of the close relationship and interpretation of nature, and centuries of living in harmony with nature, the Achuar are guided by the knowledge and spirit imbedded in nature. Rather than viewing the natural world as a collection of separate
elements from which humans are apart, they recognize all creation as an interconnected web, and each of us as an integral element in this miraculous and fragile weave of life.

We in the modern world have an opportunity to share this view – one formed from the fusion of horizons of two views: of the modern world and a new respect for nature. As Santiago Kawarim, past president of the Federacion Interprovincial de Nacionalidad Achuar del Ecuador (FINAE) stated at a Pachamama Alliance fundraiser in San Francisco in November 2006, “There is reason for hope. The rain forest can benefit all life, not just the Achuar. We know we can learn from you and you can learn much from us.” The Achuar can provide needed insight to the modern world with their wisdom of the natural world.

**The Achuar Community**

Achuar communities have been traditionally founded around a family unit: a man, his wife (or wives), his children and sometimes their spouses. When the family becomes too large, some will split off and start a new village. For example, one village I visited had about 15 families, so three brothers, their multiple wives (six of them), and their children moved to a location a couple of hours’ walk away and founded a new village.

The house is the smallest unit of Achuar society and is the center of which the Achuar family begins marking out space for the transformation of nature (See Photograph 4).

**Photograph 4 – Achuar House – Don Kraft**
Descola (1986: 107) explains:

Domestic or household economy centers on the house and spreads outward from there; using nature in terms of concentric zones – house, garden, forest – set out in the classic ethnographic model, which in this case is homologous with the Achuar representation of spatial segmentation.

Social life for the Achuar is built upon the autonomy of the house and expands outward within its surrounding territory. As Descola (1986: 105) discovered, the centrality of the house creates a self-sufficient isolated household world which is each isolated and “felt to be truly harmonious – Aristotle used the term ‘natural’ – only if accumulation is excluded and the constraints necessarily engendered by commerce with others kept to a minimum.”

**The Mlabri – The Yellow Leaf**

The rare, gentle, and obscure Mlabri people, also known as the *Phi Tong Luang*, have been referred to as the Spirits of the Yellow Leaves (Herda 2007: 4). However, the Mlabri do not see themselves as “spirits.” They will tell you they are forest people, which is what *mla bri* means in their language (Herda 2007: 4). As Herda (2007: 4) describes, The Mlabri do not want to be called Spirits of the Yellow Leaf. They will tell you they are not spirits, but that they are humans. Traditionally, they thought only they, the Mlabri, were human. These elusive, nomadic hunter-gatherer people are known for building temporary shelters out of bamboo with banana-leaf roofing (See Photograph 5). They leave these shelters about every seven to ten days.

*Photograph 5 – Mlabri Shelter – Dr. Ellen Herda*
days, when the green leaves turn yellow, hence giving the Mlabri the popular name The Yellow Leaf (Herda 2007: 4).

There is little information on the origin of the Mlabri, yet it is thought they originated in northern Laos and migrated from the Mae Khong area into Thailand during the 19th century. There have been scattered writings and speculation on the Mlabri, but for the most part, anthropologists and other scientists know little about these people (Herda 2002).

The first sightings date back to 1914 near Nan Thailand when there were reports of seeing their “huts” on the mountain side (Goodden 1999). In the early part of the century they were more widespread across northern Thailand. While the other tribes from the Mon-Khmer have developed and changed, the Mlabri remained in the hunting and gathering stage of human development (Goodden 1999). Today, the Mlabri are slowly emerging in Thailand as agriculturists, though in Laos they remain hunters and gatherers; those who may be in Burma would most likely be hunters and gatherers (Herda 2007).

The Mlabri Community

The Mlabri express a strong sense of community. They care deeply for each other and share whatever resources are available as a community (Herda 2007). According to Herda, there is little social stratification and no lasting leaders, chiefs, or headmen, though women have a lower status than men. Each person has a high degree of individual freedom and problems are settled through discussion and consensus.

Originally, the Mlabri lived in bands which were the most important unit of their society. A band usually consisted of one or two families in numbers of 10 to 15. The bands of families were scattered across the mountain side. According to Goodden (1999),
Mlabri folklore taught them that if they settled down permanently and cultivated plants, an evil spirit would send a tiger to destroy them.

Estimates of their numbers within Northern Thailand in the province of Nan and a small band in the province of Sayaburi in Laos are approximately 400 (Herda 2007). In the last 25 years, due to the destruction of the forest and with wild animals disappearing, the Mlabri are now forced to live in villages closer to other groups of people, including the Hmong (Herda 2007).

The Mlabri are barely sustaining survival in a de-forested territory that provides very little in the way of food. The government officials of the province and the local community know their challenges and do what they can to help them. However, when a foreigner enters their domain, a sense of wanting to exercise power is evident both in the government officials’ and local villages’ behavior (Herda 2007: 4).

Until recently, many of the local Hmong exploited them as laborers for food and for small amounts of money. Since the Hmong striped the forest of trees for agriculture, it was a sad irony the Mlabri or forest people were laborers in illegal logging and clearing the forest for agriculture that they once depended upon. More recently, the Mlabri are learning successfully to raise livestock and farm land they purchased with the help of the non-government organization, Windhorse Foundation. This creates an upward trend for the Mlabri toward increased self-sustainability and a new way of life.

**Summary**

Chapter Two provides an overview of the Achuar and Mlabri peoples; their relationship with nature, their social communities, and the challenges they face with the modern world.
Next, Chapter Three, describes a literary review of anthropological research, specifically the movement over the past 30 years from a structural approach to current day interpretive anthropology, as a basis for the understanding of indigenous culture. It also includes a review of current thinking on leadership theory, which is used as a foundation for imagining a different approach to leadership.
CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The main thing I have learned about being a leader is to be responsible. I also have learned how to give advice to other people to improve their lives – their welfare.

Fernando Antik, Achuar Leader

Introduction

Within the first half of the twentieth century, the nature of anthropological discourse regarding the study of indigenous peoples in pre-industrial societies focused on cultural functionalism as a method of understanding human society and culture. This approach has been criticized since observed cultural facts were not seen in terms of what they were at the time of observation but in terms of what they must stand for in reference to what had formerly been the case (Lesser 1935: 55). Functionalists believed the reality of events were found in manifestations in the present without addressing a society’s past or history.

Another anthropological theory, structuralism, also evolved during this time period. The structuralist paradigm in anthropology, grounded in scientific inquiry, suggested the structure of human thought processes was the same in all cultures (Winthrop 1991). Concerns were raised in the 1960’s through the 1980’s on the grounds that structuralist methods are imprecise and dependent upon the observer (Lett 1987: 103). This methodology has also been criticized for its lack of concern with human individuality.

Interpretative anthropology emerged in the 1960’s and does not follow the model of physical sciences. The interpretative approach to anthropological study analyzes how people give meaning to their reality and how this reality is expressed by their culture. It
views culture as a mental phenomenon and rejects the idea that culture can be studied in
the same manner as with the physical sciences.

Interpretative anthropology focuses on analysis of symbols, words, mentality, and
meanings from an ontological perspective rather than an analysis of behavior or social
structure. It represents an ontological view of writing and recording research and includes
how we understand others and ourselves. It is an experience through language in which
we assign meaning. Language is the foundation for the researcher to create a shared space
in which language and culture go together.

Another aspect of an interpretative approach is that it avoids extreme cultural
relativism. The purpose of an interpretative view is to find a “middle” ground between
relativism and that of forcing one’s way or opinion on the other. An interpretative
approach to research is not neutral; the researcher must have a point of view and express
it. This approach ultimately shares a reconfigured new condition of everyday life that is
researched and written that crosses cultural and linguistic boundaries. It brings a new
process of gaining knowledge through a common sense approach and provides a more
compelling point of view than a factual study. Simply stated, the principle purpose of an
interpretative approach is generating and reaching shared meaning among cultures
through dialogue and a relationship between self and other through interpretation and a
readiness to listen.

**A Shift in Thinking in Anthropological Research**

As part of my research and my interest in the anthropological view of indigenous
cultures, I studied the work of three anthropologists from the structuralist and
functionalist period who initiated a shift in thinking with methodology in studying
cultures and indigenous peoples. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Sir Raymond Firth, and Robert Redfield each contributed to the discourse of anthropological study that eventually led to contemporary thought of anthropological interpretation, which in turn challenged the view of indigenous peoples as savages, Stone Age, primitive, or uncivilized.

**Claude Lévi-Strauss**

Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, is best known for developing structuralism as a method of understanding human society and culture. His work had a large influence on contemporary thought, in particular on the practice of structuralism which shaped his research. Lévi-Strauss lived in Brazil during the late 1930’s where he conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the Mato Grosso and the Amazon Rain forest. He lived among both and also studied the Nambikwara and Tupi-Kawahib societies.

During World War II, Levi-Strauss lived in New York where he shaped structuralist thought while studying with Franz Boas, who influenced his work. After the end of the war he returned to France and submitted his thesis, both a "major" and a "minor" thesis. These were *The Family and Social Life of the Nambikwara Indians* and *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Lévi-Strauss continued to publish and experienced considerable professional success. He became one of France’s best know intellectuals when he published *Tristes Tropiques*, which was a travel novel based upon ethnographic analysis of the Amazonia peoples of Brazil. It is this work that transformed his anthropological work from a scientific nature to more ethnographical while remaining insistent that patterns of myths could be expressed in a series of mathematical formulas.
His findings were that “every myth is driven by the obsessive need to solve a paradox that cannot be solved” (Levi-Strauss: 1978: 10).

In 1962 Lévi-Strauss published his most important work, *La Pensée Sauvage* or *The Savage Mind*. The book relates primitive thought as a form of thought. The first half of the book lays out Lévi-Strauss's theory of culture and mind, while the second half expands this account into a theory of history and social change.

Lévi-Strauss spent the second half of the 1960s working on his master project, a four-volume study about mythology called *Mythologiques*. In it, he took a single myth from the tip of South America and followed all of its variations from group to group up through Central America and eventually into the Arctic Circle, tracing the myth's spread from one end of the American continent to the other. While *Pensée Sauvage* was a statement of Lévi-Strauss's big-picture theory, *Mythologiques* was an extended, four-volume example of analysis. While *Tristes Tropiques* was lyrical, autobiographical, and self-reflective, *Mythologiques* was complex, theoretical and scientific.

In 1978, Lévi-Strauss wrote *Myth and Meaning, Cracking the Code of Culture*, in which he challenged the thinking of primitive people as inferior to scientific thinking. He mediated between primitive thinking and the civilized mind by writing:

> The way of thinking among people we call, usually wrongly, ‘primitive’ – let’s describe them rather as ‘without writing,’ because I think this is really the discriminatory factor between them and us – has been interpreted in two different fashions, both of which in my opinion were equally wrong (Levi-Strauss 1978: 15).

He explored this further by telling us that the thought of indigenous peoples is not inferior, just a fundamentally different kind of thought. Theirs is a society that focuses on survival and harmony with nature and that people who are without writing have an
increased knowledge of their environment and resources. Lévi-Strauss (1978: 16) explains:

What I tried to show in Totemism and in The Savage Mind, for instance, is that these people whom we usually consider as completely subservient to the need of not starving, of continuing able just to subsist in very harsh material conditions, are perfectly capable of disinterested thinking; that is, they are moved by a need or a desire to understand the world around them, its nature and their society. On the other hand, to achieve that end, they proceed by intellectual means, exactly as a philosopher, or even some extent a scientist, can and would do.

Lévi-Strauss (1978: 19) concluded his thought on this difference between primitive thinking and the civilized mind saying that “the human mind is everywhere one and the same and that it has the same capacities.” He also concluded that it is only through differences that progress can be made while maintaining cultural identity.

The world of Lévi-Strauss was one of paradox. He spent his lifetime interpreting myths and trying to determine their significance for human understanding while maintaining his foundational view of the superiority of scientific exploration.

Sir Raymond Firth

Sir Raymond Firth was an ethnologist from New Zealand. His educational background began while studying economics in London where he met social anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski. This meeting led him to blending economics and anthropology and to his anthropological research of the Maori in New Zealand. Firth's doctoral thesis was published in 1929 as Primitive Economics of the New Zealand Māori.

Firth’s research followed a functionalist paradigm which focused on the study of Polynesian societies in the South Pacific and the economic systems of tribal people. His research began with a Polynesian society in the Solomon Islands, where he studied an untouched society that had been resistant to outside influences and which had an
undepveloped economy. His first publication was *We the Tikopia: A Sociological Study of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia*.

Firth succeeded Malinowski as Professor of Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics in 1944, and he remained at the School for the next 24 years. He returned to Tikopia on research visits several times throughout his life. After retiring from teaching, Firth continued with his research interests, and right up until his hundredth year he was producing articles.

In 1958, Firth wrote *Human Types: An Introduction to Social Anthropology*, where through extensive fieldwork he analyzed the differences and similarities in customs and habits between what he called “primitive” and “civilized” societies to gain a better understanding of the diverse forms of human behavior. His studies went beyond anthropological observations and focused on the basic principles of work and wealth of native societies. His conclusions identified similarities of broad economic principles with indigenous communities which revolved around the search for food as a common characteristic. “In every primitive group there is a problem of food supply in relation to population, and this problem is not realized by single individuals in isolation, but is dealt with as a collective question by some planned system of production and distribution” (Firth 1958: 63).

Firth found that tribal people did not view work as a duty as did European and Western societies, but rather the immediate need to satisfy their material wants. “Work for its own sake is not regarded as duty. And time is not such an important element in the economic process – there is no feeling that the time taken is ‘lost’ or ‘wasted’” (Firth 1958: 64).
Firth concluded the main drive to economic activity of tribal people is a socialized one and not based on individual need. The principle of reciprocity is fundamental to the human relationships within the tribe and the values of self-sacrifice and tribal duty are inherent to the community.

**Robert Redfield**

Robert Redfield was an American anthropologist and ethnolinguist. Redfield studied Mexican communities (Tepoztlán, Chan Kom), and in 1953 he published *The Primitive World and its Transformation* and in 1956, *Peasant Society and Culture*. Afterwards he furthered his study into a broader set of disciplines that included archeology, anthropological linguistics, physical anthropology, social anthropology, and ethnology.

Redfield wrote about his own experience doing research in Latin America on indigenous people. As he did research, he realized he had been trained to treat the society as an isolated culture. However, he found people were involved with trade, and there were connections between villages and states. More than that, the village culture was not bounded. Beliefs and practices were not isolated. Redfield realized it did not make sense to study people as isolated units, but rather, it would be better to understand a broader perspective.

In the final chapter of *The Primitive World and its Transformation*, Redfield considered his own behavior as an anthropologist toward what he called *nonliterate* societies. He admitted to how he injected how he feels as another human being when encountering a custom or action of an uncivilized society. Redfield’s commentary acknowledged that when one studies the human affairs of any culture, it is unlikely to be
objective and not make value judgments. “Whenever the anthropologist looks at him, something human inside the anthropologist stirs and responds” (Redfield 1953: 152).

Redfield (1953: 40) asks, “it is your story and mine; how can we help but care?” He discussed his attempts during his research to show how he felt without neutrality – either like or dislike – of local customs and cultural preferences. However, he acknowledged that when an anthropologist meets a particular indigenous people, “he is apt to feel for that native while he is trying to describe him objectively” (Redfield 1953: 152). For Redfield, the tradition of rigid exclusion of value judgments is too strong and he concluded instead that the aim of ethnographic research calls for “much objectivity as can be combined with the necessity to come to know the values of the people one is studying” (Redfield 1953). The transformation in his thinking about ethical judgment leaned toward cultural relativity. As Redfield (1953: 157) wrote, “I am, perhaps, extending somewhat the doctrine of cultural relativity; I am saying that the standards of truth and goodness are relative to a great historic cultural difference, that between uncivilized people and civilized people.”

Redfield concluded that anthropologists cannot exclude their own interpretation while conducting fieldwork of indigenous people. As Redfield (1953: 157) explains, “I have so far said that anthropologists confronting this or that primitive society, do in fact place values of their own on what they see there, although they often say that they do not.” This transformation in this anthropological thinking is important to this study, for it lays a foundation for an interpretive research approach.

The transformation of anthropology this past century, in the context with study of indigenous people, has evolved from a structuralist and functionalist view to an
interpretative approach. Claude Lévi-Strauss, Sir Raymond Firth, and Robert Redfield all contributed toward this middle ground between relativism and objectivity. Clifford Geertz (1973: 29), who was on the leading forefront of the shift to an interpretative approach, comments on the progress of anthropology, notes that “anthropology, or at least interpretative anthropology, is a science whose progress is marked less by a perfection of consensus than by a refinement of debate. What gets better is the precision with which we vex each other.” It is this interpretative approach to research, one which searches for meaning that my research encompasses.

**Leadership Theory**

There have been a variety of different leadership theories and practices developed and evolved over the past decades. As Northouse (2004: 2) describes, “over the past 50 years, there has been 65 different classification systems developed to define the dimensions of leadership.” In addition to a flood of books on the topic of leadership, there are also numerous publications and scholarly studies with a wide variety of theoretical approaches that explain the complexities to the leadership process (Northouse 2004: 1). These studies have ranged from conceptualizing leadership as a trait or inborn characteristic, or as a behavior, while others view leadership as more of a humanistic process (Northouse 2004: 11).

Prior research on leadership focused on leadership as a trait or inborn characteristic versus leadership as a process that can be learned (Northouse 2004: 11). According to Northouse (2004: 4), the trait viewpoint suggests a set of properties possessed in varying degrees by different people and residing in select people, a view that then restricts leadership to those who are believed to have special, usually inborn, talents.
On the contrary, the process viewpoint suggests leadership is available to everyone and can be learned.

From these viewpoints a number of leadership theories have evolved, including skills approach, style approach, situational leadership, contingency theory, path goal, transactional leadership, transformational leadership, team leadership, servant leadership, and others. Despite the many ways leadership has been conceptualized over the years, there are four components, according to Northouse (2004: 3) that are identified as central to leadership:

- leadership is a process,
- leadership involves influence,
- leadership occurs within a group context, and,
- leadership involves goal attainment.

These components imply leadership as an event between leader and followers that is interactive, and both leader and followers are in relationships together, to each other and collectively.

Of the many theories on the topic of leadership, three surfaced as having meaning and connection to my research and my theoretical framework; Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner’s view of personal-best practices taken by leaders, Laura Reave’s research of the role of spiritual values with leadership, and Tracey Becker’s exploration of indigenous leadership where leadership is displayed by distinct characteristics developed from history of cultural traditions and values.

**The Leadership Challenge**

Recent leadership research has explored leadership with a humanistic focus, which has strengthened and widened the role of a leaders living and working in a
complex global environment. One recognized approach with this view is from Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner’s work. In their book, *The Leadership Challenge*, they describe an approach to leadership which focuses on “self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and interpersonal skills” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: xix). As Kouzes and Posner (2002: xix) describe from their research:

Today there’s much more demand for leaders who are exemplary coaches and individuals who show respect for people from many different cultural backgrounds. Team players are move valued than ever. If you want to place a winning bet on who will be successful as a leader in these times, bet on the more collaborative person who values people first, profits second.

In developing their framework, Kouzes and Posner (2002: 13) researched personal-best practices of leaders who faced challenging circumstances through case studies, interviews and surveys, and identified a best practices model of leadership. As a result of their studies, they uncovered five practices of exemplary leadership and concluded that effective leaders engage in these personal-best practices in any organization or situation:

- Model the Way
- Inspire a Shared Vision
- Challenge the Process
- Enable Others to Act
- Encourage the Heart

As Kouzes and Posner (2002: xxiii) explain, these common practices create a leadership process in which “ordinary people use when they are bringing forth the best from themselves and others” and that it is “people make extraordinary things happen by liberating the leader within everyone.” They (2002: xxv) also explain, “good leadership is
an understandable and a universal process. Though each leader is a unique individual, there are patterns to the practice of leadership that are shared. And that can be learned.”

*Model the Way*

The practice of *Model the Way* means leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 14). They do this by clarifying their personal values and beliefs and by having the ability to clearly express themselves (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 14).

People expect their leaders to stand for something and expect them to have the courage of their convictions. Leaders who are not clear about what they believe in are not found to be credible. “We admire most those who believe strongly in something, and who are willing to stand up for their beliefs. If anyone is to become a leader we’d be willingly follow, one certain prerequisite is that they must be someone of principle” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 45). Leaders must have values that serve as guides to moral action or in other words, what to do and what not to do. Kouzes and Posner’s research clearly indicated that values make “a significant difference in behavior at work” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 49). Having clarity of values helps leaders feel confident about who they are and what they value as well as the ability to build a community of shared values.

Kouzes and Posner also describe the importance of personal expression when modeling the way. “To become a credible leader you have to learn to express yourself in ways that are uniquely your own” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 56). People follow leaders based on their message; the words, the way it is expressed, and its authenticity. To *Model the Way*, leaders need to demonstrate commitment to values with every action and expression. “Doing so begins by finding your voice – by clarifying your values and by
expressing yourself in unique ways. By finding your voice you take the first step along the endless journey to becoming a credible leader” (Kouzes and Posner 2002: 58).

*Inspire a Shared Vision*

The next practice of exemplary leadership is the ability of leaders to inspire a shared vision. Having a shared vision provides an agenda and gives direction and purpose to the organization. As Kouzes and Posner (2002: 131) describe, “as a leader, you must envision the future and then create the conditions for others to build a common vision together – one based on ideal and unique images of a common future.”

An aspect of inspiring a shared vision is the leader’s ability to enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. It includes the leader getting to know his or her followers, finding common ground, drafting a shared vision statement and communicating from the heart. “Leaders breathe life into visions. They communicate their hopes and dreams so others clearly understand and accept them as their own” (Kouzes and Posner, 2002: 159).

*Challenge the Process*

All effective leaders challenge the process and the status quo. They look for opportunities to change things for the better, experiment, innovate, grow and improve. Kouzes and Posner (2002: 177-181) describe four essentials for a leader to use to search for opportunities to get extraordinary things done:

- Seize the initiative – leaders seize initiative with enthusiasm and a desire to make something happen.
- Make challenge meaningful – leaders stand up for their beliefs and challenge with purpose.
- Innovate and create – leaders emphasize on innovating new products, markets.
Look outward for fresh ideas – leaders look to customers, users, suppliers, R&D for new possibilities.

Effective leaders who challenge the process also know innovation and change involve experimentation, risks and failure. Kouzes and Posner (2002: 223) explain that exemplary leaders, “are experimenters: they experiment with new approaches to all problems” and “recognize failure as a necessary fact of innovative life.”

Enable Others to Act

The practice of Enable Others to Act encompasses the leader’s ability to foster collaboration and build trust. An effective leader realizes leadership is not a solo act but that it is a team effort. It is through collaboration that success is achieved. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002: 242), “collaboration is a social imperative. Without it we can’t get extraordinary things done in organizations. Collaboration is the critical competency for achieving and sustaining high performance.” As they (2002: 244) also describe, at the heart of collaboration is trust and that it is “the central issue in human relationships” and without it you can not lead.

Another critical aspect of Enable Others to Act is the leader’s ability to strengthen others by sharing power and discretion As Kouzes and Posner (2002: 301) explain:

Strengthening others is essentially the process of turning constituents into leaders – making people capable of acting on their own initiative. Leaders strengthen others when they give their own power away to them, when they make it possible for constituents to exercise choice and discretion, when they develop in others the competence and confidence to act and to excel.

Encourage the Heart

“Encouraging the heart is about the principles and practices that support the basic human need to be appreciated for what we do and who we are” (Kouzes and Posner 1999: xii). To Encourage the Heart, leaders need to stimulate and motivate the internal drives
of those who they lead by linking rewards with performance, providing recognition and celebrating accomplishments.

Kouzes and Posner’s (2002: 391) approach is practical and applicable for everyone and can be applied in a variety of organizational settings. The five practice areas can be learned and developed by all rather than just those in managerial or leadership positions. The approach treats leadership as a process between leaders and others. Their approach also emphasizes the need for insight and the care for others on the part of the leader. As Kouzes and Posner (2002: 391) describe:

Learning to lead is about discovering what you care about and value. About what inspires you. About what challenges you. About what gives you power and competence. About what encourages you. When you discover these things about yourself, you’ll know what it takes to lead those qualities out of others.

Through self-discovery, self-reflection, and self-development, leaders discover who they are as leaders.

Spirituality in Leadership

A contemporary leadership theory that has been emerging is spirituality and spiritual values as key elements to being a successful leader. According to Laura Reave (2005: 655), in *Spiritual Values and Practices Related to Leadership Effectiveness*, research has shown there is a clear consistency between spiritual values and practices and successful leadership. As Reave (2005: 656) explains:

This review of over 150 studies shows that there is a clear consistency between the values and practices emphasized in many different teachings, and the values and practices of leaders who are able to motivate followers, create a positive ethical climate, inspire trust, promote positive work relationships, and achieve organizational goals.

