

**STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO INSTITUTIONAL
PRESSURES: A CASE STUDY OF AN ABORIGINAL
NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**

JILL FINLEY

Bachelor of Commerce
McGill University, Montreal, Canada
1997

A research project submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies of the University of Lethbridge
in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

The University of Lethbridge
Lethbridge, Alberta Canada
August, 2002

©Jill Finley 2002

**STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO INSTITUTIONAL PRESSURES: A CASE
STUDY OF AN ABORIGINAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**

JILL FINLEY

Approved:

Supervisor: Bernie Williams, Ph.D.

Date

Project Committee Member: Judith Kulig, DNSc

Date

External Examiner: Trish Reay, Ph.D.

Date

Chair, Project Examination Committee & Director,
Graduate Programs & Research: Robert A. Boudreau, Ph.D.

Date

ABSTRACT

This research project explored an Aboriginal nonprofit health organization's strategic responses to institutional pressures using concepts from neo-institutional and resource dependency theories. The case study method was adopted, and participant observation and interviews were the main data collection techniques utilized.

The study revealed an organization that contended with legitimacy issues from a variety of stakeholders. Organizational responses to these pressures involved the adoption of business practices, while attempting to maintain Aboriginal values and culture. Leadership was identified as a key variable that influenced the structural and strategic responses of the organization.

Through this research I concluded that when utilized in a complementary manner, institutional theory and resource dependency theory offer insightful explanations about the adoption of business-like structures and strategies in a nonprofit organization. This research project closes with practical recommendations concerning the ways that nonprofit organizations are structured and operate, and a discussion of policy implications and future research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of a number of individuals.

I would first like to thank the staff at The Centre for cooperating with me over a period of three months while I worked on this study. I am very aware that considerable trust was placed in me and I appreciate it very much. I am also deeply grateful for the privilege of being allowed into their meetings and activities in order to observe and hear their stories. I am forever indebted to the director and program director, which provided me access to any information they had available. I thank you all for putting up with me and my numerous questions for three months.

I would like to thank the members of my committee for the supportive and yet independent learning environment in which this study was conducted - my supervisor, Dr. Bernie Williams, for his constructive criticisms, direction and support during the preparation of this manuscript; and my secondary supervisor, Dr. Judith Kulig, who has introduced me to compassion even in the rigour and competition of academic struggle.

Finally, and significantly, I would like to thank my friends and family who have supported me with love and encouragement. Special thanks to Blair, Susannah, Jason, Mom and Dad who guided me and supported me as an ethnographer.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
Introduction to the Research Problem	1
Introduction	1
Organizational Responses to Changing Conditions.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Questions	5
Study Relevance	5
Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	6
Project Overview	6
CHAPTER 2.....	8
Theoretical Framework and Key Organizational Issues	8
Introduction	8
Organizational Change	8
Neo-Institutional Theory	10
Resource Dependency Theory.....	15
Organizational Configuration	18
Pressures Facing the Nonprofit Health Sector	20
Adapting to the Environment	22
The Focal Organization	23
Rationale for Chosen Study Site.....	25
CHAPTER 3.....	30
Research Methodology	30
Site Selection and Field Preparations	30
Ethnographic Case Study	31
Unit of Analysis.....	32
Rigour and Confirmability	33
The Data	33
Roles of the Researcher	34
Participant Observation	35
Interviews	36
Secondary Documents	36
Ethical Considerations.....	37
Data Analysis	38
CHAPTER 4.....	40
Discussion of Results	40
Introduction	40
Examination of the Research Questions.....	40
Research Question 1: In what ways do isomorphic changes occur in a non-profit organization?.....	41
Introduction	41
Coercive Isomorphism.....	42
Mimetic Isomorphism	46
Normative Isomorphism.....	48
Legitimacy.....	50
Research Question 2: In what ways do external agencies and funding sources shape the structure, procedures, programs, policies and professionalism of a nonprofit organization?.....	53

Aboriginal Culture as a Way of Doing Business.....	54
Becoming More Business-Like	65
Cooperative Strategies.....	66
New Revenue Solutions	69
Research Question 3: What role do volunteers play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?.....	71
Research Question 4: What role does professional staff play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?.....	74
Leadership	75
Professionalization	79
CHAPTER 5.....	82
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	82
Introduction	82
Discussion	83
Limitations of the Study	86
Implications for Further Research.....	88
Recommendations	90
REFERENCES.....	92

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The Centre's Generated Revenue Sources..... 80

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACE – Alberta Community Enhancement

AGM – Annual General Meeting

CAC – Canadian Association of Centres

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSV – Homeless Street Van

PTA – Provincial Territorial Association

UAYP – Urban Aboriginal Youth Program

VLT – Video Lottery Terminals

WCAC – Western Canadian Association of Centres

WHO – World Health Organization

YCP – Youth City Program

CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the Research Problem

Introduction

Nonprofit organizations are a key component of Canadian society that serve a variety of needs and provide a wide range of services. Change has been constant throughout the history of Canada's nonprofit sector. The nonprofit sector has been continuously moving from its backstage place among the institutional components of Canadian society towards a more high profile, mid-stage position (Reed & Howe, 1998). This shift has been fueled by government decisions to downsize and delegate some of their social responsibilities. The nonprofit sector not only commences their duties at the fringes of government programs, but it plays an important role in communicating the government's Voluntary Sector Task Force's overall goal of 'enhancing the quality of life for Canadians' (Government of Canada, 1999). Understandably then, the nonprofit sector is seen as the sector that fills in where other systems have fallen short (Salamon, 1987). In an epoch characterized by significant societal changes that include: economic swings, sustainable development challenges, struggle for, and maintenance of a national identity and reduced legitimacy to Canada's democratic institutions, studying nonprofit organizations can offer public policy implementers an understanding of the forces that influence the strategy and structure of nonprofit organizations.

The nonprofit sector has been responding to change for many years. The introduction of the neo-conservative political ideology of the Mulroney years provided a focal point to the commencement of a new reality--a reduction of federal funding designated for social program development and enhancement. In subsequent years, this

philosophy filtered down to the provincial and municipal levels, leaving nonprofit organizations to deal with the resulting social and economic restructuring now occurring at all three levels of government. Nonprofit organizations are facing a new climate characterized by unprecedented competition for donations combined with shrinking government support (Bush, 1992; Weisbrod, 1988).

Organizational Responses to Changing Conditions

In response to these circumstances, nonprofit organizations are changing and becoming more professionalized and bureaucratized. Universities have created programs pertaining to nonprofit management, nonprofit organizations have hired directors with management backgrounds and nonprofit organizations have merged with other nonprofit organizations, finding themselves forced to diversify their services. In short, nonprofit organizations have increasingly begun to mimic the structures and strategies of private-sector businesses. Both professionalization and structural change are increasingly common hallmarks of recent activity in the nonprofit sector (Wilson, 1989).

Research that specifically examines the effects of pressures facing nonprofit organizations has begun to appear in the literature. Tolbert (1985) determined that the effects of resource dependence on structure were enhanced by nontraditional dependence relationships. In her study, increased dependence on public funding was a better predictor of the occurrence of public-funding offices in private institutions of higher education than in public ones. Similarly, increased dependence on private funding predicted the occurrence of private-funding offices in public colleges and universities more accurately than private ones. Other studies involving nonprofit organizations have produced similar

findings. In his work on nonprofit art organizations, DiMaggio (1986) identified increasing numbers of finance and marketing personnel as an organizational response to pressures for high levels of earned income. Similarly, Salamon (1987), in his discussion of government-nonprofit relations, revealed that there is an increasing pattern of government reliance on nonprofit organizations to deliver publicly funded services. Studies report that changes in funding profiles for British voluntary organizations have also served to reinforce a degree of competitive behaviour (Wilson, 1989). Butler and Wilson (1990) support the finding that there exists increased professionalism in the nonprofit sector. Moreover, Gronbjerg (1991) reveals that complex management tasks associated with grant and contract funds impede efficient operations. In the case of human service organizations, Hasenfeld and Schmid (1989) contend that human service organizations are very dependent on the state to provide both legitimacy and resources: “the government serves a key role in enabling their activity by providing legitimacy through formal accreditation and funding of proposed programs” (p. 246).

In the case of local nonprofit organizations, the government provides legitimacy when they provide funding for contract work intended to provide short-term work experience while creating a new position at an organization. In many cases, the organization welcomes the position to assist and complete organizational tasks. Although funding agencies do not necessarily dictate what should happen, they use coercive pressures in the form of productivity standards or staffing levels to encourage certain ends (Bigelow & Stone, 1995). Hence, at the local level the possibility of an internal reliance on funding is created by the funding body and in turn, accountability is demanded through a formal evaluation. Institutional pressures, in this case, can cause the

organization to change their structure to become more pro-active to seek permanent positions. Additionally, it can result in isomorphism whereby the firm starts to resemble other organizations or the institutions that have provided them with the funding.

Thus a variety of impetuses for change have been identified. The problem is that the influences of a variety of institutional forces - government programs and funding initiatives, professional values and work principles, business practices, and other forms of legitimacy are not well understood in terms of their relative impact on organizational change within the nonprofit sector. Previous research has provided explanations of patterns of change based on concepts from institutional theory and resource dependency theory. But this body of research has been somewhat fragmented and disjointed and the two different theories of change often provide competing explanations. In this study, explanations will be explored using both the institutional and resource dependency perspectives in an integrative manner in order to develop a deeper understanding of change processes at the level of the individual nonprofit organization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project was to analyze the internal and external influences that affect organizational change in a nonprofit organization. Using the concepts of neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer & Scott 1983; Scott, 1987), and resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), an in-depth case study was undertaken. This study focused on specific organizational strategies and structures that resulted from both internal and external influences on the organization. Over the course of a three-month study period, I observed,

studied and participated in a nonprofit organization in order to gain an understanding of responses and adaptations to changing environmental demands. The study focused on the investigation of organizational actions that were viewed to be particularly relevant when analyzing change from the perspective of resource dependence and institutionalization. The main objective was to examine how and why the organization adopted specific organizational strategies, structures and internal processes.

Research Questions

This research project was guided by the following research questions:

- 1) In what ways do isomorphic changes occur in a non-profit organization?
- 2) In what ways do external agencies and funding sources shape the structure, procedures, programs, policies and professionalism of a nonprofit organization?
- 3) What role do volunteers play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?
- 4) What role does professional staff play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?

Study Relevance

Nonprofit organizations play an important role in our society. An understanding of the issues as they pertain to a nonprofit organization is important if one is to undertake a study of Canada's nonprofit sector and associated issues. The outcomes of this research are significant in that they may help the nonprofit field better understand the relationship

between environmental changes, and the ensuing internal response and actions relating to these changes. This information can be used to strengthen organizations within the nonprofit sector in the future; particularly nonprofit organizations that strive to improve the quality of life of their clients.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to one organization, an Aboriginal¹ nonprofit health organization. This research project systematically investigated the relationship between internal and external forces as well as the program delivery, by conducting a case study analysis. With a single-organization case study there is an opportunity to gain rich, comprehensive and in-depth information. The limitation of this approach is the issue of generalizability and determining the extent to which the findings from this study relate to other nonprofit groups. This issue was considered at various junctures throughout the observation period, and will be addressed further in this project.

