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Sources of Empowerment for Native American Women: Pomo Women's Critical Reflections

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SOURCES OF EMPOWERMENT FOR NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN: Pomo Women's Critical Reflections

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by
Heidi F. Morgan

San Francisco
May 2001

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.

	5/10/01
Candidate	Date

Dissertation Committee

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Chairperson	Date
	10 MAY 01
Second Reader	Date
	May 10, 2001
Third Reader	Date

A Pomo Woman Collecting Sedgegrass
(Smithsonian Books, 1986)

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Ruth Hucklebridge and my father, Ted Hucklebridge. My mother has been my greatest source of empowerment throughout my life as a strong, competent, supportive, and loving role model. She has dedicated her life to serving others, in her family, her church and her community. With her passion for learning and ability to transform ideas into action, her life is a reflection of Paulo Freire's belief in creating change for social justice.

My father empowered me to believe that I could achieve far-reaching goals and that nothing was impossible. His life was committed to creating positive and healthy learning experiences for children through physical education. He too, transformed the world by providing young people with an opportunity to develop self-esteem and a sense of belonging by participating in group activities. He saw the highest good in all people, and like Freire, believed in creating dialogue with others to develop understanding and peace.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the remarkable Pomo Indian women leaders who made this participatory research possible. Thank you, Rozan, Mary, Suzann, Irenia, Connie, and Georgeanne for sharing your life experiences, beliefs, reflections, and guidance. It is my hope that the ideas you shared in this study will benefit young Native American women in the future. It has been an honor to learn about your lives and your people.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Rosita Galang, Father Denis Collins, and Sister Mary Peter Traviss, for your encouragement, counsel, and superb editing suggestions. I also wish to thank Dr. Flor Ada for your guidance, and introducing me to the richness of participatory research.

My special thanks go to Anna Duffy for her painstaking efforts at transcription. Finally, thank you to my family, especially my husband, Ted, for your support and encouragement.

CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground.
Cheyenne proverb

Statement of the Problem

Native American women today face many barriers. As members of a colonized group of people, they have been oppressed by racism, white privilege, and loss of their cultural identity, language, and land. Although Native American men also face these barriers, women have the added oppression of sexism in a male-dominated world (Wilson, 1998). Having lost many of their rights to self-determination, many young Native American women choose paths of self-destruction, numbing their pain with alcohol or drug abuse. They are unable to visualize a positive or successful future for themselves and often become victims of domestic violence. Many Native American [1] women are left to raise their children alone, living below the poverty level with poor or nonexistent health care for themselves and their children (Allen, 1986; U.S. Department of Justice, 1999). At the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China, August 1995, Winona LaDuke (1995), the co-chair of Indigenous Women's Network stated the following: "We believe that the right of all peoples to self determination cannot be realized while women continue to be marginalized and prevented from becoming full participants in their respective societies" (p. 2).

[1] The researcher used the terms Native American, American Indian, Indian, Native, or indigenous, interchangeably throughout the study when referring to the indigenous people of North America. Discussions with Native people revealed a varied preference for the above terms.

As long as Native American women live in poverty and are oppressed and abused by the male-dominated society, women will not have self-determination. LaDuke (1995) believes that indigenous women's loss of their right to "determine their destiny, and that of future generations" originates with the "predator/prey relationship industrial society has developed with the Earth, and subsequently, the people of the Earth" (p. 2):

> We [women], collectively find that we are often in the role of the prey, to a predator society, whether from sexual discrimination, exploitation, sterilization, absence of control over our bodies, or being the subjects of repressive laws and legislation in which we have no voice... It is also critical to point out at this time, that most matrilineal societies, in which governance and decision making are largely controlled by women, have been obliterated from the face of the Earth by colonialism, and subsequently industrialism. The only matrilineal societies, which exist in the world today, are those of Indigenous nations. We are the remaining matrilineal societies, yet we also face obliteration. (p. 3)

Jackson (1993) echoed LaDuke's concerns about indigenous women, writing, "Aboriginal women continue to constitute the most aggrieved and oppressed constituency within Aboriginal communities" (p. 63), based on his research of the Aboriginal Movement in Canada. Native American women then, as members of an indigenous and colonized group have been marginalized within their own communities as well as the industrialized society at large.

While many Native women have been unable to overcome the oppressive barriers discussed above, a few women have somehow discovered sources of empowerment that have enabled them to develop leadership qualities and success in their lives. It is these women with whom this study sought to identify as role models for their younger sisters and daughters and granddaughters. Through the

process of dialogue, this study aimed to identify what strategies and factors contributed to their success as Native American women leaders in their community. How were these women able to overcome the marginalization and oppressive experiences in their lives? What messages of hope do they offer to indigenous women?

There is little research identifying the specific sources of empowerment Native American women leaders have utilized to overcome oppression in their lives. This study focused on the experiences of Pomo women from the northern California area around Clear Lake. Although there are some anthropological and historical studies about the Native people from this area, few researchers have developed dialogues with Pomo women. One author stands out: Greg Sarris (1993,1994), a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, has written two books about Mabel McKay, a Pomo healer, Dreamer, and expert basket weaver; but the overall literature is scarce for this population of women leaders.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to explore from the perspective of Pomo women, the sources of empowerment that enabled them to overcome oppressive experiences in their lives. Through the process of participatory research, the participants were asked to identify strategies or factors that enabled them to overcome those oppressive barriers in an empowering instead of self-destructive manner. Participants were also asked to name existing problems

young Native American women face today, utilizing Paulo Freire's (1994a) approach of problem posing and action.

The women then discussed what guidance they would offer to young Native Women struggling with issues like drug and alcohol abuse, or domestic violence, and what kinds of action or changes were needed to help young women in their community. It is hoped that the dialogue provided the participants with an experience of empowerment and that the collective recommendations for action in their communities will be beneficial to young Pomo women facing oppressive barriers in their lives today. This research adds to the limited literature that currently exists about Native American Pomo women leaders. It presents the experiences and voices and guidance of strong Pomo women through the unique, dialogic, research methodology of participatory research.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What oppressive experiences have Pomo Native American women leaders experienced in school, job, social, family, tribal, and/or other settings?
2. What strategies have Pomo women leaders utilized to overcome oppressive experiences and obstacles?
3. What do Pomo women leaders see as the primary issues disempowering young indigenous women today?

4. What messages or guidance would Pomo women leaders offer to their Native sisters and daughters who are experiencing oppression and turning to self-destructive behaviors in their attempt to escape feelings of powerlessness?
5. Through the process of participatory research and dialogue, how would Native American women leaders utilize the findings of this research for social transformation and empowerment in their community?

Theoretical Framework

This research focused on two major constructs: oppression and empowerment. Specifically, what oppressive experiences did a select group of Pomo Indian women experience in their lives and what empowered them to overcome those oppressions? Two areas of oppression that seem obvious to address would be racism and sexism. Cornel West (1994), in his book *Race Matters,* stated that, "Race is the most explosive issue in American life precisely because it forces us to confront the tragic facts of poverty and paranoia, despair and distrust"(p. 155). As members of a colonized group of indigenous people of color, American Indians have been oppressed by racism since the invasion of western Europeans. They were seen as savages, and uncivilized, to be taken care of by the patriarchal, civilized, and Christian Western Europeans guided by their vision of manifest destiny (Takaki,1993). If the Indians would not cooperate with the European-Americans, they were annihilated. Over 90% of the indigenous people of the United States were killed by the invasion of the white man, either from disease, starvation created by losing their habitat, or murder (Wilson, 1998).

However, beginning around 1940, the Indian population has begun to increase and is now considered one of the fastest growing ethnic groups not due to immigration (Banks & Banks, 1997). With this growth in population, economic growth has not followed. The percentage of Indian families living below the poverty level is greater than any other ethnic group in the United States (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993). According to Banks and Banks, "Indians are one of the nation's poorest and least educated ethnic groups" (p. 160).

Given the poor economic and educational status of American Indians (Mindel, Habenstein, & Wright, 1998), the researcher reasoned that they might benefit from what Paulo Freire (1970) would call "liberatory education." When a dominant group oppresses an ethnic people, Freire believed the oppressed could achieve empowerment through the process of liberatory learning; where the participants are encouraged to challenge and change their oppressed worldview through collective dialogue. Empowerment, Freire believed was the result of liberatory education. He felt that a "culture of silence" existed in oppressed people in colonized countries, and that over time they began to believe the negative images projected on them by their oppressors. Thus, the oppression they experienced became internalized as well, and their sense of self-determination and empowerment eroded.

In addition to experiencing oppression because of their race or ethnicity, Indian women are also oppressed by virtue of being women in a sexist society. When a person experiences internalized oppression, he or she often becomes

silent and does not feel that they have choices that would improve their situation. Belenkey et al (1997) asserted that "the extreme sex-role stereotypes that the silent women accept reflect the powerlessness they have experienced. Men are active and get things done, while women are passive and incompetent. This view undoubtedly helps the women make sense of their own dependence and deference to authorities"(p. 29). By submitting to male authority figures, whether in a school, career, tribal or family relationship, many Indian women see themselves as powerless and dependent. Seligman (1975) suggested that this sense of powerlessness might be one of the contributing factors that have kept women in abusive relationships. Similar to the concept of learned helplessness, they are unable to visualize a more positive reality.

Native American women were not oppressed by men within or outside of their culture before the arrival of the Europeans. According to Green (1992), "the roles of women in Indian societies were deliberately undermined because they conflicted with the patriarchal, European way of looking at power and authority"(p.23). In fact, Green (1980) maintained that many Indian peoples had women as leaders and female-centered religions.

The researcher was cognizant that her role as facilitator of an indigenous group of women may have created cross-cultural misunderstanding (Lustig, 1999). Therefore, Cajete's (1994) theory of indigenous education was respected in this study. He suggested that, "Objectivist research about Indian education has contributed a dimension of insight, but it has substantial limitations in the

multidimensional, holistic, and relational reality of the education of Indian people"(p.20). It was important for the researcher to honor the "affective elements—the subjective experience and observations, the communal relationships, the artistic and mythical dimensions, the ritual and ceremony, the sacred ecology, the psychological and spiritual orientations" (p.20), of these Pomo women.

The role of storytelling as a pedagogical strategy, described by Sarris (1993) was an important part of creating dialogue with the women. The researcher also utilized constructivist listening, as described by Lustig and Koester (1999), which emphasizes a non-authoritarian, empowering and community building technique during discussions.

This study implemented the theoretical framework of Freire's (1970) liberatory education by creating a dialogue with Pomo Native American women in the Clear Lake area of California. This framework of collective discussion empowered the women in this study to identify strategies that might benefit and empower other women in their community still living in a "culture of silence"(p. 24).

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study identified sources of empowerment as described by Pomo Native American women leaders from the Clear Lake, California area, through the process of participatory research. The women were from Pomo tribes, recommended by prominent community leaders within and outside of their tribes,

and also by respected colleagues and associates from the Clear Lake community. Participation was voluntary. The participants received a letter of invitation to participate in the study (Appendix B) and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix C) agreeing to audio tape their dialogues. This study was limited to the information gathered from the six Pomo women participants; the results of this study may not be generalized to all Native American women as a group.

Significance of the Study

Native Americans carry with them as part of their cultural tradition the telling of stories, for teaching, for learning, for sharing, and for developing unity. Deloria, Jr. (1982) described the contrast between western and indigenous ways of learning: "Indians were practical; whites wanted to instruct in abstractions. Indians wanted to produce useful people; whites wanted to transmit a body of information regardless of its immediate usefulness" (p. 59). By utilizing participatory research, this study allowed the participants to create the narrative instead of the researcher operating upon the subjects. Unlike traditional ethnographic studies about Native American women, this study was in collaboration with Native American women, for Native American women. The researcher was merely the facilitator. This research adds significantly to the literature, as there have been few, if any participatory research studies completed with Northern California Native American Pomo Indian women leaders.

It is hoped that, through the sharing of their stories, the women experienced a sense of empowerment, knowing they participated in a study

focused on how to transform the oppressive lives of some of their sisters and daughters and granddaughters in need of empowerment. The recommendations for action within their tribes may create an opportunity for dialogue and ultimately positive social change.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The review of the literature is presented in four different sections: (a) historical background of the Pomo Indians, (b) demographic information about crime rates, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and health issues facing the Pomo Indians living in the Lake County area of northern California, (c) roles of Native American women in Pomo society; past and present, and current literature and narratives written about Native American women, and (d) current research about Native American women and empowerment or leadership.

Historical Background of the Pomo Indians

Reports vary, but according to James Wilson's (1998) *History of Native America,* the west coast was the most populated region north of Mexico at the time of Columbus' arrival. California had 150 different societies, six major languages, and a population of close to 700,000 people. Most of the indigenous people living in the area now known as northern California subsisted on hunting and gathering. A few groups in northern California, including the Pomo, learned how to prepare food from the acorns on oak trees. The Pomo and Coast Miwok tribes had lived peacefully for many centuries in this manner, existing in small groups of around 100 people near Clear Lake and the Russian River, which are now the present-day Mendocino, Sonoma, and Lake Counties. They generally maintained a permanent settlement in the winter and would hunt and gather,

setting up temporary encampments during the spring and summer. The Pomo were known as skilled traders, utilizing the large resources of obsidian, clamshell beads, and magnesite in the Clear Lake area for exchange of goods with other tribes. Even today, one can find knives and tools made from Clear Lake obsidian throughout the United States.

The name for the Pomo people, meaning "at red earth hole" originated from ethnographers (Geise, 1996), not from the people themselves, and was probably a reflection on the color of the highly volcanic dirt in the area. Anthropologists have identified remains of some of the oldest Native Americans from the Clear Lake area, dating back more than ten thousand years. Before the European invasion, there were over 70 Pomo tribes, and seven different languages. Estimates suggest that there were 13,000 to 20,000 Pomo in the early 1800's. In less than 100 years, 2/3 of these Indians died due to the influx of European diseases, forced labor, and murder via colonization (Geise, 1996; Malinowski et al, 1999). According to the 1990 census, 4900 people identified themselves as Pomo. Of the seven Pomo languages, only three are currently spoken. Of the Clear Lake Pomo, only one member is reported being able to speak their original language fluently (Lake County Department of Social Services, 2000).

Wilson (1998) stated that initial European contact with the Americas did not disrupt the northern California tribes until the early 1800's. When the Spanish padres and accompanying military established Mission San Rafael in 1817, the

indigenous Miwok and Pomo people were forced into slavery and acceptance of the Catholic religion. They were forbidden to speak their language or practice their religion or traditions. If they refused to cooperate they were beaten, mutilated, or killed. Their land was taken over by the Spaniards and Mexicans. They had to either live as squatters or work on the ranches now owned by the colonizers. Men were forced into hard labor in exchange for barely enough food and women were captured and used as domestic help or sexual slaves for the white man (Geise, 1996).

Sarris (1993) wrote that the Russians, although not interested in converting the Indians, treated the local Pomo and Miwok with similar hostility while establishing a colony on the northern California coast called Fort Ross. This was originally a Kashaya Pomo village called Metini. The Kashaya people were forced into slavery by the Russians to assist them in growing crops to send to their Alaskan colonies. The Pomo women and children were used as slaves and raped frequently by the Russians. They had settled there to take advantage of the sea otter trade, but when they had decimated the population of sea otters they deserted Fort Ross. At the time of the Russians' departure in 1842, over 80% of the Miwok and Pomo Indians had been killed by a smallpox epidemic.