Some of the practices emphasized have been found to be crucial leadership skills including; showing respect for others, demonstrating fair treatment, expressing caring and
concern, listening responsively, recognizing the contributions of others, and engaging in reflective practice (Reave 2005: 655).

Spirituality expresses itself not so much as religion but as associated with feelings of interconnectiveness with the world and living things (Zinnbauer, Pargament, & Scott 1999). Religion focuses more upon a specific group and organization, while spirituality is more generic and may encompass more than one religious approach (Reave 2005: 656). As Reave (2005: 655) describes, spirituality as a leadership practice lies in the “embodiment of spiritual values such as integrity, and in the demonstration of spiritual behavior such as expressing caring and concern.”

According to much empirical research, demonstration of caring and concern is a leadership practice that is crucial to leadership success (Reave 2005: 675). Caring, concern, and attention to the needs of others, including coaching, listening, empathy, and warmth, have been identified by researchers as a distinguishing feature of great leaders (Reave 2005: 675). Reave (2005: 675) describes, “a leader’s ability to be caring and considerate toward others has been shown to be a key determinant of leader success or failure.” An interesting aspect of a leader’s care and concern is how it is viewed by others. As Reave (2005: 676), explains,

A leader’s demonstration of caring and concern can go beyond the walls of the organization to make a commitment to the community as well. A leader’s promotion of corporate philanthropy has been shown to have strong effects on employee perceptions of fairness, work environment, and organizational ethics, all of which have been shown to have effects on motivation and commitment.

Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2004: 13) define workplace spirituality as “a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees’ experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy.” Block and Richmond (1998: vii),
reinforce this theme of connectedness and meaning, suggesting that “spirituality is the experience of connection to something that transcends our deeper lives. We may envision this connection to something larger than ourselves or deeper within ourselves, but we know that it is beyond the material.”

Fry (2003: 694) defines spiritual leadership as “the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership.” He describes the sense of a calling, whether a call from within or a Higher Power, as “the experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life” (Fry 2003: 703). The response could be a service or ideal and directly or indirectly involve others. Fry’s (2003: 695) description of membership involves “establishing a social/organizational culture based on altruistic love whereby leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership and [feeling] understood and appreciated.” According to Fry (2003: 694), spiritual leadership occurs when the self embodies spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, and humility. It is someone who can be trusted, relied upon and admired, and who demonstrates leadership through reflective practice and in ethical, compassionate, and respectful treatment of others.

Exploring the relationship between spirituality and leadership can provide us insight into leader effectiveness. A leader’s practice of spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, humility and the spiritual practices of care and attention to others, listening responsively, appreciating others, and taking time for personal reflection have all been found to have positive effects on leadership (Reave 2005: 681).
Leadership and Indigenous People

Although much has been written about the topic of leadership, there has been little research on the topic of leadership within indigenous peoples. One research study, *Traditional American Indian Leadership: A Comparison with U.S. Governance*, did examine North American indigenous leadership, though the study noted the scarcity of research in this area. A description of this research is included since my data suggests some common practices to leadership among indigenous people from geographically distant locations. As Becker (1997: 2) describes:

> Legitimate academic information on traditional American Indian leadership is scarce. Our literature review reveals a dearth of writings on this subject from an American Indian leadership perspective. Most of the written information on traditional American Indian leadership is found in ethnographic documents written by non-Indian anthropologists. Unfortunately, ethnographers wrote from a European-American perspective and often lacked an understanding of American Indian traditions.

Another challenge is that accurate knowledge about American Indian leadership is unknown because mainstream U.S. educational institutions have not explored it (Becker 1997: 2).

In her study, Becker (1997: 1) describes the complex and dynamic methods of leadership in tribal matters and states there is no one system of American Indian leadership tradition. Still she also posits that a commonality does exist; that “traditional American Indian values and culture have been handed down through the generations and continue to influence American Indian leadership today” (Becker 1997: 1).

According to Becker (1997: 3), American Indian leadership displays distinct characteristics developed from their history of cultural traditions and values. They live holistically and understand themselves as interconnected with the physical and spiritual forms of life. Spirituality is seen as a cornerstone of culture and leadership and is one of
the ways to sustain and nurture the culture. Spirituality is a core element of American Indian life. Becker (1997: 3) describes all American Indian leadership having spiritual significance and that “strong leaders were those who had a strong spiritual core.”

Elders also play a role in the leadership relationship. According to Becker (1997: 3), elder status was earned by those who “displayed care for future generations and honored responsibilities of cultural traditions and tribal relations” and “demonstrated generosity and kindness, and honored all living things, including people, plants, animals, and the earth.”

According to Becker (1997: 6), American Indian leaders:

- Act as humble servants to the community.
- Do not seek or promote themselves to be leaders.
- Hold strong traditional values and contribute to the community.
- Are selected based upon knowledge, wisdom, skills and experience to act as a leader.
- Distribute responsibility among capable and respected persons; no one person is always a leader – many leaders act as leaders at different times.
- Lead by example rather than authority or holding power over others – they are not coercive or hierarchical.

Just as leaders are selected by the community, they can also cease to have a leadership role if tribal members do not like or trust their actions, for in such a case they simply do not follow the person (Becker 1997: 4). American Indian leaders also never order people to do anything because “they strictly adhere to the principle that people have the right to self-determination” (Becker 1997: 4). All people are treated with respect regardless of position within the tribe. Johnson (1982: 80) explains that “American Indians respect all
people regardless of their tribal status is derived from their belief in the circle of life and the interconnectedness it represents. Like the circle of life, natural growth and change, the pace of American Indian life was slow, patient, deliberate and unhurried. As Johnson (1982: 80) describes in *Ojibway Ceremonies*, the Ojibway “often took days, weeks, or even months to take time when making a decision.” He further describes:

> Different points of view were welcomed and respected. Leaders did not argue for their points of view, and there was no debate. They sought understanding and consensus through mutual inquiry. They stated their words as new interpretation on the matter and preaced their remarks with statements such as “I have yet another understanding” and “our brother or sister has provided us with an idea.” Ideas were put forth in this manner until a resolution presented itself to everyone involved.

Most leadership within American Indian societies practice a holistic approach where leaders have no power over their people and share in the leadership of different tasks (Becker 1997: 7). Rather than a command and control approach, leaders “protected the welfare of the tribe as guardians of tribal culture with spirituality at the core of their leadership” (Becker 1997: 7).

This summary of American Indian characteristics for leadership provides a descriptive view of leadership which continues to influence American Indian people today. Traditional American Indian leadership continues to live in the minds and hearts of the people and manifests itself in their families and community (Becker 1997: 12).

**Summary**

Chapter Three provides an initial review of literature of anthropological research and the thinking that has evolved and influenced how researchers conduct research involving indigenous peoples. An explanation of the shift from structuralism and functionalism toward an interpretative, participatory approach is included to highlight the importance of conducting research from a hermeneutic frame to gain knowledge and new
meaning. This chapter also addresses three contemporary leadership theories; specifically the leadership thinking of Kouzes and Posner, spirituality and leadership, and the characteristics of traditional American Indian leadership.

Chapter Four explains the theoretical framework for the research, the research protocol, the location of research sites, information about the research categories, conversation questions, research participants, and an introduction to data analysis. It also includes a summary of the research pilot study and background of researcher.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH PROCESS

There’s humility in the kind of leadership with the Achuar that you don’t find everywhere. They consider the community a higher ethic than the good or the accomplishment of the individual.

Lynne Twist, Co-Founder, Pachamama Alliance

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the research orientation as established in Herda (1999: 93-128) and provides the practical aspects of the study, including the research protocol, research sites, descriptions of the conversation partners participating in the study, and questions used to guide the conversations. It also includes an explanation of the data collection and analysis process used for the study, and an overview of the pilot study that preceded this project. Before providing the overview of the research process I describe the theoretical framework for the data analysis from an interpretive view.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Hermeneutic Theory

The theoretical framework for my research is critical hermeneutics, which places the researcher at the center of the social investigation to gain understanding; in this case, on the topic of leadership revealed through solicitude and care, shared understanding, and imagination. The three categories that provide the boundaries for data collection and analysis for this research include Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricoeur’s theories of solicitude and care, Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, and Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney’s views on imagination. The intent is to explore leadership within the context of these theories with indigenous leadership and to perhaps discover a new and different view of leadership.
This past summer, my travels took me to remote locations in Thailand, Laos, and the southern Amazonia area of Ecuador to meet indigenous people and to learn first hand how leaders in these locations view leadership within the framework of care, shared understanding, and imagination.

**Solicitude and Care**

Martin Heidegger’s interest in his most influential work, *Being and Time*, was to address the question of Being and to make sense of our capacity as human beings. He refers to a specific type of Being, the human being, as “Dasein” or the way in which man behaves, “the manner of Being which this entity-man himself-possess (Heidegger 1962: 32).” Heidegger’s Dasein means “Being-there” and “there” is the world. He (1962: 33) writes:

> Sciences are ways of Being in which Dasein comports itself towards entities which it need not be itself. But to Dasein, Being in a world is something that belongs essentially. Thus Dasein’s understanding of Being pertains with equal primordially both to an understanding of something like a ‘world’, and to the understanding of the Being of those entities which become accessible within the world.

For Heidegger the world is here, now and everywhere around us; as human beings we are immersed in it. He describes Being-in as “the formal existential expression for the Being of Dasein, which has Being-in-the-world as its essential state” (Heidegger 1962: 80). Heidegger uses the term “concern” to describe the Being of a possible way of Being-in-the-world because he believes Dasein is revealed as “care.” As he (1962: 274) describes in *Division Two, Dasein and Temporality of Being and Time*:

> The totality of Being-in-the-world as a structural whole has revealed itself as care. In care the Being of Dasein is included. When we came to analyze this Being, we took as our clue existence, which, in anticipation, we had designated as the essence of Dasein. This term ‘existence’ formally indicates that Dasein is as an
understanding potentiality-for-Being, which, in its Being, makes an issue of that Being itself. In every case, I myself am the entity which is in such a manner.

He further describes the uniqueness of human beings, which gives rise to a set of possibilities for each individual and the potential for either authentic or inauthentic existence. For Heidegger, authentic existence can only come to being when individuals realize who they are as Being, for each has their own destiny to fulfill as potentially in the world through care. Heidegger (1962: 276-7) defines “existence” as “a potentially-for-Being – but also one which is authentic” and at the same time, the authentic potentially-for-Being “becomes visible as a mode of care.”

Care is the central theme of Heidegger’s philosophy and Dasein is where care finds its meaning. Care can be thought of as an ethical term which defines our openness as human beings. It refers to the way things and others matter to us, for when things and people matter to us we care for them. Heidegger refers to this idea as concern or solicitude. He used the term “concern” as an ontological term to describe a possible way of Being-in-the-world and said that Dasein was revealed through care. Heidegger (1962: 159) writes that concern is “a character-of-Being which Being-with cannot have as its own, even though Being-with, like concern, is a Being towards entities encountered within-the-world.” He also refers to solicitude as guided by “considerateness and forbearance” (Heidegger 1962: 159).

Such concern can occur in an authentic or inauthentic way depending upon our openness to the consequences of our concern. According to Heidegger, authentic solicitude retains the dignity and respect appropriate to care by helping others, whereas inauthentic solicitude creates a situation of dominance and dependency. He (1962: 158) writes of inauthentic solicitude:
Solicitude has two extreme possibilities. It can, as it were take away care from the Other and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* for him. This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other that with which he is to concern himself. It is this type of solicitude in which one can become dominated or dependent.

In contrast, Heidegger (1962: 159) describes authentic solicitude, as “not so much as a leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him in his existential potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his care but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time.” He (1962: 159) also writes of authentic care as oriented “to the existence of the Other, not to the ‘what’ with which he is concerned; it helps the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for it*.”

Heidegger (1962: 159) tells us that everyday “Being-with-one-another maintains itself between the two extremes of solicitude – that which leaps in and dominates, and that which leaps forth and liberates.”

Paul Ricoeur’s view of solicitude focuses on the respect of self or self-esteem and the concern for the other. His view is of the reciprocity of giving and receiving. Ricoeur (1992: 180) writes in *Oneself and Another* that “self respect and solicitude cannot be experienced or reflected upon one without the other.” For Ricoeur, it is the caring for the other that defines one’s life with others in community. He believes the supreme test for solicitude is finding authentic reciprocity in the face of human suffering.

In addition, Ricoeur examines how the concept of recognition attributes to the dialectic of giving and receiving. His process of recognition appeals to the realm of authentic reciprocity through ethics and of goodness. Ricoeur (1992: 189) describes:

I am speaking here of goodness: it is, in fact, noteworthy that in many languages goodness is at one and the same time the ethical quality of the aims of action and of the orientation of the person towards others, as though an action could not be held to be good unless it were done on behalf of others, out of *regard* for others.
Ricoeur also addresses the concept of mutuality as mediated by good, which Aristotle described as the practice or virtue of friendship. Ricoeur (2000: 182) describes the Aristotelian paradox of friendship and self-love by saying that “one must love oneself in order to love someone else.” He describes friendship as being centered on reciprocity in which one gives and receives what is best in oneself. Ricoeur (1992: 183) argues that this friendship is based on mutuality in which “each loves the other as being the man he is.” This context of mutuality and authenticity preserves the self on an ethical plane, “which reciprocity, on the plane of morality, at the time of violence, will be required by the Golden Rule and the categorical imperative of respect” (Ricoeur 1992: 183). Ricoeur (1992: 184) also states:

This ‘as being’ (as being what the other is) averts any subsequent egoistic learnings: it is constitutive of mutuality. The latter, in turn, cannot be conceived of in absence of the relation to the good, in the self, in the friend, in friendship, so that the reflexivity of oneself is not abolished but is, as it were, split into two by mutuality, under the control of the predicate ‘good,’ applied to agents as well as actions.

Thus, solicitude is central to self-esteem, which without the self is unrecognizable to itself. Ricoeur (1992: 192) tells us:

To self-esteem, understood as a reflexive moment of the wish for the ‘good life’, solicitude adds essentially the dimension of lack, the fact that we need friends; as a reaction of the effect of solicitude on self-esteem, the self perceives itself as another among others. This is the sense of Aristotle’s ‘each other’ (allelous), which makes friendship mutual.

For Ricoeur (1992: 190), solicitude demands “a more fundamental status than obedience to duty.” He says, “its status is that of benevolent spontaneity, intimately related to self-esteem within the framework of the aim of the ‘good’ life” and that “receiving is on an equal footing with the summons to responsibility, in the guise of the
self’s recognition of the superiority of the authority enjoining it to act in accordance with justice” (Ricoeur 1992: 190).

Ricoeur also addresses the concept of similitude. He (1992: 193) describes it as “the fruit of the exchange between esteem for oneself and solicitude for others.” He argues that the self cannot have self-esteem unless “I esteem others as myself” (Ricoeur 1992: 193). This is paramount to the authentic reciprocity between self and other. Ricoeur (1992: 193) also summarizes his thinking by stating that “becoming in this way fundamentally equivalent are the esteem of the other as oneself and the esteem of oneself as another.”

The nature of conversation provides the self and other a new and different way of being. It is through conversation that one can find understanding and agreement with the other. An ethical and moral way of being can be lived out between different cultures though community discourse if both come from an orientation toward new understanding. Ricoeur (1992: 290) tells us:

Only a real discussion, in which convictions are permitted to be elevated above conventions, will be able to state, at the end of a long history yet to come, which alleged universals will become universals recognized by “all the persons concerned” (Habermas), that is, by the “represented persons” (Rawls) of all cultures. In this regard, one of the faces of practical wisdom that we are tracking throughout this study is the art of conversation, in which ethics of argumentation is put to the test in the conflict of convictions.

Both Heidegger and Ricoeur’s concepts of care and solicitude have implications on an ontological view of leadership as a way of being. At the heart of a leader’s being and legitimation as a leader is communication and relationship. This was uncovered and evident from my dialogue with both Achuar and Mlabri leaders. Their communication was grounded in solicitude and care that contributed to reaching shared understanding and relationship. The Achuar and Mlabri leadership as a way of being is different from
current, traditional management and leadership practices we see in today’s organizations yet they are successful with leading their people.

**Habermas’ Concept of Communicative Action**

In the *Theory of Communicative Action, Volume One*, Jürgen Habermas begins his discussion of communicative action by explaining the four action concepts relevant to social-scientific theories. To make possible the introduction to the concept of communicative action, he analyzes the concepts of teleological, normatively regulated, and dramaturgical action in terms of actor-world relations.

**Teleological Action**

The concept of teleological action is the center of philosophical theory of action. Habermas (1984: 85) describes it as the actor attaining an end or bringing an occurrence of a desired state by “choosing means that have promise of being successful in the given situation and applying them in a suitable manner.” In this situation, a decision is the result of alternative courses of action with the realization of an end, and “based on an interpretation of the situation” (Habermas 1984: 85). This model is interpreted in a utilitarian view and the actor chooses the means and end by maximizing utility.

**Normatively Regulated Action**

The normatively regulated action concept refers to members of a social group adhering to or violating norms or common values. They comply with a norm which results in fulfilling expected behavior. It has a “normative sense that members are entitled to expect a certain behavior” (Habermas 1984: 85).

**Dramaturgical Action**

The concept of dramaturgical action refers to “participants in interaction constituting a public for one another, before whom they present themselves” (Habermas
1984: 86). This action is focused on presenting one’s self image or impression of oneself to others for the purposes of “stylizing the expression of one’s own experiences with a view to the audience” (Habermas 1984: 86).

Habermas makes clear the importance of language as a mechanism for coordinating action and achieving understanding. With the above three models of action, language is one-sided. With the teleological concept, the actor uses language for his or her own self-interest with “only the realization of their own ends in view” (Habermas 1984: 95). The focus is on getting someone else to adopt a belief or share a view. The normative model of action presupposes language as the medium to communicate values of an already consensual agreement within a social group from the same social world. The dramaturgical model of action presupposes language as a “medium of self-presentation” and “assimilates to stylistic and aesthetic forms of expression” (Habermas 1984: 95). This is primarily the presentation of self to an audience.

Habermas (1984: 95) distinguishes the one-sidedness of these concepts, by explaining it is only the communicative model of action which “takes all the functions of language equally into consideration.”

**Communicative Action and Validity Claims**

The concept of communicative action, as described by Habermas, “refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extra-verbal means)” (Habermas 1984: 95). Both subjects reach understanding about the action situation and “their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement” (Habermas 1984: 95).

Contrasted to the teleological, normative, and dramaturgical models of action, it is only the communicative model of action that “presupposes language as a medium of
uncurtailed communication whereby speakers and hearers, out of the context of their preinterpreted life-world, refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social, and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of the situation” (Habermas 1984: 95).

According to Habermas, language is only relevant to speakers when they are trying to reach understanding. They take up “relations to the world, not only directly as in teleological, normatively regulated, or dramaturgical action, but in a reflective way” (Habermas 1984: 98). Speakers integrate the objective world, social world and the subjective world as a framework with the goal to reach understanding. They realize the possibility their validity will be contested by others. The speaker puts forth a “criticizable claim in relating with is utterance to at least one ‘world’; he thereby uses the fact that this relation between actor and world is in principle open to objective appraisal in order to call upon his opposite number to take a rationally motivated position” (Habermas 1984: 99).

Mats Alvesson (1996: 142) describes the idea of undistorted communication as a key element in Habermas’ theory. He describes it as a free discussion based on good will, argumentation and dialogue. It is the basis of rational discussion that assumes consensus can be reached through language. Undistorted communication provides the most reflective form of rationality, namely communicative rationality – communication free from domination; that can be open and free. According to Alvesson (1996: 142), arguments and other statements claiming to have a rational basis can be “examined and discussed, in principle until consensus is achieved that one of the approaches or ideas is the correct or best one, either in the sense of being ‘true’ or appropriate in terms of certain well-tried and tested needs and preferences.”
It is communicative rationality that provides both subjects a way of responding through questioning, testing, and accepting a statement’s validity. It is communicative action that allows both subjects the opportunity to explore each statement on a basis of universal validity criteria.

Thomas McCarthy (1996: 290) defines the goal of reaching understanding between speaker and hearer as “the bringing about of an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective communality of mutual comprehension, shared knowledge, reciprocal trust and accord with one another.” According to Bernstein’s view of Habermas’ theory of communicative action, he explains, “anyone acting communicatively must, in the performing of a speech action, raise universal validity claims and suppose that they can be vindicated or redeemed.” Habermas’ four corresponding validity claims for communicative action are comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness.

The validity claim of the speaker is comprehensible if the speaker selects a form of expression that both speaker and hearer can understand. The second claim is the speaker’s intention of communicating content or presuppositions as true and sincere in order for the hearer to share the knowledge of the speaker. Corresponding to this truth claim is the relation to the external reality or making statements about “the” world or “objects and events about which one can make true or false statements” (McCarthy 1996: 280).

The third claim validates the speaker as truthful and it is appropriate and right for him or her to be communicating in order for the hearer to believe and trust the speaker. Corresponding to this claim is the experiences of one’s “own” world or inner reality – “the speaker’s own world of intentional experiences that can be expressed truthfully or untruthfully” (McCarthy 1996: 280).
The final claim is the *rightness* of the speaker in the light of existing norms and values so the hearer can accept the claim and both speaker and hearer can agree with one another. Corresponding to this claim of rightness and appropriateness is the interpersonal relations that constitute “our” world – “a shared life-world of shared values and norms, roles and rules that “can ‘fit’ or ‘misfit’ and that themselves are either ‘right’ – legitimate, justifiable – or ‘wrong’” (McCarthy 1996: 280).

Alvesson (1996: 143) suggests that communicative rationality is high if the ideas emerging from the discussions will be based on “comprehensible statements; the people making the statements will have done so with honesty and sincerity; the various utterances will have been true or correct and will conform prevailing norms.” It is also important these four elements are explored through open and free dialogue and the social situation allows the exploration of validity claims. The relationship between speaker and hearer needs to be one of equal opportunity to express attitudes, feelings, viewpoints, and intentions that ultimately reach mutual understanding.

It is possible for situations within each claim to result in communication breakdowns or interruptions. Alvesson describes the circumstances that frustrate the achievement of consensus in open dialogue as communication that is *systematically distorted*. This can occur due to power relations and ideological domination entering the communication process, making it “difficult if not impossible to question statements or to promote comprehensibility, honesty, correctness, and legitimacy to the utmost” (Alvesson 1996: 144). As McCarthy (1996: 289) describes, if communication is to continue on a consensual basis, “mutual trust must be restored in the course of further interaction as the good faith of each party becomes apparent through assurances,
consistency of action, readiness to draw, accept and act on consequences, willingness to assume implied responsibilities and obligations, and so forth.”

Habermas describes a source of distorted communication coming from the result of *instrumental action* or *strategic social action* which distorts communication due to the “dominance of the goal rational systems of action, according to which imperatives arising from given ends-means relationships consistently enjoy priority and dominate the agenda” (Alvesson 1996: 145). In this situation, efficiency and task considerations determine what is important and legitimate with no questioning, testing, or reflecting of values, interests or reasoning.

An argument can be made that Habermas’s theory of communicative action could also throw some light on aspects of leadership in organizational contexts. Since communication is critical to a leader’s role and organizational success, the application of communication action theory could add meaning to the leader and other relationship and organizational effectiveness.

**Ricoeur and Kearney’s View of Imagination**

As humans, we have a unique capability to imagine and create our own future. Of all the powers of humankind available, imagination is one of the most powerful to envision something that does not exist. We use our imagination constantly and it is part of our existence. As Richard Kearney (1998: 1) philosophizes, “are we not doing it every day, every night, every time we dream, pretend, play, fantasize, invent, lapse into reverie, remember times past or project better times to come?” However, Kearney challenges us to come to know more about imagination, to ask questions of it and to better appreciate what it means to image and thus “to better appreciate what it means to be” (Kearney 1998: 1).
Imagination is open-ended, pictorial, and metaphorical. It is the cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility that is grounded from our past. It is through knowledge, interpretation, understanding and imagination that we present ourselves toward a tomorrow. As Herda (1999: 81) explains:

If we take seriously the act of reinterpreting our world and our past activities, we will realize that we are not simply reviewing and analyzing past theories, policies, or assuming the role of an advocate. Rather, we are using our knowledge and understandings to aid in shaping the future and interpreting the past with a pre-orientation that we will use this knowledge to create new possibilities for the future.