Project Overview

This research paper has been divided into five chapters. Chapter One has provided the background to the study, including the pertinent research questions and overall purpose. Chapter Two contextualizes the study theoretically by presenting key features in a theoretical framework for this study. It discusses neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory and traditions in the study of bureaucratic organizations and

¹ The Aboriginal people's definition includes Indian, Inuit and Métis. *Source: Statistics Canada, 1996.* Although the term 'Aboriginal People's' is the proper terminology, the term 'Aboriginal' will be the terminology used throughout this research project.

their legitimacy, with an emphasis on the study of nonprofit organizations. This chapter also traces the history of Canada's Aboriginal peoples and describes the history, purpose and staff profile of the Aboriginal organization that was studied for this project. Chapter Three deals with the research methodology, outlining the role of the researcher in this ethnographic case study. This is followed by Chapter Four, which provides an analysis of the effect of the environment in which the organization operates. This chapter also discusses structure, committees, staff, and volunteers, and their roles in transmitting the mission, culture and goals of the organization. A qualitative analysis of data is presented in Chapter Four based on emergent themes and their relationship to the research questions. This project concludes with consideration of the implications and limitations of the research, and suggestions for future research initiatives, all presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework and Key Organizational Issues

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the theoretical framework for the study through a discussion of the key theoretical and practical issues related to the project. First, a discussion of the key tenets of neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory is presented. Second, a perspective on organizational strategy and structure is provided, highlighting the importance of organizational culture, values and beliefs. Third, the background and significance of some of the unique aspects of the focal organization are discussed. Some background is provided regarding the changing role of nonprofit organizations. Finally, the importance of Aboriginal culture is also discussed.

Organizational Change

An organization's response to change is the main focus of this study. Organizations may respond to institutional change and pressures in a variety of modes ranging from passive compliance with institutional norms, to direct and active defiance of an institutional environment (Goodstein, 1994). Organizations must respond to institutional pressures and demands embodied in regulations, norms, laws and social expectations (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These institutional pressures and demands emanate from a number of sources, including state, via regulatory and government agencies, the professions and public and private interest groups (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer & Scott 1983; Scott, 1987); however, the study of organizational change in this area is not well understood.

Usually empirical research draws on a single theoretical approach in explaining particular cases of organizational behaviour and structure (Tolbert, 1985). But combining resource dependency theory and neo-institutional theory perspectives allows for a much fuller explanation of the process of institutionalization. Sherer and Lee (2002) argue that taken together, both neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory contribute to further understanding and predicting the sources of institutional change.

This study is based on neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory, and begins with the assumption that organizations are social entities infused with values and beliefs. The legitimacy of an organization is dependent on its conformity with institutionalized expectations. These expectations are socially defined by constituents who pressure organizations to conform to institutionalized expectations regarding acceptable organizational structure, goals, policies, programs and procedures.

While the theory of institutional change still remains largely misunderstood (Kraatz & Moore, 2002), this current study attempts to gain an understanding of the influences of the institutional environment by integrating arguments from neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory. The research was addressed in terms of two key concepts from neo-institutional theory - isomorphism and legitimacy. In the current study, several fundamental changes had been evolving in the institutional environment. I focused on one particular organization that was re-inventing itself in the face of such change.

Neo-Institutional Theory

The basic tenets of neo-institutional theory were used to orient and situate the study. This theory is relevant because it considers the organization and the effects a larger environment has on its structure and procedures. This theory is also useful because, unlike other organizational theorists, some of the neo-institutional theorists' research has involved nonprofit organizations (Scott, 1998).

Neo-institutional theory draws its roots from an open-systems theory that conceives of organizations as entities that interact with, are shaped by, and in turn, help shape the environment in which they are located. Institutional theory suggests that all organizations must garner legitimacy from external constituents in order to increase their resources and survival capabilities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Another point of interest for researchers using neo-institutional theory has been the influence of the social and cultural environment in which organizations find themselves embedded. Neo-institutionalists investigate behaviour within organizations and have tried to understand how the behaviour of actors in collective entities is shaped by conventions, norms, myth and ceremonies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Although organizations can obtain legitimacy and ultimately, survival by conforming to institutional expectations, they are also constrained by these same institutionalized expectations. Pressures from the environment not only constrain the organization of activities, but these pressures also influence the development of organizational goals (Scott, 1987).

When an organization establishes legitimacy by institutionalizing its supporters' expectations, failure to meet those expectations can result in the loss of that legitimacy.

Neo-institutional theory suggests that institutionalized organizations derive legitimacy as a result of isomorphism. Legitimacy is derived from organizational alignment with socially constructed and accepted conceptions of appropriate organizational goals, structures and routines. Organizations can obtain legitimacy and survival by conforming to institutional expectations; however, they are also constrained by institutional expectations (Scott, 2000). Scott indicates that “institutional environments are multiple, enormously diverse, and variable over time. To neglect their presence and power is to ignore significant causal factors shaping organizational structures and practices” (Scott, 1987, p. 508). Therefore, neo-institutional theory must attend to a wide range of processes, structures and mechanisms by which institutional change occurs.

Neo-institutional theory encompasses a broad theoretical framework. It also consists of diverse ideas regarding organizations. These diverse ideas can vary depending on which sector and institutional theorists are chosen to study. Neo-institutional theorists study the behaviour within organizations and have tried to understand how the behaviour of actors in collective entities is shaped by norms, myths and ceremonies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). They have also directed their attention towards understanding how similar structures and practices arise in related organizations.

According to Meyer, Scott and Deal (1983), institutional structures emerge in society and define various roles and programs as rational and legitimate. In their study, they looked at schools and indicated that to survive is to conform to institutional rules. These structures encourage the development of specific bureaucratic organizations that incorporate these elements and conform to these rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). While neo-institutional theorists (e.g. DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977;

Meyer & Scott, 1983; Zucker, 1988) have attended to somewhat distinctive institutional elements in formulating their views of legitimacy, it is useful to distinguish analytically among three types of control mechanisms: coercive, mimetic, and normative (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Coercive isomorphism is a result of legal or state-imposed rules. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that when the pressure to conform comes from governmental regulations, acts or laws, then coercive institutional pressures are at work. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) also suggest that various authorities can use coercive power to compel compliance. Slack and Hinings (1994) agree that coercive isomorphism is the result of formal and informal pressures exerted on other organizations, which may be dependent on them, but it also may result from cultural expectations within the societal context in which the organization exists. Thus, actors in the environment are sufficiently powerful to impose structural configurations and practices on organizations.

Mimetic isomorphism is miming, mentoring or duplicating something that another organization is already doing. In other words, mimetic isomorphism is primarily concerned with how uncertainty influences organizational decision-making. “Uncertainty is also a powerful force that encourages imitation” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 151). Mentoring can also help to reduce uncertainty. “Organizations that can demonstrate their adoption of mentoring programs ensure the legitimacy that comes from having this appropriate social form in the eyes of existing employees, employee applicant pools, and external constituents” (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001, p. 254). In sum, there exist many ways whereby nonprofit firms remain competitive by following societal norms.

Normative isomorphism is associated with professionalism. It attempts to explain how organizations respond to pressures from professional bodies. Responding to these pressures enable organizations to achieve legitimacy in their environment and increase their chances of survival and success (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Neo-institutional theory suggests that the imitation of legitimated industry practices will enhance employer legitimacy. In hiring professionals, organizations are usually thought to acquire the talent they need to manage and operate their technologies. The operation of normative forces in organizations must also consider the structural configurations of its members' roles (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001). Neo-institutional theory proposes that when organizational processes are poorly understood due to uncertainty, managers will be motivated to monitor the actions of other organizations in their field in an effort to find viable solutions to organizational problems (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Meyer and Rowan (1977) shifted the focus from organizational goals to the structural and procedural aspects of organizations. “Independent of their productive efficiency, organizations which exist in highly elaborated institutional environments and succeed in becoming isomorphic with these environments gain the legitimacy and resources needed to survive” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 352). Thus suggesting that, in organizations, rationalized arguments take the form of myths that cannot be objectively tested, but stand as rational on the basis that everyone knows them to be true - “institutionalization involves the processes by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule like status in social thought and action” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341). Rationalized myths are part of the institutional context in which organizations operate and to which they adapt in order to maintain their social legitimacy.

Thus, rationalized institutions create myths of formal structure, which shape organizations. Furthermore, Meyer, et al. (1983) suggest that institutional structures emerge in society and define various roles and programs as rational and legitimate. These structures encourage the development of specific bureaucratic organizations that incorporate these elements and conform to these rules (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In other words, adoption of the rules creates the myth that the organization is operating rationally. Because myths are highly institutionalized and considered objective, they are not challenged. Therefore, rules are taken for granted as legitimate. Organizations do not necessarily conform to rules because they are taken-for-granted, but because they are often rewarded for doing so through increased legitimacy, resources and survival capabilities (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

According to Zucker (1991), the level of institutionalization directly influences the transmission, maintenance and resistance to change on cultural persistence. Culture, she writes, is a highly institutionalized social construct—a perception of reality—transmitted from one actor to another, one generation to another (p.86). The degree of institutionalization depends on whether an act is perceived to be more or less exterior and objective. Zucker (1977) discusses institutionalization as both a process and a property variable. “It is the process by which individual actors transmit what is socially defined as real and, at the same time, at any point in the process, the meaning of an act can be defined as more or less a taken-for-granted part of the social reality.” (Zucker, 1977, p. 728).

This section has shown that neo-institutional theory can explain the influence of the environment and the impact of its professionalization on structure, strategy, and

processes – coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism. Guided by theory, this study will look at how one organization has maintained an emphasis on social performance and pursued legitimacy in the face of change. It will do so by observing how this organization exhibits isomorphic structures consistent with the dictates of institutional norms.

Resource Dependency Theory

According to the resource dependency theory, the acquisition and maintenance of resources are paramount for survival. Since acquisition of resources is viewed by resource dependence theorists as the key to organizational survival, resource providers become the dominant component of the environment and a major source of uncertainty, constraint and contingency for nonprofit organizations.

Acquiring and maintaining adequate resources requires an organization to interact with others who control those resources. The level of constraint depends on the degree of dependence experienced by an organization. Effective organizations recognize and modify the locus of their dependence, identifying and appropriately responding to the criteria required for continued resource acquisition from each key provider (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Either directly or indirectly, financial success can result in greater organizational stability, managerial improvements, increased visibility and capacity for fund raising and strengthened program activity (Skloot, 1987).

In terms of understanding dependency forces in the voluntary health sector, Scott (1982) states that conformity to the requirements of these external resource providing agencies is a condition for the survival and success of health organizations. Organizations will tend to map the complexity of environmental elements into their own structures. To

remain competitive, for example, nonprofit organizations acquire grant-writing expertise. Moreover, nonprofit organizations will seek alternative funding sources to help reduce the resource dependence caused by donation and grant-based income generating strategies.

By adopting changes within the institutional environment, a nonprofit organization is able to demonstrate to the funding agency that it is performing tasks in a proper manner. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977), the organization becomes legitimate. This legitimacy can be used as a source of status with the state agency, and in this way, the organization ensures that it continues to receive the resources it requires to operate.

In the case of nonprofit organizations it may be recognized that the central constructs from resource dependency and institutional theory are closely intertwined. In the absence of clear objective performance criteria such as return on investment or profit margins, organizational performance and legitimacy are judged on the basis of value-based criteria. While some performance based criteria (such as accountability and responsible management) may be important, the successful acquisition of resources over time is much more reliant on symbolic actions and perceptions of legitimacy than it is on substantive criteria such as profits or earnings per share. Thus, legitimacy may be seen as a resource in and of itself, in that having legitimacy allows a nonprofit organization to establish stronger networks and alliances, which in turn increase the quantity and quality of information and potential access to key funding sources.