The invasions of the Spaniards, Mexicans, and Russians were devastating, but the oppression was far from over for the Indians. Takaki (1993) described the next and final wave of colonizers as the American "squatters," who came from the eastern United States in search of their "manifest destiny." The discovery of gold

in California brought thousands of white men to California in 1849. They settled on the Indian's land, developing ranches and farms. This limited the natural resources available in the Pomo and Miwok territories. The Indians could no longer survive as hunters and gatherers. What few tribes were left began to disappear from starvation. Many atrocities, chronicled by Geise (1996), occurred in the Clear Lake area, including the infamous "Bloody Island" incident, where an entire Pomo village of innocent men, women, and children were massacred by the U.S. Army in an unjustified response to a murder of two abusive Americans, Kelsey and Stone.

Geise (1996) described how in 1852, 18 treaties were established between the U.S. Government and California Indian tribes reserving approximately 8.5 million acres for the indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, like most treaties between the government and the Indians, it was never approved in Congress nor implemented by the government. Instead, due to the powerful interests of the white gold miners, ranchers, and farmers, four small reservations were established, mostly to separate the Indians from the white man. Malinowski, et al (1999) described the Hoopa Valley, Round Valley, Tule River, and Smith River reservations as more like internment camps than villages that had subsistence potential. The Pomo tried to return to their traditional villages after being rounded up on "death marches" to these reservations. But upon their return, they discovered that their land had been taken over by white settlers. Many Indians

were hunted for sport or forced to hide out or work for the ranchers who inhabited their land.

In 1870, one event occurred that gave the Pomo, and Miwok inspiration. It was the emergence of the Bole Maru (Dream Dance) religion. Wilson (1998) wrote about how the Indians began to develop a sense of solidarity around this religion and became empowered to buy their own land. They sold their famous baskets and put their money together that they had earned from working on the ranches and bought several small plots of land now known as "rancherias." Unfortunately, by the 20th century, Geise (1996) reported they lost all the land they had purchased except for the Yokaya Rancheria, located west of Clear Lake in Ukiah due to high mortgage payments, taxes, and unreasonably priced land sold to them by unethical bankers.

In 1906, Congress revisited the 18 treaties of 1852 and authorized the establishment of 54 rancherias for the California Indians, a fraction of the original land promise, on land that was often unwanted, infertile, and arid (Malinowski et al, 1999). Geise (1996) maintained that the Pomos received small pieces of land in Lake, Sonoma, and Mendocino Counties. Even though the Indians were now living on rancherias given to them by the government, their children were not allowed to attend local schools and were sent to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools great distances from their homes. This further alienated the Pomo children from their family traditions, culture, and language. Lake County Pomo parents actually sued the local school districts for the right to have their children attend

public schools in their area. A separate school was established for some of the Pomo children, but most were still sent to boarding schools with the main goal being assimilation.

Geise (1996) continued her chronicle of Pomo Indian history: in1958, the U.S. government declared the Rancheria Act in California that basically gave all Indians living on rancherias, which were small reservations, the option of termination. The act was sold to the Indians, as a way to own their land and the BIA promised to provide services like water, electricity, and paved roads to the rancherias. Many Pomo rancherias voted to terminate their federal status, but never received the services from the BIA and also lost what little land they had to tax defaults. Over 5,000 acres of tribal lands were lost to forced sales. Now the Indians had lost not only their land but their tribal status as well. A lawsuit was filed by several Pomo bands to reverse their termination status in 1983. Although 17 tribes were successful in restoring their tribal status, many had lost their tribal land. The waters of Clear Lake that had provided subsistence fishing for the Pomo for thousands of years were polluted by waste from abandoned mines, recreation vehicles, chemicals, and sewage.

The Lake County Child Care Planning Council (1998-1999) revealed that the 1990 census identified 4,900 people as Pomo. Their tribal lands vary from none at all to 177 acres, housing from 15 to 400 people. In Lake County there are six federally recognized rancherias: Robinson, Upper Lake, Big Valley, Elem/Sulpher Bank, Scotts Valley, and Middletown. Only one-third of tribal

members live on tribal land. The Pomo people continue the fight today to recover their land and restore federal recognition of all Pomo rancherias.

Demographic Information on Native Americans

This study selected the population of Native American women, specifically Pomo women, from the Lake County area of Northern California. The Lake County Child Care Planning Council (1998-1999) described Lake County as rural and undeveloped with few industries and only 43 residents per square mile compared to 198 residents per square mile, for the average population of California. There is high unemployment, chronic poverty, and high rates of welfare dependency. "Native Americans are subject to higher levels of negative social and economic conditions than is the general population of Lake County"(p. 20). Two and three tenths percent, or a total of approximately 1,144 people in Lake County identified themselves as Native American in the 1990 census. This is over twice the national average, at .9% (1998 census). The Native American population is growing, with reports of 5% of all births to Lake County Indian mothers (Lake County Child Care Planning Council, 1998-1999).

The 1995 U.S. Census showed approximately 22% of California's children (aged 5-17) living in poverty, most from single mother homes. The Lake County Child Care Planning Council (1998-1999) showed county data for this group is 28.7%. They compared the county data with the Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates, where 36% of all Native Americans live below the poverty rate. According to the Lake County Child Planning Council (1998-1999), 34% of all

households in Lake County had an annual income of less than $15,000, placing only three other counties of California's 58 counties with a higher percentage of children on federal aid.

The Lake County Child Care Planning Council (1998-1999) suggested that the percentage of Native Americans in Lake County living below the poverty level is likely to be even greater than the national average. Their data from the BIA (1990) indicated unemployment rates as high as ninety percent in northwestern California.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (U. S. Department of Justice, 1999) offered evidence that the profound incidence of socio-economic stress experienced by American Indians has lead to high rates of reported substance abuse and family violence. Mindel, et al (1998), reported that many native children drop out of school before the 9th grade, thus continuing the cycle of unemployment, poverty, frustration, and hopelessness. In the U. S. Department of Justice publication, *American Indians and Crime* (1999), the following statistics were reported:

1. American Indians experience per capita rates of violence twice those of the U.S. population.
2. Rates of violent victimization for both males and females are higher among American Indians than for all races.
3. The rate of violent crime experienced by American Indian women is almost 50% higher than that reported by black males.

4. Seventy percent of the violent victimizations experienced by American Indians are committed by persons not of the same race; a substantially higher rate of interracial violence than that experienced by white or black victims.
5. American Indian victims of violence were the most likely of all races of victims to indicate that the offender committed the offense while drinking.
6. The 1997 arrest rate among American Indians for alcohol-related offenses was more than double that found among all races.
7. Rates of violence in every age group are higher among American Indians than that of all races.
8. One in every four American Indians aged 18 to 24 is a victim of violent crime.

These findings reveal that the American Indian is quite clearly, still a victim of external and internal oppression, facing abuse from other ethnicities and the resultant feelings of disempowerment from within their own culture. In addition to poverty, substance abuse, and violence, Native Americans also face unique health problems. The National Research Council (1996) reported the following areas of concern:

1. The leading cause of death among American Indians aged 15-24 is from accidents, suicide, and homicide, often alcohol-related.
2. The five leading causes of death for American Indians aged 65 and older is heart disease, cancer, cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, pneumonia, and influenza.

3. Diabetes mellitus, which was rare among pre-contact (before the white man) American Indians, is now prevalent 2.8 times that of all U.S. races. Causes include obesity, dietary composition, and physical inactivity, all preventable, but exacerbated by alcohol abuse.
4. Forty percent of adult Indians in California smoke cigarettes, double the rate of U.S. adult smokers.
5. Forty-two percent of deaths among California Indian women and 37% of deaths among Indian men were attributable to smoking.
6. The death rate from tobacco abuse is twice as high for Indians than for the average American. Two out of every five Indians die from tobacco abuse.
7. American Indians are a relatively young population, with higher levels of poverty, unemployment, single-parent families, fertility, and mortality than the general U.S. population.

In summary, Native Americans face serious obstacles to survival that place them in a similar context to Third World or developing countries. Freire's (1970) pedagogy of the oppressed theory, developed in Brazil could easily translate to the Native American people today. According to Allen (1986), Native women face the same oppressions as men, including

> fighting alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, or alternatively, affluence which erodes traditional values, rape, incest, battering, forced sterilization through the Indian Health Service, health problems, high infant mortality rates, poor educational employment and economic opportunities, suicide, homicide, and violent and racist attitudes and behaviors against Indian people.(p. 408)

But for Indian women, every woman's issue "is framed in the context of issues pertinent to Native peoples" (Green, 1983, p. 14), "such as tribal sovereignty and self-determination"(Maguire, 1987, p. 116). The participatory research methodology used in this study, inspired by Freire and developed by Maguire, addressed the Native American women's challenge to empower their younger women.

Native American Women's Roles: Past and Present

Allen (1986) described interviews with Indian women by anthropologists who reported a clear delineation of gender roles before colonization by the white man. Women nurtured the children, collected acorns and other vegetation, wove baskets, and did most of the domestic work. Men hunted; fished; made tools, weapons, and traps; and built houses. Family life was very important. It was rare that a woman would live alone or be a single parent.

Klein, et al (1995) described how this gender specialization of roles changed dramatically after contact with the white man. As men could no longer provide for their families by traditional methods such as hunting and fishing, they lost a source of their self-esteem and power. Women, in turn, often became single parents when disease or settlers killed their mates. They had to find jobs as domestic help for white people or work in the fields alongside the men. The stratified gender roles began to shift. Men, in a sense, lost some of their traditionally defined power and women developed a different source of power through economics.

According to Green (1992), the Indian woman has always been strong within her culture, past and present, but the effect of colonization and resulting disintegration of traditional family roles that were once defined by the tribe has left both Indian men and women in a state of role confusion. Today, many women report their responsibilities include taking care of the family, raising the children, and providing economic stability. What then happens to the men if they are not hunting and gathering? What is their responsibility? The U.S. Department of Justice (1999) shows evidence that all too often, the men turn to alcohol or drugs as a reaction to this sense of disempowerment in their lives. The women and children become victims of abuse or become co-addicts just to survive.

There is a growing interest in Native American women's narratives in the literature today. Some (Farley, 1993) believe it is to preserve the past and traditions, hearing the stories of the grandmothers and grandfathers. The retelling of life stories and myths in the Indian culture provides a sense of identity and connection to a powerful heritage for the younger generation of Indians. The women's stories (Crow Dog, 1990; Farley, 1993; Katz, 1977, 1995; Wall, 1993; and Wallis, 1994) often speak of Indian women's incredible resourcefulness and tenacity in the face of overwhelming adversity. They show how they have drawn on their traditional beliefs and survived in contemporary society.

Katz (1995) interviewed Native American women and saw them as "carriers of culture passed down orally for countless generations" (p. 9). Allen (1986) believed that storytelling helped the modern Indian woman "mend the

tears in the web of being from which she takes her existence" (p.46). The following collection of literature about or by Native American women helps to illuminate the misperceptions and lack of information about Native American women in American history books. This literature includes myths, stories and autobiographies by Native women, which provides important background information describing their unique worldview and experiences.

One legend of survival by Velma Wallis (1994), titled *Two Old Women,* described the courage and determination of two elderly Athabascan Indian women in Alaska. Carolyn Niethammer (1977) wrote about *Daughters of the Earth: The Lives and Legends of American Indian Women*, sharing myths and traditions of Native women of all ages from the Arctic to the Southwest. *I am the Fire of Time: The voices of Native American Women,* by Jane Katz (1977) introduced the reader to an anthology of Indian oral literature, including poetry, prose, prayers, songs and rituals. Katz (1995) most recently published *Messengers of the Wind: Native American Women Tell Their Life Stories,* where she interviewed Native women across the United States attempting to learn about the challenges and choices facing indigenous women today. An autobiography by Mary Crow Dog (1990), entitled *Lakota Woman*, provides a contemporary story of her life and involvement in the American Indian Movement.

Some of the narrative literature focuses on the oral tradition of storytelling, such as *Spider Woman's Web: Traditional Native American Tales About Women's Power*, by Susan Hazen-Hammond (1999). This anthology

offered stories and songs that "portray the strength and vitality of women," (p.24) and included exercises and meditations for reflection and transformation. One male author who stands out in the literature about Native American women is Greg Sarris, son of a Coast Miwok/Pomo father and Jewish mother. In his book *Weaving the Dream* (1994), he shares the stories and memories of Mable McCay, the last of the sucking doctors and Dreamers of the Cache Creek Pomo Tribe from Clear Lake. He continued his sharing of the Pomo culture and discussed the value of storytelling in *Keeping Slug Woman Alive: A Holistic Approach to American Indian Texts* (1993). Sarris has been culturally sensitive and insightful in his approach to the Pomo Indians and Pomo Indian women.

In the book, *Wisdom's Daughters: Conversations with Women Elders of Native America,* by Steve Wall (1993), Vickie Downey, a Tewa Tesuque Pueblo woman declared:

> It's the time of the feminine...When I look around at different women, I see sadness and a heaviness in themselves. What they're experiencing is what the earth is experiencing, her sadness and her heaviness because of the way her children are living today... The words of women have to be recognized...It's that time. (p. 12)

Current Research about Native American Women and Empowerment

After an ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) search reviewing research and journal articles with the key words, Native American women and empowerment, role models, or leadership, and a review of dissertation abstracts about the same topics, the researcher found no participatory research studies about Pomo Indian women and empowerment.

A few studies utilized an ethnographic, qualitative approach that parallels several of the tenets of participatory research; data were collected through the interviews, recorded, and analyzed by identifying themes. One such study, *Leadership Roles of Native American Women in Education in the 1990's*, by Linda Keway (1997), explored factors that led to their success and barriers the women experienced in their pursuit of higher education. Keway interviewed 12 Native American women leaders in the field of education. Her results showed the following factors contributed to success: leadership characteristics, support systems, education, and beliefs. A common barrier identified was the distortion of Native American women's roles, as a result of European beliefs about the stereotypical role of women and Native Americans, which led to racial and sexual discrimination. Many of these misperceptions of women's roles have been introduced or influenced by non-Indian ethnographic and historical writers.

Another dissertation, by Valorie J. Johnson (1997), titled, *Weavers of Change: Portraits of Native American Women Educational Leaders*, also used a qualitative method to gain greater understanding about the leadership of six Native American women. In this study, Johnson asked the following research questions: (a) How do selected Native American women educators talk about their leadership experiences? (b) How do they assess their leadership efforts to effect change in Native American education? (c) What lessons about leadership can be learned from understanding their experiences? and (d) What are the implications for preparing Native American women for educational leadership in

the future? Although Johnson's focus was on women leaders in education, her research questions are quite similar to those of the present study. After analyzing the transcripts of individual interviews, five themes emerged: (a) a commitment to serving the community, (b) the emergence and claiming of one's Native voice, (c) education as a key to cultural survival, (d) travelers across boundaries, and (e) the spirit and soul of Native leadership. Johnson also discovered major findings about how these Native women think about leadership, including: (a) leadership is focused on a group-centered process that creatively responds to constantly changing forces; (b) leadership is relational, organic, and synergistic; (c) power is used as a force that empowers others to create or improvise change rather than control others to respond or react to change; (d) life and leadership to women are one and the same.