Theorists of imagination, during biblical and medieval times, identified the tension between good and evil when philosophizing about imagination and approached the topic with suspicion. “Many classical and medieval thinkers considered imagination an unreliable, unpredictable and irreverent faculty which could juggle impiously with the accredited distinctions between being and non-being, turning things into their opposites, making absent things present, impossibilities possible” (Kearney 1998: 3).

Since then, imagination has transcended to a modern understanding. Modern philosophers understand imagination as “presence-in-absence – the act of making what is present absent and what is absent present – while generally reversing the negative verdict it had received in the tribunal of tradition” (Kearney 1998: 3). Kearney (1998: 3) identifies the common trait of inquiry with imagination as “the human power to convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, what-is into something other-than-it-is. In short, they all designate our ability to transform the time and space of our world into a specifically human mode of existence.” This humanist model explores imagination as “an intentional act of consciousness which intuits and constitutes essential meaning” (Kearney 1998: 5). Kearney also describes the human precondition of freedom as
essential to imagine and project new possibilities. Without the freedom to imagine, we can not imagine how things might be or envision new possibilities of a future world grounded from our past and inclusive of our present.

The philosophy of imagination, from Kearney’s (1998: 6) perspective, includes three hermeneutic claims:

- imagining is a product act of consciousness, not a mental reproduction in the mind;
- imagining does not involve a courier service between body and mind but an original synthesis which precedes the age old opposition between the sensible and the intelligible; and
- imagining is not a luxury of idle fancy but an instrument of semantic innovation.

These claims encourage us to further analyze the power of imagination in hermeneutic discussions on language, identity, narrative, ethics, and dialogue, and the potential application to international, social, organizational, and individual development opportunities. It encourages us not to take imagination for granted but instead create new meanings to invent new possibilities.

Most phenomenological accounts of imagination are descriptive in method. It is through the hermeneutic orientation that moves us toward the interpretative view of imagination. Kearney (1998: 142) explains this shift towards a hermeneutic view of imagination as “less in terms of vision than in terms of language.” It is Paul Ricoeur, during the fifties through the eighties, who most explored the role of imagination in language, whether through symbols, myths, poems, narratives or ideologies.

Ricoeur took considerable time in exploration of the creative, hermeneutical account of imagination, shifting the paradigm of imagination from a descriptive
concentration of visual images to an interpretative dimension of language. Kearney (1998: 142) describes Ricoeur’s account of imagination as “semantic innovation” or “an indispensable agent in the creation of meaning in and through language.”

Although others such as Heidegger, Kant, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Bachelard have espoused a hermeneutic account of imagination, it is Ricoeur, Kearney (1998: 144) describes, “who made the most incisive intervention” and Ricoeur’s discussion of the imaginative function “represents the single most direct reorientation of a phenomenology of imagining towards a hermeneutics of imagining” (Kearney 1998: 145). Ricoeur (1981: 181) asks us to recognize the power of imagination, not only as “images from our sensory experience, but the capacity for letting new worlds shape our understanding of ourselves.”

Ricoeur’s preference of a hermeneutic adoption of imagination includes imagination as multiple levels of meaning that replaces the visionary model with one that is of a verbal, or of a linguistic function. As Kearney (1998: 145) describes, “Ricoeur affirms the more *poetical* role of imaging: that is, its ability to say one thing in terms of something new.” He (1998: 147) also adds, “Ricoeur’s preference for a semantic model of imagination over a visual one makes possible a new appreciation of this properly creative role of imagination.” This concept of imagination as primarily verbal through language, provides explanation to how metaphor can bring into play the coming together of two different meanings that produces a new meaning. Kearney (1998: 148) tells us that imagination can be “recognized accordingly as the act of responding to demand for new meaning, the demand of emerging realities to *be* by *being said* in new ways.”

The poetic imagination produces text to *being said* in new ways. It opens up new meaning for the reader, thus permitting new understanding, new possibilities of self
through the images of the text, whether myths, symbols or dreams. From the interpretation of text we are opened up to new possibilities and action. Kearney (1998: 149-150) further explains Ricoeur’s view that “there can be no action without imagination” and “action is imaginative variations of the world, offering us the freedom to conceive of the world in other ways and to undertake forms of action that might lead to its transformation.” Semantic innovation can thus point towards social transformation. The possible world of imagination can be made real by action. Action is necessary to create and lead a new possible world. The Achuar people are a dream society and their leaders lead according to their dreams and what they envision from shamanic ceremonies. Dreams, visions, and imagination provide the direction to how Achuar leaders live their lives, how they make decisions, and how they lead their people.

Summary of Theoretical Framework

The review of theoretical literature of Heidegger, Ricoeur, Habermas, and Kearney provides the framework in which the topic of leadership can be pursued through carrying out research in a critical hermeneutic tradition. This framework is a participatory collaboration between researcher and research participants to engage in dialogue and to think about leadership in a different view. It is a view that is inclusive of the concepts of care, shared understanding, and the imagination of new possibility.

Research Protocol

The research protocol for the research is a research process in which conversations take place between researcher and research participants. The research conversations for this study took place in San Francisco, Thailand, and Ecuador with leaders of Mlabri and Achuar villages, as well as with leaders of organizations who partner with them. The conversations included specific guidelines and focus, were audio
recorded, then transcribed and fixed as a text. The text was analyzed focusing on the areas of theoretical framework and review of literature for meaning and to appropriate new possibilities as a result of reading the text.

The remainder of this chapter describes the research site, conversation questions, participants in the research, data collection methods, timeline, data analysis approach, background of the researcher, and a summary of the pilot study.

**Entrée to Research Site**

One research site for conducting a conversation was selected in Northern Thailand, outside the city of Nan at a hill people village of the Mlabri. A second research site was in the Southern Amazonia area of Ecuador, specifically in Achuar territory (See Appendix A: Research Site Locations). Because of the nature of the this exploration, the research involved international travel to both locations in order for me to observe, interact, and participate in conversations with leaders of the Mlabri and Achuar, as well as those leaders in non-government organizations who partner with them in development projects at both locations.

Prior to the travel to these far reaching locations, arrangements were made with individuals in San Francisco and Ecuador in order for me to identify Mlabri and Achuar leaders. My travels in Southeast Asia included travel through Northern Thailand and into Laos where I was able to have informal conversations with leaders of a Hmong village and Khamu village along the Mekong River. My travel in Ecuador was with an organized trip sponsored by the Pachamama Alliance, an organization that partners with the indigenous peoples of the Southern Amazon to help them protect their territory from oil exploration and destruction.
Research Categories and Conversation Questions

The hermeneutic approach for this research study included the following categories as described in the theoretical framework section and the questions used as a guide for the conversations:

Category I: Solicitude and Care

1. How did you become a leader of your village?
2. How do you lead your people?
3. What have you learned about yourself as a leader?

Category II: Communicative Action

1. How do you build trust with others?
2. How do you work together with those outside of the village?
3. Can you describe an example when working with others worked well? Not so well?

Category III: Imagination

1. What does the future look like for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?
2. How do you tell others about the future of your village?
3. How does your past help you think about the future for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?

Given the nature of my research with indigenous people, some of the research questions were reworded to ensure appropriateness and understanding between researcher and research participant. The research questions used were slightly different when I conducted conversations with leaders of organizations that support indigenous people and with leadership thought leaders. See Appendix B for Research Questions Guide – Version 2.

Research Participants

Participants in the study were from both research sites (Thailand and Ecuador) and San Francisco, California. Twelve formal participants contributed to this study, representing leaders of the Mlabri and Achuar people, and leaders of non-government
organizations including Pachamama Alliance located in San Francisco, and Pachamama
Fundación, located in Quito Ecuador. The research participants who are leaders of non-
government organizations were mailed a letter of consent to be a research participant
prior to the research conversation (See Appendix B).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Livelihood or Occupation</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ta Taw</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Mlabri Leader</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Ear</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Mlabri Elder</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sornkili Prakhoon Anan</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Hmong Village Leader</td>
<td>Thai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Tucker</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Executive Director, Pachamama Alliance</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynn Twist</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Founder, Pachamama Alliance</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Twist</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Founder, Pachamama Alliance</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Koupermann</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Guide/Consultant</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>Elario Gunt</td>
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<td>Achuar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando Antik</td>
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<td>María Belén Páez</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>President, Fundación Pachamama, Ecuador</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1 - Conversation Partners**

My awareness and selection of Bill and Lynn Twist, David Tucker, and María
Belén Páez, were due to my involvement and support of the Pachamama Alliance
organization and my admiration of their leadership and work with the Achuar and other
indigenous people in the Southern Amazonia in Ecuador. The Pachamama Alliance is a
U.S. based not-for-profit organization that has formed a relationship with the leaders of
Achuar. This relationship was initiated by the indigenous elders who, out of their deep
concern for the growing threat to their way of life, and their recognition that the roots of this threat lay far beyond their rain forest home, actively sought the partnership of committed individuals living in the modern world. Bill, Lynn, David, and Belén are those persons.

Bill and Lynn Twist are founders of Pachamama Alliance and have led the organization to help support the Achuar to protect their territory from being destroyed. Bill is President and Chairman of the Board of Directors. Lynn is a board member as well as a global activist, fundraiser, speaker, consultant and author, who has spent much of her life with causes such as eradicating hunger and poverty, global sustainability and security, human rights, economic integrity, and spiritual authenticity. David Tucker has been on staff with The Pachamama Alliance since 1999, serving as Executive Director since 2001. He has been bridging the global North and South for over a decade, leads Pachamama journeys to Ecuador, and is a committed student of indigenous earth-based wisdom.

María Belén Páez (See Photograph 6) is President Fundación Pachamama, Ecuador. Belén works with indigenous peoples and nations of the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon basin. She coordinates, administers, and provides assistance in the areas of organizational development, territorial management, alternative economic development, lobbying, culture, identity, and education. As an Ecuadorian citizen she believes that Ecuador should no longer extract petroleum, and that there are enormous opportunities to cultivate an alternative model of development for the Amazon basin.
Daniel Koupermann is a guide, naturalist, and past president of Fundación Pachamama, Ecuador. Daniel has been working with the Achuar since 1981, soon after they made contact with the modern world. Daniel was the visionary who led efforts in creating the Kapawi Ecological Reserve and Kapawi Ecolodge in the Amazon Basin, a sustainable development within the Achuar Territory. Daniel was instrumental in arranging my conversations with Achuar leaders while in Ach0 Territory.

The Achuar leaders included in my research conversations were Elario Gunt, Fernando Antik, and Santiago Kawarim.

Elario Gunt (See Photograph 7) is the vice síndico (leader) of the Wachirpas village, which means he is second in line of authority for the village. He told me he had been a leader within the village.
for many years.

Fernando Antik (See Photograph 8) is the síndico of the Kusukau village and has been the leader there for three years. Santiago has been in various leadership roles for the past few decades including President of FINAE (the Achuar governing federation) twice, the leader of the Punpuntsa village, director of an Achuar school, a member of the Achuar Territory Assembly, and currently is leading Aero Tsentsak, the Achuar airline. This is the air service that transports tourists into Achuar Territory to the Kapawi Ecolodge.

Photograph 8 - Daniel Koupermann, Fernando Antik, Don Kraft, Celestino Antik – Linda Leyerle

My conversation partners in Thailand, Ta Taw, Split Ear, and Sornkili Prakhoon came about from my involvement with the Windhorse Foundation, of which I am a board member and president. The Windhorse Foundation is a non-government organization that is working to help change the lives of desperately poor people in Southeast Asia. Ta Taw is the leader of the Mlabri village and has led this village for several years. Split Ear (See Photograph 9) is a village elder who advises Ta Taw on the importance of maintaining Mlabri culture and traditions. Sornkili Prakhoon is a Hmong leader and farmer who has
supported the Mlabri since they were forced onto the land that is now their village about 15 years ago. Had it not been for Sornkili, the Mlabri may have become extinct. He fed and clothed them, educated them, and helped them with the transition from hunters and gatherers, to farming and raising livestock.

Photograph 9 - Conversation with Split Ear – Beryl Banks

Data Collection and Text Creation

Data for this research study were collected through conversations between researcher and research participants. The twelve conversations were audio recorded and transcribed to a text or a fixation of the conversation in writing (Herda 1999: 97). While in Thailand, I was assisted by Juu, a Hmong college student and travel guide, who translated my conversations with Ta Taw, Split Ear while at the Mlabri village. Juu also translated my conversation with Sornkili Prakhoon. My conversations in Ecuador were translated by Daniel Koupermann who translated with Achuar leaders in Spanish. As with any translation between languages, the challenge of getting accurate data was in play since multiple languages were used and interpretation may have been incorporated
between speakers. The conversations at most risk with a loss of true meaning were with Ta Taw, Split Ear, Sornkili, Elario, and Fernando.

After the conversations were transcribed, some of the transcriptions were sent to the participants to read, comment, clarify if necessary, and to provide time to review and reflect on what was said during the conversation. I accommodated any of the changes the participant wanted to make to the text. The intent of this type of data collection is not only to share in the conversation experience but more importantly for both conversants to gain new knowledge and learning from each other.

Where possible, research participants in this study were contacted by email or phone with a description of the study followed by a letter of invitation that included the research questions (See Appendix C) and the Consent to be a Research Subject form (See Appendix D). Participants were also sent a letter of confirmation that the conversation is to be audio recorded and transcribed into a text document that they will have an opportunity to edit before becoming data for analysis (See Appendix E). Finally, after the conversation, the participants were sent a thank you and follow-up letter to show appreciation for their participation in the study (See Appendix F).

**Timeline**

The timeline for the research study began with data collection in May 2008 and was completed in August of 2008. Text creation and analysis of the transcribed conversations and determining research implications occurred from September 2008 through January of 2009. The final dissertation was completed and submitted on February 4, 2009.
Personal Journal

An important source of data used during this research study was a personal research journal. During the exploration of my research topic and travels to Thailand and Ecuador, I kept a personal journal in order to record observations, generate new ideas, and record reflections outside the formal data collection process.

My aim with keeping a journal was to document new insights and views on the topic of leadership as well as new understanding of both the research process and the theories of solicitude, communicative action, and imagination. The personal journal I kept during the research process was used as a source of informal data with the primary data retrieved from fieldwork.

Data Analysis

According to Herda (1999: 98), data analysis is a creative and imaginative act in which the researcher appropriates a proposed world from the text. The conversation texts from the research conversations were analyzed to determine themes and to place them within the selected categories for the study. The analysis also determined new meaning in light of the theoretical concepts by using quotes from my conversations, from my observations, outside documented studies, and from my personal journal. From the analysis, implications were made on the topic of leadership that provides new insight and new direction.

The following sequence explains the process for analysis following a critical hermeneutic approach (Herda 1999: 96-100) that was used for this research:
• Data were collected by having research conversations that were recorded and transcribed. Some of the conversations occurred with the aid of a translator, since the native language was other than English.

• The transcription became a text of the conversation between the researcher and the participant and was fixed in written form. The transcriptions formed the major source of data for analysis.

• The researcher read all the conversation transcriptions and developed an overview of the topic and appropriated a proposed world from the text. When one is exposed to a text, one comes away from it with a different perspective.

• The researcher identified significant statements from the conversations and determined themes within the research categories.

• The themes and other important ideas were substantiated with quotes from the conversation transcripts and were supplemented with observational data.

• The themes were then examined to determine what they meant in light of the framework of critical hermeneutics.

• Additional opportunities were provided for continued conversation and discussion with research participants to make note of any changes or new ideas since the first conversation.

• Next, a context was set for a written text. The text was developed from a discussion of groupings of themes and sub-themes within each category in light of the topic of leadership.

• The research topic was discussed at a theoretical level and provided further use for critical hermeneutics.
• Implications from the written text provided deeper insight and a new direction on the topic of leadership. New aspects for further study were also identified.

• Examples of learning experiences that took place for the researcher during the research process were identified and the role the study played in the researcher’s life.

This study followed the described process above in order to provide new insight and direction on how leaders can lead others. The themes of solicitude and care, shared understanding, and imagination were woven throughout the interpretive, hermeneutic texts that were created to provide the depth and the framework to interpret leadership in a new light.

**Pilot Study**

The following section summarizes the pilot study conducted for this research project.

**Introduction**

A pilot study was conducted on November 16, 2007 to determine if the theoretical framework and research questions of my research topic were adequate to guide a conversation on the topic of leadership. The pilot study was conducted at a coffee house in the town of Orinda, outside San Francisco, with Dr. Jim Kouzes (See Photograph 10). The details of the pilot study are described in the following section.
Conversation Partner

To gain further understanding on the topic of leadership and how it relates to hermeneutic thinking, I approached Jim Kouzes, well known thought leader on the topic of leadership, and co-author of the best seller, *The Leadership Challenge*. Jim has been conducting research on the topic of leadership for the past twenty years and has written numerous books based on the findings of his extensive research. I was familiar with Jim’s view on leadership and this led me to consider him as a research partner. Some of his thinking on leadership has similarities to the categories I have selected for further study – solicitude and care, communicative action, and imagination. The transcription of the conversation with Jim is available in the appendices (See Appendix G).

**Solicitude and Care**

Our conversation began on the topic of care of others within a leadership context. Jim began by describing a cartoon he saw in the New Yorker and which he had recently used during a keynote speech. The cartoon illustrated a manager who said “keep up the good work, whatever it is.” The cartoon demonstrated how the manager was void of relationship with those he was leading.

Jim linked this to caring for those you lead and went on to say that caring for those you lead requires a certain set of skills. In a sense, it is having the skills and capabilities to build and establish relationships. Jim’s view is “if you’re truly interested in someone else, you’ll be paying attention to them.”

Jim also advised that it is important to “personalize what you say” to others in order to show you care about them. He explained:

If you want to demonstrate you truly care about someone, then you’ll know about what they like and need, their hopes, dreams and aspirations and not try to treat
everyone the same. That, of course, requires getting to know the person as a person: their values, their beliefs, their interests, their hobbies, if they have a family or not.

According to Jim, one of the most important characteristics for a leader is to respect and treat people with dignity. He says this is a universal view and the research he has conducted over the years validates this thinking. “Whether it’s here in the U.S. or elsewhere, having an interest in other people and having curiosity about other people, wanting to find out about their values, and not assuming that your way is the best way, is universally positive and has a positive impact.”

In their book, Encouraging the Heart, Jim and Barry Posner (his co-author and dean of the school of business at the University of Santa Clara) describe a comment from a CEO who feels it is important to love those you lead. It’s notable to mention that Jim’s espouses to this thinking as well. The “tag” line that he uses in his communication is “Love ‘em, and Lead ‘em.” When asked about what that means to him, his response was as leaders, “if caring about people, having good relationships with other people is key to being effective as a leader, you really need to love people.”

Communicative Action

The conversation continued and included a discussion on the role of leader and the importance of building relationship and shared understanding. To Jim, it begins by enabling others to act. Jim described the importance of trust as a key aspect of enabling others to act by saying:

Enabling others to act or making others feel powerful and efficacious and capable is, at its core, about trust. If I’m demonstrating trust toward someone else, then I’m behaving in a particular way. But if I don’t trust them I’m more likely to diminish them. What makes people feel powerful or efficacious or capable is fundamentally about showing trust in them. It’s about giving them something important to work on or decide on.
Jim also explained that communication of expectations that are based on trust is important for a leader to practice when building relationships.

**Imagination**

My conversation with Jim ended on the topic of imagination and how it plays with being an effective leader. For Jim, it is important for a leader to imagine new possibilities by creating a compelling image of the future. He considers this a leadership best practice and explained:

> It's where people have to create a compelling image of the future or they have to communicate in a way that other people can see it as their own interest and that requires some of their natural caring, paying attention and listening and also being able to tell stories, examples, anecdotes, use humor - rather than just the rational linear way many people in the business communicate.

For Jim, a leader needs to describe the future in ways other people can actually see themselves in that picture.

> When asked how a person’s past plays with how he or she imagines something for the future, Jim’s response was that if you look backwards first you're more likely to see further ahead. He described this further, saying:

> By understanding more clearly our past and where we came from I think we're better able to understand it takes longer to do things that we might originally think. We recognize that if we can look back 20 years and understand where we've come from, then we have some sense of all of the variety of experiences that made us who we are and it wasn’t just one linear transition. As we look ahead, we look at more variety in things, not just one thing.

Jim shared a personal story of his own life on how his past led him to his present and how he looks to his future:

> As I look at my own background and say, I got here by a rather circuitous route rather than a linear path. I was exposed to a whole variety of experiences that brought me here. I think part of the looking backwards first does bring us to a
better understanding of how rich and varied our own experiences have been. It gives us permission to look at more things that are out there.

In summary, Jim’s insight on the topic of leadership provided implications for leaders with how they care or pay attention to others, build relationships through trust, and imagine new possibilities by being inclusive and looking outside of one’s own discipline. Additional information about the data analysis and implications from the pilot study is available in appendices (See Appendix H).

Learning from Pilot Study

The research pilot study explored the topic of leadership as a way of being. In this leadership model, leaders operate through care, building relationship and shared understanding, and imagining a new possible world.

Results of the pilot study confirmed the theoretical framework of solicitude and care, shared understanding, and imagination are worth exploring as a foundation for thinking about leadership differently. As a result of conducting the pilot study, new thinking surfaced as to my approach to my dissertation. It included:

- revising the title of my dissertation to *Voices From the Forest: Leadership Revealed through Care, Shared Understanding, and Imagination*,
- addressing how it is key for leaders to reach a shared understanding with others, and,
- highlighting the interconnectiveness of the modern world and indigenous people and how leaders play a role in imagining a better world for all of us.

This new thinking guided my approach to research for my dissertation.
Background of Researcher

My professional background is in the field of learning and development with over 25 years’ experience. Currently I am the Director of Learning and Development in Human Resources for Genentech, Inc. located in South San Francisco, California. I am responsible for Genentech’s professional, management, and leadership development curriculum, and Genentech’s on-boarding and performance management processes. Prior to Genentech, I worked for Oracle, Gap, Inc., and A.C. Nielsen Company.

My experience in learning and development, learning technologies, performance management, and measurement and evaluation of learning has led to my presenting at several national and international conferences. My work has also appeared in publications such as Future Pharmaceuticals, Workforce Magazine, Human Resource Executive Magazine, and Training Directors’ Forum and I have been published in Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels, by Donald Kirkpatrick, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th editions.

My educational background includes a Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in Business Management and a M.B.A. from Golden Gate University in San Francisco. Embarking on this research study blends my personal passions to learn more about indigenous culture, to help save our Earth’s forests, and my role with the Windhorse Foundation, a non-government organization that helps desperately poor of Southeast Asia.

My research was a continuation of a personal and professional interest on the topic of leadership and one of self discovery and meaning for my own leadership. It is a journey that began when I first enrolled into the doctorate program at University of San Francisco in 2004 and my first exposure to critical hermeneutics and the philosophies of Ricoeur, Gadamer, Habermas, Kearney, and Heidegger. Over the years, I have made
effort to appropriate the philosophical concepts from my coursework to my own leadership approach. The intent of my research project was to further develop my own leadership capability with what I learned from my research.

**Summary**

Chapter Four describes the theoretical framework including the hermeneutical theories of solicititude and care, communicative action, and imagination. It also provides a description of the research protocol used for this research study, including research categories, conversation questions, a description of research participants, my approach used for data analysis and an overview of the pilot study. Chapter Five describes the data presentation and analysis from my research conversations.
You are in the jungle with the Achuar, with the sounds of the birds and animals. What you can say about the Achuar people is we don’t want oil companies. Because the forest is our supermarket, our pharmacy, our hardware store.

Fernando Antik, Achuar Leader

**Introduction**

As mentioned in Chapter One, the intent of my research is to uncover an orientation toward leadership that incorporates the wisdom and experiences from leaders of indigenous people unavailable from prevailing leadership research – a view of leadership that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding and imagination. This Chapter provides not only the critical hermeneutic analysis of the research conversations in terms of the three research concepts that frame this effort, but also the voices of my conversation partners and their narrative that underpins this research.

**Voices from the Forest: The Mlabri**

In the spring of 2008, I made arrangements to travel to Southeast Asia and Ecuador to conduct my research. The trip to Thailand provided an ideal opportunity to meet with three conversation partners; Ta Taw, the leader of the Mlabri village, Split Ear, the Mlabri village elder, and Sornkili Prakhoon, a Hmong village leader who has worked with helping the Mlabri for the past 10 years.

I first traveled from San Francisco to Boston, where I spent a few days with family to celebrate my niece’s graduation from Boston University. The next leg of my trip was to onto Barcelona, Spain, where I spent a few days exploring the city, and then a 10.5 hour flight to Thailand to join a group of San Francisco Bay Area educators and
Windhorse Foundation supporters for a service and culture-related trip that would begin in northern Thailand then travel into Laos. With the assistance of Dr. Ellen Herda, I made arrangements with Juu, a 22 year old Hmong man from Laos, who was our guide and interpreter for the trip. We met the night before in our hotel in Nan to discuss plans for the next day, which would take us to the village.