The theoretical orientation of this study then, is to examine the mutual interdependence of neo-institutional and resource dependence concepts. While the

concept of legitimacy has often been examined from a value-based perspective, it is viewed here primarily as a resource that is relationship-based and self-reinforcing – that is, legitimacy begets legitimacy. Another contribution of this study is to examine institutionalization and resource dependency concepts in a complimentary rather than contradictory light. Through previous research, neo-institutional theory argues that over time, organizations will adopt similar characteristics to gain legitimacy and ensure survival (isomorphism), while resource dependency theory argues that over time organizations will seek differentiation on the basis that chances of survival can be enhanced by avoiding an over-dependence on any one external entity. By viewing legitimacy as a resource, this research explores the idea that isomorphism and differentiation work, in a complementary manner, gain and sustain legitimacy and secure resources from a variety of sources.

Organizational responses to legitimacy connect the components of this study. From a neo-institutional perspective, legitimacy is derived from organizational conformity with socially constructed and accepted conceptions of appropriate organizational goals, structures and routines (Scott, 2000). Although effectiveness of an organizational form can be demonstrated by meeting goals and objectives, this is not sufficient to ensure survival. Support from powerful internal and external actors is necessary to ensure survival, as is the development of strategic responses.

For the current study, attention will be directed towards identifying the external constituents who impose demands on the organization as well as the means with which to cope with such demands through strategic responses. The strategic response literature contends that organizations may seek to comply, avoid or try to manipulate institutional

demands. Therefore, this study will incorporate organizational responses to institutional pressures (i.e., acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance and manipulation) as identified by Oliver (1991).

Organizational Configuration

In order to examine organizational change, it is necessary to begin with a conceptualization of what an organization is and what are the key characteristics that may change over time. Greenwood and Hinings (1996) suggest that it is essential to explore both the structures of organizations as well as the systems and processes that connect the structural attributes. This suggests the need to examine and categorize not only the structural attributes such as size and division of labour, but processing issues such as development of a mission, decision making, governance, and ability to attract the necessary resources. Hinings and Greenwood (1987) define organizational configuration as the structures and processes by which tasks are carried out. They also argue that organizational structures are reflexive expressions of intentions, aspirations and meaning that are embodied in the dominant values and beliefs found in an organization (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988). Other researchers have used this basic conceptualization of organizational configuration as a foundation to examine organizational change in nonprofit sport organizations (MacIntosh, Bedeck & Franks, 1987; Slack & Thibault, 1987), but the model has not been utilized to examine organizational change in nonprofit health organizations.

Based on the Greenwood and Hinings (1988; 1993; 1996) model of strategic organizational change, understanding change is not then just a matter of understanding

organizational structures, it also involves understanding the values and beliefs that underpin these structures (Bigelow & Stone, 1995). Many researchers have studied organizational values and beliefs as an aspect of organizational culture (Schein, 1985). Culture, Zucker (1991) points out, is a highly institutionalized social construct--a perception of reality--transmitted from one actor to another. Organizational culture, is a concept that has been used by theorists and practitioners to describe organizational life. By understanding organizations more fully, we increase our ability to make decisions that are relevant to the needs of the members, and that are effective in helping to increase organizational effectiveness.

The concept of organizational culture has been defined in numerous ways. For example, Schein (1985) defines organizational culture as the set of shared values and beliefs. Organizational culture, then, is based on relatively enduring values embodied in organizational norms, rules and goals. Different organizational structures give rise to different patterns of interaction, and these patterns lead to the formation of different organizational structures.

Thus, in examining organizational change in the focal organization of the current study, analytical attention will be given to both the organization's structural attributes, and its underlying values and beliefs. Cultural values and beliefs are of particular interest in this study since the focal organization was an Aboriginal organization. The focal organization was built around a specific set of values and beliefs that were at times in conflict with institutionalized values and beliefs which were prevalent in the wider societal milieu. Our attention will now turn to a discussion of pressures facing the nonprofit sector and some of the unique characteristics of the Aboriginal culture.

Pressures Facing the Nonprofit Health Sector

In order to understand the pressures facing the nonprofit health sector, it is important to define the sector. The word health symbolizes more than just health care. In terms of health and health care classifications, there are as many different ideas as there are people. From a population health perspective, health is understood in broad-based terms. The Government of Canada indicates that there is more to health than health care. It contends that there are powerful links between prosperity, income distribution, and the role of education and economic development in fostering health². For example, education increases opportunities for income and employment, and equips people with a sense of control over life circumstances-thus influencing health and coping skills. Hence, the nonprofit sector includes environmental service providers to medical care organizations.

The nonprofit health sector faces many pressures. The first indication of institutionalization can be seen by way of their interaction with the many entities existing in the social and economic environment. For example, nonprofit organizations may act as contractual agents for government, hold contracts with businesses to provide health care services for their employees, form partnerships with business and government, and have corporate or government employees involved as board members for their organization. These relationships with government provide a conduit for institutional values to be passed on to the nonprofit incorporation form.

² Population Health. *Source: Strategies for population health: Investing in the health of Canadians: Ottawa: Minister of Supply of Services Canada 1994.*

All nonprofit organizations are experiencing financial and competitive pressure that has created a climate conducive to adopting structures and practices from the corporate sector (Shortell, Gillies, & Devers, 1995). Ongoing shrinking economic resources accompanied with a shift in responsibility from government to the nonprofit sector for dealing with social/health problems is becoming a reality (Salamon, 1989). Nonprofit organizations compete with one another for donations, membership, clients and sales (Stienberg, 1987). Consequently, nonprofit organizations are adopting structures, policies, programs and procedures to adapt to these environmental demands.

Increasingly, nonprofit associations are embedded in supra-organizational systems or are subject to broader institutional values or beliefs that influence their structures and practices (Alexander & Weiner, 1998). For example, many local nonprofit organizations are linked to national or umbrella organizations (e.g. United Way). It may well be that at the national level there are highly organized agencies that approximate the professional bureaucracy model of organizational design. For example, the Toronto Star suggests that nonprofit health organizations such as St. John Ambulance, and the Parkinson Foundation of Canada, must be run like businesses in order to be successful (Scrivener, 1999). The article further states that “those who run non-profit organizations are taking additional training at business schools. They are working on their masters of business administration degrees to help them run their organizations more efficiently in an era of cutbacks and increased competition for charitable donations” (Scrivener, 1999, p. B1). This shift towards a more business-like model can be related to Thorton’s (2002) article addressing conflicting institutional logics.

Adapting to the Environment

Nonprofit organizations appear to be adapting to their environment in several ways. They seem to view the adoption of alternative strategies as mechanisms to ensure their survivability. A variety of options are actively being explored by nonprofit organizations. Some organizations are emphasizing internal and external operating efficiencies, while others have improved their financial workings, engaged in new and different marketing strategies, or increased government lobbying efforts in an effort to secure resources. Alternatively, nonprofit organizations may form partnerships to raise funds (Skloot, 1983). And yet another approach, and to some a less attractive one, is that of retrenchment. Of the existing retrenchment alternatives, the one drawing increased attention is that of increased involvement in commercial activity. Commercial activity helps to reduce the resource dependence caused by traditional government grant issuances and individual donations and is only one strategy among many when it comes to adapting to changes as a result of internal and external pressures.

A question for consideration is whether these attempts to secure resources threaten organizational mission statements by causing increased bureaucratization and professionalism. Researchers are concerned that nonprofit organizations will become so much like businesses that their financial concerns will be diverted from their social missions (Bush, 1992; Kramer, 1987; Salamon, 1989). Lipsky and Rathgeb-Smith (1989/90) maintain a similar position when they expressed that, “while contracts may allow an agency to expand services, pay their staff better salaries, and move into new service areas, contracts bring administrative and accountability demands that may conflict with an agency's mission” (p. 630). Similarly, from a resource dependency

perspective, Selznick suggests that organizations often unintentionally displace their initial goals and depart from their missions as they attempt to adapt to environmental dependencies, increase efficiency, and/or resolve power struggles (Kraatz & Moore, 2002). Although empirical studies are numbered in this area (Kramer, 1987), the consequences of agencies receiving funds are dependency, co-optation and dilution of advocacy and autonomy, goal depletion and loss of an agency's voluntaristic character through increased bureaucratization and professionalism. Thus, it is important to examine not only the pressures facing organizations in today's nonprofit health sector, but also to gain an in-depth understanding of how organizations interpret and respond to these pressures.

The Focal Organization

This ethnographic case study examined the effects of institutional change at "The Centre," a pseudonym for a nonprofit health organization. Its mission is "to strive to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples in an urban community by supporting self-determined activities which encourage equal access to, and participation in society, and which respect and strengthen the increasing emphasis on Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness" (<http://www.CACcentres.ca>). Their mission clearly relates to health in broad-based terms. Hence, their organizational outcomes are related to health.

This organization has been in operation since 1969, and is supported by the Aboriginal community and several non-Aboriginal agencies dealing with concerns and issues in the geographic area in which it operates.

This organization is part of a larger group of similar organizations, also called “Centres.” They are mandated by the guidelines and procedures stipulated by a national body (Canadian Association for Centres (CAC) that oversees all the Centres and Provincial Territorial Associations (PTA).

The concept of a “Centre” originated in the mid-1950’s. A noticeable number of Aboriginals were moving to Canada’s larger urban areas, to seek an improved quality of life. In an effort to address the needs expressed by their communities, concerned individuals began to push for the establishment of specialized agencies. Until 1972, the Centres were dependent, to a large degree, on individual volunteers and their ability to raise operating funds through various fund raising events, private donations and grants from provincial and federal governments. Today there are 114 Centres and seven PTA’s across Canada.

The Centre was founded to serve as a drop-in centre for Aboriginals who had relocated to the city from their reserves. Since then, the Centre has grown into a multi-service agency that provides health-related services. They organize several community events and celebrations to promote healthy living and to encourage cultural sustainability. Their current programming stresses the importance of community involvement and includes youth programming for Aboriginals through outreach services, cultural and educational programs, and recreational activities. In addition to the aforementioned services, The Centre is the successful recipient of the new homeless shelter, and the Aboriginal Population Health Survey contract. The Centre also provides advocacy services and plays an active role in the community.

While changes to date have been developmental, recent changes and uncertainties in the external environment have accelerated the organization's growth. Hence, the organization has expanded their services and client offerings by forming various formal and informal partnerships locally with other organizations and by diversifying their funding resources. The Centre has increased in size over the years, currently employing 10 paid staff and retaining approximately 20 volunteers. Five Aboriginals and two non-Aboriginals represent the current board of directors.

Rationale for Chosen Study Site

Aboriginals are the longest residing people of Canada. They maintain a part of history that is unique to Canada and to each individual tribal group. There are three types of groups that fall under the Aboriginal people's definition. This is as a result of the 1982 Constitution Act that recognized three main groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Aboriginal peoples are those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group (e.g. First Nations, Inuit or Métis) and/or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or Registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act and/or those who were members of an Indian Band or First Nation (Statistics Canada, 1996).

An Aboriginal organization was chosen as the focus of this study because of the reality that as Aboriginal lifestyles, socio-political issues and current demographics are changing, a need to expand the scope of research to include factors highlighting Aboriginal employment and organizational issues has been identified.