Carlson (1997) conducted a study of Native American women elementary school teachers. She was interested in learning about the key elements for success among these women. Her results, from interviewing five Native American women from a large city in America's southwest, representing four different tribes revealed the following themes as important for success in young Native American women: (a) a supportive family, (b) mentoring and positive role models for young Native American girls in elementary and secondary school is vital to their continuing onto higher education, and (c) a strong sense of cultural identity.

Ballew (1996) conducted a study of Native American women obtaining their doctoral degrees in psychology. She interviewed 10 women and was

interested in exploring their educational experience in a non-native institution. Her results revealed three common themes experienced by these women: (a) being identified as different by others; (b) encountering stereotypes and assumptions about being Indian; (c) struggling to reconcile two worlds, the Indian and non-Indian world.

A longitudinal study, *Prevention through Empowerment in a Native American Community,* by Petoskey (1998) examined the effectiveness of a substance abuse program among American Indian students from the fourth to twelfth grades. The program utilized Paulo Freire's (1970) model of community empowerment, emphasizing the long-term nurturing of gradual growth in personal and communal strength, rather than more confrontational and reactionary strategies. The findings of the study showed that the program enhanced increased social bonding, decreased alcohol use and reportedly decreased the potential use of marijuana in the future.

In *American Indian Success in the Urban Setting,* Mucha (1984) interviewed 34 Indians from 17 different tribes, male and female, examining patterns of success and obstacles experienced. The findings showed all subjects experienced difficulty integrating the non-Indian and Indian elements of their worlds, and discomfort adapting to urban life. Success was related to having ideals and maintaining ties to their community.

In *Women of the Native Struggle: Portraits and Testimony of Native American Women,* Farley (1993) interviewed 45 Native American women role

models who shared their experiences as mothers, grandmothers, tribal elders, teachers and leaders. The importance of instilling spiritual beliefs and cultural pride in their children emerged as a common theme. The women expressed concerns about threats to the environment and stereotyping.

Voices of Indianness: The Lived World of Native American Women, a study by Brayboy and Morgan (1998) described a dialogue with four Native American professional women revealing common themes of spirituality, Indianness, bonding, racial discrimination, and reciprocity/inclusiveness. The findings of this study suggested possible programs that could assist women from oppressed populations.

Emerging from every study of Native American women was the negative impact of the white patriarchal society on the power and position of Native women. Torson (1990) examined this topic in her study, *Communication and the Power of Native American Women*. She discussed the importance of Native language and oral tradition and mythology in nurturing the role of American Indian women and how damaging the effects of stereotyping, such as the "Indian princess" or "Pocahontas" have been to Native women. She mentioned that there is a growing activism among Native American women to reestablish women's leadership and address the issues within their communities.

A research study by Hirschfelder, Molin, Oneita, and Wakim (1997), titled *Women of Hope: Native American/Hawaiian Study Guide*, developed a documentary video, poster series, and study guide about Native women in

leadership positions from various indigenous groups. The biographical profiles of the 12 women included topics about tribal sovereignty, the political role of women, environmental issues, conservation, music and dance, overcoming negative expectations in school and society, American Indian stereotypes, and how to create a "circle of strength" in the classroom.

Summary

The literature reviewed provided valuable information for conducting the present study about Native American women, the barriers they have experienced in their lives and how they overcame those barriers. The literature also assisted the researcher in more clearly identifying the specific nature of oppressions that Native American women face today, and in understanding the historical background of the Pomo Indians. The demographic information about crime rates, drug and alcohol abuse, poverty and health concerns, illustrates the devastating effects of colonization and racism upon the Native Americans. The literature describing the role of Native American women in Pomo society in the past, contrasting with their current role, demonstrates the negative impact of the patriarchal western society on the gender roles of Native women today. Women did not experience sexism or domestic abuse in relationships with men, for the most part, as many do now. But it is encouraging to read the biographical literature that offers an emerging consciousness among Native women looking to reconnect with their traditions and spiritual practices and reclaim their power.

The current studies about Native American women and empowerment, revealed the following common themes contributing to women's success: the importance of support systems and a supportive family; serving one's community; reclaiming one's Native voice, traditions, and spirituality; positive role models; and learning how to integrate the Indian and non-Indian facets of their worlds. Common barriers or obstacles the Native women reported in the literature were: discomfort adapting to urban life, racial discrimination, sexual discrimination, encountering stereotypes and assumptions about being Indian, struggling to reconcile the two worlds of Indian and non-Indian, distortions of Native American women's roles as a result of European Patriarchal beliefs, negative expectations in school and society, disconnection from their cultural traditions and spiritual practices, and a lack of positive role models.

This study is important and contributes to the existing literature because it is a participatory research study with Pomo women leaders. The researcher was unable to find any studies about Pomo women and sources of empowerment utilizing the methodology of participatory research, which focused on empowering the voices of its participants for the purpose of social transformation.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Research Design

This study sought to identify common sources of empowerment experienced by six Native American women leaders from Pomo Indian tribes in the Clear Lake area of northern California. The researcher used the participatory research methodology, a method of social investigation of problems, involving participation of oppressed and ordinary people in problem posing and solving for the purpose of social transformation and empowerment (Ada & Beutel, 1993). This methodology was inspired by Freire (1972) and further developed by Maguire(1987).

The goals of this participatory research were to empower the participants to reflect upon their personal history, to examine their collective experiences as Native American women, and to develop potential recommendations for women less empowered than them. The core elements of participatory research include the process of dialogue, questioning, reflection, naming problems through collective discussion and interaction, more reflection, becoming "critically conscious," and ultimately developing a plan of action for social reform (Freire, 1986; Maguire, 1987). The role of the researcher is to be a facilitator of dialogue and a student of the participants' views.

In this study, the researcher was interested in learning what strategies and factors enabled these Indian women to overcome oppressive barriers and lead

empowered lives, for the purpose of providing assistance to disempowered Native women. Participatory research is a collaborative process between researcher and participants. This collaboration can often alter the research questions, modify the original design and affect the ultimate outcome of a study.

Hall (1981) described participatory research as "a process that combines three activities: research, education, and action" (p.4). According to Hall, the term was developed from Marja-Liisa Swantz's work with students and women village workers in Tanzania when Paulo Freire visited her in 1971. Freire's interest was in creating a dialogic process of education that included "praxis," meaning reflection upon learning and action as a continual process. Freire's (1994b) pedagogical approach of liberation was translated into participatory research. He believed that education should involve students as active participants, not as passive receptacles "banking" information without reflection or freedom of thought. Participatory research is an ideal paradigm for studies with indigenous peoples as it provides them a voice and an opportunity to co-create the research and results. There is cooperative learning by both the researcher and participants. This process allows the participant to develop "critically transitive consciousness"(Freire, 1994, p. 46; Shor, 1996), with which they can reflect upon their own experiences with a sense of empowerment.

Participatory research, unlike many other research methods that operate upon the subject and further alienate and objectify them, is most interested in participant's dialogue and feedback. Having been excessively anthropologized

and misinterpreted, many Native Americans are reticent to participate in any research studies. Most research has done them more damage than good, with erroneous stereotypes like the "Pocahontas perplex " described by Green (1992), which provides only two polar characteristics of Native American women: Indian princess or Indian squaw. In reality, Indian women are as varied as any other ethnic group and Maguire (1987) maintained that participatory research will encourage the women to speak their truth and analyze and reflect upon their histories and their beliefs, name their problems, and collectively develop processes for social change.

Research Setting

This study took place in Lake County, California, approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. It is a rural area, surrounded by mountains, pear orchards, vineyards, and Clear Lake, the largest fresh water lake in California. Access to Lake County is difficult, with no rail service, buses, or commercial airports, and only very circuitous mountain roads. Because of its isolation, there is very little industry or employment. There is a high level of poverty and many families are dependent on federal aid for survival. Negative social and economic conditions are worse for the Indian population, which is 2.3% of the entire population of Lake County. There are six tribes, organized into six rancherias: Middletown Lake Miwok Rancheria, Elem Indian Colony, Big Valley Indian Rancheria, Scotts Valley Indian Rancheria, Robinson Rancheria, and Upper Lake Indian Rancheria (Lake County Child Care Planning Council, 1998-99). The six

Native American women with leadership qualities, for this study are members of one of the above northern California Tribes of Pomo Indians. Individual gathering sites were determined based upon the location and availability of the participants.

Research Participants

The six Native American women leader participants were members of the Pomo Indian Tribes located in the Clear Lake area of California. Local prominent tribal and community leaders nominated women they believed were excellent role models and leaders in their community. A list of these women was created and the participants were selected from the list based on their availability. The researcher contacted potential candidates individually by telephone, or in person to determine if there was a mutual interest in participating in the study. When at least six participants were identified, letters of invitation (Appendix B) and consent forms (Appendix C) were mailed to the participants for their agreement. Alternates were identified and informed they might be called in the event the researcher lost a participant in the course of the study.

Questions That Guided the Initial Dialogue

This study sought answers to the following research questions. The subset questions were developed to guide the initial dialogue with the participants. Given the collaborative nature of participatory research, these questions were subject to some alteration if agreed upon by the participants that it would enhance the study.

Research Question 1: What oppressive experiences have Pomo Native American woman leaders experienced in school, job, social, family, tribal, and/or other settings?

a. Describe how you were treated unfairly in any of the above settings because of your race or sex or other oppressive factors?

b. How did the above experience feel and how did you respond to it?

Research Question 2: What strategies have Pomo women leaders utilized to overcome oppressive experiences and obstacles?

a. Given the negative experiences you have described above, what factors enabled you to overcome those oppressive experiences and obstacles in a positive, life empowering way?

b. What stopped you from responding to those negative experiences with self-destructive behavior and choice?

Research Question 3: What do Pomo women leaders see as the primary issues disempowering young indigenous women today?

a. We have discussed oppressive experiences in your life. Which barriers still exist for young Native American women today?

b. What do you believe are the primary obstacles facing young Native women in your community today?

Research Question 4: What messages or guidance would Pomo women leaders offer to their Native sisters and daughters who are experiencing oppression and

turning to self-destructive behaviors in their attempt to escape feelings of powerlessness?

a. Many young Native women in your community are using drugs or alcohol to numb their feelings of powerlessness. What guidance or message do you have that might enable them to recapture their power?

b. Are there any specific strategies or activities that you think would help empower these women in your community?

Research Question 5: Through the process of participatory research and dialogue, how would Native American woman leaders utilize the findings of this research for social transformation and empowerment in their community?

a. We have talked about the process of problem posing, naming, reflection and action, which is all part of participatory research, a collaborative project. Given the findings of our dialogue, how do you see this information being useful in your community?

b. What kind of action would you like to take based on this study?

Data Collection Procedures

The following steps were taken for collection of data:

1. All participants signed a consent form approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at the University of San Francisco indicating their agreement to participate in the study voluntarily.

2. Permission was obtained from all participants to tape- record all dialogues.

The model of dialogic retrospection described by Kieffer (1981) was utilized for data collection:

a. Design of initial questions for the research participants

b. 1st dialogue session (taped)

c. Transcription of text (verbatim)

d. Critical analysis of text according to themes by participants and researcher

e. 2nd dialogue session: reflection on 1st dialogue comments (taped)

f. Transcription of revised text

g. Critical analysis of revised text according to themes

h. Sharing of results with participants and discussion of plans for social action

There were originally to be two, one-hour individual dialogues and two, two-hour group dialogues. Due to the extremely busy schedule of the participants, the original dialogue plans were altered to two, two- hour dialogues and no group meetings. Special attention was taken to accommodate the needs of the participants. Individual dialogues occurred in their home or office, or by telephone over a 2-month period, as agreed upon by the participants. The tapes and transcripts are kept confidential by the researcher and stored in a safe place. During all aspects of the study, the researcher acted as a facilitator and student, and focused on creating a supportive, empowering environment for the participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

All dialogues were tape-recorded with permission from the participants and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were given to the participants for review and reflection, providing them the opportunity to make any revisions. The participants and researcher both reviewed the first dialogue for common themes. The second dialogue began with a reflection on the first dialogue and was tape-recorded. The dialogue was transcribed verbatim and given to the participants for reflection and revision. Both the researcher and participants, as co-researchers, reflected upon the dialogues for common themes generated. The participants and the researcher completed a critical analysis of the dialogues. All results were shared with the participants. As themes emerged, the researcher categorized and described these themes or common responses. Categories included the following topics: common experiences of oppression, strategies or factors that enabled the women to overcome oppressive experiences, and guidance for the Native American woman struggling with oppressive barriers today. Generative themes were (a) strong families, (b) positive role models, (c) identity as an Indian, (d) spirituality, (e) education, (f) commitment to the Indian community, and (g) guidance for young Native American women.

Protection of Human Subjects

An application was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco. Upon approval of the application by the IRBPHS (Appendix A), each participant

received a letter of invitation (Appendix A) describing the research and signed the consent form indicating their agreement to participate in the study voluntarily (Appendix C).

Background of the Researcher

Heidi Morgan is a 46 year-old professor and counselor at Clear Lake Community College. Her position includes teaching courses in Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and College Success. She also serves students as an academic, career, and personal counselor. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and Business Administration from Antioch University, Ohio, and two Master's Degrees from Sonoma State University: School Counseling, and Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling.

As an educator in the Clear Lake area for the past four years, she has discovered that it is an economically depressed community with over half of the inhabitants subsisting below the national poverty level and close to 90% of the students at Clear Lake Community College on Federal Aid. Although Lake County has more Indians per capita than the national average (2.3%, compared to 1.2% national census numbers), very few enroll in Clear Lake Community College. Of the few Native women who have enrolled, they often drop out halfway through the semester. Upon follow-up calls, the students shared with the researcher that they were unable to complete their education due to experiences of domestic violence, pregnancy, drug or alcohol addiction, or poor childcare (Lake County Department of Social Services, 2,000).

This researcher is concerned about the current status of Native Americans nationally, but especially those who live so close to home. She feels that her college and the educational system in Lake County is not reaching this population and providing them the opportunities and broader choices in life that they deserve. Admittedly, the researcher has a bias, that education is a path towards empowerment and self-determination (Shor, 1996). It is not the only path, of course, but one that Paulo Freire, who inspires this participatory research would support.

CHAPTER IV

Findings of the Study

Introduction

This chapter presents the six Pomo women leader participants and discusses their responses to the research questions and the themes that were generated from the dialogues with them. The dialogues were conducted in a relaxed and friendly manner in the participant's homes, offices, or by telephone. Each participant was asked to respond to the initial dialogue questions and then reflect upon their responses in the second dialogue. The transcripts were analyzed and tapes listened to several times by the researcher to ensure the accuracy of the following generative themes. The first dialogues elicited the following major themes: (a) the importance of a strong family, (b) positive role models, (c) spirituality, (d) Indian identity, and (e) education. The second dialogues addressed the themes: (f) commitment to the Indian community and (g) guidance to young Native American women.

Profiles of the Research Participants

The six participants represent strong Pomo women of vision and substance. They have all overcome obstacles of oppression resulting from colonization by European-Americans. Although they have lost much of their language and ancestor's land, they maintain a strong connection with their Pomo Indian culture, traditions, and spirituality. These women are survivors. These

women are leaders. These women have made positive changes in their tribal communities.