The next morning, eighteen of us tightly positioned ourselves into the back of a large pick up truck (See Photograph 11) with 15 or more 50-pound bags of rice, food items, a butchered pig, clothing, and other supplies for the two hour trip in 90 degree plus heat along the steep mountainous roads to the Mlabri village. When we arrived at the village, I noticed the improvement that had taken place since my last visit to the village two years ago – a new clinic, a school, tin roofs, vegetable gardens, and chicken huts (See Photograph 12). I had been studying the Mlabri and their way of life during my coursework at University of San Francisco for the past four years and first visited the village in 2006 on a cultural and humanitarian trip lead by Dr. Herda. It was satisfying to see the improvement within the past two years, yet more assistance is needed to help the Mlabri continue to build a new sustainable way of life other than their past traditional hunting and gathering ways which are no longer possible. Although there was improvement, the people were ragged and tired from the hard work from farming the land and the constant struggle to survive.
After arriving to the village, Ta Taw, Split Ear and I sat on the ground, under the shade of a tree next to Split Ear’s house. Ta Taw has been the leader or “head man” for the village for the past several years and was selected by the Thai government to lead the village since they believed he had good communication capabilities. According to Ta Taw, the local people also were in favor of his being selected “head man.” He explained, “the local people say they like me and want me to be head man.”

Split Ear, a village elder, is named so due to the split in one of his ear lobes from an earring he once wore as part of traditional custom for Mlabri men. The conversation began with Split Ear, who was interested in telling me about the past traditions of the Mlabri. Asking Split Ear to tell me about himself opened up the conversation to learn about the challenging transition the Mlabri people face with retaining their identity as they adopt new ways. The situation for the Mlabri became grim as the forests in Northern Thailand began to disappear the past three decades. Since the Mlabri were a hunting and gatherer society, they eventually had no where to go. Split Ear described how his people
had to move many times until their forced settlement by the Thai military to the current location; up in a mountainous area where all the trees have been clear cut, now taken over by bamboo. He said the “government made us move here…in this village.” Although they were forced to live a new and different way, Split Ear stressed the importance of maintaining Mlabri culture throughout our conversation. He described:

In the future, we want a better house, better village and we want our people to keep our culture. Like the original one. We want to improve ourselves to be better for the future. This means not always having outside people helping us. We have to improve ourselves to have education. When we have education then we don’t need help from others. In the past we didn’t know Thai language….now we do. We need to keep our own culture. To keep our own culture is good for the outside people to know so they know who we are.

Split Ear provided an example of how as a village elder, he is attempting to “keep our own culture” which is by teaching the youth of the village how to start fire as the Mlabri did in the forest. He demonstrated how to start a fire using a Mlabri traditional method by taking out a few items from a bamboo carrying case that included a metal piece (goick), flint (haplick), and a soft substance from a coconut for the fire to catch onto. He showed how easily it can be done by starting fire a few times (See Photograph 13).

He then attempted to help me try to start fire which I failed after multiple attempts. Although I was unable to light fire, it was enjoyable to see Split Ear’s amusement due to the lack of my fire making capability. It was the first laughter within the village I had heard during this or during my prior visit to the village in 2006.
Since we are reflective beings and culture is not static, we can imagine new possibilities, new ways of being, and new meaning that transition our culture to new and preferred ways of life. Split Ear’s desire for his village to become self-sustainable, and to see the Mlabri improve their way of life for the future are clear examples of the transition they are experiencing. This includes the practical changes from a migratory way of life to learning to farm and the cultural changes as they adopt Thai ways and social protocol with Mlabri ways of being. From a cultural difference standpoint the challenge for Split Ear is reconfiguring past beliefs, attitudes, and norms, to a horizon of the present and a new imagined future. Gadamer (1979: 273) describes his view as it is seen through the lens of culture, history, and tradition:

The horizon of the present is being continually formed, in that we have continually to test all our prejudices. An important part of that testing is the encounter with the past and the understanding of the traditional from which we come…In a tradition this process of fusion is continually going on, for the old and new continually grow together to make something of living value, without either being explicitly distinguished from the other.

For Split Ear, the past traditions are just a memory and the fusion of these memories with the present and future are now being appropriated toward learning to live in a new world for the Mlabri.

Ta Taw (See Photograph 14), the village leader or “head man,” has been leading the village of approximately 25 Mlabri families for the past nine years. I began my conversation with Ta Taw by asking him how he became head man. He responded with humility by explaining, “the local people say they like
me and want me to be head man. They like I know how to speak – how to speak clear, how to be the head man, how to lead the people, how to talk to people in the village. When people fight I know how to clear it up – to make it equal for them so they decide me as head man.” Ta Taw leads out of his sense of responsibility and care for his people. He mentioned that he is “responsible for many things in the village. People drink alcohol; they do acts of bad things. They fight with other people. I am the person to say to them to stop. Second thing – when they have no food, I am the leader in the village to go to town to talk with the government to come and help.”

Heidegger (1962: 139) states that Being-in-the-world is essentially care; through care and solicitude; and that it is the most genuine and organic of human social interaction. Ta Taw acts both for concern for and as solicitude for the other – his people. He also leads with authenticity related to Heidegger’s concept of an authentic being, and how it can be retained with others. For Heidegger (1962: 374), it enables us to exercise an authentic form of care, solicitude and is the project of moving towards ones own most possibility and as such this aim is temporally bound towards the future. Heidegger (1962: 246) describes temporality revealing itself as “the meaning of authentic care” and “the perfecto of human being – becoming what one can be in being free for one’s own most possibilities – is an accomplishment of care.”

Ta Taw does not desire control as a leader and would prefer not to be the leader or head man, yet he does so because the people ask him to be the leader, and that the government wants him to be the leader. Nonetheless, he accepts this responsibility out of care for his people.

My conversation with Ta Taw also led me to believe his leadership also illustrates Fry’s description of spirituality and leadership; one that is based on altruistic love.
whereby “leaders and followers have genuine care, concern, and appreciation for both
self and others, thereby producing a sense of membership and [feeling] understood and
appreciated” (Fry 2003: 695). According to Fry, spiritual leadership occurs when the self
embodies spiritual values such as integrity, honesty, and humility, all of which I sense Ta
Taw possesses. In recent years, some of the Mlabri have been exposed to Christianity by
attending a Christian church in a nearby Hmong village. This may be influencing the
reconfiguration of their boundaries on spirituality with past traditions. As he explained:

First, I have learned to love myself, my family, and the other. That is why the
people choose me. When people have problems, I have to go and see who made
the mistake and stop them. When people get angry or have little food, I go and see
the reason and do right for them. If they do not have enough food, I divide it for
them. So that’s why they love me. I want everybody to have land, to cultivate it,
to plant rice. This is the main thing. If somebody does not have – that’s a
problem.

Although the Mlabri have made strides in becoming self-sustainable, much
remains to become independent of others and to reconfigure to a new way of life. Ta Taw
imagines a better future; one of independence from outside assistance, having the
capability of farming their own food, having improved living conditions, and improving
educational opportunities for their children. He explained:

In the future, we want a better house, better village and we want the people to
keep their culture. Like the original one. We want to improve ourselves to be
better for the future. This means not always having outside people helping us. We
have to improve ourselves to have education. When we have education then we
don’t need help from others.

Both Ta Taw and Split Ear hope for future generations of Mlabri to have a remembrance
of their past and to remember their culture and past traditions. Ta Taw explained, “in the
past from our ancestors to now today, we want to remember the spirituals. We want our
children not to forget what we did in the past. To know the names of the trees, to know
the food; what is good or not good to eat. To remember our traditions from when we lived in the jungle.”

Ta Taw and Split Ear’s remembrance and narration of the Mlabri past exemplifies Ricoeur’s view of memory and prediction. For Ricoeur (1984: 52), lived time is human time “to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full significance when it becomes a condition of temporal existence.” As Ricoeur also states, we mediate between the two types of time through the act of emplotment; telling, retelling and reconfiguring the life events that make up the plot and that opens us up to new possibilities. We experience time through the notion of memory and prediction. As Ricoeur (1984: 10) points out, “narration, we say, implies memory and prediction implies expectation. Now, what is it to remember? It is to have an image of the past. How is this possible? It is possible because this image is an impression left by events, an impression that remains in the mind.” For Ricoeur, through memory we take traces of the past and try to represent them in the present. Since trying to remember just as it exactly was is at best a partial representation, they are subject to misrepresent rather than represent the past.

Ricoeur (1984: 11) defines prediction as “a present expectation that future things are present to us as things to come” and expectation as an “image that already exists, in the sense that it precedes the event that does not yet exist.” He also goes on to say that this image is “not an impression left by things past but a ‘sign’ and a ‘cause’ of future things which are, in this way anticipated, foreseen, foretold, predicted, proclaimed beforehand”. Ricoeur believes the space of experience is made up of cultural events that a person remembers in the present. The past is thus made present to project toward the future for new action. The future is made present.
For the Ta Taw and Split Ear, their narratives rely on memory of the past while in the forest, and the prediction of an uncertain future due to a new way of life for their people; one of independence and as farmers. Turner (1967: 97) describes this state of ambiguity as the concept of “liminal period” or the state of “betwixt and between” a position. It is a state of being in which the lives of the Mlabri people are “neither here nor there,” neither past nor future. Their identity is in a state of flux due to the transition between two worlds of being; their traditional hunter and gatherer way of life and the new way of raising livestock and farming.

As with Ricoeur’s (1984: 11) view, the Mlabri narrative has become a mediation between “a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things.” It is a position of mediation between the two worlds the Mlabri live within; one of their past ways of life in the forest and one of the present and future. For example, lighting fire using traditional practice that has been passed down from their ancestors is something the youth of the village are not interested in learning, yet they do imagine new possibilities for a better future. Soon after our conversation, Split Ear’s son Iwan, who was in his late teens, appeared out his house. I asked him how he imagined his future with being Mlabri. His response was he was going to get married soon and “I am going to be a farmer. I just want to be a farmer.”

Sornkili Prakhoon Anan

After distributing the supplies to the village and ending my conversation with Ta Taw and Split Ear, we got back into the truck for the trip back to Nan which included a downpour of rain while in route. The cool drops of rain were refreshing given the earlier high temperature while at the village. Once at the hotel, I had a conversation with Sornkili Prakhoon Anan (See Photograph 16) who was also with us during our trip to the
Mlabri village. Sornkili is a Hmong farmer and a former village leader or “head man” who is from the village next to the Mlabri. Sornkili is his Thai name since the government will not let him use his Hmong name. His first interaction with the Mlabri came about when they were forced to settle nearby and he saw how poor the people were. As a result, he began to help them and has continued to work with the Mlabri for the past eight years.

“Even though I’m no longer head man of the Hmong village, I still work with these people because I love them. I love these poor people and brought some of them to my house. A few of them stayed in my house.”

Ricoeur defines solicitude as empathy and concern for others, specifically an empathy and concern that is directed toward reducing the suffering of the other. Ricoeur (1992: 190) defines suffering as “not defined solely by physical pain, nor even by mental pain, but by the reduction, even the destruction, of the capacity for acting, of being unable to act, experienced as a violation of self-integrity.” Ricoeur, with Heidegger, understands that solicitude is something practiced in terms doing with and doing for. For Ricoeur (1992: 191) the “supreme test of solicitude, when unequal power finds compensation in an authentic reciprocity of exchange, which in the hour of agony, finds refuge in the shared whisper of voices or the feeble embrace of clasped hands.” Ricoeur posits that through acts with the suffering other rather than merely stepping in acting for the other increases the other’s capacity to act. Ricoeur (1992: 193) continues, “solicitude adds the dimension of value, whereby each person is irreplaceable in our affection and esteem. In this respect, it is in experiencing the irreplaceable loss of the loved other that
we learn, through the transfer of the other onto ourselves, the irreplaceable character of our own life.” Sornkili’s leadership includes his solicitude for the Mlabri which focuses on helping them to learn to help themselves. He acts with the Mlabri rather for them. As he described:

I work with them on four things. First is education. Mainly for the people who don’t know how to read and write. Both children and adults. They return home and tell the others. So, in the future, they will not have to go and work for other people. They don’t want to have to work for others, but for now it is necessary so they can be able to buy rice to eat.

Second is to teach about daily life – how to be a friendly person to the other – sociable. Third is how to keep their health, to be clean and the last one is belief in Christianity. The main thing is health. A few years ago, they were unclean. They didn’t know how to be clean people. But now they do.

Sornkili also shares an optimistic view of imagining a new future for the Mlabri with Ta Taw and Split Ear. He explained that “they listen to other people and trust them. They will trust. This is important in order to help them and love them in the future. More trust will help for the next one to two years.” I was curious as to how Sornkili was able to build trust with the Mlabri so our conversation transitioned to how he builds trusting relationships with others. His view is trust is important in building relationships as a leader. As he described:

Because we live together for long time, I love them. When they first came from the forest, they didn’t know how to do anything – how to cook, how to dress… I taught them how to cook and how to dress in their clothes. The other thing that is most important to relationships is trust. If they don’t believe you they will not trust you. When people come to help them, I explain to them people come to help so they trust me. If they need something they come to me first because they trust me.

Sornkili, as with Ta Taw, leads from his heart and exemplifies Ricoeur’s view of solicitude toward the other. Ricoeur’s view of solicitude focuses on the respect of self or self-esteem and the concern for the other. Ricoeur (1992: 180) tells us that, “self respect
and solicitude cannot be experienced or reflected upon one without the other.” For Ricoeur, it is the caring for the other that defines one’s life with others in community and that the supreme test for solicitude is finding authentic reciprocity in exchange in the face of human suffering.

In addition, Ricoeur (1992: 189) examines how the concept of recognition attributes to the dialectic of giving and receiving. His process of recognition appeals to the realm of authentic reciprocity through ethics and of goodness: “I am speaking here of goodness: it is, in fact, noteworthy that in many languages goodness is at one and the same time the ethical quality of the aims of action and of the orientation of the person towards others, as though an action could not be held to be good unless it were done on behalf of others, out of regard for others.”

As the day came to a close, I began reflecting upon what I had heard from the voices of Split Ear, Ta Taw, and Sornkili and how it relates to leadership. They lead from their heart, grounded in care and love for others out of concern and solicitude. With great humility and selflessness, they naturally and authentically build trusting relationships.

**Voices from the Forest: The Achuar**

*Photograph 16 – Achuar Territory – Don Kraft*
A few days after returning to San Francisco after my travels in Southeast Asia, I continued my exploration of indigenous leadership by traveling to Ecuador on a trip sponsored by the non-government organization, Pachamama Alliance. The trip included ten other travelers most of whom were associated with the Pachamama Alliance organization. In the spring of 2008, I had exchanged emails and had phone conversations with the trip organizers to ensure I would have an opportunity to meet with Achuar leaders. They assured me I would have ample time and opportunity to meet with Achuar leaders. Fortunately, more time in the field and with Achuar leaders did occur as well as fewer interpretation issues with the Achuar than with my time with Mlabri leaders.

Elario Gunt

My Ecuador trip began with visiting Quito, Ecuador’s capital, then traveling to the town of Otavalo in the Andes where we spent a few days exploring the area and experiencing healing and cleansing ceremonies with Quechan Shamans. Next we embarked for the rain forest – the Southern Amazonia area of Ecuador and the home of the Achuar. After experiencing a one day delay due to rain storms in the town of Macus, a small town on the outer edge of the rain forest, six of us squeezed into the six-seat airplane for an approximately two hour flight deep into the rain forest. It was a breathtaking experience to see the vibrant green rain forest from above, as far as you could see on the horizon and the many rivers that make up this beautiful part of our world. Our small plane landed on a short muddy airstrip carved out in the middle of the jungle where we were met.

Photograph 17 – Arrival to Achuar Territory
by Achuar employees of the Kapawi Eco-Lodge who took us on a 45-minute journey by river to the lodge (See Photograph 17).

After spending a day exploring in and around the lodge, which included a lagoon and some paths through the jungle, we set off to the Achuar village, Wachirpas. Prior to arriving, we had taken another 45-minute trip on the river and then hiked five and a half hours through the jungle to get to the Shaman’s house, just outside the village and where we would camp and spend the evening. Celestino, our Achuar guide, explained during our excursion how the many plants we came across were used for medicinal purposes. The trail we followed through the thick forest was extremely muddy and included obstacles such as climbing over fallen trees, crossing streams, traversing up and down ravines, dealing with the many insects buzzing about, and doing all of this with the temperature at about 95 degrees with high humidity.

When we arrived to the Shaman’s house, we participated in the introduction protocol and drinking of chicha with Shaman Supa. As with Achuar protocol, Supa’s wife poured the chicha for us to drink in traditional drinking bowls and then distributed them to us. Our group conversation began with Supa’s interest in learning about us; who we were, where we were from; and what we did for work. After about an hour of conversation, we began setting up tents for our stay. During this time, I asked Daniel, our Ecuadorian guide and translator, if I was going to be able to meet the leader of the village. Daniel asked Supa and some of the others about the location of the leader and learned he was not in the village and would not be returning for a few days. This was disappointing yet he did say the vice síndico, or second leader with authority, was in the village and asked if I wanted to meet with him. I said yes and we hiked an additional 30 minutes along a muddy path to the village. It was about 5:00 p.m. when we arrived which
meant we had little time since sunset began about 6:00 and we would need to get back (hopefully) before dark.

We arrived at the Wachirpas village and Daniel located Elario Gunt who was working on building a new long house – the traditional Achuar house. Elario is the vice sindico of the village which means second in line of authority. He has spent many years as a leader within his village. First as a professor, then he was selected by his community to be secretary of the community and now the vice sindico. He also has been educated and trained as a naturalist guide for the Kapawi Eco-Lodge, where we were staying while in the rain forest. Daniel asked him if he would participate in a discussion with me about being a leader of his village. He agreed and we went into his house and participated with the introduction protocol which included one of Elario’s three wives providing us the chicha drink (See Photograph 18). His wife and three of his children observed and giggled throughout as we had our conversation.

Although we had a short conversation I was able to sense Elario’s humility as a leader. He leads with a sense of purpose to help his people resolve problems, meet the needs of the community, and reach agreement among members of the community. As with other leadership contexts, the capability to clearly communication is critical, even for a leader in a remote jungle village. Elario described:

I have learned how to communicate my own ideas and the ideas of my people to others outside the community. That is what I have learned – to interact and to exchange with foreigners and with other Achuar communities and with other indigenous peoples and with other nationalities. My learning is how to
communicate ideas and also to teach others about the forest and about Achuar culture. So communication was the best thing for me to learn.

In addition to the importance of communication, Elario also spoke to the importance of collaboration and the ability to reach agreement with others. He stressed the need for all of the members of the community to be heard and to achieve “prestige” as a way for a leader to be able to gain the trust and belief of the people. He explained:

The first thing you need to do is achieve prestige. People have to believe in you and the only way people believe in you is when you behave properly in your community. Once you have prestige, you can talk and be heard by others. It means good behavior, to be a good man, not a liar, a good worker, a good hunter, collaborative with others in the communal work, fulfilling your commitments. It’s leading by example. Build prestige and lead by example.

Elario’s description of his practice of reaching agreement and collaboration as I noticed with other indigenous leaders, illustrates Habermas’ theory of communicative action. For Habermas (1996: 4) the ideal speech situation takes place within the following terms: “In seeking to reach an understanding, natural-language users must assume, among reservation, that they tie their agreement to the inter-subjective recognition of criticizable validity claims, and that they are ready to take on the obligations resulting from consensus and relevant for further interaction. For Habermas (1984), the fundamental requirement for communicative action is an orientation toward reaching understanding and involves the putting forth of validity claims. First the statement made is comprehensible, thus, intelligible. Elario speaks in Achuar and is understood by his people. Second, is that the statement is true. As Elario described, “people have to believe in you” and what you say is the truth. Third, the speaker is sincere and truthful, and therefore is trustworthy of what is being expressed. This is what Elario refers to as achieving “prestige” or by behaving properly and practicing “good behavior, to be a good man, not a liar” and “fulfilling your commitments.” And the final validity claim; the
speech act is right, within its normative context or as Elario says, “you can talk and be heard by others” since you have achieved prestige and you “lead by example.” Each of the claims are critiqued or defended through reason and argumentation and subject to verification within the context of an orientation of reaching understanding and under conditions as Habermas (1970: 371-373) terms “pure inter-subjectivity,” which essentially means both parties of the conversation are equally free to share and receive ideas. The position that is agreed upon and accepted is determined by as Habermas describes as “the force of the better argument.”

**Fernando Antik**

The next day, after returning by boat to the Kapawi Eco-Lodge, I had the opportunity to meet with Fernando Antik, who was the leader or síndico of the Kusukau village (See Photograph 19). Prior to our conversation, we traveled along a river for 45 minutes to the Kusukau village. The group I was traveling with on the Pachamama Alliance trip all came along since they were interested in my research as well as the opportunity to visit an Achuar village.

![Photograph 19 - Kusukau Village – Don Kraft](image)

When we arrived at the village, we hiked for about ten minutes up a muddy, slippery hill to get to the village. Daniel and Celestino showed us around the village and
explained how the Achuar live in the rain forest and rely on the forest for survival. The village was home to Celestino and his brother Fernando was the leader of the village. I was grateful to Celestino for arranging the meeting with his brother. We went to Fernando’s house and were warmly welcomed. Once we were all seated, the introduction protocol began by his wife giving us the chicha drink. Fernando’s wife and children watched us having our conversation as well as others from the village who gathered in and around his house. Once again, laughter and giggles from onlookers were heard throughout the conversation, not to mention the sound of an occasional rooster voicing his territory. This was an unexpected aspect of the conversations that had taken place with the Achuar which was also the case while in Southeast Asia. When there is a conversation taking place in a village, the whole village is welcome to participate and observe.

My conversation with Fernando involved the translation of three languages. I spoke in English, Daniel translated to Spanish to Celestino, and then Celestino translated in Achuar to Fernando. It was a symphony of language and sound hearing the different spoken words. Similar to when I was with the Mlabri, due to the multiple translations, a risk to interpretation existed when conducting this type of research. Nonetheless, I felt comfortable with Daniel’s interpretation understanding the meaning of what was being said by Fernando.

Our conversation began with Fernando telling us about himself as leader of the village. He has been the leader of his village for three years and told us he takes his role very seriously as the authority of the community. He was very kind to explain to us the introduction protocol we had been experiencing while in Achuar Territory. He welcomed us with “yewanhay” which means “hello, we are here” and explained that the Achuar use
this greeting all “moments of the day” since they do not have words for “good morning,” “good afternoon,” or “good night.” Then we were offered the chicha drink and explained the significance when a visitor arrives to an Achuar house. As Fernando explained:

When visitors come to the house of an Achuar, the men will ask his women to serve the chicha to the visitors when he wants the visitors to stay. First thing to assure – the only thing they have to offer is chicha. It means the same as when you provide an offering when someone comes to your homes by providing them a drink. For the Achuar, this is the most important thing – because it’s the only thing we have. The whole culture is built around this beverage. No one drinks the chicha until the owner of the house drinks first to prove the chicha is good and not poisoned. These are the things that are very normal and very important. It’s food and replaces the water since the water is not good – it’s too dirty. Chicha is used as food and as a beverage and for parties. It’s multipurpose, marvelous thing for our culture.

We also discussed how and why he became the leader of the village. He explained the democratic process for someone to become leader of the village:

Each two years the members of village assemble to elect the new village authorities for the community for the next two years so that was the case for me. I was elected by my community and they selected four persons by voting. The person with the most votes becomes the sindico, the second most votes is vice sindico, the third is secretary and the fourth is the man who takes care of the money in the community. We are elected.

This is a very different process in the selection of a leader than what occurs with the Mlabri. Rather than being elected or having an election process as with the Achuar, Ta Taw was identified by Thai government to be the leader of his village. The Mlabri have not created a process for selecting a leader since it is currently done for them.

Fernando (See Photograph 20) also sees his primary role as caring for the people. For Fernando it is to ensure the airstrip is clean, and to organize and
coordinate labor of the members of the community so life is better for all, such as building a new house for a family or clearing the jungle for planning food. He also mentioned his responsibility to “solve problems and bring peace again.” Fernando expanded on how he helps solve problems by “talking and trying to understand common points that are convenient for both.” He tries to help people reach a solution that is good for both. As the village authority, if someone behaves inappropriately or produces violence with another person he will “order him to go to the forest and to drink netema or malihawa and get the spirit of the jungle first and fast” and then “he will come back and will be more capable to understand how to live in harmony and is better and should not do it again.”