Even though Aboriginals are the first inhabitants of Canada, and were historically forced to live a life of isolation on what are called "reserves," their lifestyles are now

changing. Prior to these recent changes, Aboriginals resided in rural or isolated areas of Canada (Frideres, 1998). This isolated lifestyle can be attributed to occurrences surrounding their past. That is, when the European settlers arrived in what is now Canada, they began to make arrangements or treaties with Aboriginals. The treaty making process meant that Aboriginals gave up their title to lands in exchange for certain rights. Most of the agreements included reserving pieces of land to be used only by Aboriginals called reserves. Aboriginals have been trying for years to fight for the return of these rights. Aboriginal groups and the government continue to negotiate new agreements pertaining to land ownership and the recognition of other rights. Today, less than half live on reserves. Others live and work in cities across Canada. About 20% of Aboriginal people live in seven of the country's 25 census metropolitan areas.³

Over the last few decades there has been an increase in unprecedented changes in the Aboriginal community. Pressures for change have come from a variety of sources including civil resistance, court decisions, Aboriginal leadership, public opinion and a royal commission. In addition, Bill C-31 was passed and implemented; resulting in regained or acquired Indian status for over 105,000 individuals⁴ and, for many Aboriginals, new pressures regarding community facilities and questions of community membership. The federal government, while reducing the growth in funding levels to Aboriginals, has implemented new or modified policies regarding land claims, self-government, housing, funding transfer mechanisms, post-secondary education and economic development.

³ Seven Census cities are: Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Saskatoon, and Regina.
Source: 1996 Census.

Third, as statistics reveal, the Aboriginal population is on the rise. According to the 1961 and 1971 census, there were approximately 220,121 and 212,760 Aboriginals in Canada respectively⁵. In 1981, it was estimated that Aboriginals constituted 2.0% (486,834) of the total Canadian population. According to the 1996 Census, 799,010 people reported having Aboriginal origins (Statistics Canada, 1996). This is an incredible increase from the 1961 census.⁶ This population increase takes on even greater significance when it is revealed that the population increases are occurring in the under 24-year olds age bracket. This range represents 53% of their population and this growth is forecasted to continue increasing in the future.⁷

Aboriginals are still working to keep their unique cultures and languages alive. They are trying to regain control over decisions that affect their lives--in other words to become self-governed. Aboriginals continue to play an active role in building the future of Canada.

⁴ The Indian Act (Bill C-31) was passed in 1985 and was instrumental in some 105,000 children of an Indian woman married to a non-status Indian and Indian women being reinstated as Status Indians. *Source: 1991 Census Handbook Statistics Canada (Catalogue No. 92-305 E).*

⁵ Over the years, methodological and administrative changes have occurred regarding Aboriginal census data causing problems with total counts and fluctuations. The census data of Aboriginal people between 1871 and 1971 were unique and different from enumerations that occurred with the past two decades. During this period, persons whom the Canadian government registered as "Indians" were counted separately from other Aboriginal people who may have had the same ancestry, but were considered as "non-status Indians" because they did not meet the legal definition set out in the Indian Act. Also, during this period all ethnic origin data related to responses concerning only an individual's father's side. Therefore the population figures presented here may not be very accurate, as they discount Aboriginal women who married interracially, and under-counted Aboriginal people on reserves and in cities. *Source: Census Handbook (1996) (Catalogue No. 92-352-XPE).*

⁶ This incredible increase in the population could be partly due to changes brought to the Indian Act (Bill C-31) in 1985. Also, it might be due to earlier undercounting that has occurred in the past. Prior to 1981, the Census did not include multiple responses. Specifically, the question used to identify Aboriginal Canadians in 1981 was "to which ethnic or cultural group did you or your ancestors belong on first coming to this continent?" The question was changed again in 1986 and became "To which ethnic or cultural group (s) do you or did your ancestors belong?" And at that time, the respondents were allowed to write in three ethnic origins. In 1991, the question changed again and then for the 1996 census, the question asked directly if the person is an Aboriginal person. *Source: Census Handbook (1996) (Catalogue No. 92-352-XPE).*

⁷ Statistics Canada 1996 Census revealed that their average age is 10 years younger than the average age of the rest of Canada (25.5 vs. 35.4). *Source: Statistics Canada, 1996.*

The focal organization of this study is located in the province of Alberta. Among the provinces and territories, the 1996 census shows that Alberta has the second highest Aboriginal population. In Alberta, 122,835 Aboriginals were enumerated during the 1996 census. They constituted a significant 5% of Alberta's population and, as discussed above, their proportion is increasing rapidly. With this growth, also comes an increase of aboriginal migration to the cities and towns in Alberta. Although this change is welcomed in the eyes of government statisticians, this increased migration also comes with a vast array of challenges to those in the helping professions, like public service institutions, health care service providers, and ultimately, nonprofit health organizations.

This study takes place in a small urban centre. Although the Aboriginal population in this area is documented, the disparity in population figures supports the notion that the actual local Aboriginal population is highly uncertain. It is in fact considerably higher than in reported documentation. This poses an even greater concern for those associated with nonprofit health organizations. Dealing with an urban Aboriginal lifestyle is one thing if it is stable, but dealing with frequent moves and a lack of long-term fixed addresses is another thing.

As such, nonprofit health organizations are subject to pressures from internal and external agents to conform to expectations regarding organizational structure, goals, programs, professionalism, policies and procedures. Perceived legitimacy is important by all actors involved, but it is especially important that support from powerful internal and external actors exists to ensure survival as well. Moreover, organizational responses to legitimacy are also key components of this study. From a neo-institutional perspective, legitimacy is derived from organizational conformity with socially constructed and

accepted conceptions of appropriate organizational goals, structures and routines (Scott, 2000). Therefore, this research project identifies institutional pressures and explores isomorphism and legitimacy through strategic responses.

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

This chapter will discuss the research design, the data collection strategies used and the data analysis procedures chosen.

Site Selection and Field Preparations

A major challenge facing every field researcher is to select a research site that is conducive to the goals at hand. The nature of my research objectives along with the following personal reasons, made the task simpler: 1) to study Aboriginal issues as part of the Business Enterprises, and Self-Governing Systems of Indian, Inuit, and Metis Peoples Program 2) to understand the pressures faced by nonprofit organizations from a social scientist viewpoint; 3) to continue to work with Aboriginal people, and; 4) to heighten my understanding of Aboriginal issues in the workplace.

As Creswell (1994) recommends, I acknowledged my personal bias to the readers in that I am a white middle-class female, raised in the dominant society of the Western world, speaking Canada's two official languages. Having lived in two of Canada's most culturally diverse cities, Ottawa and Montreal, coupled with significant exposure to ethnically different cultures through travel, I developed open-mindedness and cultural awareness. Additionally while working in the Northwest Territories, I garnered a great amount of insight into the Aboriginal identity through the contact I enjoyed with my Aboriginal co-workers. I lived in the Northwest Territories for three years, spending two of these three years as a member of a Gwich'In family who through my common-law husband included me in their ways of living, teaching, sharing and understanding.

To compensate for my personal bias, I had several employees from The Centre willing to read samples of my writing as it was produced. My two advisors, experienced in fieldwork, were available to provide me with direction throughout.

I was sensitive to my roots in the dominant culture and my role as researcher and was able to question my manner, thinking and assumptions in order to see things differently and to open myself to changes. I was aware that my presence as a non-Aboriginal could affect the atmosphere and what was said at, for example, a woman's group, but knowing that other non-Aboriginals attended such events meant that my presence would not necessarily be unusual or inhibiting.

Ethnographic Case Study

An ethnographic case study was used to study an Aboriginal nonprofit health organization. As a researcher, I immersed myself in the minutiae of everyday organizational life of one organization. In order to more fully understand the complex process of institutionalism, one must consider acts of interpretation by organization members. As one researcher pointed out, "neoinstitutionalism goes hand-in-hand with organizational ethnography as a broad research paradigm" (Zilber, 2002, p. 237). A case study is an empirical inquiry that "investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 1989, p. 23). According to James (1977), "Ethnography is the study of culture from within, the attempt through field observation to record how individuals perceive, construct, and interact within their social and economic environment" (p. 180). This approach offered me an opportunity to study the emergence of institutional phenomenon in an organizational context.

A major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence. The use of multiple sources allows a researcher to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal and observational issues (Yin, 1989). Therefore, this current study used the methods of participant observation, interviews and document analysis.

Unit of Analysis

It is important to define the case under investigation. As a general guide, the unit of analysis is related to the way the initial research questions have been defined (Yin, 1989). In this instance, the primary unit of analysis is the type of organization that is being studied, the Aboriginal nonprofit health organization. However, the same case study may involve more than one unit of analysis (Yin, 1989). In this study, one must recognize that organizations do not act, rather, individuals in organizations act individually and collectively. Even though events occur within this single case, attention has also been given to the Aboriginal employees as a subunit of the study. Therefore, this type of design is an embedded case study (Yin, 1989). Although the main focus of this study involved a single nonprofit organization, the subunit identification added significant opportunities for analysis.

Rigour and Confirmability

Case study researchers also must maximize the quality of the design through construct validity external validity and reliability⁸. To ensure the quality of this study, several techniques were employed. A detailed diary was maintained throughout all stages of the project to ensure that decisions made concerning data collection, analysis and interpretations were documented. Also, the potential problems of construct validity were addressed because I provided multiple measures of the same phenomenon. To increase the reliability of my case study, I maintained a chain of evidence. First, the study itself has made sufficient citation to the documents, interviews and observations. Second, the database created indicates actual evidence with date documentation. Also, the review process demonstrated construct validity from a methodological viewpoint. That is, it was reviewed not only by peers, but also by members of the organization. Informal discussions were held with key respondents regarding the findings.

The Data

My fieldwork began in May, 2002 and was completed in July, 2002. During this period, the methods of data collection were those associated with an ethnographic case study. In this design framework, a qualitative approach was used to capture the issues as defined by organizational members and key stakeholders. Qualitative research was used because it involves rigorous methods of collecting, sorting and managing complex data, and interpreting patterns and meaning within the data. Marshall and Rossman (1995)

⁸ In a qualitative inquiry, construct validity is establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied; external validity is establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized;

indicate that qualitative designs are the best choice when the researcher is conducting research that involves poorly understood organizational phenomena and systems. Critical to qualitative methods, then, is actively listening to people and recording their perceptions, beliefs, and knowledge, and observing and recording what they actually do. Of course, what people say they do and their actual behaviours may not always be consistent. Qualitative methods may reveal inconsistencies; however this concern was decreased through the combination of participant observation research and interviewing (Page as cited in Lambert, Ashery and Needle, 1995).

Roles of the Researcher

Different roles are adopted to gain access to organizations and their employees (Gummesson, 2000). In a traditional academic researcher role, the qualitative methods available are that of interviews and observation, and according to Gummesson (2000), a method that will take the researcher even further is that of participant observation. When dealing with processes of decision-making, implementation and change, it is essential to establish satisfactory access. Gummesson (2000) indicates that adopting the “employee” role provides the most comprehensive access to strategic and organizational issues.