Rozan

Rozan is 23 years old and a member of the Elem Pomo Tribe. Her grandmother on her father's side was half Hawaiian and half Pomo Indian, the offspring of a Pomo woman who fell in love with a steel guitar player from Hawaii, who came to California to perform with a band. Her father is from the Elem and Big Valley Tribes and her mother from the Yokayo (Americanized version: Ukiah) tribe in Mendocino. She was born in a hospital in Ukiah and has spent all of her life living on the Elem Rancheria on the shores of Clear Lake with her family. She is married to a Yuki and Walaki Indian man from the Round Valley Tribe. She has two boys, one age three years, and one five months. I first met Rozan when she was a student attending one of my classes at Yuba College two years ago. She was interested in developing her resume for a job she was applying for as Domestic Violence Family Liaison for the Inter-Tribal Council. I was immediately impressed that such a young woman was willing to take on such challenging work. Rozan is a natural leader with strong dreams and high ideals for herself and her people. She has almost completed her Associates Degree at Yuba College, Clear Lake, and her plans are to achieve a Bachelor's Degree and then go on to complete a degree in Law. She is anxious to make changes at the state and federal levels. She has dreams of helping her people and getting some of their land back (Morgan, 2001).

Rozan represents my entry into the Pomo community. She and her father came to a class about ethnicity and racism I was teaching and shared the history of the Pomo Indians. From their presentation I began to develop an interest in the oppression experienced by the Pomo Indians. Rozan's father is an elder and leader of the Elem Tribe and has dedicated his life to helping his tribe and educating the public about the Pomo Indians. He became involved in the American Indian Movement and take-over of Alcatraz several years ago. His passion for Indian rights has filled Rozan with an enthusiastic and powerful spirit of confidence and empowerment (Morgan, 2001).

Mary

Mary is a 31 year-old Pomo woman with three children and one stepson. She was born in Ukiah from a Pomo woman who was an alcoholic. She was a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) baby with spinabifida and many other physical and mental disabilities. She was given up for adoption because her birth mother did not think she could care for any more children. She was adopted at birth by a white, Christian family and grew up in Eureka, California. She had two older stepbrothers who were also white. She was raised Christian and had little contact with any Indians until attending her first Pow Wow in her teens. She attended school intermittently from the sixth grade on because of her illness and hospitalizations. She was never able to graduate from high school and is currently working on completing her GED (High School Proficiency) at Clear Lake Community College. She has two boys, ages nine and seven, and one girl, age six.

She currently only has custody of her nine year old boy because her other two children were abducted by her ex-husband and she has been unable to locate them. Mary lives with her fiancé in Clearlake, who has one stepson living with them and she takes care of the children. Both Mary and her boyfriend are clean and sober and in recovery for drug and alcohol abuse. Although Mary is on state disability, she is dedicated to creating a happy and healthy life for her son and stepson.

Mary is an extremely loving and wise woman. One would think she is much older than her 31 years. She has overcome major obstacles in her life and yet still persists with an optimistic and caring attitude toward others. She is active in her tribe and school as an advocate for children with disabilities. Her son is also a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome child and struggles with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). She believes that at least 60% of Indian children are born with FAS, ADD or a disability of some kind due to drug and alcohol abuse from their mothers. Mary plans on continuing her education and achieving an Associates Degree and then a Bachelor's Degree. She is considering pursuing a career in law to implement changes for children with disabilities and the Indian people. Although a white family raised Mary, she embodies many of the wonderful characteristics of the Pomo Indian: patience, wisdom, and a strong connection to her spirituality (Morgan, 2001).

Suzann

Suzann is a 44 year-old Pomo mother of five children, ages 7, 14, 20, 22, and 24. She is a member of the Scott's Valley tribe. She is currently a single mother, although she has had 3 husbands. Her mother was from Covelo and her father from Laytonville, ½ Pomo, and ½ Walaki. She was born in Lakeport but moved to Covelo to be raised by her uncle and his wife when she was nine years old because her mother was killed in a car accident. Her uncle was Pomo and his wife, whom she considers her mother, was white and probably German Lutheran. She grew up on a big ranch with her 4 "siblings" who were also white. Covelo is one of the biggest reservations in California and over 50% of the children at her school were Indian.

She graduated from high school with good grades and was very involved in sports. She got married when she was 18 to a Yurok Indian man and proceeded to have three children. He became quite physically abusive when he was drinking alcohol and finally his abuse led to her leaving him. He ended up in prison with nine DUI's. After a second marriage, which was verbally abusive, and a third with an unfaithful husband, she has been single for the last three years and seems to be enjoying every minute of it. Suzann has always been interested and involved in helping others. When she was 16 she took care of her 80 year-old grandmother in her last years, and then took jobs working in convalescent hospitals as an aide for several years. Currently, she is the Community Health Worker for her tribe. She helps members of the tribe, especially the elders, with

medical support and transportation. She works with her tribe, which is also her family, all cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, helping them to get the medical care they need. She is a very strong woman and a survivor and helper. She is an asset to her community and extended family (Morgan, 2001).

Irenia

Irenia is a 44 year-old Pomo and member of the Robinson Rancheria Tribe. Her mother was 100% Pomo and her father was 100% Filipino. Her mother spoke the Pomo language as a child but lost it when she was forced into boarding school in Riverside, California, and punished for speaking her language. Her father was a migrant worker and Irenia was born in Stockton, near the delta. She enjoyed her childhood, playing near the river with her 15 older siblings. She was fifteenth out of 16 children. She began working in the fields at age eight during the summer. Her father spoke Filipino, Spanish, English, and other languages, which allowed him to communicate well with the diverse work force and become a foreman. Irenia grew up and went to school with Indians, Mexicans, Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, and Italians. She attended a one-room schoolhouse in grammar school with the children of the migrant workers, and the landowners, who were Italian.

She developed a strong work ethic from her parents and graduated from high school and went on to get a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Sciences from Humboldt State University. She has worked as a microscopic photographer for Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, a fishery biologist technician for the

national forests, a fire fighter, and even a contractor in Seattle. She moved to the Clear Lake area five years ago when her brother got sick and needed someone to care for him. After he died, her mother got sick and she cared for her until she died. Clearly, Irenia is a loving caretaker and talented woman who is independent and in charge of her own paths in life. She became interested in what she could do to help the tribe and was hired as an environmental technician and then began to write grants for water resources and environmental planning. She is currently the supervisor for the Robinson Environmental Center. She has written grants for the Native American Protection Act, which gives Natives a right to retrieve their artifacts from museums and other storage facilities. She has been successful in bringing in over three million dollars in grant funding to her community in the last three years. She is considering running for Tribal Council Chairman. She wants to build more community programs and infrastructure. She sees a need for more social, educational, cultural and environmental programs. Irenia has a strong social conscience and is currently taking care of a four year-old FAS Indian foster child. She has a mission to improve her community and the lives of her people (Morgan, 2001).

Connie

Connie is a 50 year-old Pomo widow and mother of three children, ages 17, 28, and 30. She was born in Lakeport, California and her mother was Pomo and her father was Mexican and Indian. She grew up in Kelseyville and spent time as a child working with her parents on ranches and orchards. Her parents

were very hard workers and saved enough money to purchase their own property. They were also very involved in community service, her father as a volunteer fireman and her mother helping with all kinds of community projects. Although her mother was Pomo, she was raised in a Catholic school and shared her Christian upbringing along with her Indian beliefs with her children.

Connie was involved in baseball, basketball, and volleyball in high school and graduated with honors. She went on to complete an Associates Degree in Community Development at DQ University in Davis. She has carried on the tradition of her parents by continually participating in volunteer work in her community. She has volunteered in schools, hospitals, and the American Lung Association. She has worked for Head Start at Robinson Rancheria and continued up the ladder in community service to her current position of Executive Director for Inter-tribal Council of California. Connie is a talented leader and articulate spokesperson for her people. She maintains a realistic perspective of the issues facing Native Americans today and also is dedicating her life to healing her people (Morgan, 2001).

Georgeanne

Georgeanne is a 56 year-old Pomo mother of three children, ages 21, 22, and 30, and has one grandson. She was born in Ukiah of a mother who was from the Concow Nomalaki Tribe near the Chico area and her father was 100% Pomo from the Upper Lake Tribe. She remembers her great grandparents telling the story of the Trail of Tears to Covelo when the government forced all the

California Indians into the Round Valley Reservation. Her grandparents raised her, because her mother died when she was nine years old. She had four siblings and four cousins who all grew up in a two- room house. She has fond memories of growing up on a large ranch with lots of open space and pear trees and grape vines. She graduated from high school in Ukiah and went on to complete an Associates Degree at DQ University in Davis, a Native American Junior College. She was always very interested in social work and legal issues and worked for the Lake County Sheriff's office processing warrants for several years. As a survivor of domestic violence herself, she became a certified domestic violence counselor through the State of California and now works for the Inter-tribal Council in that capacity. She has also dedicated her life to helping children in her community by serving as a foster mother for 12 Native American children over the years. Sadly, she shared that eight out of the 12 children suffered from FAS with learning disabilities.

Georgeanne is a loving mother and grandmother and feels her strength comes from her grandmother. She truly loves children and has a strong mission to empower women who are victims of domestic violence. She states, "I love seeing strong Indian women. There is nothing better than a strong Pomo woman" (Morgan, 2001, p. 112).

Responses to the Research Questions

The responses to each of the research questions were organized by age, beginning with Rozan, age 23, and concluding with Georgeanne, age 56. The

purpose of this structure was to provide the researcher and reader an opportunity to reflect upon the impact of age on the participant's responses and also to help the reader become familiar with the different participants in an organized fashion.

Research Question #1: What oppressive experiences have Pomo Native American woman leaders experienced in school, job, social, family, tribal and/or other settings?

Most of the participants experienced some form of oppression in their lives. Rozan shared how she experienced discrimination in the public schools.

> From living on the reservation, we always felt different because we were going into another world. There's hardly any Indians in the public schools. I felt really isolated. Other white kids and mothers wouldn't talk to me. The mothers would look at me like, "Who are you?" There was also a bit of a language barrier when I first started school because I was raised with many Indian names for some things and I didn't know what they were talking about. White kids used to make comments about stereotypes, like living in teepees and stuff. When we talked about history, the other kids and teachers didn't want to know the truth about Indians. There were lots of stereotypes and it mainly comes up in history classes. Also, I didn't get much help from teachers or counselors about going to college after high school. They just didn't think Indians would go on to college.(Morgan, 2001, p. 5)

Mary experienced oppression from her adopted family. She was stereotyped and discriminated against in her own home. She always felt like a second-class citizen and that she didn't really belong.

> At two months old I got adopted out. The adoptive family came to see a little boy and the little boy's mother decided that she did not want to give him up, so they said, "We do have one little baby girl. Do you want a girl?" And that's how they took me home, as a second choice. Then when I was in the crib, my mother told me that my brother started crying when he saw me, saying, "I thought we were gonna get an Indian and she

> doesn't have a feather." I was stereotyped from the beginning. My mother used to call me "Princess Rain in the Face," because I was so sad most of the time or "one little," you know, like that song, "One little, two little, three little Indians..." They even dressed me up like an Indian. (Morgan, 2001, p. 20).

Mary described how she was a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome baby and the hospital would not let her mother take her home so she never got to grow up with her biological family. She suffered from several physical disabilities, including spinabifida and learning disabilities. She was absent from school frequently because of her disabilities and need for surgery. At school, in Eureka, she claimed she was alienated from the other kids and was the only one with brown skin. She had no friends. She was sexually abused by her step-father, her brothers, and then the neighbor boys, beginning at around age five. After a while, she said that the only thing that helped her survive the continual assaults and rapes was to disassociate. She would imagine a kind and gentle Indian friend taking her by the hand up to the ceiling in the corner of the room. He would say, "You don't need to be there," (Morgan, 2001, p. 21) and she would just feel peaceful while she looked down at herself from above. She tried to tell her mother but she would not listen or believe her and she spent many hours hiding in her closet until her mother got home so no one would know she was there. In junior high, Mary attempted suicide, and the counselor at school was the first person who really asked what was going on. She began to get counseling and was sent to a hospital for a while, but her family hardly ever visited her there.

Mary began using alcohol as a way to numb the pain in junior high. She discovered that there was alcohol in Listerine and vanilla. "I had the freshest breath in school but I was drunker than a skunk. It was hard on your stomach, though" (Morgan, 2001, p. 22). She would drink or get high whenever she could just to escape the psychic pain. Her mother never seemed to be aware of her drinking or drug use. There was no one in Mary's life to serve as a role model, mentor, guide, or friend. She was alienated and isolated.

Suzann, age 44, had a much different experience growing up than Mary. She was raised in Covelo, by her uncle and his wife, who was white, because her mother had died in a car accident when she was nine. She said she never experienced any discrimination growing up and that over half the kids in her school were Indian. Her experience of oppression was in her marriages. Her first husband, who was Indian, became an alcoholic and physically and verbally abused her. She was able to leave him after several years and three children, but then got involved in another oppressive relationship with a verbally abusive man. After having one child with him, she left him and then married her third husband. He was not verbally or physically abusive, but mentally abusive in the manner of being a womanizer. "He was a good guy. He just couldn't be faithful" (Morgan, 2001, p. 55). She had one child with her last husband and divorced him and is now living happily alone.

Irenia, age 44, experienced oppression in the form of low educational expectations from her parents and teachers. She grew up in the delta region of

California near Stockton and was one of 16 children. She attended a one-room schoolhouse during her elementary years with her siblings and the children of other migrant workers of color. "There were Indians, Mexicans, Filipino's, Japanese, and Italians in our school. The teachers gave preferential treatment to the Italians because their parents were the wealthy landowners; we were the poor farm worker's kids. We were never encouraged to go beyond high school by our parents or the teachers" (Morgan, 2001, p. 62).

Irenia continued, "I don't recall being treated unfairly because of my race in high school. It was the height of the Civil Rights Movement. We were the only Indians in the school but we were included in most activities" (Morgan, 2001, p. 65).

Connie, age 50, experienced some discrimination in her early years by being excluded from social activities and feeling isolated and different. She grew up in the Lakeport and Kelseyville area of Clear Lake. When asked about experiences of discrimination in school, she recalled:

> You know, at that age, when I think about going to school, I think of grammar school and junior high and I think I remember having really good teachers in elementary and junior high level and high school. It was pretty good. Where it was really difficult was with other kids, where they do a lot of name- calling and not being invited to social events and not being involved in after school activities like other kids who get to go on sleepovers and things like that. Not being a part of that, I realized, as I got older that I wasn't involved in those things and I didn't know why. By the time I understood why, I had such a full life I don't think I really suffered from it as much of a trauma. (Morgan, 2001, p. 88)

Georgeanne, age 56, experienced stereotyping in school and felt she was discriminated against in job situations. She also experienced racial discrimination

when she would go shopping, often treated unfairly by white clerks. Her experience of being an Indian woman married to a white man would occasionally illicit judgmental looks from white people. Georgeanne would always speak out against discrimination, but she was most comfortable working with her own people.

> In the schools, the kids would say Indians were stupid, or stay away from them, but I had many friends. I've definitely been discriminated against in job situations where I think I was more qualified but the person they hired was non-Indian. Sometimes when I go to stores, the clerks will ignore me or put me off, but I tell them it's not ok. Once I saw Squaw bread in a store and I told the clerk the word Squaw means somebody's whore. I confront them right away. I told her she should change the name of the bread. When I first moved here with my husband, who was German, I remember walking into a store with him and I was pregnant and people would just stop what they were doing and stare because I was Indian and he was white. Most of the time I've worked in Indian programs so I don't experience much discrimination. (Morgan, 2001, p.110)

Most of the participants experienced some form of oppression in their lives from being isolated or alienated in school by other children because of being Indian and looking different. Some of the women experienced oppression in their relationships with men by being verbally or physically abused. And one of the women, Mary was severely oppressed, abused mentally, physically, and sexually by her family and other men in the community.