The Achuar traditional way of life and culture provides Achuar leaders a foundation to lead. They rely on inspiration from nature as did their ancestors have for many years. As Fernando explains it:

To get the inspiration and the power from nature is through the plants – the netema, malihawa, and ayahuasca. These are the tools I have to approach the spirits of the jungle and use these plants to see the presence of the sacred animals that can be the anaconda, the jaguar or the harp eagle. Once I have the presence of them, I am assured that what will come next is the message I am looking for. After the animals, an elder will show up in the vision and the elder will tell me things that I should do. They will tell me in this vision how I should approach my leadership and the things I should do to fulfill the needs of my people.

Fernando’s statement exemplifies how his spirituality contributes to his leadership practice. He has feelings of interconnectiveness with the world and living things that surround him in forest and uses it for guidance on how to approach meeting the needs of his people. Fernando’s leadership is similar to the findings of Reave’s (2005: 675) research on indigenous leaders among the Native American groups. Her research has identified the caring, concern, and attention to the needs of others within a spiritual
context as a distinguishing feature of great leaders. She also describes it as a leader’s ability to be caring and considerate toward others as a key determinant of leader success or failure.

Fernando shared with us his dreams of a better future for the Achuar which illustrates Kearney’s theory of imagination. Kearney (1998: 1) philosophizes about our ability to imagine “every day, every night, every time we dream” and identifies the common trait of inquiry with imagination as our ability to “convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, what-is into something other than-it-is” (1998: 3). Fernando imagines through his dreams to be more connected with the “exterior world” and imagines the next generation of Achuar to be better educated, understanding that education is the most important aspect to the future of the Achuar. “We need our children to speak Spanish and to develop the skills to confront and deal properly with the oil companies that are a permanent threat from the exterior world. Education will be the tool that our next generation will need to deal with those issues.”

After our conversation, some fellow travelers from our group played music using flutes and sang songs for the Antik family and village onlookers. They found the singing and music very amusing, most likely since it was music they have not heard much of before. After I thanked Fernando for his participation and promised to send some photos that were taken, we left the house when a few of my fellow travelers came up to me to say how much they enjoyed the visit and observation of the conversation. One mentioned it had become the best part of the trip – to spend time learning about leadership from an Achuar leader. Another made a comment “I never realized how intelligent the Achuar are. Thank you for helping me to see the Achuar in a new way.”
Her statement demonstrated how some, even today within, as Fernando describes as the “exterior world” can have a myopic and ignorant view of indigenous people. Much can be learned from indigenous culture, traditions, and history; as well as from their wisdom of the forest and nature.

**Santiago Kawarim**

My next conversation partner was with the Achuar leader, Santiago Kawarim, (See Photograph 21) who leads the Achuar airline company, Aero Tsentsak. Originally, a tentative meeting was scheduled to meet Santiago upon our arrival to Shell, immediately after returning from Achuar Territory. Shell is a small town on the border of the rain forest and is used as a launching point for flights into the rain forest. Because our flight from the rain forest was delayed because of bad weather – again, rain storms - my meeting with Santiago did not take place. Another meeting was tentatively scheduled for the next morning.

When we eventually arrived in Shell, we continued the trip by going to Banos, a small town surrounded by mountains about one hour west from Shell up into the Andes. The next morning, I reserved a taxi to take me back to Shell to meet Santiago at the Aero Tsentsak offices at the airport. The ride to and from Shell was a beautiful collection of scenery; tall mountains, an active volcano, waterfalls, and rivers. After some difficulty in finding the Aero Tsentsak offices, my meeting with Santiago took place. Santiago speaks English
with some difficulty; however, he had a laptop he used to look up words in English to help with our conversation and understanding.

Santiago’s role is the manager of Aero Tsentsak. This is the air service that transport tourists to and from the Kapawi Eco-Lodge. It is only recently that Santiago took the lead to run the air service since the service had previously been owned and operated by another non-Achuar manager. The focus over the past ten years has been to turn ownership of both the Kapawi Eco-Lodge and Aero Tsentsak to the Achuar people. The final transition of ownership for both took place in the fall of 2007 and has been successful with providing the Achuar an ecological business opportunity and revenue. Although Santiago leads and manages the airline, he made sure to inform me that “the company is not for me, it’s not for one community; it’s for the entire Achuar nation.” In his role, Santiago leads eight people who help operate the airline. After asking about some of the challenges of being a leader, Santiago told me he has a good relationship with those who he leads and that they are “very successful – I have never seen them unhappy, negative – they have never complained.”

Santiago has a long history of being an Achuar leader and has had a key role with partnering with the Pachamama Alliance to defend their territory against the oil companies since the organization’s inception in 1993. His current position is with the Aero Tsentsak which is a very high level role within the Achuar community. The Achuar have only recently taken over ownership and operation of the airline of three planes and the eco-lodge. Prior to this position, Santiago was president of the Achuar National Assembly for two terms of three years for a total of six years. He also spent eight months living in San Francisco, California to learn English and has been a professor at his village, Punpuentsa.
According to Santiago, he has built trusting relationships with those he leads and understands the important place Achuar leaders have within the community and throughout the Achuar nation. He told me it is very important to build positive trusting relationships as an Achuar leader. It is a reciprocal relationship that drives Santiago’s leadership, as he explained, “I always defend the people. We have love for each other. The bible provides principles. We need to keep those rules. I have never changed my principles. My people give me inspiration and support me and trust me. My people trust me. My heart is with the people.”

Santiago’s leadership, as with Elario and Fernando, is one that is manifested in care and concern, specifically as Heidegger (1962: 157-159) distinguishes; care as concern and care as solicitude. Concern is care for “toward entities encountered within-the-world” and for objects. Solicitude is care for other beings and “pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the other, not to a ‘what’ with which he is concerned.” It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between acts of care out of concern, as with defending the Achuar Territory from the oil companies, to acts of care out of solicitude as with their humility directed toward the Achuar people. Heidegger (1962: 158) offers that “even concern with food or clothing, and the nursing of a sick body are forms of solicitude.” Nonetheless, Achuar leaders clearly practice this duality of care through their humility as leaders and as guardians of the rain forest. Reave’s (2005: 655) leadership and spirituality theory also illustrates the voice of Achuar leadership. As she describes, spirituality as a leadership practice lies in the “embodiment of spiritual values such as integrity, and in the demonstration of spiritual behavior such as expressing caring and concern.”
Santiago also commented on the importance of learning new things that will help the Achuar nation while maintaining the Achuar culture. He sees remembering the past as very important and explained further:

The past is very important. We should maintain our culture – not to forget – to drink datura, to go into the forest, to keep connected with the forest. Like me, I have different experience. Good experiences for me, but I have never forgotten my culture. I can go into different communities, talk with the people and drink chicha and talk about my dreams in the morning; this is very important. Keep our culture, our traditions.

**Voices from the Pachamama Alliance**

My conversation with Santiago was my final conversation with an indigenous leader. As a component of my exploration into the leadership of indigenous people, I also conducted conversations with leaders from the “exterior” world who have partnered with the Achuar. They included María Belén Páez, Daniel Koupermann, Bill and Lynne Twist, and David Tucker. Not only did they provide valuable insight into how the Achuar lead others, but they also shared their own view on leadership, which has been influenced by the interconnectiveness with the Achuar people and the forest.

**María Belén Páez**

Prior to the trip, I exchanged email communication with María Belén Páez, who is President Fundación Pachamama Ecuador, describing my research and asking if it would be possible to meet with her in Quito. In mid-May, before I left for Southeast Asia, she agreed to meet and we made tentative arrangements. I had planned to be in Quito two days before the organized Pachamama trip would begin so I felt comfortable we would have time to meet.

After arriving to Quito late evening, I woke the next morning and spent most of the morning and afternoon trying to make contact with Belén. Since my cell phone was
not getting a signal in Quito, I was relying on the receptionist at the hotel to make and translate the call for me. After frustration with trying to get a phone call through to the Fundación Pachamama office (due to busy signal, audio recording, and my inability to speak Spanish), I finally was able to schedule a tentative meeting for 2:00 p.m. the next day. A worker at the office said to come by at 2:00 p.m. and we could meet if she had time.

The next day I took a taxi to meet with Belén and fortunately I didn’t have to wait long, and she was able to meet me. When Belén arrived into the conference room where I had been waiting, she came up to me and kissed me during our introduction, which surprised me. My thinking was how gracious and warm she was to a perfect stranger. I was also surprised by how young she seemed (late 20’s to early 30’s) to be leading this organization with such important work, guiding the efforts of Pachamama in trying to protect the Southern Amazonia area of Ecuador from the oil companies who wanted to go in and drill for oil, destroying the rain forest. Her leadership also includes her participation in government meetings with officials such as the president of Ecuador and attending international conferences on the affects of global climate change. Belén’s leadership is built upon her intense passion in protecting the rain forest for the Achuar who call the forest their home. She speaks from her heart and feels her destiny as a leader is her commitment to the people of the forest.

Heidegger (1996: 134) theorizes that care for the other is an ontological state of being in which Dasein or the experience is of “being there.” This state of being results when Dasein recognizes thrownness and the person chooses to live an authentic life. Heidegger tells us human beings are thrown at birth toward a life with an already potential; a potentiality of being that is historical and cultural. Thrownness guides our path
in life. He further writes, “As care Dasein is essentially ahead of itself. Initially and for the most part, the being-in-the-world that takes care understands itself in terms of what it takes to care of” (1996: 350). He also says that when we care for the world we are thrown to, the decisions and choices we make, and our sense of personal responsibility for our actions deepen. Belén’s throwness into being-in-the-world deepened her purpose and commitment as a leader. She described:

I realized I wanted to spend, if not the rest of my life, but at least 50 years, in the Amazon region. I had the opportunity to live there for two years and then I have been working and living in the indigenous territories inside, between the borders from Ecuador and Peru. I have been living with almost all the nations and nationalities and doing a lot of work with conservation, indigenous affairs, campaigns against oil extraction and oil exploitation, mining, and environmental education with kids. Since then I never left this contact with Kapawi and that’s why I became a leader in this region -- in the Amazon region, in Ecuador and Peru, because of this moved moment in my life.

Belén’s life narrative is also replete with examples of her connection and learning from indigenous people and their influence on her life. She described why she became involved in working with the indigenous people and took on the leadership role with Fundación Pachamama, saying:

But it was really, I would say, a spiritual connection with the forest and with the spirit of the forest. After a time I came to confirm this because I feel I have many contacts with indigenous people but also with their ancestors and people that made me feel strong to continue with this dream I have and the commitment I have with them, which is to protect their lands, to protect the tropical rain forest, and to move forward on initiatives that are related with these issues. I have this commitment, which is really strong.

Belén’s commitment is intertwined with her spiritual connection with the forest and the indigenous people. Belén experiences, as Bloch and Richmond (1998: vii) describe as the “experience of connection to something that transcends our deeper lives” and as Fry (2003: 703) describes as the sense of a calling; “the experience of transcendence or how
one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life.”

Belén has spent much time in the rain forest and has found a special connection to it. She believes the spirits in the forest are around her and protect her. The Shamans that she visits in the jungle say they see Achuar spirits around her. She gained confidence in her leadership knowing this and feels free to “speak aloud; to run to the President of Ecuador and say, ‘this is going on!’”

Our conversation led, as did my conversations with my other conversation partners, to the topic of trust and how it plays within a leadership context and with reaching shared understanding. Belén explained:

We really have a lot of confidence with indigenous organizations and indigenous people. They trust us a lot and I think it’s a question of people, of individuals; to be there, to talk to them a lot, and to spend a lot of time and being really connected with their own fights and struggles. They admire us and that's why this fusion of the NGO and indigenous organizations are really successful as a partnership.

Her leadership has been built on trust; so much so, the Achuar came to her and wanted her to work with them. Her response was one of solicitude and care as with the other leaders I spoke with earlier during my research. She described, “they came and said to me and said, listen, we want to work with you. We find you are a person we can trust. We would like to put our work in your hands so you can work with us. So I say, okay. That's fine. You love me. Okay, that’s fine.”

Belén imagines a better possible world not only for the Achuar, but for all of us. The Achuar are a dream society – “they are dreaming all the time.” Belén has learned about dreaming and the importance to dream which has resulted in a shared vision with the Achuar for the future. She is confident they are in a strong position to defend the huge
Southern Amazon territory from the oil companies. She also believes they are not only saving the territory and the Achuar way of life, but also supporting the global situation for all people around the world. Her dream is the forest will remain and the indigenous people will be successful with preserving their culture and teaching others the “way we need to be connected with nature” that will lead to a new model of sustainability.

My conversation came to a close with Belén with her acknowledgement that our time together provided her with an opportunity to “stop for a while and breathe and think.” She concluded by saying it made her feel “refreshed with myself.” Afterwards we walked through the office and I was able to meet the others who are doing such important work with the Achuar and to help build a more sustainable world.

**Daniel Koupermann**

Daniel Koupermann (See Photograph 22) was our guide while in Ecuador and has extensive experience in working with the Achuar and with leading trips into the Achuar Territory. My conversation took place while traveling from Banos to Quito, the last day of the trip. We stopped for lunch and had our conversation as others from the group seated at our table also participated. I owe a great deal to Daniel since he was instrumental with arranging conversations with Elario, Fernando, and Santiago.

Daniel was one of the few people from the modern world who made first contact with the Achuar in 1981. Since then he has lead adventure and
humanitarian trips into the territory, worked with many of the Achuar communities, and led the building of the Kapawi Eco-Lodge. Our conversation began with Daniel’s explanation of the hierarchy of Achuar governance. He explained that first level of leadership is with the síndico of the village. The síndico has primary authority in the village followed by the vice síndico. They are the two leadership roles at the community level. The next level is an association which is formed by síndicos who represent their communities. The association has a president and a vice president. The Achuar Nation is formed by ten associations. The ten presidents of the ten associations are the government council for the Achuar Nation. All of these leadership roles are through democratic elections. The Achuar Nation is led by a democratic form of governance.

Achuar leaders lead with humility which helps them gain the people’s trust. All of the elected leadership positions are based upon the people’s belief that the leader is a good man, responsible, trustworthy, and committed to the people. Daniel explained:

They have a willing to work for their people. They always want to work for their own people. When they get the opportunity to get a better education, they commit to give back to the community. They show the skills as Santiago has. He was a professor; he was trained to be a professor. When he was being trained, he showed very good skills, and then he worked several years as a professor/teacher. During those years he also showed to the people that he was a good man; serious and responsible. They selected these leaders to be trained in politics – especially against the invaders, against threats.

Over the years Daniel gained acceptance from the Achuar and as a result the Achuar have learned to trust him. Today Daniel is still involved with helping the Achuar and feels a responsibility to help. When asked why, he responded that “it is because they inspire me; the way they think; the way they are. It’s an inspiration. And it’s because I want to preserve the territory. It’s the last pristine jungle in this country. As an Ecuadorian, I’m interested in keeping the land well preserved because once we lose that – it will be a
pity.” Ricoeur (1999: 16) tells us that human fragility linked to responsibility is also a call toward the future to do something to help. Fragility calls us to act in response to that we perceive as unjustifiable and that we have a responsibility to each other to promise to work toward a shared horizon of hope for a better life.

As much as Daniel supports and is inspired by the Achuar and their fight to protect the rain forest for Ecuador and the world, he has a broader view which is much different from the others I spoke with in regards to what the future may bring. He described:

The oil companies, the misery, the violence, the wielding of power, all these symptoms we see in humankind – that will never change. As humankind we will keep consuming water, natural resources. We will keep destroying the world. We will keep creating social injustice; economic differences will continue. That will never change. Oil is not the problem. The problem is humankind, human nature, human misery. It's how it is. The challenge we face is knowing that giving your life to noble causes, your energy to noble things, even knowing that it might not work. It sounds like it doesn’t make sense. But that is what I feel. I believe.

Daniel does not imagine a change in the current increased consumption of our natural resources and thus has a different view of the future for the Ecuadorian rain forest, one which was contrary to the others.

David Tucker

My involvement and support for the Pachamama Alliance dates back to 2004 when I first conducted research about the Achuar for a course I was taking at the University of San Francisco. In order to learn more about the Achuar and the Pachamama Alliance, I attended one of the monthly meetings which provided an overview of the Pachamama Alliance organization and work in Ecuador. It was David Tucker who provided the presentation on the work of Pachamama Alliance. My conversation with
David occurred late 2007 at the Pachamama Alliance office, located in the Presido, San Francisco.

David is executive director of Pachamama Alliance and has been involved with the organization since 1999. He has been committed to leading the organization by providing the training, skills, and resources to the Achuar to help them have their voice heard. During our conversation he described how his work at Pachamama was a “calling, not just my own personal calling, but part of something bigger.” He feels he has been on a journey these past years and has experienced much change. He explained:

I’ve changed a lot and the organization has changed a lot during those nine years. I experienced the organizational change through my own being. It’s been beautiful. It’s been hard. It's required deep looking into myself and a lot of willingness to transform, willing to look deeply. It's at the root of the Pachamama Alliance. I feel like we're a transformational organization that also works with indigenous people. We're talking about building a new dream for the modern world. I feel that if we’re not willing to be on that journey then it's just a good idea out in the world, or it's a projection on how the world ought to change. But we’ve got to be the ones leading the way to make that change.

David provided his thoughts on how his association with the Achuar has influenced his own leadership. He believes the traditional hierarchical model within most organizations limits energy. What he has learned from the Achuar is to be more collaborative and to share leadership with others. He said, “so I was feeling a lot of stress and a lot of pressure because a lot of decisions had to be made by me. And, what I was shown by the indigenous practices and ceremonies was to round it out; get some more collaboration, shared leadership.” To “round it out” David learned from the Achuar a different way of leading. It was one of collaboration and involvement of others. He explained:

The Achuar have a modern world leadership model that is set up with a president and a vice president. But their leadership is much more collaborative; everybody has a voice. I've been to their annual meetings a lot where sometimes they'll go all night, because everybody has a voice. In that sharing, a collective truth
emerges by allowing people to have their voice heard. It’s something where you’re not trying to direct or control a process too much.

That style can really create friction with the current style that is very top-down. So my style, and I would say the indigenous style, is process-oriented. It might go slower in the beginning but you make further leaps ahead because it's thorough. People feel seen, they feel heard, and they don't feel disempowered. So that's more and more a space that's being created.

Another successful practice David has incorporated within his own leadership practice is his ability to create public space that is open and safe for others to participate. He described:

It’s really in holding a space and creating a space. At our staff meetings we have a practice of opening up sacred space to invite in the energy, the spirit that called this alliance into existence; a recognition that there's something beyond us as individuals and me as, say, the director. To realize that there’s something bigger than just us. So it creates a space of humility and it also creates a space where the people can speak into. When that space energetically is closed down, people just don’t speak because it's not safe. So building a container of trust is something I’ve been working on a lot of years and it takes a while.

David’s “creating a space” for others to open up and building a “container of trust” are examples of Habermas’ theory where “social space” is generated through communicative action. As Habermas (1996: 360) developed this idea he referred to the public sphere as being best described as,

…a network for communicating information and points of view (i.e., opinions, expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are in the process; filtered and synthesized in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions. Like life world as a whole, so, too, the public sphere is reproduced through communicative action, for which mastery of natural language suffices; it is tailored to the general comprehensibility of everyday practice.

Thus, through communicative action, David creates a space where ideas, issues, problems, etc. are brought into a public sphere where voices are given the opportunity to express ideas, concerns, and discourse on an informal basis; just as the Achuar leaders explained during my conversations with them. This opportunity for voices to be heard
creates a “greater sensitivity in detecting and identifying new problem situations”
(Habermas 1996: 381).

Self discovery is also another aspect of becoming a leader that David has learned. He understands people have unique styles as to how they lead. He described his own self discovery:

What I've discovered about myself as a leader is that I have a certain style that’s unique to me; it’s not as traditional as what an executive director would be in a world of not-for-profit. I tried to be someone I was not because I was trying to fill a role and that was very painful. I think the important thing for leadership is -- the most powerful thing a leader can be is authentic. And also vulnerable; open to others; to sharing ones own feelings. So I've discovered that I'm more of a heart-based leader. I think that really helps to feed the soul of this organization.

Imagination is an aspect of David’s leadership as well. He described how this is connected with what he has experienced with the Achuar:

I would say part of my spiritual practice is earth-based, indigenous, you know, ceremonies that really open up a space of creativity and imagination and guidance as well. Where do you really draw the line between imagination and contacting a higher source? I think there’s some interplay there. That helps me a lot.

The natural world is a great place for me to access my imagination and creativity. I would like to create an organization where people feel like their imagination can be accessed and expressed. Definitely a collaborative approach but also it’s also empowerment. So someone can create or imagine a different way of doing something or a different way of seeing the world, seeing new possibilities. Imagining a new possibility for how something can be done.

Kearney identifies the common trait of inquiry with imagination as, “the human power to convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, what-is into something other-than-it-is. In short, they all designate our ability to transform the time and space of our world into a specifically human mode of existence” (Kearney 1998: 3). This humanist model explores imagination as “an intentional act of consciousness which intuits and constitutes essential meaning” (Kearney 1998: 5). Kearney also describes the human precondition of freedom as essential to imagine and project new possibilities. Without the
freedom to imagine, we can not imagine how things might be or envision new possibilities of a future world from grounded from our past and inclusive of our present.

For the future of the Achuar, David imagines the fulfillment of their dream. He sees the “what-is” and the possibility of changing the dream “into something other-than-it-is.”

I see the Achuar fulfilling their dream. They suffered at the beginning…not only would a threat come to their land from the outside but that they would prevail; that they would triumph. So I saw that from the beginning, so this is just about fulfilling that dream. I can see them creating a model of development, whereby they fully maintain their identity and land yet they interact with the outside world in specific ways.

Bill Twist

Bill Twist is President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Pachamama Alliance. He and his wife, Lynne Twist are the co-founders of Pachamama. Bill and Lynne are now living in Ecuador, partnering with Fundación Pachamama to influence the drafting of the new Ecuadorian constitution to include natural rights for the environment. Bill attended our final group dinner as a special guest the last evening of the trip. It was during the dinner I asked Bill if he would participate in my research, which, to my good fortune, he graciously agreed.

We met the next morning while having breakfast with another Pachamama supporter, Tom Koenig, at the Hotel Cultura in Quito (See Photograph 23).
Bill and Lynne founded the Pachamama Alliance after taking a trip organized by Daniel Koupermann and John Perkins to Achuar Territory back in the early 90’s when the Achuar were becoming aware that their land was in danger of destruction from oil exploration as had occurred in the Northern Amazon of Ecuador. The onslaught of oil and lumber companies into the rain forest was causing the extinction of species, loss of potential life saving medicinal plants, damage to the balance of Earth’s climate control, and most importantly, the disappearance of indigenous cultures. As Bill described, the Pachamama Alliance was born out of relationship they developed with the leaders of the Achuar out of a concern for the threat to their way of life. The relationship was initiated by the indigenous elders and shamans themselves who, out of a concern with this growing threat to their ancient way of life, and their recognition that this threat lay beyond their rain forest home, actively sought the partnership with Bill, Lynne, and others.

During the first trip, Bill said both he and Lynne began to have “some kind of feeling of affinity for the people, the individuals, and also as a people, some real affinity for how they were in the world, what they represented.” This attracted him to what became the founding of the Pachamama Alliance organization with a mission to “preserve the Earth’s tropical rain forest by empowering indigenous peoples who are its natural custodians” and “to create a new vision of equity and sustainability for all.”

This relationship was formed and based upon reaching a shared view – one in which the view of the Achuar and that of the modern world were blended to create a new vision. Gadamer describes this type of dialogue as reaching understanding by the “fusion of horizons.” A new view is formed and understood when it is realized how the context of the subject matter can be seen differently to lead to a new interpretation than originally
arrived at. New information or a new sense of understanding of the initial interpretation is integrated into a broader, more informed understanding with the other. Gadamer (1979: 347) describes:

[It] is a process of two people understanding each other. Thus it is a characteristic of every true conversation that each opens himself to the other person, truly accepts his point of view as worthy of consideration and gets inside the other to such an extent that he understands not a particular individual, but what he says. The thing that has to be grasped is the objective rightness or otherwise of his opinion, so that they can agree with each other on a subject.

Through conversation and open dialogue, the Achuar and individuals from the modern world sought to discover each other’s view and horizon. From this, an understanding of the past was brought into the present and which translated into a new possibility that the future would not be an extension of the past ideology of destruction according to Western thought and practice; but one of sustainably. The alliance experienced a “fusion of horizons” in which two views were formed to meet the challenges of the present and imagine new possibilities for the future.