In the participant observer role, I volunteered at The Centre approximately twenty-five hours per week over a three-month period. As a volunteer, I assisted various coordinators with daily activities, special events, career fairs, cultural activities and with fundraising initiatives. In addition, I helped out with homelessness initiatives, such as Soup Kitchen, the Homeless Street Van (HSV) and the interim homeless shelter.

and reliability is demonstrating that the operations of a study--such that as the data collection procedures--

On a number of occasions, I visited The Centre simply as a chance to be there and to check to see if any new signs were up for events. During these visits, I would try to immerse myself in the culture and sit on one of the couches to work on some of my journal writing. This sometimes made data recording easier as I had fewer distractions than I do at my office. A secondary feature of the practice was engaging in conversation with members of the organization as they constructed what change means to them. I sometimes used indirect sources, (i.e. workers' stories) to learn more about the organization's profile. Handwritten notes were made and later transcribed on my home computer.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a special form of observation and involves firsthand knowledge of the chosen setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). It allows the researcher to get closer to the lived experience of the participant. I wanted to be more than a passive observer, I wanted to participate in the events being studied. I wanted to understand organizational issues from the viewpoint of actors internal to the case study. This domain was ideal because it fit the setting and the participants' sensitivity. The workers instructed all clients that I was a researcher observing the workers as I volunteered and that I would not be recording anything pertaining to the clients.

The data were interpreted as a member of the organization and as a researcher. The field notes of the participant observation were written in the form of a story rendered mainly in the words of the organizational members (Agar, 1980).

can be repeated, with the same results (Yin, 1989)

Interviews

The second method of data collection used was interviewing. According to Yin (1989), the interview is one of the most important sources of case study information. An interview guide was designed to maintain order and to allow for focused examination of issues, but sufficiently open to allow for examination of emergent meanings and constructs. The interview guide for the organizational members was divided into sections reflecting objectives of the study. Respondents were asked to provide limited socio-demographic information and a range of questions pertaining to their work responsibilities, issues, thoughts and attitudes (see Appendix A). A set of questions was developed specially for stakeholders (e.g. municipal employees). I hoped to get a clearer understanding of how the stakeholders viewed the organization (see Appendix B).

Formal interview times were established with the participants ahead of time. Interviews were conducted during regular working hours without interruption. The interviews were conducted behind closed doors to ensure privacy and anonymity. All respondents were informed that a copy of the final report would remain with the centre indefinitely. I took along my tape recorder during every interview, but used it only after getting permission from the participant, and only as a backup to my notes.

Secondary Documents

Secondary documents were used as a source of contextual information. They not only provide contextual information, but are also a type of observational technique. According to one well-known ethnographic researcher, observational technique can

encompass more than what one visualizes, including for instance, documents and records that can be obtained in a particular setting (Prus, 1994). The organization's policies and procedures manual was obtained which outlined the mission, the charter of the institution and its stated procedures in the community. Other pertinent written documents including minutes of the general meetings, agendas, newsletters, newspaper clippings and annual reports were collected for subsequent interpretive analysis. This type of information can take many forms and provides an excellent supplement as part of the data collection strategies.

Ethical Considerations

As with any research conducted at the university, the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee, practicing under Tri-Council Guidelines gave approval for the study. Dealing with ethical issues like confidentiality, privacy and anonymity for the protection of respondents has always been a major challenge among social scientists who conduct research with human subjects in small-scale contexts (Bernard, 1988). It is common practice to use fictitious names for organizations, communities and respondents when conducting a study that involves human subjects. This same respect for anonymity was taken into consideration in this context as well. Throughout this report, the organization is referred to as "The Centre". The respondents were aware that they were referred to as only "the staff" and were given pseudo names when referred to individually. All respondents were asked to give consent before commencing the participant observation component. All respondents were asked to sign a consent form prior to the commencement of any interview (see Appendix C). They were

informed that neither their name nor the name of the organization where they worked would be identified in the notes, interviews or research project.

In the cover letters through both stages of the study, respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time with no consequences.

Data Analysis

The analytical technique that was used as part of a general strategy was that of Explanation-Building. According to Yin (1989), within Explanation-Building (a procedure relevant to explanatory case studies), the goal is to analyze the case study data by building an explanation about the case. The analysis of the data (i.e., interviews, field notes and secondary documents) was based on some designated themes designed to capture the information related to the research questions (Morse & Field, 1995). What is required for the analysis of the data is some means of discovering systematic patterns or relationships among categories (Agar, 1980). This analysis supported an understanding of the institutional pressures occurring in health-related nonprofit organizations.

A combination of explicit coding procedures and an iterative process of redesigning the emerging dimensions through inspection of the data was used. Following the coding procedure, the text subsumed under each code was reviewed, summarized and an analytic memo was written to capture the major issues relevant to this code. Methodological and theoretical memos were written throughout the coding and code review process. Theoretical dimensions were compared with the data, and modified or discarded based on their fit. When considering instances and cases that did not fit within

the formed patterns, I looked for similar cases. If no similar cases were found, then that initial case was considered an anomaly (Mayan, 2001). If similar cases were identified, then they were coded and a new category emerged.

In summary, the research questions contributed to the investigation of meaning using qualitative methods in an ethnographic case study. These techniques adapted well to the organizational context in question.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion of Results

Introduction

This study has systematically investigated organizational responses to a changing environment by conducting a case study of an Aboriginal nonprofit health organization. I observed, studied and participated in The Centre's responses and adaptations to changing environmental demands. Organizations are said to respond to pressures using strategies that are defined within the organizational culture as appropriate and successful. As such, response strategies selected influenced the structure, goals and routines of the organization.

The stories and document analysis revealed that over the course of a few years, The Centre had experienced changes to their systems, structure, policies and procedures. This discussion will explore the findings as they relate to the literature. Neo-institutional theory and resource dependency theory provide the theoretical foundation to study the effects of institutional pressures on this organization, and the strategic response literature supports the pressures that cause organizations to negotiate partial conformity, avoid conformity or try to manipulate institutional demands (Oliver, 1991).

Examination of the Research Questions

Research was conducted through an exploration of the effects of institutionalization on one organization, and guided by the questions; "In what ways do isomorphic changes occur in a non-profit organization? In what ways do external agencies and funding sources shape the structure, procedures, programs, policies and

professionalism of a nonprofit organization? What role do volunteers play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization? What role does professional staff play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?" An examination of the four research questions is highlighted in this next section.

Research Question 1: In what ways do isomorphic changes occur in a non-profit organization?

Introduction

The Centre is an institutional organization, "characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy" (Scott & Meyer, 1991 p. 123).

This research identified the effects of institutionalization, as The Centre demonstrated conformity with institutional expectations. They did so by using strategies such as imitating other Centres, seeking external funding through relationships, selective compliance with institutional demands, and co-opting with institutional authorities, hence conforming to institutional demands. These strategies all resulted in greater institutionalism at The Centre.

Neo-institutional theory contends that in order to be perceived as legitimate, organizations must conform to institutionalized expectations regarding appropriate organizational goals, structures and activities (see Chapter 2).

Nonprofit organizations operate in environments characterized by uncertain relationships between means and ends. In such institutional environments, legitimacy is critical to an organization's ability to secure vital resources (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Organizations gain legitimacy through conformity with prevailing norms, practices, and

beliefs of multiple constituencies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1983), and through organizational responses to institutional pressures.

Scott and Meyer (1991) reasoned that because formal organizational training programs had become widely disseminated and thus were taken for granted, they had become institutionalized. March (1981) as cited in Haveman (1993) also contributes to the taken for granted approach in that once enough social actors do things a certain way, that course of action becomes taken for granted or institutionalized and other social actors will then undertake that course of action without thinking.

Neo-institutional theory offers an explanation for the way in which organizations maintain stability and still handle uncertainty. They can do so by separating or buffering themselves from the environment (Oliver, 1991). Meyer et al. (1992) suggest that “organizations that conform to institutional rules tend to succeed in environments with elaborated [highly developed or complex] institutional structures.” (p. 48) The structure and the programs can be explained by theory. The conclusion can be drawn that coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism--the effects of professionalism--explains the procedures, policies, programs and professionalization implemented by The Centre.

Coercive Isomorphism

A large part of The Centre’s structure and procedures is the result of coercive isomorphism. Neo-institutional theory states that institutionalized organizations derive legitimacy as a result of isomorphism, replicating forms and procedures that have been rationalized in the wider environment. The structures, policies and procedures of these organizations must accord with social norms in order to gain legitimacy. Through

coercive isomorphism, The Centre adopted the laws governing nonprofit organizations, funding policy guidelines and funding decision changes into their structures, policies and procedures resulting in coercive isomorphism.

Oliver (1991) contends that organizations often acquiesce to institutional pressures through habit. In particular, the role of Revenue Canada in granting charitable status shapes the way in which the nonprofit sector is defined. Laws of incorporation require an elaboration of the governance, legal rights, and the responsibilities of the organization before they are granted status. When an organization is granted 'registered charitable' status, it must submit an annual return. As well, the sector has developed a number of standards for nonprofits, e.g. diversity of board members, requirements to hold an AGM once a year. For example, The Centre's AGM followed the guidelines, with corresponding motions to accept amendments to by-laws and proper voting procedures. One staff member commented on the strict nonprofit guidelines, "...especially when they [The Centre] have the AGM, there is a strict code with it, you have to have do it annually and you have to have so many members and board members in attendance."

Potential changes in government funding, including funding policies can directly affect the actions of a nonprofit organization dependent on state funding. All youth programs at The Centre are dependent on federal funding and are subject to changes in funding arrangements. To prepare for future change, program utilization statistics are prepared as evidence of program success in obtaining and maintaining clients. As indicated by the remarks of one staff member, "as it stands, if there aren't numbers, that is people taking part in the programs, there is always the fear that the program will be cut." Furthermore, The Centre has only recently adopted these reporting procedures, "we

have really over the past few years had to keep good track of those statistics/numbers and to keep them on hand”. Similarly, one staff commented on the severity of the funding constraints, “if we don’t use our funding, that is, if we don’t use this money, then the programs may deteriorate or the money that isn’t used has to be returned.” This reality was manifested with respect to their student positions. If a student left their position earlier than expected, a replacement was hired immediately in his/her place or the funding would be cut and possibly jeopardized for the future. This caused the organization to maintain a student database.

One of the Centre’s funding sources is the community lottery. They now rely on Bingos as a source of fundraising. They used to volunteer at Bingo twice a month and receive a cheque based on how they did each time. But, now the community lottery board has decided to pool all proceeds and distributes the earnings equally among other community organizations. This is a form of coercive pressure as it was decided for all area charities - they have no choice but to comply.

The Centre’s structures and routines are also affected by sudden funding decisions. For example, as a result of partial condemnation to the homeless shelter, The Centre was called upon to set up an interim homeless shelter⁹. Within hours of the announcement, The Centre staff had rearranged their schedules, cleaned out their upstairs and purchased food and household items like water canisters, towels, pillows, and pillow cases in anticipation of the shelter. Fortunately, The Centre had been preparing for the possibility of an overflow (due to increasing numbers of homeless people) and therefore, built an extra bathroom. They also pre-ordered mats and blankets. They had to alter their

internal staff structure and rely on the existing staff to sacrifice time to volunteer at the shelter in order to accommodate this change. The Centre was the recipient of the new shelter, but recurring city by-law issues remained unresolved. As a result, permanent funding had yet to be awarded. The Centre needed confirmation from city officials that a location and subsequent funding were secured in order to proceed. Until then, The Centre had to rely on volunteer staff to function. Staff members, including myself, worked one night a week at the shelter and in return, were given the next day off. To accommodate this change, the workers had to alter their schedules. With respect to last minute changes, one staff member said:

I know that at the last minute, they prepared a schedule for the shelter when we heard about the flood. But, Emelye and I had already weeks ago put our names down for the first night, so they got prepared in the event that the shelter would happen. But, I didn't expect to find out the same day like that, but that is just how the environment works, it can change so quickly, things are uncertain that way.