Research Question # 2: What strategies have Pomo woman leaders utilized to overcome oppressive experiences and obstacles in their lives?

In this question, the researcher was looking for sources of empowerment experienced by these women. In other words, what stopped these women from taking the self-destructive paths that so many other Indian women have chosen?

Were there specific factors or strategies that enabled them to overcome their oppressive experiences in a positive, life-affirming manner?

Rozan shared that her empowerment came from a supportive family life. Her family had always been involved in community service and helping others.

> I owe my strength to my parents and grandparents. I never saw any physical abuse or drug and alcohol abuse in my house. No one even smokes cigarettes in my house. My grandfather was a drug and alcohol counselor at the Friendship House in San Francisco back in the '50's. My grandmother taught us respect. My father worked for 30 years for the tribes and that's the only way he's going to work is to help tribes. Why would I start an abuse cycle with alcohol and drugs? They are foreign substances to my body. They don't belong here. (Morgan, 2001, p. 5)

In addition to her strong family life, Rozan also talked about the importance of her connection to her tribe. Her grandparents both spoke Pomo before they were forced into boarding schools and punished for using their language, but they kept their stories and dances. Rozan's life revolves around tribal activities and Round House events.

> I understand a little Pomo, but we have the songs and prayers and dances that preserve our language. The elders teach us now. My tribe dances and sings. My mother's tribe, the Yokayo, make baskets. My sons are learning how to dance. I started dancing at age 2. The ceremonies in the Round House are blessed and sacred. There are lots of rules about how to behave, so the children have to learn how to be good. You feel and breathe that you are a part of it. I would say a lot of my strength comes from my religion. For me, growing up in the Round House has been my heart. I don't believe the Creator would want me to do bad things to my body. My grandmother taught us what respect is and how the dance is respect and spiritual, to serve the elders and help them. (Morgan, 2001, p. 8)

When asked about how she handled peer pressure in high school, Rozan said,

> Peer pressure is not important. Someone in school told me 75% of all Indians drink. I decided it wouldn't be me. We've survived so long with all the things done to us. Knowing that, the Creator has a good plan for me. I think we are here for a reason. I think I have a purpose here and serve it. (Morgan, 2001, p. 10)

Rozan's sources of empowerment were her family, her connection to her tribe and her spiritual beliefs. She was raised in a very supportive, loving, and healthy family environment, which empowered her to make positive life choices.

Mary was not as fortunate as Rozan, to have been raised in a healthy, supportive environment that taught her about her Indian culture and traditions. She grew up in a very abusive and dysfunctional family. Mary's empowerment over alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence came from her ability to break her denial and take an honest look at her life and where it was going. When asked how she was finally able to recover from alcohol and drug abuse Mary said,

> When my kids got abducted (her ex took them), I quit drinking because it was one thing I could control. No one could tell me that I couldn't drink because I had the physical strength to tell them that I could. But to tell myself that I couldn't was the hardest thing because that means that you're self-examining yourself. You're looking at yourself and saying, "You have a problem," and I didn't like looking at myself saying that I had a problem. Drinking became anger. You know, I didn't laugh anymore. I couldn't be goofy. I wasn't having fun. I grew out of it. (Morgan, 2001, p. 35)

Mary is a gifted storyteller, and like her Indian ancestors before her, answers questions with stories. Below, she describes what it felt like to quit using drugs and alcohol.

> It's hard to quit drinking and using dope. It's like if you see a coyote and his foot's in a trap, that coyote will chew his foot off to survive. And I had to learn to cut my arm off. I still had one good arm. The other one, yeah, it may be stuck in that trap and wanting to drink and use... the addiction.

> But I have the whole other part of my body that can function and live and breathe and survive, without that bad arm. And you have to go slow, 'cause if you rush, you're going to say "screw it" and you're going to go get that dead arm out of that trap and try to make it work and it isn't going to. And then you're gonna self-destruct. (Morgan, 2001, p. 42)

Getting off drugs and alcohol was particularly difficult for Mary because all of her family and friends used substances. This is a common experience among many young Indian women. They are faced with having to choose between their ties with their family and friends who are addicted to drugs or alcohol or sobriety. This means, often in order to get sober, they lose their emotional and cultural connections that they have grown up with and must be doubly strong in order to achieve sobriety on their own. She had to distance herself from them.

> I look at them and I am so grateful that I don't have to live that way anymore. I am not a prisoner anymore. I don't have to rely on something that has no emotion, no caring, no concerns, no remorse, for anything in my life. I'm the one who has caring and remorse, feeling, promise, joy and I can get that to myself and give that to other people. I don't have to walk around dead and make people like me. If they don't like me, that's all right. I like me. I've been clean and sober for 2 years now and my partner hasn't used for 9 years. Drugs and alcohol are no longer a part of our lives or our children's lives. (Morgan, 2001, p. 47)

Mary was able to remove herself from a self-destructive life style by facing up to the consequences of her behavior. Realizing that she lost her children and they had been hurt because of her substance abuse finally gave her a wake-up call to quit using. Although it was not her family of origin that empowered Mary to choose a healthier path in life, it was her love for her children that prompted her to stop her self-destructive behaviors.

Suzann's strength came from her strong connection with her family and her experience growing up in Covelo with other Indian children. She developed a strong sense of her cultural identity and also developed a responsible work ethic modeled by her parents.

> My mother worked at the school as a secretary and bus driver, so I had lots of support and perfect attendance. We lived on a big ranch and I was very active in sports, especially baseball. I learned both the white ways and Indian ways of being in the world. I had good healthy role models. I wasn't raised around drugs or alcohol. We all had responsibilities and jobs to do. My parents were workaholics and just retired from their jobs after 45 years. My mother was a very strong person and my Dad was very mellow. That's probably how they got along. He still rides horses at age 78. I think I learned my strong work ethic from them. (Morgan, 2001, p.51)

Suzann developed her identification with Indian culture at an early age and also learned about Christianity from her mother. Her spirituality was a major factor in Suzann's empowered choices in life.

> My dad was a semi-pro rodeo rider and I was always at rodeos and Pow Wows on the weekends. They would dance all night and rodeo all day. It was just part of my life. I learned important values about being an Indian and respecting my elders. When I was 16, I took care of my 80 year-old grandmother until she died. I was always taught to care for elders. My mother took us to the Lutheran church, so I learned both Christian and Indian ways. I consider myself a Christian and Indian in my heart. If you have a good heart, you are a good person. (Morgan, 2001, p. 54)

Even though Suzann was not exposed to drugs or alcohol at home, she did go through a phase where she used alcohol after she experienced domestic violence with her first husband. She shared that he beat her up because of his drinking. She believed that she was able to get out of that abusive situation, unlike many other Native women, because of her healthy family background. She

realized that this is not how one is supposed to be treated in a relationship. It was the stability of her family of origin and her spirituality that gave her the strength to leave abusive relationships and quit using substances.

Irenia also developed empowerment from growing up with responsible and hard-working role models for parents. She learned the importance of a strong work ethic, which she has continued throughout her life.

> My mother was Pomo and my father was Filipino. I was number 15 of a family of 16 children. My mother was a very strong woman and hard worker. I had a great childhood playing in the delta with my brothers and sisters. We also had to start working in the fields when I was eight. Back then there wasn't much control with child labor laws. My father spoke several languages, which helped him become a foreman in the fields. We were exposed to a lot of different people. My dad was sort of a workaholic farmer. His idea was to just feed your family and make the money and that kind of thinking. Every single one of us kids graduated from high school. I think I learned a strong work ethic from my father. Work was very important. (Morgan, 2001, p. 63)

Irenia was empowered to make positive life choices and avoid drug and alcohol use because her parents did not model that behavior. Irenia believed being raised in the country away from peer pressure had an impact on her healthy choices. She was never exposed to drugs or alcohol. She was also empowered from her connection to tribal activities. She developed a strong sense of her Indian identity during the American Indian Movement. She describes her early experiences with Indian gatherings:

> When we were growing up my mother would take us everywhere to Indian ceremonies and gatherings. She didn't tell my father where we were going, she would just put us all in the car and drive away for the weekend. I think that's where I got my independence. She didn't even bother to ask. When I was about nine years old it was the height of the American Indian Movement. My sisters were the first people on Alcatraz. That was really

> my first exposure to Indian politics and Indian culture and Indian heritage. Before, I used to kind of not want to acknowledge the color of my skin and stuff like that. That was the beginning and it has been with me ever since, with all my family, really. (Morgan, 2001, p. 64)

Irenia's sources of empowerment came from growing up in a hard-working family and not being exposed to drugs and alcohol as a youth. She developed independence from her mother as a role model and learned about the importance of her Indian culture from her family's participation in Indian ceremonies and the American Indian Movement.

Connie's mother was Pomo and her father was Mexican and Indian. She developed her strength and empowerment from her family-life. Both of her parents' involvement in volunteer and community activities led her to lead a life of social service.

> I think the key for me was having a strong family. A mother and father who were real family centered even though they worked hard. They made sure that we had what I consider life enrichment experiences. We would go on picnics and they did a lot of community volunteer work. My father was a volunteer fireman and my mother was always involved in community work. As we got older, they saved their money and purchased property of their own. Our success as a family was the thing that I think kept us from being involved in self-destructive behaviors. (Morgan, 2001, p. 111)

Connie had empowered role models for parents, who demonstrated an excellent work ethic and taught her the importance of independence and autonomy. She described her mother as being an unusually strong woman.

> Even though my mother had TB as a child and it left her with a limp, she was very independent and self-reliant. I belong to a community commission on the status of women in Sacramento. We were discussing who would be assigned to sit on our disabilities committee that we promoted lobbying for activities for services in pay equity and that type of

> thing for women. One of the committee members said to me, "Well, Connie, what about your mother?" And I looked at them like, "how could my mother serve on this because she has no disability?" But, I guess she did from the visual perspective. But in terms of what she was able to achieve, it didn't exist. So even though my mother used crutches to get around for the most part, it didn't occur to me that my mother should be on our committee for women with disabilities. That was a reflection of her independence. I can say it was a real honor to be her daughter. (Morgan, 2001, p. 110)

Connie continues the community service modeled by her mother having worked for over 30 years for her tribe and the Indian community, and is currently the Executive Director for The Intertribal Council of California.

Spirituality and an Indian identity were very important parts of Connie's life and her feelings of empowerment.

> My family had pride in who we were as humans beings. My parents were very spiritually aware and believed each person has a value no matter what they do and should be treated with respect: respect for one's spouse and each other. My father and mother were Catholic and so I was raised with both Christian and Indian values. (Morgan, 2001, p. 113)

The other important aspect of her childhood that she believed contributed to her leadership qualities was her involvement in sports. She participated in baseball, basketball, and volleyball. She said it was a "great outlet for me as a young woman to find a positive channel to put all that energy into. I think that's how I was able to deal with some of the physical changes that happen in a teenager's life. Our whole family was involved in sports."

Georgeanne developed her strength from a stable and healthy family environment. Her grandmother was an excellent role model. Although she

experienced abuse from her husbands, she attributes her ability to get out of those relationships to her grandparents.

> I was raised by my grandparents because my mom died when I was nine. They were never abusive toward each other. My grandmother never allowed alcohol or smoking in her house. I was raised to really believe in myself and take care of myself. My grandmother only had an 8th grade education but was a very strong woman raising 9 grandchildren in a two-bedroom house. We lived on a ranch with lots of open space to play. I learned to show respect to elders from my grandmother. (Morgan, 2001, p. 113)

Georgeanne is very connected to her Native spirituality and sees it as an important part of her empowerment. Participating in tribal events provides her and her children a strong feeling of Indian identity and connection to her tribe. She learned about Native religion when she was 22 years old.

> I can remember going to Bible school occasionally during the summer because my grandmother wanted us to but we never really practiced the religion. I believe in Native religion now. I love birds, like the red-tailed hawk. I believe birds are messengers and I get inner strength from seeing them fly. I went to my first Pow Wow around age 22 near Colusa. I knew that I was home and in my heart I had always been there. This is where I belonged. This is my people. I got my strength from my grandmother and my spirituality. (Morgan, 2001, p. 109)

All of the women talked about how they got their strength and empowerment from their families of origin, except for Mary, who found strength in her children. Their parents as role models, was an important factor contributing to their positive choices in life. They also reported that their spirituality and connection with their Indian culture was an important source of empowerment in their lives.

Research Question #3: What do Pomo woman leaders see as the primary issues disempowering young indigenous women today?

With this question, the researcher was interested in identifying what the participants believed were the major barriers facing young women today. Rozan believes one of the major issues young Indian women are facing today is domestic violence. It is often due to substance abuse. The men learn it from their fathers and continue the abuse cycle with their wives and children. Rozan worked as a family violence liaison for the tribe.

> I had to stand up to the community and to their spouses and say they're not going to let our women be victimized anymore. Many women call physical violence "Indian love" from their husbands, but that is a stereotype of love. I call domestic violence wife beating, because that is what it is. You cannot downplay a man abusing a woman, taking away who she is by hitting, slapping and kicking her. I served a lot of restraining orders. (Morgan, 2001, p. 12)

Many young women begin using drugs and alcohol in their teens. Rozan believes that many young women suffer from drug and alcohol abuse because of problems with identity and low self-esteem "A lot of Indians have no clue about our dances and culture. They have poor role models. I would never start a cycle of abuse into drugs and alcohol when I have been given a cycle of Native traditions and healthy behaviors." (Morgan, 2001, p. 10)

Another major issue facing young women is the effects of substance abuse on their children and/ or themselves. There is a crisis in the Indian community with FAS and learning disabled children because of substance abuse. Mary

believes part of the problem facing young women comes from their mothers. She was an FAS child and so were her children.

> I think there are a lot of disabled Indian children. About 60-80% are born with FAS or ADD [her numbers]. People think that's just how Indian children act. Their mothers drink and the children pay for it. Physical abuse is a big factor in Native American culture. They call it "Indian Love" when you get a black eye or busted up. All that's "Indian love." That's not love, that's abuse. (Morgan, 2001, p. 31)

Another problem is that many young women choose to stay in abusive relationships. They often are unable to see other options or choices or may be addicted to substances themselves. They have low self-esteem and poor role models and do not pursue outside support. Many teenage women get pregnant just to get out of an abusive household and end up moving into a similar or worse situation with the father of their child. When asked why the young women stay in abusive relationships, Mary asserted,

> A lot of Indian women have little self worth. A lot of young girls get a man and they get a baby. It's a way out, they think. Their dad's beating up their mom or their mom's drunk and tweaking and beating them up. It's a way out. They don't have stable parents telling them what to do. Now days you got people "whatever" and "go and get the hell out" do what you want, I don't care, gimme a beer, gimme a bag, this and that. Parents have given up their position of authority. Kids today are allowed to act wild. No one cares about them. There is no more traditional family. (Morgan, 2001, p. 32)

Another important issue facing young Indian women is poor health. Few young women seek pre-natal care and many have poor diets and smoke cigarettes and use drugs. Diabetes is at an epidemic level in many Indian communities because of poor diet and lack of exercise. Many elders are dying at a young age due to heart disease and stroke from complications from diabetes or smoking

related illnesses (National Research Council, 1996). Mary shared her concerns about Native Americans' health.