Ricoeur (1992: 3) refers to reaching a shared understanding through dialogue as the “dialectic of self and the other than self.” For Bill and Lynne they shared a connection with the people who call the rain forest their home and realized the critical stake in the health and well being of the forest that supports all our lives. We are all interconnected to each other, or as Ricoeur (1992: 3) suggests, “selfhood on oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other.”

Our conversation focused on Bill’s view of the Achuar as leaders using an orientation toward reaching shared understanding rather than one based on personal gain. The conversation included much of what others had been saying about how the Achuar
lead; leading from a place of humility, trusting relationships, collaborating with others, and imagining new possibilities for a more sustainable world for all. Habermas (1984: 78) writes, “reaching understanding is inherent telos of human speech.” Thus, his theory of communicative action has contained within its nature a prospective orientation. Ricoeur (1981: 78) describes Habermas with this concept as invoking “the regulative ideal of an unrestricted and unconstrained communication which does not precede us but guides us from a future point.” An example that best describes this action is how the Achuar make decisions. Bill explained:

I would say their ability, not just their ability but the value they put on collective decision-making. At times it's really slow and cumbersome but it seems they come up with really wise decisions, things that don't appear at first. It can be really frustrating at times in the process when they're dealing with something difficult. It’s like it's so obvious, why don’t they just do this? Then the answer may come out entirely different. No one will really step out and stand up in front and say: this is the way we’re going to do it. They use oratory a lot to talk about things and everybody talks.

Bill spoke to how one becomes an Achuar leader which is a consistent theme within selection of leaders among indigenous people. According to Bill, the leader is chosen to be a leader, or representative for the community. If someone looks as he wants to be a leader or maneuvers to be one, he will be disqualified. Leaders are selected by the people, the community, and are individuals who the people feel confident that they will represent them and not take the position out of self interest.

Another aspect of how the Achuar lead is through their patience and looking to what will emerge or “recognition that there’s something else waiting to happen and giving it a channel, an opportunity.” The Achuar go to their “dreams or plant medicines to have something that informs them what to do.” He further described:

Their job as human beings is not to conquer or forge new paths or be a great person because of that. They're, clearly, an instrument connected to something.
I think its spirituality for them… they don’t even have the distinction. It has to do with building the health and well-being of their community, their family, their nation.

I think, for me, the element of being aware that there is sort of something waiting to happen, there's some - I don't know whether it's God or spirit - something waiting. Maybe the more you can get your ego out of the way - quiet the mind or something - something can work where you are working in harmony with something. That one is connected with some great design that you're learning from and assisting in. There's something very inherent about recognizing that you are a part of some great design.

It is through this holistically connection to something greater that Achuar leaders display these distinct characteristics out of their longstanding history of cultural traditions and values. This interconnectiveness is a fundamental cornerstone in which Achuar leadership guides their way to sustain and nurture their culture.

**Lynne Twist**

My conversation with Lynne Twist (See Photograph 24), co-founder of the Pachamama Alliance with husband Bill, took place at Mills College in Oakland, California two days after I returned from Ecuador. Prior to the meeting, I contacted Lynne by email and arranged a meeting with her through her assistant. It turns out Lynne, who was currently living in Quito, was in the Bay Area the entire time I was in Ecuador. She was keynoting and attending the Pachamama Global Gathering Conference, which was a two day event in which facilitators of the *Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream* symposium gathered to discuss the direction of future symposiums.

Lynne and Bill have spent a great deal of time working with Achuar leaders so I was interested in hearing about her thoughts about Achuar leadership practices. As I had heard earlier, their humility as leaders continued to be a consistent theme. Lynne said it is
the kind of leadership you do not find everywhere and that “they consider the community a higher ethic than the good or accomplishment of the individual.” This speaks to the Achuar’s practice of living in a communitarian society rather than the individualistic ways of North America. Focusing on the achievement of the individual would never occur to them. The Achuar are “all about the benefit, the well-being of the community” and the “individual becomes nourished by that and only that, not by their own gain.” Lynne shared an example such as, “if someone’s hungry no one eats until that person’s fed…if someone’s hurting everyone takes care to fulfill that person’s needs before everyone can feel whole.” She also added, “they really do bow to the will of the people like no leadership I've ever seen. I mean, really. They will step down when they need to, so we’re in the presence of some kind of leadership we’ve never…actually I’ve never…seen it before quite like that.”

Lynne’s comments posit Ricoeur’s theory of action and ethics in which he distinguishes the difference between the capacity for an individual to act versus an obligation to act. He asserts that individual actions lose their significance without having awareness of a larger whole. For Ricoeur, this means the responsive self’s primary concern is not with its own condition but rather with responding thoughtfully to others in hope the responsiveness will bring a better life for all persons involved (1992: 165-68). Ricoeur’s concept of solicitude is stated “whereby each person is irreplaceable in our affection and our esteem” (1992: 193) and serves as the underlying motivation for “responding thoughtfully” which, together with similitude; the bond between oneself and the other, “authorizes us to say that I cannot myself have self-esteem unless I esteem others as myself” (1992: 192).
In her book, *Soul of Money*, Lynne examines the concept of “enough” and the distinction between our consumer culture and that of the indigenous people. For our consumer and individualistic culture “more is better” as opposed to the Achuar, who live in what I would call, “they dwell in the house of enough,” of fulfillment, of what I call, “what you appreciate, appreciates”. You know, they are in the experience of constant bounty. It comes from Africa. They call it ubuntu. In Achuar culture it’s really this experience of coming into unity, which is really the one way of defining the word community…. as coming into unity.

Stemming from this unity of community is the Achuar leader’s ability to trust others. Lynne described that they operate from a deep sense of trust for the other. “Trust is not something that is given or taken away, rather it how people act as trustworthy or untrustworthy in the space of your trust. That’s the way the Achuar seem to be with each other.” Without trust of others within the Achuar community and those from their external world, the Achuar would not be able to survive. As Lynne explained, “they create the space where people can be and behave in a trustworthy way.” Creating a space for people’s “genius to show up” is a concept that Lynne has integrated into her own leadership. She further added:

I think the Achuar have really given me the concept of the collective wisdom is greater than any one person. You know, we have the role, my husband and I, of being the co-founders… we call ourselves the co-foundees. We were founded by Pachamama and they were founded by us; rather than we founded this organization. We don’t feel like we're the source of it or the great leaders from above or any of that. We realize that we were just the lucky ones who were in the right place at the right time when this started coming through.

We carry the calling and responsibility with, hopefully, humility. But we don’t think like we know what to do -- we don’t. We were such just a blank canvas when this began. We were what they call an empty cup in Buddhism, we weren't a full cup; we weren't going to say, gosh, now we can exercise all the things that we learned in business school or now we can put to work all of our concerns about the environment, we didn't have any of that. We were worried like everybody else but we were just lucky enough to be there.
Lynne’s comments provide a broader appropriation of Habermas’ theory of communicative action as practiced toward reaching a shared understanding between the Pachamama Alliance and the Achuar. Bernstein describes Habermas’ theory of communicative action as “the type of social interaction that is oriented toward reaching understanding. Communicative action, according to Habermas, must be carefully distinguished from nonsocial instrumental action and social strategic action, both of which are orientated toward success” (Bernstein 1983: 185). He also states that through the use of speech that the “goal of coming to an understanding is to bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with another. Agreement is based on recognition of corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness” (Bernstein 1983: 185).

The old paradigm of development is what Habermas describes as instrumental and strategic action, focusing only on what the West defines as success, which has resulted in economic, political, and cultural domination of others. There is little dialogue or exchanges of views. There is little or no common understanding or shared knowledge. Success from these actions has been defined by domination and control which has destroyed cultural identities throughout the world.

By turning to Habermas’ theory of communicative action as a starting point, one can begin to deconstruct past concepts of development. As the leaders of the Pachamama Alliance have acted with Achuar leaders, it is only through the use of dialogue, relationship, language, trust, respect of differences and shared values that a common understanding can lead to a successful discourse of development. A common
understanding can only occur by engaging in the process of dialogue between equals that incorporates each others’ experiences and perspectives.

The process of dialogue, negotiation and translation are also important to recognize in order to understand peoples from other cultural contexts. As Tucker (1999: 23) explains, “the task is only beginning. Much work needs to be done to produce theoretical perspectives on development that do justice to the social imaginary of Third World peoples without first reconstructing them in our terms before meeting them.”

At the end of our conversation, Lynne shared a story about the U.S. presidential election, specifically about President Obama on the campaign trail in the summer of 2008.

I heard the most amazing thing the other day from one of the people working very closely with Senator Obama, and they were asking him in a very intimate setting, now that we're getting into the next campaign phase, what was the most important moment in the previous campaign? Can you remember a moment that got to you?

And he said, yeah, and he started to cry, which he probably doesn't do that much, it was a small setting. He said, there was a time in Iowa where they had those yellow police tape things and I was going down an aisle of where they were trying to get me to move from one part of the building to another (I think it was an outdoor thing). People had their arms outstretched to shake hands or touch him and he said he looked at the hands as he was walking and he stopped and there were black hands and brown hands and yellow hands and pink hands and white hands and hands with fancy fingernails and little children's hands and hands that had calluses and hands that… You know, and he said… he realized, he said, “I am an excuse for something that has wanted to happen for so, so long. And if I can remember that, I could actually be a good President.”

For Lynne, her and Bill’s work with the Achuar was also something that has wanted to happen for a long time, something consistent with her dream. The Achuar’s initial contact and their response with the formation of the Pachamama Alliance is something that has wanted to happen for a long time, to come when the world is in crisis. As Lynne commented, “we say that transformation announces itself with crisis.” What Lynne has
learned from the Achuar is that the wisdom of the group, wisdom of humanity, wisdom of the human family, will pull us through. Lynne also shares the Achuar’s imagination for new possibilities for the future. She described that “they have also seen through their imagination; they might use a different word, they might use dreams; but to them, their dreams are prophetic and real and are coming from a source they trust, rather than what we might call imagination. It's imagining the prophetic future. “Lynne agrees and sees the Achuar prevailing. She described, “they are very certain they know how it's going to turn out. That they will prevail, they will succeed. That the indigenous peoples will be key to the transition and that life will sustain itself and the rain forest will survive. They see it will happen and they need to cause it to happen. I see it for them.”

The leaders of those in Pachamama Alliance and the Achuar Territory reached a shared understanding by embracing the possibility of dialogue from the onset. Those from the North set out with the Achuar elders and leaders to reach a shared understanding on how to best partner to work together to create a new view that can assist the Achuar in protecting their territories and the future of all of take action to help “change the dream of the North” that will create a sustainable and socially just human presence on Earth.

**Conclusions Drawn from Data Analysis**

As described in Chapter Four, the three categories that provide the boundaries for my data collection and analysis for this research study include Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricoeur’s theories of solicitude and care, Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, and Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney’s views on imagination. What follows are conclusions based upon the data obtained from my conversations with participants within each of the conceptual boundaries.
Care and Solicitude

The first category within my theoretical framework is care and solicitude. As Heidegger (1992: 139) states, Being-in-the-world is essentially care; care as concern and care as solicitude. It is through acts of care and solicitude that people give rise to a set of possibilities and potential for an authentic, genuine existence. At times during my conversations it was challenging to distinguish acts of care as concern from acts of care as solicitude. For Ta Taw and his leadership of the Mlabri village there is a duality of care; concern for survival by meeting the basic requirements to life such as having enough food and water, to his solicitude for the people such as better health conditions and education for the next generation. The Achuar leaders also lead by providing a duality of care. Their leadership includes care to help sustain their culture and to save the forest from destruction as well as the solicitude for their children by providing education to the next generation.

For Ricoeur (1992: 180), solicitude is a focus on respect of self or self-esteem and concern for the other and that caring for the other defines one’s life with others in community or as he describes “self-respect and solicitude cannot be experienced or reflected upon one without the other.” Ricoeur (1992: 190) also says solicitude demands “a more fundamental status than obedience to duty” and that “status is that of benevolent spontaneity, intimately related to self-esteem within the framework of the aim of the ‘good’ life” and that “receiving is on an equal footing with the summons to responsibility.”

Care and solicitude for the other in a leadership context is prominently found throughout the data gathered from my research and exercised freely by my conversation partners, most notably from the indigenous leaders, Ta Taw, Fernando, and Santiago.
Each provided examples as to how their leadership is grounded in their care and sense of responsibility for their people. They exercise selflessness and humility as leaders and lead through genuine care, concern, and appreciation for their people and community. As Lynne Twist described of the Achuar leaders, “they are all about the benefit, the well-being of the community. The individual becomes nourished by that and only that, not by their own gain.” This way of being as a leader is manifested in the core to how they lead. As Ta Taw mentioned “I have learned to love myself, my family, and the other.” And as Santiago described, “I always defend the people…we have a love for each other. My heart is with the people.” In a modern leadership context, Jim Kouzes described during my pilot study, that what is true for being an effective leader is the need to love people. He said, “loving people, caring about people, having good relationships with people, is key to being an effective leader. You really need to love people.”

**Communicative Action**

The next theory within my theoretical framework is communicative action. Habermas (1984: 95) describes the concept of communicative action as “the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extra-verbal means).” This interaction between two subjects leads to the coordination of their “actions by way of agreement” with the goal to reach understanding. Habermas (McCarthy 1996: 280) informs us that there are validity claims necessary in reaching an understanding when an assertion is made; comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness. Alvesson (1996: 42) describes a key element of Habermas’ theory as the “free discussion based on good will, argumentation and dialogue” and said that the discussion assumes that consensus can be reached through language.
One theme that was evident within the narratives from my conversation partners was the importance of communication and reaching shared understanding with the people they lead and with those from outside their villages. For Elario, as well as with some of the others, reaching consensus within the community was important to solving problems. He said, “I help my people solve problems…and I’m trying to reach consensus all the time among the members of the community.” During my conversation with Bill Twist, he commented on how long it can take to make a decision or deal with an issue. “At times it’s really slow and cumbersome but it seems they come up with really wise decisions.” He also explained:

I’ve seen many times when it seems like this process is just endless and they’re not seeing the point and why don’t they just cut to the chase. Then later or the next day something emerges. Sort of the recognition that there’s something else waiting to happen and giving it a channel, an opportunity to express itself and listening.

Lynne Twist explained her view about how the Achuar reach shared understanding, saying that “in Achuar culture, it’s really this experience of coming into unity, which is really a way of defining the word community. They do everything by this very, quite sophisticated process of consensus. At the same time, the elders must bless it or there isn’t consensus.” Habermas claims it is critical the four validity claims (comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness, and rightness) are explored through open and free dialogue. The relationship between speaker and hearer needs to be one of equal opportunity to express attitudes, feelings, viewpoints, and intentions that ultimately reach mutual understanding.

For Habermas’ third claim, validation of the speaker as truthful in order for the hearer to believe or trust the speaker was also a theme from my conversations within the concept of leadership. In other words, an atmosphere or open space of trust needs to exist.
As the data shows, many of the leaders spoke of trust. Lynne Twist described how her interactions with the Achuar have changed her own leadership:

I have a level of trust that I never knew I had. You don’t give trust and then take it away when somebody does something that isn’t trustworthy or you don’t wait for them to become untrustworthy for you to give them your trust. You just trust them. They could break the trust six or seven times but we still trust them. That’s the space where people can be and behave in a trustworthy way. That’s the way the Achuar seem to be with each other.

My conversation with Santiago focused on his leadership and the importance of trust as a key leadership capability. He said it’s “very important to be a leader; my people give me inspiration and support me and trust me; my people trust me.” He built this trust through his actions of defending his people and as he explained, “we have love for each other and our principles.” For Sornkili, trust is important for building relationships and reaching shared understanding. He described:

The other thing that is most important to relationships is trust. If they don’t believe you they will not trust you. When people come to help them, they ask why do people want to come and see them. I explain to them that people come to help so they trust me. If they need something they come to me first because they trust me.

My conversation with Sornkili, as well as with the others, demonstrates Habermas’ (1984: 308) “mutual trust in subjective sincerity” and his analysis of consensual speech acts as a basis for reaching understanding that rest upon a background of consensus formed from the recognition of an agreement that “comes about between at least two acting and speaking subjects” (Habermas 1984: 307). As Habermas (1984: 307) summarizes:

It belongs to the communicative intent of the speaker (a) that he perform speech act that is right in respect to the given normative context, so that between him and the hearer an intersubjective relation will come about within is recognized as legitimate; (b) that he makes a true statement (or correct existential presuppositions), so that the hearer will accept and share the knowledge of the
speaker; and (c) that he expresses himself *truthfully* his beliefs, intentions, feelings, desires, and the like, so that the hearer will give credence to what is said. Habermas’s argument of reaching understanding through mutual comprehension, shared knowledge, reciprocal trust, and accord with one another represents how consensual speech actions can be reached and result in meaningful relationships.

**Imagination**

The third category within my theoretical framework is imagination. Imagination is the cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility that is grounded from our past and as Kearney (1998: 3) explains, it is the “human power to convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, what-is into something other-than-it-is.” Ricoeur (1981: 181) asks us to recognize the power of imagination not only as “images from our sensory experience, but the capacity for letting new worlds shape our understanding of ourselves.”

In some cases, it was difficult for my conversation partners to discuss imagination since some seem to be very much in the present and found the concept challenging to understand. When I asked Elario to describe what the future looks like for the Achuar, he responded, “I don’t know. I can’t answer this question because I am taking care of the present now. The others, elders, are in charge of that. They have the vision and they deal with those issues. I am here to deal with the present.” When with the Mlabri, my conversation with Ta Taw touched upon the future for the Mlabri. Ta Taw imagines the people of the village having “a better house, better village” and to “improve themselves to be better for the future.” He sees the possibility of education for their children being critical for sustainability and reducing the help from outsiders.
Because the Achuar are a dream culture, they do have a sense for using their dreams and visions to guide their future. Lynne explained further, “they are a dream culture, they’re guided people. They have total trust in their dreams, in their plant medicines, in what they hear from the voice of the forest. They feel responsible for carrying out the messages that come through them. An example of this is how Santiago described why he became an Achuar leader. He said, “I had always had a dream to become a leader of the Achuar people for several years when I drank the datura. I had a vision to become in the real life a good leader to help my people defend our territory, to go on trips to other countries to tell other people what was happening with my people.”

The new understandings arising from the data in lieu of the core theories of my research provide a framework for a different approach to leadership which will be described in the next chapter.

**Summary**

Chapter Five describes the data presentation and analysis from my research conversations. I provide an examination of each of my research conversations through the lens of my conceptual framework and the theories of Heidegger, Ricoeur, Habermas, Gadamer, and Kearney. Representing the voices of indigenous leaders from the Mlabri and Achuar people and those leaders who partner with them, a different view of leadership than is widely recognized today is provided. In the next and final Chapter, I provide a summary of findings from the collected data and recommendations for a framework for leadership, grounded in solicitude, shared understanding, and imagination. In addition, I offer my reflections on the research process, broader implications of the data, and discuss recommendations for additional research.
CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With Achuar leaders, there is a humility you don’t find elsewhere. They consider the community a higher ethic than the good or accomplishment of the individual.

Lynne Twist

Introduction

This final Chapter provides a summary of my research followed by the findings from the collected data and analysis. Then guided by the data and theoretical analysis, I provide a framework for leadership that is based on care, communicative action, and imagination. I next offer suggestions for additional research and my personal reflections regarding the research process.

Summary of Research Findings

Introduction to Summary

The intent of this research project is an exploration of leadership with a deeper interpretation of what is good leadership from the voices of indigenous leaders. The study is guided by an ontological approach to leadership which focuses on how a leader finds meaning through solicitude and care for the other, reaches shared understanding, possesses the spiritual values that build a personal foundation to leading, and the power of imagining new possibilities.

The study begins with background information about the Achuar and Mlabri peoples including their relationship with nature, community, family, and interdependence with the forest. The Achuar, located in Southern Ecuadorian Amazon, have been able to maintain their identity, traditions, and culture as they continue to live in harmony with nature and to keep the oil companies from destroying their territory. The Mlabri, located
in Northern Thailand, face the challenges of surviving in a de-forested territory and learning a new way of life. For both peoples, there is a high degree of individual freedom, strong sense of community, a connectedness with nature, and leaders lead through everyone being involved through discussion and consensus.

This research study also includes the study of anthropological thinking, specifically the movement over the past 30 years from a structural to interpretative approach as a basis of understanding indigenous culture. It is an approach that generates and reaches shared meaning among cultures through dialogue and relationship between self and other. I studied the work of three anthropologists; Lévi-Strauss, Firth, and Redfield, who challenged and initiated a shift in thinking with methodology in studying culture and indigenous peoples. Through an interpretative approach to research, one which searches for meaning that my research encompasses. My literature review also investigates current leadership theories; including Kouzes and Posner’s view of leadership, spirituality and leadership, and a study of indigenous leadership of Native American leadership characteristics. These contemporary views of leadership form a foundation which helped create the theoretical framework for the research.

The theoretical framework for the research includes three categories that provide the boundaries for the data collection, analysis, and findings. They are Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricoeur’s theories of solicitude and care, Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action, and Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney’s views on imagination. The intent is to explore leadership within the context of these theories and to discover a new and different view of leadership.

My journey on this quest took me to far remote locations to conduct conversations with leaders of indigenous people, with the intent to listen to the voices of Mlabri and
Achuar leaders and with leaders who partner and work with indigenous leaders, not only to learn of their view of indigenous leadership, but to uncover how the relationship influences their own way of leading. The research protocol is in a critical hermeneutic tradition including researcher and research participants in which conversations take place and are analyzed to determine themes and conclusions within the categories of the study.

This investigative process deepens as I reflect upon the voices I heard from the forest and the text that emerges from my conversations. Through the research process and the narratives from my research participants, new understandings and meaning were gained within the unity of inquiry from the theories of Heidegger, Ricoeur, Habermas, Gadamer, and Kearney, within the framework of care, communicative action, and imagination. This work represents a beginning to an understanding of leadership from a different approach; one that differs from individualistic and selfishness to one of collaborative, communal, and selflessness. It is an approach that incorporates the wisdom and experience of indigenous people, grounded in a deep sense of spirituality with others and nature.

As a result of my research, my purpose now is to appropriate new thinking, ideas, and practices gained from my interactions with Mlabri and Achuar leaders, not only within my own way of being as a leader, but also for others who lead in a variety of organizational contexts. As Kearney (2004: 53) reminds us, “seeing-as… not only implies a saying-as but also a being as.”

**Research Findings**

The voices from leaders in the forest yielded a number of interesting narratives, with subsequent analysis that forms the foundation of the research. The narratives of
indigenous leaders based on care, shared understanding, and imagination, leads us to a different interpretation of leadership.

**Finding #1: Care for the Other**

*Care and solicitude toward others is central to a leader’s capacity to lead.*

Ricoeur’s (1992: 352) theory of *oneself as another* tells us “the search for the choice appropriate to the situation, is to recognize oneself as being enjoined to live well and for others in just institutions and to esteem oneself as the bearer of this wish.” During all of my conversations for this research project, care for the other was identified as a common theme by indigenous leaders. All of the indigenous leaders I spoke with had a strong sense of care for the other; for their people, the community and the environment they depend upon for survival.

They lead with humility and selflessness. The leaders I spoke with lead by example rather than authority or holding power over others. In addition, they consider themselves more of a representative than what we in the Western world would consider a leader, and act as humble servants to the community. As to the origins of their becoming a leader, they are chosen by the people they lead. They respond from the call of their people and do not seek or promote themselves to be leaders. Bill Twist described this well:

> When they are chosen to be a leader, they’re chosen to be a representative. They know that what they are doing is for their community, not for themselves. When they select leaders, no one runs for the position. If you want to be a leader and are maneuvering to be one, you would be disqualified.

Another commonality uncovered throughout my research is that the selection of a leader is conducted through a democratic process. Persons with strong traditional values and whose actions have contributed to the community emerge as leaders. A leader is
sought out and selected by their people based upon their knowledge, wisdom, skills, and experience to act as a leader. However, with the Mlabri, Ta Taw was selected by the Thai government to be the head man for the village since he was considered good at communicating and settling disputes. Fortunately, the people in the village support his selection and also want him to be the head man. For the Achuar, who have a hierarchy of leadership within their territory, selection by the people is the method of choosing leaders. In some cases the person selected doesn’t want to be the leader yet will do so for the community. As one leader described, “of course, this is what I’m going to do. I’m going to help my village and I’m going to help my people.” It is through the care for others that defines the leader’s role in life and with others in community.