Similarly, a stakeholder gave an example of The Centre internal changes:

With the interim shelter. We went to them [The Centre] and asked them could you do this. I know they made changes within their internal structure to prepare and plan. Tracey and I took the designs over to the soup kitchen and showed the people [homeless people] and asked them what they thought. The designs were done by the centre and an architect.

Despite the fact that The Centre had just incorporated these structural changes, in less than one week of operation, the interim shelter guidelines changed. The Centre had to maintain a logbook, as requested by the city. They had the telephone system re-routed to the upstairs. They were no longer allowed to provide the shelter clients with snacks or coffee. The capacity for the shelter was pre-determined at 20, however, the capacity changed to 10. A commissioner was required on site until the building was brought up to

⁹ They received the contract for the new permanent homeless shelter (still to be built), but this was an interim situation that happened at the last minute because of a flood. They have no choice but to comply

fire code. There were changes constantly happening at the shelter as per city codes and regulations. “And there will be more rules and regulations coming up for the shelter and we will have to conform to those,” confirmed a member of the management team. In order to accept the responsibility for the shelter, interim, or permanent, The Centre had to abide by the rules and regulations set out by the city. It can be inferred that these structural changes and processes embodied coercive isomorphism. At this point it is useful to look at the procedures used by The Centre.

Mimetic Isomorphism

Organizations tend to model themselves after similar organizations in their field that they perceive to be more legitimate or successful (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). With recent pressures from the CAC to standardize policies and procedures, networking with similar centres along with increased industry-wide recognition of volunteers--there is more cause to mimic.

The Centre institutionalized its economic development arm to the community, using a model created by the CAC, a form of mimetic isomorphism. The CAC formed a committee to encourage the adoption of economic development at each centre. Centres are going to be required to create and manage the economic vitality to sustain their operations into the future. As the director explains:

All centres are going to be required to do this [run like a business]; it isn't just me with my background here. What is going to happen is that as each centre brings on new leadership they have to look at those business skills of the individual being hired. And certainly through the CAC that is the mandate now and it is their thinking that is leaning towards economic development.

because they were the successful recipients for the shelter to be erected in the fall.

The adoption of these new economic activities is evidence of mimetic isomorphism.

Although the Centre tries to be unique in their programming and services, they find it beneficial to implement programs and procedures that are already in place. Organizations benefit from the imitation of organizational structures and routines that have been successful for others (Oliver, 1991). With respect to the new homeless shelter, The Centre had visited another city's shelter on several occasions for ideas, "when I see something that works, why not? It brings freshness and change." Similarly, as one staff recounts, The Centre generates ideas from other Centres at the annual retreat, "it was great because we listened to others share their stories of what worked and what didn't work at their centers." The Centre trusts the centres in the CAC. This illustrates what Galaskiewicz and Wasserman (1989) demonstrated in their study, which is that organizational actors are more likely to mimic those organizations it trusts.

Many nonprofit organizations today recognize their volunteers in a variety of monetary and non-monetary ways. Writing a letter of recommendation on behalf of one of a volunteer provides the connective tissue by which adherence to social expectations is reproduced. The Centre really tries to recognize their volunteers as indicated by the remarks of one stakeholder:

I started volunteering at The Centre around 96 or 97. When my boy was 17 I got him involved at The Centre as a volunteer, and as a result he got a summer job with another organization. They wanted him back this summer, but he wanted to do school all summer. He got a lot of skills from The Centre and they gave him certificates and wrote a nice reference letter, they give you a certificate, letters of reference, free meals, personal recognition and networking.

Such mimicking serves to reduce uncertainty, but it can also mean that organizations within an industry will start to look alike over time. Mimetic isomorphism resulting from the effect of the CAC and the community on The Centre has been

demonstrated. Therefore, a large part of The Centre's structures and procedures is the result of mimetic isomorphism.

Normative Isomorphism

Because nonprofit organizations like The Centre work with people, they encounter a vast array of regulations that govern and control their responses and responsibilities to clients. Hence, The Centre functions in a normative system where legitimization of activities is necessary for survival. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) said that by adopting elements of the business model, nonprofits could establish credibility with stakeholders. Specifically, through professionalization, legitimacy can also be achieved whereby a director may also head up another committee or maintain a seat on a government panel. Singh, Tucker, and House (1986) indicate that a current listing in the Community Directory of Metropolitan Toronto and receipt of a charitable registration number issued by revenue Canada is an example of normative pressure at work. This example signified external legitimacy, as listed organizations showed higher survival rates than those that were unlisted.

Nonprofits are increasingly being asked by funders and other agencies to prove their effectiveness both in terms of measurable and demonstrable success and with respect to program delivery, client support and fiscal plans. At The Centre, for example, each potential program must submit a proposal that includes specifics regarding operational policies and procedures, modes of service delivery and a budget. Proposals provide evidence that an organization or a committee has undertaken groundwork to deliver the program. A common component to Requests for Proposals today is the

credentials section. External agencies often ask for personal profiles of those submitting. Funders look for individuals with a business background to ensure that the money they are giving to an organization is going to be used appropriately. The current director at The Centre has an accounting designation and a financial background. As one stakeholder commented, "it helps that he [the director] has a financial background, funders look for that. They want to make sure that they will do what they say they will do and in a timely manner." Following program completion, formal reporting - including, number of clients served and goals attained - is submitted to the funding body as a necessary component to receive the remaining funding dollars:

It [The Centre] is run more like a business. For instance, if you look at the kinds of reporting we do with our funding agencies, it used to be operational reviews and operational reporting and now it is business planning. And this occurred about a year ago. And this is the request of the funding agencies. They want more business thinking.

Additionally, funding agencies are requiring more documentation to justify their support as indicated by the staff remarks recorded below:

I hear people say around here that you need a report for everything now when there used to be nothing. They need this for funding, there is so much documentation required for funding.

Qualified volunteers at the board level are in a position to have influence in determining structure and process. Neo-institutional theorists write that professions generate normative isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). However, literature indicating the effect of volunteers in generating isomorphism is scarce. Equally important to what professionally trained staff bring with them is the impact of volunteers on The Centre's culture. Experience tells me that there are people who develop a body of knowledge based on practical experience and training. These volunteers stay informed,

they form relationships with, and seek advice from other agencies, and they lead others. These types of volunteers are called, 'Professional Volunteers.' They develop an approach to 'getting things done' that can be a different approach from procedures espoused by professionals. Unfortunately, The Centre has a difficult time relying on volunteers, other than their board, to help with fundraising, assistance and event organization. This is not uncommon in the nonprofit sector. Sharpe (1994), points out that as many as 30% of nonprofits with charitable status in Canada do not use volunteers in any capacity other than as board members. Over the years the term nonprofit has also been extended to refer to organizations that depend solely on paid professionals (Kmieciec & Mayer as cited in Febraro et al., 1999). The Centre has attempted to counter such resource scarcities by identifying a Professional Volunteer. The Centre has identified one staff member who has stepped into that role. Her attributes and abilities were demonstrated through her leadership at fundraisers, especially during Bingo nights. She is also the representative for interagency casino nights. I observed that she has attended every volunteer event and attends activities on her days off. A member of the management team said the following about her dedication, "I know exactly who is dedicated and who is not, who I can depend on and who I can't depend on." And it was this person that most people went to for guidance and direction. Personally, I had to seek her guidance when I attended my first Bingo. She has a keen sense of how a volunteer should be treated, by ensuring that staff rotate positions to offset any chance of boredom.

Legitimacy

A fundamental consequence of institutional isomorphism, according to neo-institutional theory, is organizational legitimacy--the acceptance of an organization by its

external environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Meyer & Scott, 1983). Legitimacy is conferred status, and as such, it is usually controlled by those outside the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Neo-institutional theory suggests nonprofit organizations are susceptible to legitimacy demands of changing environments (Abzub & Galaskiewicz, 2001). This study focused on the role that the organization's identity and image played in creating legitimacy.

In their social construction of organizational knowledge argument, Mizruchi and Fein (1999) raise the issue that Meyer and Rowan's view that organizations need for legitimacy in fact closely resembles Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) resource dependence model. The Centre is able to gain legitimacy from the community as it represents the interest of urban Aboriginals and different community constituents. In order to ensure survival, support from powerful internal and external actors is also necessary. The organization's director acknowledged that his co-optation strategy provides legitimacy for the organization, "it gives us legitimacy in the community that I am on the executive for Western Canadian Association of Centres (WCAC)." Similarly, the community also recognizes The Centre's commitment to the community:

...not only is he [director] involved at the local level, but he is involved at the provincial level. He has also built a lot of bridges with the Métis and he paved the way for a lot of positive things, he has paved the way, too for the interagency committee.

Rao (1998) contends that new organizational forms become established as legitimate when powerful authorities such as the state endorse them. The Centre has garnered support from powerful actors in the environment. For example, through the Mayor's ongoing public support for their new homeless shelter, he is conceding legitimacy. Obviously, efforts become legitimized easier when they are endorsed by

powerful supporters. Recognition and acceptance of hard to serve projects have been assisted in recent years by the efforts of institutional authorities. For example, the Government of Canada's Action Plan on Homelessness in 2000 helps to legitimize The Centre's efforts in the community towards the erection of a new homeless shelter.

They have also focused efforts towards proactive public promotion. Events such as AGMs were normally used as occasions to invite the public, government representatives and the media. They also found themselves attending more and more charity golf tournaments, pancake breakfasts, meet and greets, and special meetings. As one staff commented, "I think some of the events don't actually benefit The Centre you know, like the pancake breakfast that we are doing for whoop-up days....well it is just saying we are out and about and we want to let people know who we are, where we are type thing." As practices become institutionalized, they become viewed by society as legitimate, and are adopted by organizations for legitimacy reasons and not necessarily for efficiency reasons (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Zucker, 1987). As a result, each act is confronted by distinct sets of isomorphic pressures and a need to maintain legitimacy within the community.

The current study shows that while endorsement by powerful institutional authorities may increase the legitimacy of an organizational form, endorsement cannot be seen as a guarantee of legitimacy.

Research Question 2: In what ways do external agencies and funding sources shape the structure, procedures, programs, policies and professionalism of a nonprofit organization?

In the nonprofit sector, the sense of severe threat was often entertained by major reorganizations in the relevant policy area of government. In addition, changes regarding social issues, increased competition and difficult clients, has created new agencies, which in turn have affected The Centre. Taken together, external forces have contributed to the structure, procedures, policies, programs and professionalization at the Centre.

In a rapidly changing environment, Thompson (1967) suggests that organizations focus on their interdependent relationships and shift their attention from goal attainment to survival. The central problem for complex organizations is dealing with uncertainty. The Centre has coped with external uncertainty by creating specialized roles to deal with it, thus buffering environmental influences (Oliver, 1991). To offset internal uncertainty, The Centre has found competent and adaptable staff to occupy these important buffer positions. Because of the indeterminate nature of environmental variables, these changes have strengthened the culture and altered the internal functions of the organization. However, when environmental variables are unexpected, such as the interim shelter, they may interfere with daily, consistent operations and can negatively impact job performance and established objectives.