> The health in Native American people has gone down hill. The casinos and the government should be providing healthy food instead of junk. People are getting sick with diabetes and they give them sugar, fat, oil. Where's the fresh vegetables? Fruit? Squash? (Morgan, 2001, p. 38)

When women are facing difficulties at home, there is often no counseling or support systems in place for them to get assistance and get out of the situation. Mary feels there is no place for the youth to go for help or to be listened to without judgment.

> They need to have counselors for youths that are court mandated to keep their trap shut and not gossip. They need to have someone they can trust to say, "you know what? At home I'm getting hurt" or "my dad is beating my mom" or "my little brother's sleeping with my sister or my aunt is screwing my cousin".... Abuse ranges from all those levels. It's not just drugs and alcohol, but a lot of sexual abuse too. Cousins sleeping with cousins, incest. That not right. They need to be told, "that's not acceptable" instead of saying "oh, they are going to do it anyway." Native women around here need to be encouraged to stay beautiful Native women and be proud of who they are. We need the women. Women are sacred, they bring life. (Morgan, 2001, p. 39)

Mary believes alcohol and drug abuse, poor role models, lack of traditional families and lack of self-esteem all are major barriers young Native women face today.

Suzann echoed the concern that the other women shared about drugs and alcohol and teen pregnancy and sees them as major issues facing young Native women today. She attributes substance abuse to a lack of strong role models at home and an unhealthy family life.

> I believe there is a breakdown of the family caused by alcohol and drug abuse. The parents party all night and oversleep in the morning and don't get the kids ready for school. When you're raised with alcoholics that just seems the thing to do. The young girls aren't using birth control and many get pregnant at age 14. They have dysfunctional families and poor role models as parents. Nobody is telling the kids what to do. They don't have chores or anything. They do whatever they want. The kids are not being taught how to be responsible because the parents are irresponsible. I wasn't raised around drugs or alcohol. I had good healthy role models. My parents were stable and I never wanted to embarrass them. (Morgan, 2001, p. 56)

Suzann is a survivor of domestic violence and believes most of it is related to alcohol or drug abuse. She said they send the men to prison when what they really need is treatment. Her ex-husband is currently in jail for 9 DUI's but it is not helping him to deal with his addiction. She also believes that mothers need to "drill it into their sons that violence is not ok." She thinks the changes have to start with the mothers telling their children what is right and wrong. It all starts with the family.

Irenia looks at the issues young women face today from a sociological perspective. She stresses the importance of healthy role models for young women, strong families and education. She also believes that there are not enough support services available for young Indian women today.

> Media hype influences how young women act. TV, clothes, is all they think about. I feel like they need to learn the other part of our culture. Young women need to have healthy role models and activities. They need to be educated. They need to know there is another outlet. The women involved in domestic violence need a safe place for them to go. (Morgan, 2001, p. 72)

Irenia thinks there should be more community infrastructure for the youth, including more "social programs, educational programs, cultural programs and

environmental programs" (Morgan, 2001, p. 74). She is concerned about how little the youth know about taking care of the environment. They do not seem to care about their future. "They have to help clean our environment when they grow up. It is really hard to get that point across" (Morgan, 2001, p. 73)

Connie believes the primary problems facing young women today stem from "the breakdown of the family unit" (Morgan, 2001, p. 90). Once again, the sentiment is that young women do not have healthy role models. They also do not have a strong connection to their Indian identity and the Indian community has become fragmented and doesn't pull together it they used to, to help those who need support in their tribe.

> In the old days, the whole tribe would work to address the disease. The dis-ease of social isolation. Often times, now, for people to stop using drugs or alcohol they must sever their ties to their own families. When a mother became pregnant in our community, it used to be a time that the whole family got involved. But now, whole families are divided, grandma's a convicted felon, grandpa's an alcoholic, dad does drugs and never worked in his life. These are the role models that we've got to take a look at. (Morgan, 2001, p. 91)

Connie believes many young women use substances because of the lack of support in their own families and friends.

> The tribal society has broken down. We're talking about a model of cultural confidence, your level of cultural competency. If that doesn't exist our people choose destructive behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse or violence. We had women coming to a 3-month treatment program. They were beautiful, they didn't have that death look on them. They were clear of the drugs in their system. They started talking about going to school, getting their kids back from CPS. All these wonderful things that are good to talk about. But when they go home, they are confronted with a different group of people who say, "Oh, you think you're too good because you did this, you don't want to be a part of us anymore. Get out of here." And so

> there is no safety net even to protect them from their own people. (Morgan, 2001, p. 93)

Connie believes that in order for the women to become healthy and empowered they often have to leave their dysfunctional families and this is very difficult because it is often the only place they have to go.

Georgeanne serves the Intertribal Council as a Domestic Violence Liaison. She sees the major issues facing young women today as teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and dropping out of school. "They've lost themselves and hope that if they have a family themselves they can create their own family. Many women are very battered but won't leave because of the connection with their children" (Morgan, 2001, p. 121). Like Connie, Georgeanne stresses how in the old days, the tribes would pull together and support women who were being abused and outcast the abuser.

> Drug and alcohol abuse are the major cause of violence. The men are learning it from their fathers and grandfathers. In the old days, families wouldn't tolerate physical abuse against wives and children. Men are frustrated about economics, not having a job, and so they drink and party to forget about their frustrations. Then the women complain about their behavior and then men get violent towards them.
>
> The women growing up in dysfunctional home situations are the ones using drugs, alcohol and getting pregnant as teens. I give the young women a chance to talk about how they feel and provide them ways to get away from the abusive situation, like shelters. (Morgan, 2001, p. 122)

Many young Indian women have not developed a feeling of spirituality or connection with their Indian identity. Georgeanne commented on the importance of spirituality in young women's lives.

> They're (the women) not used to the feeling of spirituality in them and they get scared and run from those feelings sometimes. The tribes are trying to teach the songs and dances to younger women but many women don't understand the power of the dance. They don't have to be afraid of it. It's like meditation, but it's not. It's powerful and soothing. (Morgan, 2001, p. 130)

Regarding the large number of FAS children being born to Indian women, Georgeanne commented:

> It's not our way to create a child that's tox positive. Children are a gift. I know it happens a lot and eventually the child will grow up and be in a foster home. Most of the children I've taken care of as a foster-parent have been FAS; at least 8 out of 12. I get most of them court referred because of neglect at home or behavioral problems by the children. I don't know at what point our tribe is going to say we're not going to tolerate drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence. We women act like victims to our men. We need to tell our sons it's not ok to abuse their women. The mothers need to tell the sons how to treat their women and their children. Some of my domestic violence victims want help from the abuser's family but their mothers stand up for the abusers and protect them and make excuses. (Morgan, 2001, p. 132)

All of the participants echoed the same themes: dysfunctional families, poor role models, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, teen pregnancy, lack of education, identity problems, low self-esteem, and lack of connection to their Indian traditions and spirituality.

Research Question #4: What messages or guidance would Pomo women leaders offer to their Native sisters and daughters who are experiencing oppression and turning to self-destructive behaviors in their attempt to escape feelings of powerlessness?

In reporting the women's response to this question, the researcher felt it was important to include their words and not interpret their messages to young

Indian women. Therefore, what follows are their voices, from their hearts, sharing their concerns, and guidance, to young Native women in need of empowerment.

Rozan felt young women need to connect more with their Indian traditions and history.

> My great grandmother remembers hiding in the trees when the cavalry and hunting parties came through after slaughtering all the Indians on Bloody Island. Our people were murdered, enslaved and forced to march by gunpoint to reservations. We have survived so much. Young women need to know who they are and where they came from. It has to do with self-esteem. I feel good knowing who I am, it gives me a sense of direction, something people look for their whole life. I know what responsibility I have to my people and I try to fulfill it everyday that I am here.
>
> Our children have a hard time living in two different worlds. When they are home, in our community, and a part of our ceremonies, they feel good, that they are equal. When it's dance time, they act and feel good because they are sure about what they are doing. This is how it should be all the time. I tell young kids, "You are here for a reason. A lot of people didn't make it. You are here because your ancestors hid or survived so you could survive." I am proud of who I am and where I came from. Pride comes from a strong sense of identity and knowing about your culture. (Morgan, 2001, p. 13)

Mary offered the following guidance for young women struggling against barriers of drug and alcohol abuse:

> All you got to do is just slow down. Because when you're doing all that, you know you're the blind being led by the lost. Listen to yourself. If it doesn't feel good, that's all right. Who cares what other people think. They're not experiencing your depression or your sorrow, your frustration or your anger. You need to be your own self-counsel and say, "Hey, you know what Mary, you're worth it." Maybe you don't need to be high. Go for a walk. Try drawing. Become self-reliant.
>
> A lot of Indian women have little self-worth. Only a woman can bring out life. She is the first person to actually feel the life moving inside of her before anyone else. Young women need to know they are important. They

> need to hang on to their inner self. They need to know their language, their traditions. When I attended my first Pow Wow, it was the first time I felt like I belonged and I was home. Native women around here need to be encouraged to stay beautiful Native women and be proud of who they are. Don't look at themselves as a dirty Indian and go by other people's expectations of them. A lot of girls, they don't know that they are even beautiful. By being Native they're more important than if they weren't. We need the women. Women are sacred.
>
> I would tell young women, "Don't give up on who you are. What's inside, people don't ever want to look at it, but once they see it, they will never be able to take their eyes off of it. It is pure and beautiful." (Morgan, 2001, p. 48-50)

Suzann's message to young women facing drugs, alcohol or abuse by men was:

> It's not cool to go along with the program. You have plenty of life ahead. I think being involved in tribal activities, dance, and baseball and sports helps so they keep their mind busy and not do other self-destructive things. Find someone they can talk to, a solid, good friend who's not using drugs or alcohol. The best thing to do in an abusive situation is to turn them in.
>
> My daughter is 14 and I tell her these things, but she wants to be wild. At that age they just know everything. She does dance in the summer time and play baseball and it keeps her out of mischief. (Morgan, 2001, p. 59)

Suzanne agreed with the other women, that participating in Indian ceremonies and learning about their culture was important for building self-esteem.

Suzann shared a favorite Indian story that she believes reflects how young people often lose sight of what's important in life by focusing on immediate gratification instead of the big picture. She hopes this will be empowering for young women to read and reflect upon.

Loo-Wit, The Fire-Keeper

When the world was young, the Creator gave everyone all that was needed to be happy. The weather was always pleasant. There was food for everyone and room for all the people. Despite this, though, two brothers began to quarrel over the land. Each wanted to control it. It reached the point where each brother gathered together a group of men to support his claim. Soon it appeared there would be war.

The Creator saw this and was not pleased. He waited until the two brothers were asleep one night and then carried them to a new country. There, a beautiful river flowed through and tall mountains rose into the clouds. He woke them just as the sun rose and they looked out from the mountaintop to the land below. They saw what a good place it was. It made their hearts good.

"Now," the Creator said, "this will be your land." Then he gave each of the brothers a bow and a single arrow. "Shoot your arrow into the air," the Creator said. "Where your arrow falls will be the land of you and your people, and you shall be a great chief there."

The brothers did as they were told. The older brother shot his arrow. It arched over the river and landed to the south in the valley of the Willamette River. There is where he and his people went, and they became the Multnomahs. The younger brother shot his arrow. It flew to the north of the great river. He and his people went there and became the Klickitats.

The Creator made a great stone bridge across the river. "This bridge," the Creator said, "is a sign of peace. You and your peoples can visit each other by crossing over this bridge. As long as you remain at peace, as long as you hearts are good, this bridge will stand."

For many seasons the two peoples remained at peace. They passed freely back and forth across the great stone bridge. One day, though, the people to the north looked south toward the Willamette and said, "Their lands are better than ours." One day, though, the people to the south looked north toward the Klickitat and said, "Their lands are more beautiful than ours." Then, once again, the people began to quarrel.

The Creator saw this and was not pleased. The people were becoming greedy again. Their hearts were becoming bad. The Creator darkened the skies and took fire away. Now the people grew cold. The rains of autumn began and the people suffered greatly.

"Give us back fire," they begged. "We wish to live again with each other in peace."

Their prayers reached the Creator's heart. There was only one place on Earth where fire still remained. An old woman named Loo-Wit had stayed out of the quarreling and was not greedy. It was in her lodge only that fire still burned. So the Creator went to Loo-wit.

"If you will share your fire with all the people," The Creator said, "I will give you whatever you wish. Tell me what you want."

"I want to be young and beautiful," Loo-Wit said.

"That is the way it will be," said the Creator. "Now take your fire to the Great Stone Bridge above the river. Let all the people come to you and get fire. You must keep the fire burning there to remind people that their hearts must stay good."

The next morning, the skies grew clear and the people saw the sun rise for the first time in many days. The sun shone on the Great Stone Bridge and there the people saw a young woman as beautiful as the sunshine itself. Before her, there on the bridge, burned a fire. Now their homes again became warm and peace was everywhere.

One day, though, the chief of the people to the north came to Loo-Wit's fire. He saw how beautiful she was and wanted her to be his wife. At the same time, the chief of the people to the south also saw Loo-Wit's beauty. He, too, wanted to marry her. Loo-Wit could not decide which of the two she liked better. Then the chiefs began to quarrel. Their peoples took up the quarrel and fighting began.

When The Creator saw the fighting he became angry. He broke down the Great Stone Bridge. He took each of the two chiefs and changed them into mountains. The chief of the Klickitat became the mountain we now know as Mount Adams. The chief of the Multnomahs became the mountain we now know as Mount Hood. Even as mountains, they continued to quarrel, throwing flames and stones at each other. In some places, the stones they threw almost blocked the river between them. That is why the Columbia River is so narrow in the place called the Dalles today.

Loo-Wit was heartbroken over the pain caused by her beauty. She no longer wanted to be a beautiful young woman. She could no longer find peace as a human being. The Creator took pity on her and changed her into a mountain also, the most beautiful of the mountains. She was placed so that she stood between Mount Adams and Mount Hood, and she was allowed to keep the fire within herself, which she had once shared on the Great Stone Bridge. Eventually she became known as Mount St. Helens and she slept peacefully.

Though she was asleep, Loo-Wit was still aware, the people said. The Creator had placed her between the two quarreling mountains to keep the peace, and it was intended that humans, too, should look at her beauty and remember to keep their hearts good, to share the land and treat it well. If we human beings do not treat the land with respect, the people said, Loo-Wit will wake up and let us know how unhappy she and the Creator have become again. So they said long before the day in the 1980's when Mount St. Helens woke again (Nisqually-Pacific Northwest, undated).

Suzanne suggests the fact that Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980 shows how unhappy Loo-Wit was over the ways her people were behaving. They need to learn to have a good heart and be kind to each other and respect each other and the land upon which they live. This includes young women respecting themselves and men respecting their women and children.

Irenia, who is very interested in developing supportive programs for the youth and someday running for Tribal Chairman, said her message to a young woman struggling with drugs and alcohol would be:

> I would tell her my past experiences and what could happen to her, even though it didn't happen to me. I would suggest she talk to other peers who are not using drugs and alcohol and have her go to support groups. The women being abused have to be educated what they are in and what it will lead to. The key is education and to provide a healthy outlet. They need that. We might not save them if something really bad happens but I think that is the only thing we can provide.
>
> I would tell young women to follow their dreams. Use education to your benefit. If you stop and have children and even if you are going through a hard time, never give up on them. You can always continue following your dreams throughout your whole life even if you don't accomplish everything. Continue living your dream no matter what it is. Even if you stop and make a mistake, you can move on and still become stronger. Do what you can for now and things will get better eventually. (Morgan, 2001, p. 84-86)

Irenia also discussed the importance of educating young women about their culture and Indian language and traditions. She believes they need to stay very active and involved in activities to stay healthy and out of trouble.