**Finding #2: Shared Understanding**

**Reaching shared understanding through communicative action, collaboration, and participation are practices by indigenous leaders.**

The public sphere is the societal setting in which communicative action occurs. I found during my conversations that through discourse within the public sphere that communication takes place that leads to consensus and shared understanding. I found and witnessed through my conversations with indigenous leaders the creation of public space for this type of discourse. All of my conversations with leaders while in a village created a participative space within the village. We would gather in a circle on the ground or sitting on small stools to have our conversation. It appeared natural for others to gather around and participate by sharing their point of view during the conversation. Much of the time it was difficult to determine what actually was being said, due to the lack of translation, yet is was clearly observable and also confirmed by those who work with the leaders that all people have a voice to be heard. For example, the Achuar collaborate with
each other and reach consensus through what can be a long, drawn out process, yet the process yields positive outcomes.

My conversations also identified the importance of a leader to be able to clearly communicate, collaborate with others (both within the village or community as well as with outside world), and resolve disputes between members within the community. In all conversations, trust was identified as an important capability for a leader in order to build relationships and respect.

**Finding #3: Imagining a Better Future**

*Imagination plays a role with indigenous leadership and guides a leader’s actions toward building a better future.*

As Kearney (1998: 1) tells us, imagination is something we “do every day, every night” and that it is the cornerstone for how we develop a vision of new possibility and present ourselves toward a tomorrow that is grounded from our past. My conversations with leaders of the Mlabri and Achuar on the topic of imagination led to similar conclusions. Although the term “imagination” was a difficult term to grasp during our conversations, each of the leaders I spoke with, possess the capacity to imagine a better future for their communities. Imagination or “imagining what could be” is a concept that helps guide their thinking and actions toward a better future.

For the Mlabri, Ta Taw sees survival for his people (food, housing, farming, education) being the utmost importance. He also has hope and imagines a better future for his people; one of sustainability and self-reliance. Imagination for the Achuar emerges through their dreams. The Achuar leaders I spoke with, dream of a better future; one that maintains their identity, traditions, and culture as they live in harmony with the
environment of the rain forest. Their dreams tell them that the Achuar territory will continue to be free from oil operations and destruction.

**Finding #4: Spirituality as a Foundation to Indigenous Leadership**

*Indigenous leaders live holistically and understand themselves as interconnected with the physical and spiritual forms of life. There is consistency between spiritual ideals and practices for leadership.*

Spiritual leadership occurs when the self embodies spiritual ideals such as integrity, honesty, and humility. As Fry describes (2003: 694), “it is a leader who can be trusted, relied upon and admired, and who demonstrates leadership through reflective practice and in ethical, compassionate, and respectful treatment of others.” Spirituality emerged during my conversations as a cornerstone for leadership and as a way to sustain and nurture culture.

Each of the Achuar leaders I spoke with mentioned the importance of the interconnectiveness with nature; viewing the world as an interconnected web that each of us has as an integral element. For the Achuar, nature is the foundation of Achuar identity of self, other and with Achuar traditions, culture and beliefs. Because of this close relationship with nature and living in harmony with nature, Achuar leaders are guided by the knowledge and spirit imbedded in nature.

**Implications for Leadership**

This research project hints at a hermeneutically informed leadership approach that is aimed at creating a way thinking about possibility needed by leaders today. It is an approach which incorporates the experiences of indigenous leaders and can be appropriated to all organizational contexts; a leadership framework that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding, and imagination within a foundation of spiritual values that provide others the capacity to act, speak, and have their
voices heard. It is leadership as a way of being; a way of acting in relationship with others.

This approach to leadership is an amalgamation of review of relevant literature in the field of anthropology and leadership theories, the data and analysis from research conversations with indigenous leaders, and the findings that emerged from the analysis. Figure 2 suggests a framework that may be universal in application.

![Figure 2: Leadership as a Way of Being](image)

**Care and Solicitude**

The first of the three action areas to this leadership model is care and solicitude. The three important functions to this area are authentic reciprocity, similitude, and mutuality.

The first action is authentic reciprocity which focuses on the respect of self or self-esteem and the concern for other. Ricoeur (1992: 180) views this as the reciprocity of
giving and receiving between the two and explains that “self respect and solicitude cannot be experienced or reflected upon one without the other.” As with indigenous leaders, it is through care for the other that defines their life with others in community. At the heart of a leader’s being and legitimation is care and relationship with others. When people matter to us we care for them. A leader’s ability to build relationships that are grounded in self respect and care of others defines a leader’s success.

The second action is similitude or as Ricoeur (1992: 193) describes as, “the fruit of the exchange between esteem for oneself and solicitude for others.” The self cannot have self esteem unless “I esteem others as myself” and is paramount to the authentic reciprocity between self and other.

The third action for a leader with embodying care and solicitude is mutuality or virtue of friendship. Ricoeur (2000: 182) describes as “one must love oneself in order to love someone else” and it is this virtue that is centered on the reciprocity of giving and receiving and preserves the self on an ethical plane. As Ricoeur (1992: 183) tells us, a friendship is based on mutuality in which “each loves the other as being the man he is.”

Today’s leaders within all organizational contexts can benefit from viewing their leadership role more through care of others, one that is reciprocal, and a relationship of both giving and receiving.

**Communicative Action**

The next action area is reaching a shared understanding through communicative action. One view of Habermas’ theory of communicative action is that appropriation of his theory is limited in seeking explicit links with empirical matter in organizational contexts and his theory is too intellectual and unrealistic. Alvesson (1996: 6), who has actually made a successful effort in linking Habermas’ critical theory to empirical matter,
describes the challenge as “such a thing would not be sensible, indeed would be all but impossible, given the philosophical orientation and high level of abstraction in his texts.”

An argument can be made that Habermas’ theory of communicative action that leads to reaching a shared understanding between participants could also throw some light on aspects of leadership practice. Since communication and reaching shared understanding are critical to a leader’s role and success, the application of communication action theory can add meaning to the relationship between a leader and others.

It is important to mention, as Alvesson (1996: 40) notes in his writings, that “communication should be regarded not as simply the transmission of information, but in a wider sense to include the very creation of meaning and understanding.” This was a key finding from researching indigenous leaders. In this context, leaders have a role of building relationships with others through communication that leads to mutual understanding of both leader and follower that includes equal opportunity to discuss, argue, question, negotiate, and reach agreement. True, the meaningful understanding prevails under this type of discourse because the communication is more rational. Habermas refers to this as the concept of ideal speech – a situation in which participants are oriented in reaching understanding not just the achievement of some specific, purposeful result. Habermas notes, as described by Wallace and Wolf (1999: 178), the goal of coming to an understanding is to “bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another.”

Interaction through communication results in the social way an organization operates and evolves. Wallace and Wolf (1999: 175) quote Habermas arguing that
communication action “is not only a process of reaching understanding; actors are at the same time taking part in interactions through which they develop, confirm, and renew their memberships in social groups and their own identities.” The process of reaching mutual understanding in daily actions creates enhanced interpersonal relationships and work that can take on meaning – a critical aspect for employee engagement. For leaders to reach shared understanding, application of Habermas’ theory requires the ability to engage in communication that includes argumentation, discussion, and discourse where all participants take part in free, open and equal dialogue that searches for and allows for comprehensibility, truth or sincerity, truthfulness and trust, and legitimacy.

From an ethical view of Habermas’ theory, there is an increased realization for the need for organizations to formulate communication systems and ethical guidelines for leaders. Habermas’ theory of reaching shared values through communicative action can lead to the ethical leadership behavior that is needed within today’s organizations. Leadership is truly ethical when leaders are guided by altruism and their intent is to benefit others. Altruistic leaders are more likely to be ethically right and morally good, by reaching mutual understanding when interacting with others, rather than legally or procedurally correct, such as with applying only strategic action.

The theory of communicative action can function as an ideal framework which can help leaders understand relationships, align shared values, and reach shared understanding in various organizational contexts.

**Imagination**

The next action within the leadership model is imagination. To imagine new possibilities, we take our past, interpret it in light of our present, and project it to the future. A leader’s imagination can bring forth into the world a memory of experiences
that can shape and help distinguish between “what is” and “what could be.” Imagination produces meaning and is at the core of understanding.

In a leadership context it provides the leader the ability to create new possibilities, project new action, and finding other ways to resolve problems. A leader’s imagination of new possibilities provides a leader a wellspring of capacity toward leading others into the future and provides others the space to come into their own potential.

**Spirituality**

At the center or the foundation of this ontological approach to leadership is spirituality. Spiritual ideals as identified by Fry and Reave’s research as described earlier, such as integrity, honesty, and humility, have an effect on leadership and contribute to leader’s success. Integrity is an important element for engendering respect and trust from those being led. Kouzes & Posner (1999) describe the importance of integrity as a practice for effective leadership. The practice of “modeling the way,” defined as “setting an example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with your stated values” demonstrates the importance of integrity.

Integrity also requires honesty and honest communication with self and others in order to “promote internal and external consistency with truth” (Reave 2005: 671). Honestly with self and others is an essential element for success in leading from a foundation of spiritual values. It is a leader’s capacity to see things exactly as they are, free from distortion.

Humility, as another indicator of a leader’s spiritual values, can also be related to leadership success. Leading for the care of the other rather than for personal gain or personal vanity can contribute to a leader’s success. As Reave (2005: 672) found in her research, “a high degree of personal humility is far more evident among exceptional
leaders than is raw ambition.” A quiet, humble leader who stays in the background can often be the most effective, and the “greater good” is greater than a focus on a leader’s individual success.

The practice of integrity, honesty, and humility, and of treating others with respect, fairness, caring, and appreciation, all can contribute to a leader’s success with leading others. These qualities have been selected to be included in this leadership framework because they are prominent in leadership research and were evident during my research conversations. As Reave (2005: 668) points out, incorporating spiritual values into leadership “can bring consistency between the leader’s image and identity, allowing the individual to function with a higher level of inner personal integration.”

**Suggestions for Further Research**

This research study is one of only a very few studies on indigenous leadership. It examines how indigenous leaders lead within the theoretical framework of care, communicative action, and imagination. The more I continue to reflect about this project, the more I realize there is so much more work ahead of me than behind with this topic. I feel my research supports my research questions yet there is a call for additional research in order to uncover and learn more about indigenous leadership. Most knowledge about indigenous leadership remains hidden so addition research studies are needed. Research areas for further consideration which interest me personally include the following:

- Returning to Ecuador and Southeast Asia to continue building the relationships with my research partners and gain a deeper understanding of their life stories and how it relates and contributes to their leadership.
- Researching other indigenous peoples on the topic of leadership such as Native Americans within North America, including United States and Canada and also
researching leaders in Africa, Asia, South America, and Australia. Recording information about their unique traditional leadership could serve future generations as well as integrate into other theoretical approaches to leadership. This would entail working with leaders, elders and others to learn more of their leadership practices.

- Researching the view of leadership from the other. Any additional research study would benefit from including the narratives from those who are led by indigenous leaders to gain insight on how they view a successful leader. It would include a focus from the view of the other.

- Another worthwhile endeavor would be to study at a deeper level the spiritual aspects of indigenous leadership. Spirituality is a core element of indigenous leadership; therefore, more knowledge of an indigenous view could identify new possibilities for leadership in all contexts.

These are a few suggestions for further research which are of personal interest and could contribute to new views on the topic of leadership practice. My desire is to continue my journey through further investigation of leadership of indigenous peoples within Southeast Asia and Africa.

**Personal Reflections**

In her description of the participatory research process in a critical hermeneutic tradition, Herda (1999: 7) tells us that when the “self changes, the rest of the world changes.” She explains that a “full and mature sense of self does not stem from a developmental process grounded in individualism but instead arises from a recognition that in one’s relationship with others there resides the possibility of seeing and understanding the world, and therefore one’s self, differently.”
Every interaction, every reading, every conversation I had during this research project contributed to significant insights as to how I view leadership not only from a theoretical stance but also to how I see myself as a leader. The most rewarding aspect from this experience is the action I have taken to lead differently and see myself differently. Shifting from an approach and focus of my own success as a leader; individualist and self driven, to one that cares more for the success of others, becoming aware of the connectedness of spiritual values with leadership, specifically with humility and personal reflection, and practicing the concepts from within this study has been a journey of self discovery and personal change.

**Conclusion**

My intent from the beginning of this research project was to explore leadership as a way of being by engaging in conversations with indigenous leaders to uncover how they care for others, how they build and establish shared understanding, and how they imagine new possibilities for the future. By drawing upon theories from Ricoeur, Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, and Kearney I set out to derive a different view of leadership.

The research of literature, travel to remote areas, recording and transcribing of conversations, and data analysis have all contributed to the forming of a new leadership framework that emphasizes a dialogical exchange grounded in care, shared understanding and imagination. The findings from the research provide an approach to leadership that offers leaders in all contexts a new way of viewing leadership.
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Appendix A

Research Site Locations

Achuar Territory
The Yellow Leaf
Appendix B

Research Questions Guide – Version 2

The following are the Research Questions Guide for leaders of organizations who partner and align with indigenous people.

Category I: Solicitude and Care

1. Why did you become a leader of this organization?
2. How do you create the conditions for people to have the capacity to act or come into their own potential?
3. What have you discovered about yourself as a leader?

Category II: Communicative Action

1. How do you build and establish relationships with others?
2. How do you reach new or shared understanding with those you lead and those who you align with in partnership?

Category III: Imagination

1. What does a better future look like for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?
2. How do you express to others what you imagine for future possibilities?
3. How does your past play in imagining a new future for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?
Appendix C

University of San Francisco
Consent to be a Research Subject

Purpose and Background

Mr. Don Kraft, a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, is doing a study on the topic of leadership and has asked me to participate in his research. This research study will explore leadership as a way of being by engaging in conversation with others to uncover why leaders care about those they lead, how they provide others the capacity to act and successfully build and establish relationships, and how they imagine new possibilities. This research will provide data and recommendations for new ways on how leaders can lead others.

Procedures

I agree to be a participant in this study. I am aware of voluntary conversations between myself and this researcher. Conversations will be in English and approximately one hour in length and will be arranged at my convenience and after these conversations are recorded, they will be transcribed. These conversations will be on the topic of leading others and my experiences as a leader. A copy of the transcribed conversation will be returned for my review, editing and approval prior to use in the data analysis.

Risks and/or Discomforts

I understand that I am free to decline to answer any questions, ask that the recorder be turned off, or terminate the conversation at any time. If I am uncomfortable I may terminate my participation in the study at any time. I understand my name and anything I contribute to the text of the research will be included in the study and in potential subsequent publications. I understand any potential risk due to lack of confidentiality will be mitigated by my editorial control over the data associated with me.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to me from participating in this study. The anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of the topic of leading in a new and different way.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.
Questions

If I have any questions or comments about this study, I may contact Mr. Don Kraft at 250 2nd Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94118 or by email at dkraft@gene.com. I may also contact Dr. Ellen Herda at the University of San Francisco at 415-422-2075. Should I not want to address either of them, I may contact the Office of Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects by calling 415-422-6091 or by writing at IRBPHS, Psychology Department, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, CA 94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of this consent letter to keep. I understand my participation in this dissertation and my participation in this research is voluntary.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

__________________________________________
Participant Signature                          Date of Signature

__________________________________________
Don Kraft                                    Date of Signature
Appendix D

University of San Francisco
Letter of Invitation and Research Questions

Date

Participant’s Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an exploration of my dissertation topic. As you know, my research will explore leadership as a way of being and to uncover why leaders care for others, how they establish relationships through shared understanding, and how they imagine new possibilities for a better future. My research will concentrate on leaders of indigenous people and those in the modern world who have formed partnerships with them. By engaging in conversations, I hope this research will have future implications for a new way of leading that can be appropriated within all organizational contexts.

Your participation in this research is contingent upon your signing a consent form (you will retain a copy). By signing this form, you will be granting me permission to record (audio) and transcribe our conversation(s). Our conversation(s) will provide data for the analysis of the subject I have described. I will provide you with a copy of our transcribed conversation(s) for your review, comments, and editing. You may add to or delete any section of the conversation at that time. Once I have received your approval of the transcript, I will proceed with analyzing our conversation. Your name and affiliation, the data you have contributed, and the date(s) of our conversation will not be held confidential.

While the conversations and transcripts in this research are collaborative, the writing that comes from them will be my own product, which may include some of your edits. You therefore consent to forgo anonymity under these conditions. You acknowledge that you have been given complete and clear information about this research, and it is your option to make the decision at the outset about whether to participate or not. You may withdraw at any time without any adverse consequences.

Below you will find a series of proposed questions to guide and direct our conversation(s). My hope is our conversation will provide an opportunity for us both to reach new understandings.

- Why did you become a leader of this organization/village?
- How do you create the conditions for people to have the capacity to act or come into their own potential?
- What have you discovered about yourself as a leader?
- How do you build and establish relationships with others?
How do you reach new or shared understanding with those you lead and those who you align with in partnership?

What does a better future look like for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?

How do you express to others what you imagine for future possibilities?

How does your past play in imagining a new future for the Achuar/Yellow Leaf?

Again, thank you for your willingness to participate. Please call (650) 255-1183 or e-mail me at dkraft@gene.com if you have any further questions. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Don Kraft
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
Organization and Leadership
Appendix E

University of San Francisco
Letter of Confirmation

Date

Participant’s Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for the opportunity to get together with you and have a conversation exploring the topic of leadership as a way of being. I am confirming our meeting on _______________. Please let me know if you need to change our arranged date, time, or place.

With your permission, I will audio record our conversation, transcribe the conversation into a written text, and submit it to you for review and final approval. I plan to use quotes, together with other conversations, as part of the analysis. If you wish to change/revise/add/delete anything from the text, just let me know. I look forward to our conversation. Your contribution to my dissertation is crucial to the research process and I appreciate your help.

Again, I thank you for your generosity in volunteering your time and energy. I look forward to meeting and conversing with you.

Sincerely,

Don Kraft
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
Organization and Leadership

E-mail: dkraft@gene.com
Telephone: (650) 255-1183
Appendix F

University of San Francisco
Thank You and Follow-Up Letter

Date

Participant’s Name and Title
Company or Organization
Address

Dear Mr. /Ms:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on _____________. I appreciate your willingness to participate in my research project and believe our conversation will be a valuable part of my dissertation. I realize how busy you are and appreciate the time, attention, and energy you provided.

Attached is a copy of the transcribed conversation for you to review and approve. This transcript will provide the basis for data analysis which, in turn, will eventually be incorporated into an exploration of leadership. As we discussed, data from this research are not confidential.

Please review the attached transcript and revise/add/delete anything you believe is appropriate. I will contact you in approximately two weeks to discuss any changes you have made.

Again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Don Kraft
Researcher, Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco
Organization and Leadership

Telephone: (650) 255-1183
E-mail: dkraft@gene.com
Appendix G

Pilot Study Research Conversation Transcript

Jim Kouzes & Don Kraft

Yellow – Solicitude and Care
Blue – Communicative Action
Green – Imagination
Gray – Fusion of Horizons

Date: November 16, 2007
Time: 1:00 – 2:00
Place: Orinda California

Prior to conversation Jim and I discussed Jim’s work with a group within Genentech. He had delivered a keynote speech at a meeting in Napa for executives from the Commercial group at Genentech. We also spoke about USF and the doctorate program I am completing. I gave Jim an overview of the type of research I was conducting and the focus of my dissertation. We then began our audio taped conversation.

DON:
How can leaders be authentic with demonstrating care?

JIM KOUZES:
In this session with commercial I use this slide. It’s perfect; I got it from the New Yorker cartoons. It shows this guy in a business suit and he’s in an open office, everybody’s sitting there and he’s walking around patting people on the back saying, “Keep up the good work whoever you are, whatever it is.” Clearly, it obviously gets a good laugh. Clearly people who just go to a seminar, learn a technique, “Oh, you should care about people,” and then walk around doing that kind of thing, “Keep up the good work,” not knowing who the people are, or what it is that they’ve done. They are not likely to be considered caring by anyone. It’s clearly a technique or method.

But it also is a behavior and a set of skills. A number of things we’ve written about in Encouraging the Heart come to mind. First of all, you have to pay attention to people. If you’re truly interested in someone else, you’ll be paying attention to them. That can be in your body language, in your eye contact, tone of voice. It’s going around and intentionally looking for people doing things right - to borrow a phrase from Ken Blanchard. I remember Tom Malone who actually lived here in Orinda until he and his wife retired and then moved away, but Tom use to do what he called, “Caring by wandering around.”

DON:
“Caring by wandering around,” great concept.
JIM KOUZES:
He would go around looking for people who were doing things that demonstrated that they cared about the organization. Its goals and objectives, the people and products, and he, in turn, would go around recognizing them publicly for what they did. He made it part of his agenda. He clearly had the intention of paying attention.

I think another important element is personalizing what you say. If you want to demonstrate you truly care about someone, then you’ll know about what they like and need, their hopes, dreams and aspirations and not everyone the same. That, of course, requires getting to know the person as a person: their values, their beliefs, their interests, their hobbies, if they have a family or not. One time when somebody worked for me when I was at The Tom Peter’s Company, Steve Farber came over one time and he showed me this letter from Carl English. Carl was a manager in one of his workshops at a utility company and Carl had written a letter to Steve’s son, telling Steve’s son what a great dad he had. And I’ll always be really impressed with what Carl did with that one little illustration of how he bothered to find out that Steve had a son. That’s truly getting to know him. Then he took the time to personalize his thank you by writing it to Steve’s son and making it different and more memorable. Those are a couple of things that come to mind.

DON:
It sounds like that’s a way for managers or leaders can build and establish relationships with the people they lead.

JIM KOUZES:
Yeah it is.

DON:
One of the things I just did with my team was use the values activity from your course materials. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of Jürgen Habermas and his theory of communicative action. He came up with a concept that there are four validity claims that need to take place to reach a shared understanding with others when communicating when building relationships with others. The first one is both speaker and hearer have to comprehend what the other person is saying, the linguistics aspect of it. The second claim is trust…that trust exists between each other - between the speaker and the hearer. The third claim is that what is said is sincere - that you gain a sense the person is coming from a sincere place.

JIM KOUZES:
So it’s trust—

DON:
It’s comprehension, trust, sincerity, and the fourth claim is shared values - having similar values to reach a shared understanding. I introduced the theory to my team and we discussed each of the claims. We agreed we comprehend each other and that the team trusted each other. We also feel there is sincerity present when we are in conversation and
work together, but with values it’s more of “I don’t know what you value and you probably don’t know what I value.”

So we used the values card sort activity and we spent three hours reaching a shared set of values for our team. We each identified our own individual values and then came up with categories with what our shared values are as a team and what the differences were, and how we will address those differences. One noticeable outcome from the discussion was the concept of caring about others. All our shared values dealt with care of the other. My discovery about that was that not only do I try to wander around and get to know people, but they also share that with each other. I was beaming with pride that they were even using the word “care”.

JIM KOUZES:
That’s terrific; great. So part of caring is that interest in finding out or about others. This is related to this -- not obviously directly on the question, but related. When I was reviewing the literature on global leadership, I did a session in Rajkovich, Iceland for a global company and they wanted to do a session on global leadership and what is different about global leadership.

I did a lot of literature review and looked up our own data across countries. There’s something called “Project Globe” which was a project that studied leaders, something like 17,000 managers in 62 different countries. I’ve looked intensively at preferences and what makes leaders effective, so they can look at cross cultural comparisons. And I found some things that were universally positive, universally negative, and what they called culturally contingent. Among the things that were universally positive -- had a universally positive effect -- I think they called it “team orientation” but we would refer to it as “fostering collaboration”. It’s part of enabling others to act and being effective at building relationships. Our own research data showed that, if you were to ask one question on the LPI, what’s the most important question to determine whether somebody has potential for being an effective leader, the item would be: treat them with dignity and respect. Whether it’s here in the U.S. or elsewhere, having an interest in other people and having curiosity about other people, wanting to find out about their values, and not assuming that your way is the best way, is universally positive and has a positive impact.

DON:
It’s a good sign that some people are thinking that way.

JIM KOUZES:
Yes.

DON:
I wonder why then that there are so many global problems?

JIM KOUZES:
One wonders if we all feel that way. The other side of it is there are biases toward your own culture that we have to overcome. They call this in the literature, “global mindset”.
The one variable that is probably the most difficult to develop because it just takes more time and more exposure to a variety of cultures, is what’s being called “global mindset”, and it’s really about openness, broadmindedness, interest in others, and interest in other cultures. If that’s not present, it’s hard to develop this “caring.”

DON:
One definition I lean toward for leadership is providing the conditions for people to have the capacity to act. This is very similar to “enabling others to act” from your book *The Leadership Challenge*. How do you think leaders can create conditions for people to have the capacity to come into their own potential and to act?

JIM KOUZES:
I think, as you know from *The Leadership Challenge* work, enabling others to act or making others feel powerful and efficacious and capable is, at its core, about trust. If I’m demonstrating trust toward someone else, then I’m behaving in a particular way. But if I don’t trust them I’m more likely to diminish them. What makes people feel powerful or efficacious or capable is fundamentally about showing trust in them. It’s about giving them something important to work on or decide on. We typically talk about delegation in management. You delegate a menial job to someone and they don’t feel empowered and they don’t feel more capable or have greater capacity. Give them something that’s meaningful and important -- an important project, a proposal, a presentation to give, a decision to make, a team to lead -- then they feel more at their capacity, but they won’t feel that if they lack the skills. So in addition to giving them a challenging task, an important task to work on, is also to help them build skills.