By expanding the size of The Centre through contracts, fund-raising and affiliations, management tried to reduce uncertainty and vulnerability. This study also attests to the strength of the resource dependence perspective. It demonstrates that changes in external agencies can lead to new strategies for resource acquisition, and that dependency relationships are altered to reflect the demands of new resource providers.

Relationships with other organizations and government funding agencies are necessary to secure resources. The nature of these relationships, in turn, often drives and defines an organization's internal structure.

One of the ways The Centre enhanced their likelihood of survival was to increase their size and make themselves stronger (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). They also diversified their funding sources and forged new partnerships with environmental stakeholders. Diversification can be viewed as an organizational response to the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). However, to prepare for changes they strengthened their social structure. An understanding of cultural issues is necessary to decipher what goes on in them (Schein, 1985). Therefore, an analysis of The Centre's cultural cohesiveness proceeds.

Organizations who strive to represent local constituencies, come to adopt customs, habits, ideologies, values and beliefs of these groups as their own (Abzug & Galaskiewicz, 2001). According to organizational researchers, organizations have internal cultures that guide the conceptualization and understanding of the organization, its mission, goals, objectives and actions. Culture develops over time and is subject to change as the organization matures and organizational actors change. Individuals and groups internal and external to an organization can sometimes strain elements of their culture. However, when faced with difficulty, The Centre's commitment to solutions and non-judgmental opinions tends to win over with respect, honesty, caring and openness all being important factors used in the decision making process.

Aboriginal Culture as a Way of Doing Business

Studying organizational culture is more than just a recounting of the attitudes and explanations expressed by organizational members, it also consists of a careful probe into, the taken-for-granted, subtle, elusive meanings behind these accounts. According to Trice and Beyer (1984), culture has two basic components:

1. substance, or the networks of meanings contained in its ideologies, norms and values; and
2. forms, or the practices whereby these meanings are expressed, affirmed, and communicated to its members (p. 654). These cultural forms play an important role in the creation and maintenance of organizational cultures.

Aboriginal knowledge systems are holistic in their understanding and are based on the idea of relationship¹⁰. Aboriginals share a rich tradition of oral communication that includes rituals, storytelling and singing. In general, these rituals, stories and songs unfold in their “whole” form, from beginning to end.

To understand the social process of institutional knowledge at The Centre, I have explored The Centre’s values and social routines. And I have discerned the meanings that characterize the culture by analyzing its forms focusing on the artifacts¹¹ (rituals, rites, ceremonies, communication patterns, storytelling, jargon, jokes, tangible artifacts and history) as symbols to create meaning for organizational members and to offer a practical approach to study cultural forms.

Their organizational culture is the Aboriginal culture. According to Schein (1985), culture’s role is to solve problems related to survival in and adaptation to the external environment. Schein indicates that organizational culture “is the pattern of basic

¹⁰ In the Aboriginal culture act affects every other act. All things in life are related in a sacred manner and are governed by natural laws.

assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration” (p. 3). Aboriginals, as a result of colonization and residential schooling, have been forced to adapt in order to survive (Frideres, 1998). Furthermore, Howard (1999) states that “Indian people’s greatest struggle has been adapting to a constantly changing world while at the same time retaining the values and social relations of traditional society” (p. 49). As a nonprofit organization operating in a funder’s world, The Centre has learned to adapt and face many challenges and uncertainties through the strength of its organizational culture--the Aboriginal culture. As one staff member explained:

We have had to change some of our culture to compete, you know like I said, forming that organizational structure on paper. I mean that was hard for us, it’s not in our culture to do that. I am glad that Lyle was there, he helped us get that going, we worked as a team. And I mean did you see all that paperwork just on the drop-in/resource Centre? That was a lot of paperwork. Oh, we are in the paperwork business now.

Much of The Centre’s success appears as intimately related to its culture as to anything else. According to Frideres (1998), the ability of a group of Aboriginals to achieve their goals is also a function of the social cohesiveness of the organization. The organization has values and beliefs, which its members share. It has storytellers and stories. It has rites, rituals and ceremonies.

Values: According to Schein (1985), values embodied in an organization’s philosophy can serve as a guide when dealing with uncertainty or difficult events. In the Aboriginal culture, values become embedded as societal norms and continue to influence Aboriginal life today (Brandt, 1990). The values that The Centre has instilled in its

¹¹ From Hatch (1997) created table view of Artifacts of Organizations Theory, p. 216.

practices have carried them through past challenges and helped them deal with funding instabilities.

I was particularly impressed with the strong willingness of staff members to help others. It became apparent to me that the incorporation of traditional values was part of their way of doing business, a way of coping with uncertainty. This was evident in their everyday organizational processes--from the way they treated their clients to the way they respect Centre staff and community elders. As one employee explained:

It [The Centre] is very culturally based, which in a lot of communities isn't sort of the main focus, it is nice to see this aspect of it. It is a nice place to work because I think everyone has a lot of respect for each other; there is a lot of trust involved, it is a very welcoming atmosphere.

From my observations, I believe that almost all staff, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, valued the assistance they are providing through their jobs. Staff members seem to gain satisfaction from knowing they are helping others. As a volunteer, I often witnessed the caring component of the organization. For example, in the interim homeless shelter, the clients were treated with fairness, respect and dignity. One staff member stayed past her shift to console a distraught client. A key community stakeholder expressed the view that The Centre cares about the community, "it is such a well-rounded organization that they can do the job. They have the interest at hand as well." Respect emerges as a deeply rooted organizational value. They show respect for their Elder Group¹² and solicit the services of respected elders to open ceremonies, events and meetings. However, The Centre also garners respect in their business relationships. A stakeholder explains that they do not treat The Centre staff any differently, only that they

¹² The Elder Group is a cultural component to all Centres across Canada. Elders are men and women who are spiritual leaders in traditional Aboriginal society.

use “respect, tolerance and cultural sensitivity in a good way, by being non-judgmental” in their business exchanges with them.

Drucker (1995) indicates that if an organization wishes to perform at a high standard, its members must believe that what it is doing is contributing to the community. The management team at The Centre recognizes the need to maintain deep-rooted values to ensure its survivability in the community. But, those good intentions need to be balanced with the reality of their external environment. That is, they need to be accountable for performance and results. The management team is able to maintain a balance between Western management practices and practices which based on fundamental Aboriginal beliefs and values.

The ability of a group of Aboriginals to achieve their goals is also a function of the social cohesiveness of the organization to which they belong (Frideres, 1998). New members learn about cultural values through socialization processes and training programs. Some organizational researchers (e.g. Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001), suggest that socialization can be interpreted as a symbolic response to societal expectations (p. 247). However, The Centre views that socialization processes may teach the values of the organization and the rules and norms of the organization, but they contend that it is not a response to societal expectations. They have always valued group cohesiveness. They specifically hire those that will fit into the group atmosphere. The director offered this remark, “many of the employees I brought on, I used a little bit of selection as opposed to qualifications. I looked for somebody who could fit the team, someone who could grow into the team and this includes contract and summer staff.”

Offering insight into this cohesiveness, a staff member gives her perspective on the socialization process at the Centre:

The first day went really well. It was just a big tour and we all sat around the board table and discussed everyone's job descriptions and what we were going to be doing. So, the first day was really excellent. I was coming in with three other new people, so it wasn't just me coming in new.

In light of the continued external vulnerabilities facing the nonprofit sector, one of the ways of adapting to a number of pressures is to strengthen one's social structure. Notwithstanding the trend to becoming more business-like, The Centre has capitalized on its own strengths to improve its structure and developed new strategies to sustain its future. The next section will capitalize on management's ideology to create meaning for organizational members through artifacts.

Artifacts: According to Whipp, Rosenfeld, and Pettigrew (1989), artifacts can be used symbolically in the change process.

Rites, rituals and ceremonies: Rites and ceremonies provide culturally rich occasions for observation (Trice & Beyer, 1984). They involve:

1. relatively elaborate and planned set of activities;
2. social interactions;
3. benefits for an audience; and
4. multiple social consequences (p. 655).

In a variety of ways, the rites observed affirmed the importance of the social role involved. For example, the accession of a local elder to the Elder's Group or the appointments of the director to the WCAC are demonstrated rites at The Centre. Widely

practiced rituals, such as agendas, minutes and motion votes provide accepted ways for committees to proceed (Trice & Beyer, 1984). Meetings were a sign of common ritual.

The director comments on the nature of their staff meetings:

...the agenda is a standing one and the meeting always takes place in the same week as the board meeting, so this is once a month. We start out with a prayer. I open the meeting with issues that had been raised at the board meeting. Then, we go around the table and field questions for the rest of the group. That is standard.

The rites, rituals and ceremonies reveal certain commonalities among organizational members. For example, AGM's always open with a prayer and a blessing by a community elder and close with a round dance¹³. The current leadership is able to maintain some consistency between the existing rites, rituals and ceremonies and inevitability of change by incorporating those institutional rules that function as myths to gain legitimacy (Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Communication Patterns: Marsden (1994) says that the word 'Indigenous' is associated with 'oral' and that information is not written down. Aboriginals have historically communicated orally. In fact, according to Howard (1999), the openness of Indian oral tradition reflects a dynamic response to change. Furthermore, the oral tradition is a method of communicating to an outsider, "Indian oral tradition presents the opportunities to experience the beliefs, wisdom, creativity, and humour of the people indigenous to North America" (p. 52).

Externally, the communication patterns at the Centre have become more professionalized as they continuously change to adhere to funding agencies expectations and community groups. However, internally, there is a common continuance to preserve

cultural traditions. This is maintained in the symbolic design of the organization--there is no internal email system. Similarly, as management introduces change to employees, it is communicated to them orally. A member of the management team clarifies; "it [change] is usually verbal. I feel that the staff is close enough where we just have to talk and work through the changes." Likewise, with respect to the new interim homeless shelter:

The way things run around here for task assignment, is that it is really quick; usually it is given out verbally. We get together and talk at a staff meeting, for instance, the shelter, we sat around the board table this needs to be done, this needs to be done. I need to slot you in here and here, so just be prepared for this and that. I told them I would have a binder ready for you if you have any questions, call me. So, a lot of the time, it is just like that, it is mainly verbal, just get them ready and let them go, but I do check on the progress.

Storytelling: Previous research (Boje, 1991) states that people perform stories to make sense of events and to introduce change, "people engage in a dynamic process of incremental refinement of their stories of new events as well as on-going reinterpretations of culturally sacred story lines" (p. 106). The Centre utilized storytelling to deal with change by recounting its past. This was evidenced during a speech made by an elder at the AGM as she tried to cope with the future of The Centre by dealing with the past. She spoke of her earliest memories, of The Centre's creation, of how The Centre picked her up off of her feet and got her the help she needed, and of how it gave her the courage to face life. The room was silent except for her voice echoing against the gym walls. Moreover, storytelling was also a means of communicating a message, "they [staff] have told stories about the old maintenance people, with their previous drinking and that they are so happy now that they have such a good bunch of people and don't have to worry about that." Staff relates this type of storytelling to give meaning as to what kind of

¹³ The round dance is a tradition in the Aboriginal culture. The dance symbolizes social and the round

behaviour is not tolerated. As Howard (1999) explains “storytelling conveys the personal, individual side of a people, something that the analytical categories and constructions of history and anthropology cannot” (p. 52).