Connie has worked at many levels of community service, from picking up young pre-schoolers for Head Start Programs, to her current position as Executive

Director for the Intertribal Council of California. Her message to young Indian women struggling with all of the barriers they face today was the following:

> To me it starts with being proud of who you are no matter what. Just be proud. I think that's it. Just be proud of who you are no matter what anyone says. To me, being an Indian has been a special gift even with all the bad, it is a special gift. Nobody else can be that person for us, but us. I think that the important thing is to just be proud of being an Indian woman. There's not a whole bunch of us. It's a wonderful heritage to have and to build on that heritage. Take the fragments of it and begin to weave together what it is you want to be as an Indian woman. (Morgan, 2001, p. 106)

Georgeanne feels young women try to grow up too fast. Her message to young women was:

> Don't be in a hurry to grow up. Stay a child as long as possible and enjoy it because once you make that commitment to motherhood, you are a mother for life. Go through every stage that you are supposed to and enjoy every one of them. Think things through. Look at what you are going to gain at the end. Learn to respect yourself, by knowing the choices you are making are right.
>
> I also think that one of the things our children need is to be taught some traditional dancing. They should attend Big Head Dances at the Round House. It is part of our religion and gives them inner strength. They should be informed about how to prepare for the traditional dance and not be high when they partake. I would suggest they pray everyday for strength. Pray to the Creator to give them strength and wisdom. Set a goal and don't let anyone influence them. (Morgan, 2001, p. 136)

In their messages to young Native women, the themes that emerged from the participants included, developing self-esteem and respect through life-affirming activities like sports and education, finding positive role models to talk with, participating in Indian cultural events and dances, connecting with Native spirituality, and taking pride in being an Indian woman.

Research Question #5: Through the process of participatory research and dialogue, how would Native American women leaders utilize the findings of this research for social transformation and empowerment in their community?

In response to this question, the participants shared some of the action they are taking now to empower their young women and programs they would like to see developed in the future.

Rozann talked about some of the social action she or her family are involved in currently and her plans for the future.

> My father just wrote a grant to regain the Pomo language that includes pictures and words for pre-school to 12th grade students. He'll be bringing in the elders to teach the classes. My sister-in-law wants to start a treatment camp for young Indian substance abusers.
>
> I plan on completing my Bachelor's Degree and pursuing a degree in law so I can help my tribe with treaties and legal issues. I'd like to get our island (Rattlesnake Island) back and our land. I like to work with the young kids teaching them creation stories, dances and about our people. My son can count to 10 in Yokayo. I plan on connecting with as many people as I can to share my ideas and beliefs about Indians. I will continue to try and help Indian women who are abused. I am currently writing a grant for an Indian shelter for abused women. (Morgan, 2001, p. 7)

Rozan's ideas for changes needed in her community included:

> We need to go back to our traditional government that is over a thousand years old. The tribe needs to respect and acknowledge women as they would mother earth. We need more social and health programs for young children, better day care, and more activities for teenagers. The youth need to know they are our leaders of tomorrow. Women need to be mentors to the youth and teach healthy behaviors, become more involved with those around them. Women and men need to realize they are role models. The community needs to be more open, have open arms, don't question and analyze everything. Give everybody the same respect. The schools need to let our youth organize themselves, allow them to be creative and most of all to listen to our children: they are young and innocent souls.

> On a state level, we need more programs for youth. We need youth councils where our children can speak out and be heard and talk about the problems in the schools and communities. They often know what action needs to be taken. Our kids need to participate more in our dances and culture to help them know who they are and develop a strong identity and self-esteem. (Morgan, 2001, p. 13)

Mary shared her ideas of what action needs to be taken to help young Native women. She is an advocate of developing more community support groups for young women and children and more activities for young children and teenagers.

> I think they should have support groups for Indian women. Ninety-five of the women have children and are very young with babies. They need to have someone take their baby one day a week while they go and just be young and talk with other Indian mothers. They need more programs in the schools that are based on children's likes, children's wonders. They need to ask them, "What do you enjoy? What do you wonder about?" Maybe go on a field trip once a month and everybody decides on what it will be. The kids should be choosing what they want to do. Maybe if school life was better, it wouldn't be so bad going home to a dysfunctional family.
>
> Kids need to see there are better ways to live. They need to have choices. If they can go to school and after school programs that are healthy, then they know they have choices. There should be support groups for young women and young men, mentors for both.
>
> The tribes that get money from the casinos need to use that money to help the people and the youth. Most people in the tribe take the money instead of using it to help the kids. The casino should be sponsoring youth baseball, softball, soccer, football, whatever. They should be providing good, healthy food, especially for the elders. There should be projects and outings for the kids. Everyone should learn the language, learn their traditions. We need to learn how to have traditional families. The kids need to learn to respect their mother earth, because that's where we came from and respect women because they bring life. (Morgan, 2001, p. 135)

Suzann belongs to the Scotts Valley Pomo Tribe. Her recommendations for social action in her community include securing some tribal land for tribal activities since her tribe only has a community center at this time. They are developing more education programs for children. She stresses the importance of teaching children about their Indian heritage and traditions. She believes more support programs are needed for substance abuse treatment, domestic violence, birth control and after school activities for youth.

> We have 168 members in our tribe but no large central location or land, just a community center in Lakeport. It is really hard to do cultural things with everyone spread out. We could use some land. We haven't received any money yet from Proposition 1A for non-gaming tribes, but there are lots of programs I would like to see developed. First, we could use the money to buy people decent houses. The elders really need good health care and transportation.
>
> Until 4 months ago, we had no programs to teach kids about traditional Indian ways. We are just beginning to develop those programs. I'm going to record a 90 year-old Pomo man who speaks fluent Pomo to help young children learn the language. We are going to start a program with the elders teaching the younger children the language, hopefully.
>
> Young women need to be educated about birth control and drugs and alcohol. We need treatment programs for substance abusers. Kids need more activities. I think if more kids played sports it would help them out a lot. They just don't have anything to do so they just hang out. The tribe pays for their entry fees and sports equipment if they are interested.
>
> Women being abused need to leave their relationships and report the abuse. Education and recovery programs need to be set up to help people with drugs and alcohol and violence, not prison. Families need to become stronger and do more parenting. Children need to learn respect for their elders and for women. (Morgan, 2001, p. 60)

Irenia came to the Robinson Rancheria five years ago to help her ailing mother and ended up staying and working for the tribe. She embodies a social

activist in her community. She shared many ideas about developing educational programs for youth, teaching them about their culture, environment, traditions, language and the value of education. She believes the whole tribe should be involved in educating the youth, engaging the elders to teach the children. She agrees with the other participants that young women need positive role models and support groups.

> I wasn't expecting at all to come back here to work for the Tribe, but I always had that background so I guess this was meant to be. I have to go back now and give something back. I always avoided it because I knew if I ever came back here I would be here the rest of my life. It is hard to leave the place you are really needed and appreciated. You know they need you and you have to be responsible and committed if you're going to see it through and make it successful. That's the kind of person I am. If I start something I have to make it right and finish it, leave it in good standing.
>
> I'm in charge of the Robinson Environmental Center and I write grants for all kinds of programs to help the tribe. I wrote a grant for the Tribal Air Program, an air quality program, the Tribal Water Quality Program, the Cultural Resources Management Program and the Native American Repatriation Program. So far, I've raised over three million dollars for the tribe, in grant funding.
>
> I'm actually thinking of running for Tribal Council Chairman. At first I thought I should wait until I'm 50 or 60 to run, 'cause I have this image that you should be older and wiser. But the Tribal members are all very young and I feel like an elder because we have such a younger group here. There are not that many elders left anymore.
>
> I would definitely like to build up the community infrastructure. That's my ultimate goal. Provide more for the Tribal members on a community level: more social programs, educational programs, cultural programs and environmental programs. With our new education department and environmental and parent committees we are providing more programs for youth and teenagers. We are trying to develop activities for kids not just after school but on weekends as well. Last weekend we took a group of kids up to Laytonville to hear poetry and this weekend we are having a scavenger hunt. We have all kind of activities for the kids here and also

> computers for them to use. We are just trying to provide a healthy place for the kids to hang out so they can get away from abusive houses with alcohol or whatever.
>
> We are just beginning a program teaching the Pomo language to children. The elders love it. They are the teachers. It is bringing the elders back together. I think the key to empowering women to get out of abusive situations is to be educated and provide them an outlet. They also need support groups with people who have experienced what she is going through right now and can tell her what happened to them and how to get out of it. (Morgan, 2001, p. 84)

Connie works on the front line of creating new programs for Indian tribes. She has dedicated her life to volunteering and working to improve the status of her people and community. She describes the importance of young people developing a sense of their Indian identity and what that means. She is interested in developing more support services for the youth and young women who need help with issues such as substance abuse and domestic violence and teen pregnancy. She is involved in creating social transformation for Indians at a national and local level. She is sharing her program ideas with Indians throughout the nation and learning new strategies from other tribes. She is interested in empowering all of her people.

> I think cultural competency is the thing that will help our people stay away from use of abusive chemicals. If we place a value on ourselves, and what we feel is important for ourselves and our children and our family and our tribe, then the whole community can become healthy that way. We need to clear the air about what a true tribal cultural value is. Indifference has been created over the years and we are beginning to heal.
>
> We need to provide support for women in abusive relationships within our community. Many of the support services are non-tribal, so it's very difficult for a woman who really would like to change. Many people don't want to face the need for change. What we are working with is the indifference that's created when a group of people have felt dis-

> empowered for so long. The motivation for change has to come from the people. As long as leadership can keep the people convinced that there is no need for change, things stay the way they are.
>
> A part of me says, "I have to challenge our tribal leadership, and I have to challenge other people who say we are serving children who are at risk or who are abused or neglected. I have to challenge them and keep that fire going because the parents of a lot of these children aren't." It is all of our responsibility and until everyone of us as a tribal people acknowledge that and accept that responsibility and begin to demand from mothers who are pregnant that they not drink and they not use or shoot up or whatever, we cannot help them. Their babies are the future of our people. Until we get that mentality back we are still going to see domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse and the vicious cycle that begets us with babies that are having below standard levels of development.
>
> There are some support programs for young women that exist now, but they are not effective if the women don't use them. We've come a long way. I know there are a number of women talking about what we can do to reorganize and refocus our energies. One of the things that is so beautiful, is that it is a nationwide sort of effort. We are not alone. There are women in South Dakota who are working on and dealing with the same issues that I am dealing with in my community. They are developing approaches that they find effective and sharing them with us. We are beginning to help each other. I find energy for my work in talking with other Indian women trying to help their communities.
>
> There are lots of conferences and networking is occurring. There is a healing focus conference being held throughout the nation and in the state of California. We sponsor domestic violence prevention programs. We are not talking about one person changing, we are talking about the way that communities deal with the situation in which they are involved. It is a slow process but it is improving. (Morgan, 2001, p. 107)

Georgeanne works for the Intertribal Council in Nice helping victims of domestic violence. She believes that in order for domestic violence to change it must come from the entire tribe and the Tribal Council. She feels a unified effort to stop substance abuse and provide educational activities about Indian traditions, dances, and language would benefit young women and boost their

self-esteem. She states that there are some support programs in the public schools for Indians, but there should be much more, beginning at the elementary school level. Georgeanne believes that funding for support programs should come from some of the money that will be disbursed from Proposition 1A and the Casino profits.

> I think what's going to have to happen to turn this thing (domestic violence) around is that it has to come from the Tribal council. It's going to have to come from the knowledge that it's not acceptable and we are not going to accept it and we are not going to protect the abusers. The women have to stand up and say, "No more." Some of the young girls are beginning to stand up for themselves and say, "this is my body and no one has the right to touch it unless I want them to." We are working with the younger girls.
>
> I think many girls drop out of high school because of the attitude of the school administration, the teachers. They're labeled when they are really young that they won't be successful and they drop out. The teachers don't encourage them. I've had students on the honor roll in elementary school but by the time they got to junior high or high school they were suspended or dropped out, saying, "I hate this school. I don't want to be here." It's the attitude at the school. They just take away their self-esteem and eagerness to be learning. They classify them as gang related, even though they're not members of gangs. I think the schools need to offer cultural sensitivity training about Native Americans for the teachers and administrators.
>
> We also, as a tribe, need to look at our priorities in our community and how we spend money. Most members want a per cap payment instead of using the money to provide support services and programs for the youth, daycare, substance treatment programs, etc. We also need to look at the money that will be coming from Proposition 1A. Children are going to get a lump sum of money when they are 18 and they'll need to know how to budget it. Many people in the tribe don't know how to manage their money.
>
> I'd like to see some of the federal and casino money be used for teaching children songs and traditional dances and learning their language and their culture. We have programs now where we go into the schools and have group meetings with the Indian students once a week. Sometimes the men

> take the boys and the women take girls separately to talk about their issues. I think it's helping because they are becoming involved in their community and kids are seeing more choices. There should be programs in all of the schools. I'm interested in elementary school and very early stages. The ITCC (Intertribal Council) got a grant for a mentoring program to work with students. I really believe that people want to change and can do it if they want to. (Morgan, 2001, p. 138)

The participants' responses to this research question followed more along the lines of what they are doing now and what they believe their community needs in the way of new support programs than how they will utilize the findings of this research for social transformation and empowerment in their community. Although the researcher asked the participants how they would like to use this information and what role she could play to assist their young women, further research is recommended with more time in dialogue and reflection to determine what, if any social action should develop from this initial study.

The researcher believes that the process of dialogue and reflection, and naming the issues and problems of young Native women today has heightened her awareness and that of the participants. It is hoped that these initial dialogues will be the beginning of a continued dialogue and relationship between the researcher and the participants. The researcher now has contacts with women who are leaders in their tribes whom she can refer Indian women to for support. The participants now have a contact with a member of the Clear Lake Community College faculty whom they know will act as an advocate for Indian women in their educational pursuits and perhaps have a more enlightened view of the issues Indian women face today.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, a discussion of the major conclusions of the findings, generative themes, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflections of the researcher.

Summary

The focus of this study was to learn about sources of empowerment for Native American women through the process of participatory research. The participants were all Pomo Indian women leaders from the Clear Lake area of California. The critical reflections of the participants were gathered over a period of two months through dialogues and reflection upon the dialogues between the researcher and the participants. The women were recommended by prominent individuals within their communities as women with leadership qualities. The purpose of pursuing a dialogue with these women was to learn how they became empowered and what factors enabled them to overcome barriers they experienced as members of an oppressed group of people. The study has contributed to the body of research about Native American Pomo women leaders and sources of empowerment, and has provided the Pomo women participants an opportunity to have their voices heard and become empowered by the process. It has also generated a list of strategies that may empower young Native women today.

Although many of the women in the study said they did not think they were oppressed that much in their lives, it is important to look at the historical context. Sarris (1993) helped to explain that the Indian wars are not really over for the Pomo.

> Of course, for the Pomo, the wars continue today; born of the old wars and subsequent separation, their wars are the wars of the dispossessed taken away from their ancient lands, cut off from many of their traditions, and relegated to the margins of society where their struggles against invisibility are undermined by poverty, disease, and inadequate education.