DON:
You want to monitor performance as well and I imagine personal development comes in to play because you don’t want them to fail.

JIM KOUZES:
You want to give something to people to stretch, so they can feel on their own and not micromanaged and not have to come to you for approval. On the other hand, you also have to monitor to see if they have the skills and ability. What that implies is if you’re a leader, you want to give someone the opportunity to grow and develop in their job and feel more personally powerful and sit down and talk to them about, “what kind of help do you need from me, what kind of skills do you need, what kind of training do you need, what kind of information do you need, what kind of resources do you need?”

All the things that will help them work independently, have some agreement, and to check in with each other periodically. There is coaching involved in that, there’s skills checking, there’s the periodic conversations.

DON:
One-on-one?
JIM KOUZES: Obviously, showing an interest. People are also going to feel more powerful. It’s a basic fundamental principle. People would rather have more freedom, not less freedom.

DON: Right.

JIM KOUZES: On the other hand, if there are no boundaries, no constraints, then people might have a tendency to wander off and start getting into other people’s territories, other issues. As leaders, we have to set clear standards, clear boundaries. That’s the part of feeling powerful. People know what’s expected of them and they know when they are doing well, and when not doing well.

DON: It sounds like you are saying communication is key.

JIM KOUZES: Communicating key expectations. Those are some of the fundamentals: based on trust, making sure you give people important things to do, they have independence and autonomy in order to make decisions but, at the same time, they have the capacity to do better and, if not, there is training and development, skill building going on.

DON: How do you reach an understanding with people from their viewpoint? To build capacity to act? How have you done that in the past with establishing relationships and understanding with the people that you’ve led?

JIM KOUZES: In the sense of them feeling more powerful in what they do?

DON: Yes.

JIM KOUZES: Let me think about a specific… Let’s go back to when I was running a business. Let’s take the example of developing people to facilitate The Leadership Challenge workshop. That’s what we did, we hired people and trained them to facilitate. Along the lines of standard setting: making sure people clearly knew the boundaries.

We would make sure people were clear about what was needed to do and to be able to facilitate on their own. We would always say it takes 10 sessions before they would feel comfortable that you’re out there and you don’t need it scripted. The scenario we would set up is, “You’ll know when you’re able to do this when you’re on a boat and all of your materials are washed to sea and you can still conduct the program without a flip chart and a pen. That’s when you know you’re ready to go out on your own. People had a clear sense ahead of time that they wouldn’t be able to do this tomorrow, and they weren’t
going to be able to next week and it was going to take a while and even after 10 sessions, they were still going to learn something new every time. I got a note from one of our guys, Mike Niece, who worked with me in the early 90’s and Mike said he just finished his 400th Leadership Challenge workshop.

And he still – he said, I still learn stuff every time I do it.

DON:  
It’s the interaction with people. I’ve done a lot of delivery too and actually you learn a lot from just the questions people ask you. It causes you think about things you haven’t thought about before.

JIM KOUZES: 
Exactly, so part of it was then setting up this other set of expectations about how long it would take. We clearly had materials provided to people. We had scripts. It’s like learning a play, learning a performance. While ad-libbing might be the ideal scenario, you could just go out and give your talk on leadership and ad lib it. Most of us aren’t that good and that knowledgeable ad-libbing. We know it takes a long time to learn. We provide them with a script. We give them something that they can refer to so that when they’re up in front of a group, they have some tools, some resources.

DON:  
They can make it their own.

JIM KOUZES: 
Yeah, that’s the other piece. I would— in some respects, how we’re a little bit different from some of our other colleagues who would say, “Do not vary from the script and follow the training manual religiously,” not that anyone did that, but that’s what they were told.

Our advice was: “Make this your own.” In order to make it your own, you’re going to have to go out and interview other leaders and gather your own stories and develop your own material that you can fit into the structure so you can make it your own. But we would initially provide people with all that so they had that available to them. It’s the whole issue of trust. If you put somebody on an airplane and send them off to another city where you’re not around, there’s got to be a lot of trust there. They're capable of delivering this. Those are just some examples of the things we do and we still do it to this day. We’re still doing “train the trainer” sessions to develop facilitators.

DON:  
Week after next, we are going to be delivering a Leadership Challenge session in Vacaville. Dan the facilitator who delivered the session a few weeks ago said after the session “I learned a lot about Genentech and a lot about the leadership here…just from the participation from the people who attended.”
JIM KOUZES:
One of the things -- he may not have found this yet -- but when I did the characteristics of the admired leaders with 125 or so people who were at the session for Commercial on Wednesday, selected “intelligent” as most admired of any other group of people. 70% selected intelligence.

DON:
We have a highly educated workforce; many have masters degrees or above.

JIM KOUZES:
Because of that -- and if I did this at McKinsey -- but for anyone who's going to do leadership development or be a leader within Genentech, these people are not intellectually lazy; they’re going to be very demanding and be very evidence-based. You’ve really got to be prepared.

DON:
And that's with our Commercial organization; can you imagine working with the research and product development organizations?

JIM KOUZES:
Exactly.

DON:
It would be even more an intellectual audience. I’d like to discuss inspiring a shared vision practice from The Leadership Challenge. I would think imagination plays a role for a leader to create and inspire a vision. How does imagination play with this aspect of being a leader?

JIM KOUZES:
The practice which scores the lowest of all the leadership practices is inspired shared vision. I would guess that's true at Genentech because it's true elsewhere. And that more leaders struggled with that practice than any of the other practices. And a clue about this whole question of imagination comes from when you look at the actual questions where people scored the lowest. It's where people have to create a compelling image of the future or they have to communicate in a way that other people can see it as their own interest and that requires some of their natural caring, paying attention and listening and also being able to tell stories, examples, anecdotes, use humor -- rather than just the rational linear way many people in the business communicate.

I think you’re absolutely right, in order to really grab people’s attention we need to be much better at communicating right brain rather than left brain; you need to be able to communicate through stories and examples and images. Have you read Daniel Pink’s Whole New Mind?

DON:
No, I haven’t.
JIM KOUZES:
You might find an interesting relation to that particular question.

Daniel Pink. He writes about new senses that are involved in business today rather than the old, more rational approach. It's a right brain/left brain discussion, and he discusses it in ways that are more applied rather than strictly about the right brain/left brain. Design for example. Design is a lot about imagination and it’s as important as the quality of a product. It’s becoming a competitive advantage. Take iPod as just one example.

DON:
We played a videotape of Steve Jobs during The Leadership Challenge workshop that showed him talking about his imagination of the three components of the iPhone: taking internet, phone and music and putting it into one device. It was really good.

JIM KOUZES:
Was that one of his speeches at Apple?

DON:
I think it was in San Francisco. We got permission from Apple. One of the comments during the session was, why don’t you show Herb Boyer who had the vision of recombinant DNA and the founding of Genentech? We’re trying to find the video to show it at the next pilot.

JIM KOUZES:
That’s cool. That’s great.

DON:
If imagination and inspiring a shared vision are some of the difficult challenges for leaders, what would you suggest as to how leaders can imagine new possibilities?

JIM KOUZES:
There are some very practical ways you can do that. The term we use is ‘outsight’, rather than ‘insight’. Outsight is the ability to perceive external realities not just internal realities. A lot of times when we think of imagination it’s an inward looking when in fact I think people who are really good at imagination are using an outward looking process.

You are able to notice things that are happening around you much better than other people. If you look at Fred Smith…he said he get his ideas from the retailing business, from the grocery business, from technology or just from reading. He’s looking outside, not just internally within himself, but externally for ideas.

When we talk about challenges to the process we know great ideas, breakthrough ideas, often come from outside of the business, not inside the business. They come from when you take a math class, as he did, or from walking through the woods or from going to somebody else’s place of business and noticing something they do and saying, how can we adapt that to our business? A lot of discoveries are often accidents. I would love to
listen to Herb Boyer and his vision of how this industry was discovered because my guess is there were a lot of accidental things that happened; it wasn’t a linear process.

DON:
I don’t know if you know the story about the founding of Genentech. Herb Boyer and Stan Cohen met in San Francisco on Clement Street at a bar. Stan was a venture capitalist and Herb a scientist and they put an idea of a company on a napkin which formed a whole industry, the biotech industry….and the start of Genentech, which was the first biotech company. That’s imagination.

JIM KOUZES:
Absolutely. You know Herb Keller? Every now and then I run across the napkin they used to sketch out the Southwest Airlines plan. They had this idea… yeah.

DON:
We have a statue outside our research center of a table in cast iron, similar to this one, with the two of them with two pints of beer.

JIM KOUZES:
It is symbolic. People who read more…amount of reading, and reading outside of their own field, have more imagination. You take Ideo, the design company -- they have anthropologists on their design team. They have engineers and people who are skilled in product design and also have anthropologists and people who are not traditional with product design. They have them because anthropologists look at the world differently. I think when you have that kind of variety and difference in diversity you are more likely to come up with imaginative ideas. The dilemma is if you’re putting people into teams it does take a diverse group of people longer to be productive because they are looking at things differently and for them to form some kind of cohesive approach to things takes longer. But once they have done that they are much more likely to come up with breakthrough ideas. So the implication for leaders is you’ve got to be paying attention and looking outside of your own organization and your own discipline in order to be more imaginative.

DON:
How does a person’s past play with how they imagine something for the future?

JIM KOUZES:
In our work If you look backwards first you're more likely to look further ahead. I think it's sort of a -- some people call it the Janus effect -- by understanding more clearly our past and where we came from I think we're better able to understand it takes longer to do things that we might originally think. We recognize that if we can look back 20 years -- which is the average amount of time backwards -- and understand where we've come from, then we have some sense of all of the variety of experiences that made us who we are and it wasn’t just one linear transition. As we look ahead, we look at more variety in things, not just one thing. If I look at my own history and my own training and development in this field, I didn't start out to do this.
DON: Where did you start your career?

JIM KOUZES: I started out wanting to be an ambassador in the Foreign Service. I was going to go into the Foreign Service…

DON: You took all the tests?

JIM KOUZES: Actually, I stopped doing it before I took the tests. I went to the Peace Corps as the first step. I thought when I came back I’d go to the Thunderbird school in Arizona, which still today is the best place to get a global view of the world. Then I’d go from there to the state department and so on. I have some friends in the Peace Corps who did in fact do that. But I did not. I came back and decided I liked education instead. I taught school and said, “I like this.” But I liked more of the stuff like NTL, T-groups, experiential learning – I liked that. My father used to buy these Pfeiffer Annuals, these sets of games and activities and so even before I was engaged in this, I saw that my father was interested also in doing these kinds of experiential things. He was a deputy assistant secretary of labor in the government and really liked that approach to learning. So I find that… as I look at my own background and say, I got here by a rather circuitous route rather than a linear path. I was exposed to a whole variety of experiences that brought me here. I think part of the looking backwards first does bring us to a better understanding of how rich and varied our own experiences have been. It gives us permission to look at more things that are out there.

DON: …and how we can imagine new possibilities. With all the years of being involved with the topic of leadership, what have you discovered about yourself as being a leader? Have you ever taken the LPI?

JIM KOUZES: Oh yeah. Many times.

DON: Did you see it changing from year to year?

JIM KOUZES: I certainly learned that as the president of a company. When I gave it to other people, and they gave me feedback I didn’t have strengths in all practice areas – I didn’t get all 10’s in all five practices. Over the years I’ve definitely learned from doing this. One of the reasons… a friend of mine, Fred Margolis used to say, what’s the best way to learn something? The first time he asked me that question I said: to experience it; people who experience it will learn the most, learn the best. And he said: no, to teach it to somebody
else. Teaching something to somebody else is the best way to learn. So every time I engage in a workshop, I’m always learning, as I said at the beginning of our conversation. So over time I, for sure, improved.

I think the one area which probably was initially a weakness for me was in inspiring a shared vision -- because it's tough for all of us -- and “encouraging the heart”. I think I did pretty good job on the whole -- I'm more of a team-oriented person: a “we” than an “I”.

My personal best leadership experience was actually a project… The first time I did it was about involving 300 people in a planning process. It was really eye-opening. I worked with other people who were facilitators but the idea was we could plan something with everyone who was participating in it, being involved in the planning of it. It took a year and a lot of meetings. Of course more people who then participate in the actual event itself, which was about a thousand people in addition to the group that planned it. But it became… each meeting became a learning experience about something. I think I'm pretty good at that. Modeling the way -- I was a Boy Scout and that was drilled in to you from the early days and my mom and my dad did so too. Challenge the process has been something -- I’m not an extreme risk taker. I’m not one of those people who jumps off buildings or the sides of cliffs with parachutes on my back. But I’m more inclined to experiment and try new things than I am one to say: well, this is the only way to do things. So it was encouraging. And I don't know why that was. I guess like a lot of other people I just sort of took it for granted. So I worked hard on that one. I got much better. And with inspiring a shared vision the thing I’ve learned the most about is being able, as we talked earlier, to describe things in ways other people can actually see themselves in the picture. Those are the two that I've worked the most with.

DON: Your tagline is always: love ‘em…?

JIM KOUZES: Love ‘em and lead ‘em.

DON: What do you do when you don’t care for someone that you’re leading? Or the person is the wrong person or the wrong fit or just they're not going to follow.

JIM KOUZES: Sometimes the best way to help them is to find something that they love to do.

DON: Set them free.

JIM KOUZES: Set them free. That’s right, set them free. I’ve had more than one occasion where I had to do that. But if people really have a desire to be where they are and do a good job and perform and feel good about their work they do, then I think it’s pretty easy to do that. I was reading -- K. Anders Ericsson is lead editor of a book called the Handbook of
Expertise or something like that. Anyway, it’s not a book I would recommend but it’s a collection of articles by people who have studied expertise. How people become experts. And one of the things he says in the book -- it’s an interesting perspective on the whole idea of you’ve got to love what you do -- and they have found it takes hard work and a lot of deliberate practice to become an expert; that’s nothing revolutionary. But they challenge the whole notion of talent and you can just go out and find a talented person and put them in a new job and they’ll perform for you. Because even the most talented people may not perform well.

But you have to deliberately practice. The number of hours to become an expert in anything is around 10 years and 5000 hours. So that adds up to be about two hours of practice every day for 10 years. Taking off for weekends…that’s a lot of time. What he says is if you're going to devote that much time and energy into something you better engage in things you love to do; otherwise you'll never really get good at them. The same is true for leadership. If loving people, caring about people, having good relationships with other people is key to being effective as a leader, you really need to love people. That’s the… that’s what you’re working with.

DON: It seems like it’s worked for you.

JIM KOUZES: It has. I’ve had a great life. A great career.

DON: Well, thank you.

(END.)
Appendix H

Pilot Study Synthesis and Data Analysis

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes a possible way of Being-in-the-world as being revealed through care and that care is to be thought of as an ethical term which defines our openness as human beings. For Ricoeur, care and solicitude is about our caring for the other with respect to self and respect to the other that defines one’s life with others.

My conversation with Jim Kouzes surfaced similar thinking about care of others and how leaders can reveal care by the actions they take to enable others the capacity to act. He described “caring by wandering around” and “paying attention” to others as a way to build and establish relationships that can lead to positive relationships.

Kouzes’ view of solicitude and care is similar to that of Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricoeur in that he truly sees the importance of a leader caring for others. Although Kouzes was not familiar with the term “solicitude” he and Ricoeur share its meaning. An example is his view that a leader’s effectiveness can be attributed through the love for the other. For Kouzes, a foundational concept for leading others is to love others. A leader shows care by being interested in others and by paying attention to what is important to them – to know, understand, and personalize interactions in order to build relationship with them. He also believes care can be described as providing people work that is meaningful and purposeful so they feel they are acting at their capacity.

**Communicative Action**

Jürgen Habermas’ aim with his philosophy of communicative action is one in which communication is free from domination, one that is open and free and the goal to
reaching shared understanding is through four validity claims: mutual comprehension, truth and sincerity, trust, and shared values (or reciprocal accord with one another). Important to Habermas is the mutual exchange between speaker and hearer and each of the four claims are met to reach shared understanding.

Kouzes’ view of having successful communication or reaching shared understanding begins with the “end in mind”; that the other is free to act. For example, for Kouzes it means enabling others to act through trust of the other and communicating expectations. For Kouzes, trust is the key to building relationship and understanding which is key to Habermas’ concept of communicative action.

**Imagination**

According to Richard Kearney, imagination is the cornerstone for developing a vision of new possibility that is grounded in our past. It is through knowledge, interpretation, understanding, and imagination that we present ourselves towards a tomorrow. We reconfigure our present to create new possibilities for the future.

For Ricoeur, imagination takes place at multiple levels of meaning that replaces the visionary model with one that is verbal, or of a linguistic function. It produces meaning in new ways that open up new possibilities and action.

Kouzes shares both Kearney and Ricoeur’s view of imagination and has incorporated similar concepts within his own work, particularly the practice of inspiring a shared vision. According to Kouzes, the role of imagination and being an effective leader lies with the capability of the leader to create a compelling image of the future with how others see themselves within that picture. As with Ricoeur’s thinking, Kouzes believes imagination incorporates care, telling stories, providing examples of what the future looks like, anecdotes, using humor; all as text – rather than the rational linear approach of
communicating a vision. It is also important, according to Kouzes, for others to see themselves as part of the picture of the future.

Another aspect of imagination and the role of the leader is the leader’s ability to foster the imagination in others. Kouzes’ encourages leaders to practice “outsight” which incorporates the interpretative nature of imagination. He believes we can look outside our internal realities, interpret diverse practices to create new and different possibilities. As a leader, this is a way to be inclusive of the ideas of others; to look at the current realities of others and together look at the world with a new and different view.

Both Ricoeur and Kearney bring an interpretative approach to imagination that begins with taking our past, interpreting it, in light of our present and projecting it to the future. Imagination brings forth into the world our memory of experiences that shape us and which helps us distinguish between what is and what could be. Kouzes prescribes to similar thinking. He believes imagination lies with our ability to clearly understand our past in order to look ahead and imagine new possibilities.

Kouzes, as does Ricoeur, does not see the temporal aspect of imagination as a linear sequence. For Kouzes, our past is not measured by linear time but through the experiences of our past, as Ricoeur tells us “lived time”, and our memory contributes to our life story that projects our imagination of the future.

**Implications of Pilot Study**

Both Martin Heidegger and Paul Ricoeur's concept of care and solicitude have implications on an ontological view of leadership as a way of being. At the heart of a leader’s being and legitimation as a leader is communication and relationship. A leader’s communication must be grounded in solicitude and care in order to reach mutual understanding, shared values, and relationship. A leader’s success in leading is dependent
upon his or her care of those who follow. Leadership as a way of being is different from most current management and leadership practices within today’s organizations. Management and leadership training advises leaders in organizations to “not become friends” or “don’t get too close” with those they lead because it would be inappropriate, or they could lose control and power. This thinking is contrary to Heidegger and Ricoeur's philosophy of Being and seeing the self in the other. For Heidegger, care is constitutional to Being, so how could a leader be one in Being—in-the-world, with others if not in a caring, close, friendly relationship?

Today’s leaders within all organizational contexts could benefit from viewing their leadership role more as a caring friendship, one that is reciprocal, and a relationship of both giving and receiving. As Ricoeur tells us, a friendship is based on mutuality in which “each loves the other as being the man he is” (Ricoeur 1992: 183).

Leadership is about relationship with others, and if you are going to lead others you need to care about them. At the heart of leadership is genuine care for people. In a recent study by the Center for Corporate Leadership, a distinction was identified from high performing leaders to those of lowest-performing. The single most identified factor that differentiated the two was the assessment score of “affection – both expressed and wanted” (Kouzes and Posner 1999: 9). The highest performing managers showed more warmth, closeness and fondness toward their people rather than the need to have power, control, and influence over others. Kouzes and Posner, in Encouraging the Heart, describe the results:

It is impossible to escape the message here that if people work hard with leaders who encourage the heart, they feel better about themselves. Their self-esteem goes up. These leaders set people’s spirit free, often inspiring them to become more than they ever thought possible. This indeed, may be our ultimate mission as leaders (Kouzes and Posner 1999: 11).
Communicative Action and Leadership

One view of Jürgen Habermas’ theory of communicative action is that appropriation of his theory is limited in seeking explicit links with empirical matter in organizational contexts and his theory is too intellectual and unrealistic. Alvesson, who has actually made a successful effort in linking Habermas’ critical theory to empirical matter, describes the challenge as “such a thing would not be sensible, indeed would be all but impossible, given the philosophical orientation and high level of abstraction in his texts” (Alvesson 1996: 6). He writes of a situation, from his research, of an information meeting of mid-level managers and the relevance of Habermas’ work in an empirical organizational context in his book, Communication, Power and Organization.

An argument can be made that Habermas’ theory of communicative action could also throw some light on aspects of leader and other behavior in an organizational context. Since communication is critical to a leader’s role and organizational success, the application of communication action theory could add meaning to the leader and other relationship and organizational effectiveness.

It is important to mention at this point, as Alvesson notes in his writings, that “communication should be regarded not as simply the transmission of information, but in a wider sense to include the very creation of meaning and understanding” (Alvesson 1996: 40). In this context, leaders have a role of building relationships with others through communication that leads to mutual understanding of both leader and other that includes equal opportunity to discuss, argue, question, negotiate, and reach agreement. True, the meaningful understanding prevails under this type of discourse because the communication is more rational. Habermas refers to this as the concept of ideal speech – a situation in which participants are oriented in reaching understanding not just the
achievement of some specific, purposeful result. Habermas notes that the goal of coming to an understanding is to “bring about an agreement that terminates in the intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another (Wallace and Wolf 1999: 178).

Interaction through communication results in the social way an organization operates and evolves. Wallace and Wolf quote Habermas arguing that communication action “is not only a process of reaching understanding; actors are at the same time taking part in interactions through which they develop, confirm, and renew their memberships in social groups and their own identities” (Wallace and Wolf, 1999: 175). The process of reaching mutual understanding in daily actions creates enhanced interpersonal relationships and work that can take on meaning – a critical aspect for employee engagement. For leaders to reach mutual understanding, application of Habermas’ theory requires their ability to engage in communication that includes argumentation, discussion, and discourse where all participants (leader and others) take part in free, open and equal dialogue that searches for and allows for comprehensibility, truth or sincerity, truthfulness and trust, and legitimacy.

From an ethical view of Habermas’ theory, there is an increased realization for the need for organizations to formulate communication systems and ethical guidelines for leaders. Habermas’ theory of reaching shared values through communicative action can lead to the ethical leadership behavior that is needed within today’s organizations. Leadership is truly ethical when leaders are guided by altruism and their intent is to benefit others. Altruistic leaders are more likely to be ethically right and morally good, by reaching mutual understanding when interacting with others, rather than legally or procedurally correct, such as with applying only strategic action.
Most current research, theories, and approaches to leadership, define leadership as an influencing process in which the leader influences others to reach a goal. As Joanne Ciulla explains in *Ethics, The Heart of Leadership*, the only difference in some of the definitions, are the implications for the leader-follower relationship. How leaders lead is an important aspect of the relationship. She believes “how leaders get people to do things (impress, organize, persuade, influence, and inspire) and how what is to be done is decided (forced obedience or voluntary consent, determined by the leader, and as reflection of mutual purposes) have normative implications” (Ciulla 2004: 11). The most morally attractive way to lead within an ethical leader-other relationship, according to Ciulla, is one that is non-coercive, participatory and democratic between leader and follower. Habermas’ theory of communicative action can function as an ideal framework which can help leaders understand relationships and align shared values in various organizational contexts.

**Imagination**

Imagination of future possibilities contributes to a leader’s way of being. Through reflection of one’s past, in light of the present, a leader can dream of what *could be*. Currently there is a need for leaders to view the world differently and enlist others within that view to create new possibilities - to share a new dream in which others can see themselves.

Paul Ricoeur and Richard Kearney challenge and encourage us to analyze the power of imagination through language, identity, narrative, ethics, dialogue, etc. and appropriate it to opportunities. In a leadership context, it is inspiring leaders who have the capacity to gaze across the horizon picturing in their minds of what no one else has ever
created before. It is this clear picture of the future that pulls them from their present forward.

People must believe in this image and share an understanding that the leader understands their needs and have their interests at heart. To enlist others in their picture of the future, leaders need to know the other’s dreams, aspirations, values, and hope for the future. It is a leader’s ability of sharing that forges a unity of purpose and passion for a common good.