The methodology utilized for the study was participatory research (Maguire, 1987), where participants who are members of oppressed groups are invited to collaborate with the researcher and engage in dialogues for the ultimate purpose of social transformation

The researcher developed five research questions that guided the initial dialogue and addressed the experiences of oppression in the participants' lives and factors that enabled them to lead empowered lives. The questions based on the research were designed to generate ideas for social action in the future.

Conclusions

An analysis of the findings revealed seven major themes. The themes that reflected sources of empowerment experienced by the Pomo women leaders were: (a) the importance of a strong family, (b) positive role models, (c) spirituality, (d) Indian identity, and (e) education. The themes that were generated by the participants in the second dialogue reflected the following: (f) commitment to the Indian community, and (g) guidance to young Native women. The participants all

discussed how their involvement with social action within their community and their children was their life's work. Their guidance to young Native women reflected the sources of empowerment that they experienced in their lives, completing the circle.

Generative Themes

The results of the dialogues were the emergence of the following major themes. Each participant shared their thoughts and feelings about these themes in the first and second dialogues. The themes are as follows:

The importance of a Strong Family Every one of the women, with the exception of Mary, grew up in a strong family with solid values and a good work ethic. They all attributed their own personal power and ability to make healthy choices in their lives to their parents or grandparents. Mary, who grew up in a very dysfunctional family, also experienced the consequences of poor choices early in her life. It was not until Mary reconnected with her Indian spirituality and saw the consequences of her lifestyle on her own children that she was able to become empowered and lead a healthier life.

Positive Role Models In addition to a stable family environment, the participants all shared how important it was for them to have positive role models in their lives. For most of them, it was their mothers or their grandmothers and in some cases, extended family members. Even when some of the participants faced oppressive situations such as alcohol use or domestic violence, they were able to draw strength from their memories of their mothers or grandmothers and leave

those dysfunctional ways of being. Again, Mary did not have that positive role model in her life growing up and suffered much more severe consequences because of that missing factor. Ultimately, it was her inner strength and renewed connection with the healthy women in her tribe and a clean and sober partner who helped Mary become empowered.

Spirituality As the women talked about what gave them strength in their lives, they all mentioned the importance of a spiritual connection to their Creator. Some of the women were raised in the Christian Church and considered their spiritual beliefs to be both Christian and Native. They also felt that one of the reasons young women today were struggling with their choices in life was because they lacked a spiritual connection with their Creator.

Indian Identity The participants suggested that one of the reasons young Indian women lack empowerment is because they do not have a strong sense of who they are. They lack self-esteem and self-confidence because of their lack of connection with their Indian culture and traditions. All of the women spoke of the importance of learning about one's culture and participating in Indian ceremonies, dances, and songs. Many believed that if more young women participated in their tribal events like Big Head Dances, and Pow Wows, and ceremonies at the Round House that they would have a clearer sense of who they were and be proud to be an Indian woman.

Education All of the participants except Mary graduated from high school and many achieved a college degree. Even Mary is now pursuing her GED even

though she must overcome severe learning disabilities, and plans to continue her education to make a difference in her tribal community. They all agreed that young women should be educated at a very young age about their Indian culture and language. They also need to be taught self-respect, and that the use of substances poisons their bodies. There was also a consensus that the young boys in their tribe need to be taught how to respect women and that violence towards women and children is not the Indian way. All believe that education can provide young Indian women with more healthy choices in their lives and lead to empowerment.

Commitment to the Indian Community All of the participants are leaders in their tribal communities in one role or another. They are all willing to stand up for their young women and children and provide a voice and support for them. All of the participants are dedicating their lives to improving the status of Indian women and youth. This commitment to their tribal community raises them to the level of positive role model and leader to young Indian women. As oppressed Indian women see the powerful leadership of their mothers and sisters, they too, may become empowered in their lives.

Guidance to Young Native American women The guidance that the participants offered to young Native women reflected the above themes of empowerment. They encouraged young women to believe in themselves, to find positive role models, to participate in Indian traditions and events and dances, to connect with

their Native spirituality, to develop self-esteem through life affirming activities like sports and education, and to take pride in being an Indian woman.

The findings from this study collaborate with the current literature about Native American women and empowerment. Studies by Keway (1997), Johnson (1997), and Carlson (1997), echoed the findings of this study with the following sources of empowerment expressed by Native American women: commitment to serving the community, claiming one's Native voice, education as a key to cultural survival, supportive family, mentoring and positive role models, a strong sense of cultural identity, the spirit and soul of Native leadership, and beliefs.

Recommendations for Action

The data from the participants in this study revealed the following recommendations for action within their communities. Some of these programs are already being implemented in some of the tribes, but not in others.

1. Develop educational programs for the youth about Pomo Native traditions, languages, dances, spirituality and practices beginning at birth and continuing throughout their lives.
2. Develop more social and health programs for young children and teenagers.
3. Develop mentor programs for older women to work with younger women and older men to work with younger men.
4. Teach young girls to respect themselves and their bodies. Teach them about birth control.

5. Develop more after school and weekend activities and cultural programs for the youth so they will have positive outlets and choices for their energy.
6. Procure more tribal land for tribal activities and community events.
7. Develop support groups and assistance for women to get out of abusive relationships. Create a "Stop the Violence" program in all tribes.
8. Involve more children in sports and other healthy activities funded by the casinos, Proposition 1A, and federal funds.
9. Provide healthy parenting classes for young mothers and fathers and educate them about the effects of substance use on their unborn children (i.e. FAS, ADD, etc.).
10. Develop educational programs for the youth about how to protect and care for the environment.
11. Develop substance abuse treatment programs for Indian youth and adults like the White Bison, Red Road to Recovery Program.
12. Introduce weekly talking circles and self-esteem building programs, such as Daughters of Tradition, developed by White Bison for young Indian women.
13. Conduct cultural sensitivity and educational inservice programs for local school administrators and teachers to help them understand

Indian children and provide them encouragement and support to continue their education.

14. Learn from other Native American tribes about programs they are using that help empower our youth and women.
15. Develop programs to teach Pomo people how to prioritize their budgets on a personal and tribal level when receiving money from the casinos or Proposition 1A for the benefit of the youth and the community as a whole.
16. Acknowledge and support outstanding Indian youth and women in their communities for continued development of empowered, positive, leadership activities.

Recommendations for Further Research

The participants in this study contributed significantly to the body of current research about Native American women and sources of empowerment. However, the number of women was small and hence the findings cannot be generalized to all Native American women. Further research with larger numbers of Native American women from diverse tribes would benefit the literature and create more generalizability of the findings.

The researcher originally had planned on having two group dialogues in addition to the individual dialogues, but due to the availability and time constraints of the participants and the study, the group dialogues were eliminated. A future study would benefit from group discussion and reflection and also more

meetings over a longer period of time. The researcher had also originally planned to video-tape the dialogues for participant reflection and also to create a potential educational video for use in their communities. Unfortunately, only audio-taping worked out so future research could benefit from utilizing video-taping of dialogues.

Lastly, the researcher believes that entry into an Indian community as a white person, representing the ancestry of their historical oppressor, most likely creates an obstacle in generating honest and open dialogue between the oppressed group and the oppressor. These Native women were quite courageous and forth coming with their responses, but the researcher believes that a member of their community might generate even deeper reflections and commentaries.

Reflections of the Researcher

According to Sarris (1993), "The Pomo are generally private, adverse to open exchange with persons outside their respective tribal communities." I feel very fortunate and honored that Rozan, Mary, Suzann, Irenia, Connie, and Georgeanne were willing to share with me their past experiences and life stories. They are all remarkable women with strong leadership qualities. By reflecting on their own lives, they brought forth substantive messages and ideas for empowering the young Native women in their communities. Through this process of participatory research and learning about the Pomo women in the Clear Lake community, my life has been enriched. I feel I have developed just the beginning of a relationship with these women and hope that their experience in this process

will provide them and their community a source of empowerment. The statement that Georgeanne (Morgan, 2001) shared, sums up my hopes for young Native women and my admiration for this group of women, "There's nothing better than a strong Pomo woman" (p. 112).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL OF IRBPHS

January 23, 2001

Ms. Heidi Morgan
6740 Wildwood Mountain Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Dear Ms. Morgan:

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS) at the University of San Francisco (USF), which operates under the rules and regulations set forth by the federal Office for Protection from Research Risks (OPRR) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has reviewed your initial application for human subjects approval regarding your study, [3]Impact of technology on the field of Human Resource Management.[2]

Your Initial Application has been approved by the committee (IRBPHS #00-187). Please note the following:

1. Approval expires twelve (12) months from the dated noted above. At that time, if you are still collecting data from human subjects, you must file a Renewal Application.

2. Any modifications to the research protocol or changes in instrumentation (e.g., changes in subject sample, wording of items, consent procedures, tasks required of subjects) must be proposed in a Modification Application, which must be approved prior to implementation of any changes.

3. Any adverse reactions or complications on the part of Human Subject must be reported (in writing) to the IRBPHS within ten (10) working days in the form of a Human Subjects Incident Report.

If you have any questions, please contact Steven Del Chiaro, IRBPHS Coordinator, at (415) 422-6091.

On behalf of the IRBPHS committee, I wish you much success in your research.

Terence Patterson, EdD, ABPP
Chair, IRBPHS
USF School of Education, Room 023
Department of Counseling Psychology
2130 Fulton Street
San Francisco, CA., 94117

cc: Dean's Office, College of Professional Studies-ATTENTION David Apelzin
A. Roberts, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION

Heidi Flora Morgan
6740 Wildwood Mountain Road
Santa Rosa, California 95409
(707) 995-7916-w (707) 987-4469-h
morganheidi@hotmail.com

January 1, 2001

Dear :

I am a member of the Clear Lake Community College faculty and currently working on completing a doctoral degree in International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco. For my dissertation, I am interested in developing a dialogue with local Pomo and Miwok Indian women in leadership positions. My interest is in response to several local Indian women who have expressed concerns about the lack of empowerment expressed by younger Indian women.

As an educator in Clear Lake and a woman, I am very interested in what approach might best serve the young Pomo and Miwok women of our area. The purpose of this study is to learn through dialogue, with you and other empowered Indian women, what factors or strategies helped you to overcome oppressive barriers in your life? Through the process of dialogue and reflection, individually, and as a member of a group, we may be able to identify some common successful strategies that might be helpful to young Indian women today.

Several prominent residents of the Lake County area who view you as a leader in your community have nominated you. I am writing to you today to see if you are willing to participate in this project. Unlike many "research" studies, this is a collaborative process, called Participatory Research, where the participants and facilitator co-create the naming of problems and potential action for social change. Your participation is voluntary. We will have two, one-hour individual meetings and two, two-hour group meetings with five to seven other Pomo women from the Clear Lake area. Our conversation will be recorded and I will provide you a typed transcript that you may change as you reflect on your comments. I will analyze the transcripts for common strategies utilized to overcome oppressive experiences, and suggestions for young Native Women. You will be given an opportunity to review my preliminary analysis and provide further clarification. All participants will receive a copy of the completed study. I offer you my personal assurance that your comments, your feelings and your culture will be treated with the highest respect.

This is a project that will reflect your cultural voice and story. I also hope our findings will provide guidance for younger women in the community. I will be contacting you in the next week to discuss your participation as a woman leader with great wisdom to share. I hope you will be as excited about this project as I am. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,
Heidi Morgan,
Doctoral Candidate

Note: A guide to potential dialogue is attached for your review

APPENDIX C

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Protection of Human Subjects Consent Form

Sources of Empowerment for Native American Women

Consent Form

This is to certify that I, _____ hereby agree to participate as a volunteer in a research project conducted by Heidi F. Morgan as an authorized part of her Ed.D. in International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco.

This is a Participatory Research study interested in identifying the sources of empowerment experienced by Native American women with leadership qualities from the Clearlake area of Northern California. The women involved in this study will be sharing experiences of oppression in their lives and how they overcame those oppressive experiences. You will also be asked to share insights and provide guidance for younger Native American women in your community. There are no foreseeable risks with this research other than the discomfort one may experience sharing one's feelings and thoughts with others.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that:

1. The time required for this study is two, one-hour meetings with the researcher and two, two-hour meetings with the group of women in the study.*(see attached addendum)
2. My participation is voluntary.
3. I am free to not answer or respond to any topics of my choosing.
4. My dialogues individually, and in the group will be audio and/or videotaped and transcribed for my personal editing. *(see attached addendum)
5. My comments and experiences will be included in this study with my name, with my permission.
6. This information will be used only for this research; any other uses for this information require my permission in writing.
7. My participation is not a condition of my employment.
8. I am free to terminate my participation in this study at any time.
9. If I have any questions about this study, or my participation in it, I may contact the researcher by calling (707) 995-7916 or the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (415) 422-6091.
10. I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant_____Date_____

Researcher_____Date_____

Mailing address of Researcher:

Heidi Morgan

6740 Wildwood Mtn.Rd.

Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Addendum to Human Subjects Consent Form

In reference to item #1 and #4 in the Human Subjects Consent form that refer to two individual meetings and two group meetings:

There will be two individual meetings only and audio not video tape will be utilized.

In reference to item #5 in the Human Subjects Consent form that refers to the use of the participant's name in the study:

The participant will have the option of using their first and last name, just their first name or a pseudonym. Please state which you would prefer below_____.

Participant_____Date_____
Researcher_____Date_____

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Sources of Empowerment for Native American Women: Pomo Women's Critical Reflections

The purpose of this research was to learn from the perspective of Pomo Indian women, the sources of empowerment, which enabled them to overcome oppressive experiences in their lives. As members of an indigenous group of people who have been historically oppressed by colonization, Native American women have lost much of their culture, language and land. Many Indian women are living below the national poverty level. Unable to visualize a life of self-determination and empowerment, these women often become victims of domestic violence, alcohol, and drug abuse.

The researcher employed participatory research methodology, a method of social investigation of problems, involving participation of oppressed groups of people and the researcher in problem naming, reflection, and action for the purpose of social transformation and empowerment. This methodology was inspired by Freire (1972) and further developed by Maguire (1987). Five major research questions guided the study: (1) What oppressive experiences have Pomo Native American women leaders experienced in school, job, social, family, tribal and/or other settings? (2) What strategies have Pomo women leaders utilized to overcome oppressive experiences and obstacles? (3) What do Pomo women leaders see as the primary issues disempowering young indigenous women today? (4) What messages or

guidance would Pomo women leaders offer to their Native sisters and daughters who are experiencing oppression and turning to self-destructive behaviors in their attempt to escape feelings of powerlessness? (5) How would Native American women leaders utilize the findings of this research for social transformation and empowerment in their community?

Data were collected through individual dialogues that were tape-recorded and transcribed. The researcher and participants then reflected upon the transcripts analyzing them for accuracy, interpretations, and themes.

The findings revealed the following seven major themes that reflected sources of empowerment experienced by the Pomo women leaders: (1) the importance of a strong family, (2) positive role models, (3) spirituality, (4) Indian identity, (5) education, (6) commitment to the Indian community, and (7) guidance to young Native women. The participants developed a comprehensive list of 16 recommendations for action in their Indian communities. They concluded that young women today need to be encouraged to believe in themselves, find positive role models, participate in Indian traditions, events and dances, connect with their Native spirituality, develop self-esteem through life affirming activities like sports and education, and take pride in being an Indian woman.

Heidi Flora Morgan, Author

Dr. Rosita G. Galang,
Chairperson, Dissertation Committee