Organizational jargon: The shortening of terms, words and areas was a common characteristic of many conversations throughout the interviews. There is a plethora of acronyms commonly used. Throughout the participant observation and during the interview process, many acronyms were used repeatedly by the participants, such as, CAC, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), HSV, and ACE. They describe diseases and agencies that The Centre associated with on a regular basis. Members of the organization also do not refer to the organization’s name in its entirety; they refer to it as The Centre. However, in conversations with stakeholders, it is referred to by its full name. Other interesting jargon used by stakeholders and members of The Centre were words used that were specific to the area of business, such as “region 1” which referred to an area in Alberta. While the proper terminology to describe their cultural identity is actually ‘Aboriginal peoples,’¹⁴ seldom is this name used in its entirety or at all among staff of this ancestry. In fact, they refer to themselves as ‘Natives.’ An indication of the reality of this terminology appeared on the voting ballots at the AGM as the ballots said ‘Native’/‘Non-Native.’ I found that I consistently tried to use politically correct terms throughout my conversations, but determined that I would use the term ‘Aboriginal’ or ‘Aboriginal Peoples’ and the respondents would use the term ‘Native.’

symbolizes the circle, a powerful symbol in Aboriginal life at which every person has an equal voice.

¹⁴ Ibid

Jokes: Content analysis of the humorous remarks and actions of this study reveals many interesting findings pertaining to humour. In Linstead's (1985) study, he reveals the importance of humour in the re-creation and maintenance of culture in organizations. As such, humour as a form of symbolic activity, is taken for granted (Linstead, 1985). Hatch and Ehrlich (1993) suggest that humour gives organizational members the ability to deal with ambiguity in complex and changing environments. "Humour can have great impact in the world by having its content transposed and defined as serious, but also by transposing real-world content into the humorous frame, and by defining it as humorous in an indelible and irreversible way" (Linstead, 1985, p. 763). Humour transcends as an artifact at The Centre. It helps the organizational members deal with hardship in the past and cushion change in the future. The use of humour in organizational conversations was a frequent occurrence. I noted on several occasions, staff members assembled at the reception desk talking and laughing as a group. In fact, two of my interviews took place in the director's office, which is located behind the reception desk and I was amazed at the number of times I could hear laughter emanating from that area. Also, at the AGM and at the National Aboriginal Day Celebrations, two different presenters made reference to 'Indian Time'¹⁵ from which laughter then ensued.

Tangible artifacts: There are many visible artifacts around the Centre such as dream catchers, sweet grass¹⁶, pictures of Aboriginal models, a sharing circle wheel,

¹⁵ According to Brant (1990), Aboriginals developed the concept of doing things when the time is right. Indian Time is a concept similar to what Schein (1985) regards as 'polychronic' time. Polychronic time is measured more by what is accomplished than by a clock.

¹⁶ Sweetgrass is a sacred grass growing throughout Canada. Some Aboriginal people use it in ritual acts of purification, prior to engaging in spiritual ceremonies.

eagle feathers, tipis, drums, and various pieces of business correspondence¹⁷. The gym was recently painted white and instead of leaving it natural, The Centre decided to paint caricatures of Aboriginals in various recreational poses. The gym also had Aboriginal logos painted on the wall.

History: Organizational members frequently referred to the past. It was a way of communicating their thoughts about how the organization once was. The Centre was plagued with a number of problems in the past including nepotism. Because the population served is small, and because there is a commitment to hire staff from the local population, many of the staff members had family connections to each other or to members of the board. The following were some additional references to the past by various staff members:

When I first started here I was an ACE employee. Back then, there was no programming and The Centre was in a bad deficit. We didn't have the people coming through the doors like we do now and there were no partnerships that were built. And if there were partnerships - well they were minimal. I think since then, as the years went on and things got better, we encouraged building bridges and getting out and talking to the community and seeing what the community is doing.

...before there was no purpose, no direction, no commitment to the mission. Nobody really saw their role in relation to the whole and I think unless you have a purpose for being, you will have problems.

Similarly, interpretations of the organization's past from a stakeholder revealed how the past is used to set expectations for the future:

I have seen the centre make a full circle. They have been around for a long time. I haven't seen them have sustainable programs since I have been around. Just in the last 4 or 5 years they have done very well for themselves. They are a good group of people. They have good leadership. They have a supportive board. They keep up the mode of operations, they can only go further.

¹⁷ Business correspondence refers to letterhead and manuals which incorporate Aboriginal traditions.

The Centre credits their holistic knowledge systems and connections to their surroundings for their success. The Centre sees cultural cohesiveness as the driving force behind their ability to adapt. Historically, they have dealt with change in so many ways that they are able to identify with it to their advantage and adapt accordingly. According to Marsden (1994), they have survived for centuries in harmony with nature and therefore, have obviously developed highly attuned adaptive strategies, which need to be used as a basis for planning for the future. The ability to adapt, coupled with uncertain funding outcomes, has encouraged the organization to become more business-like and adopt cooperative strategies.

Becoming More Business-Like

The Centre has taken on new forms as a result of the unstable nature of external agencies. In the past, The Centre relied solely on core funding provided by the federal government. But, dependence resulted in financial troubles and the inability to secure capital. Consequently, The Centre has started to adopt new diversification strategies and to seek out new revenue solutions to become more sustainable--to write their own future instead, of having it written for them. According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), “organizations which require one primary input for their operations will be more dependent on the sources of supply for that input than organizations that use multiple units” (p. 46). Wilson and Butler (1986) suggest that the more dependent an organization is on government funding, the more likely they are to engage in cooperative strategies.

To maintain some control over autonomy and to minimize external intervention, Oliver (1991) indicates that avoidance tactics may serve an organization’s interests. In

this case, to avoid interdependence on one source--core government funding, The Centre has been exploring other avenues to funds acquisition. The most common strategies directed at funding diversification included: new kinds of fundraising (including bingos), bidding on government contracts to deliver services, property acquisition, increasing partnerships, visibility and promotion.

Organizational theorists (e.g. Daft, 1998; Hasenfeld, 1983; Oliver, 1990; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) maintain that several strategies can be adopted to manage resources. The Centre has formulated a mixture of cooperative strategies to ensure their survival and to maintain their independence (Hasenfeld, 1983).

Cooperative Strategies

Committees: Organizational theory suggests that to increase the legitimacy, organizations often seek to obtain co-opt opponents. Oliver (1991) calls this type of approach 'manipulation' and it is defined: "purposeful and opportunistic attempt to co-opt, influence, or control institutional pressures and evaluations" (p. 157). In particular, committees are formed and comprised of diverse stakeholders and opponents as a means to prevent community opposition. These committees are formed not only for symbolic reasons but also for realistic reasons--to assist with service implementation. Once formed, these committees must undertake several activities as a condition of funding from the government. As for the opponents, this is a way to prevent opposition to the implementation of the shelter therefore, increasing chances of success. For example the new homeless shelter committee represents a cross-section of community members that include the public, representatives of social service agencies, real estate boards, government (including local police) and people of Aboriginal ancestry.

Special roles, committees and task forces are created to develop applications for funding. This was demonstrated through a community-based consortium of agencies that was created to provide a service to assist people living on the street to make positive lifestyle choices that will lead to personal development and improvement. The Centre joined the consortium and, as a member, teamed up with other groups to develop an application for funding for a homeless van. The Centre earned the contract to operate the van. It was through the creation of this committee, that the contract for the van became reality.

Contracting: Contracting is a formal or informal agreement between two organizations for the exchange of resources or services (Hasenfeld, 1983). The Centre is aware of the vulnerability associated with government funding. To avoid interdependence, The Centre has instigated formal and informal contracts. For example, The Centre has a formal contract to operate the HSV. Through this initiative, The Centre was able to hire two full time staff on a contract basis. The Centre provides the personnel through a partnership between themselves, The Hepatitis C Society of Canada, HIV Connection and the local band. This initiative has proven to secure funding for The Centre.

Coalition: A coalition is the pooling together of resources for a joint venture. Coalitions may surface in order to allow organizations to compete more effectively for the limited resources or to combat further budget cutbacks (Hasenfeld, 1983). The Centre works closely with several community groups and government agencies. They view

relationship building as a way to reduce uncertainty. The director lends insight as to how they have learned to survive in light of government cutbacks:

...we have been doing a whole lot more since there have been cutbacks. In the last few years we have made big strides to partner with health initiatives. We partner up to demonstrate responsibility for our future. We need to secure our future. The community sees this and knows that we are taking responsibility. It is through this networking that we are able to continue to build. Networking is sustaining our future, it got us the new shelter, it got us a leadership role with the provincial association, and it got us partnerships with health initiatives.

Similarly, a stakeholder speaks of their mutual gain through partnering:

We have had a formal partnership for the last two years. We have always had contact with them [The Centre], but not as formal. We have had community staff here who act as community liaisons, help people seek medical attention and often we have used The Centre to help with this process, but we didn't have anything formalized. Now there is a contract, we did a joint venture to apply for funding. I think the joint venture really helped us get the funding. It is one of those symbiotic relationships.

Such relationships have made the access to funding more attainable. Each agency realizes that it cannot obtain these funds on its own, but by joining forces with one another it stands to gain resources and legitimization.

Interlocking Directorates: Interlocking directorates, known as cooptation, “is a strategy for accessing resources, exchanging information, developing interfirm commitments, and establishing legitimacy.” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, p. 161) According to Daft (1998), an interlocking directorate is a formal linkage that occurs when a member of the board of directors of one company sits on the board of directors of another company. The Centre has employed this strategy with the recent appointment of a Metis Local board member to its board of directors, and with the director moving to now sit on the WCAC board and the community lottery board. These linkages provide The Centre

with information about the activities of that organization and the exposure in obtaining commitments of support from the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Moreover, this behavior is more important now, as the government continues to reduce funding to social programs. This has caused nonprofit organizations to innovate and look for new sources of revenue as a strategy and as a means to sustain them in a changing institutional world. Hence, this has led The Centre to adopt new revenue solutions in the form of diversification, commercial activity, gaming, and property rentals.

New Revenue Solutions

Government funding cuts, accompanied by increased competition for donor dollars, creates a need for new resource acquisition strategies. With pressures to become more self-sufficient, The Centre diversified their funding sources. The director comments on funding diversification and why it is necessary: “to stay alive. Well, I think you have to; you can’t put your eggs all in one basket. An example of this [the diversification] is the homeless shelter. Even if our core funding was lost, we could sustain ourselves through that program.” As another staff member agrees, “We need to seek different avenues and programs to survive.” Engaging in this type of activity is one response to this situation, and represents an attempt to reduce dependence on government and other sources. Diversification, according to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) “is a strategy for avoiding interdependence” (p.127). Organizations may opt for such strategies, such as managing client-paid fees as a way to control the content, structure, and timing of management tasks (Gronbjerb, 1991). The Centre has developed ideas pertaining to

commercial activity, such as, property rentals to help reduce the resource dependence caused by traditional donation and grant-based income generating strategies. However, apprehension about the nature and the impact of such changes is still high, causing The Centre to continue developing their diversification plans while sticking to cautious strategies.

A current revenue strategy adopted by The Centre is that of gaming. Bingo is a major fundraising source. But, relying solely on these revenue sources is again not something that is sustainable alone. Alberta's Bingo proceeds are now pooled and even these sources have their own competitors - as one staff explained, "bingo went down because of VLT [Video Lottery Terminals] and casinos." This example clearly indicates the competitive nature of fundraising and alludes to the potential that commercial activities might provide.

A greater role in resource acquisition translates into more cooperative strategies. Essentially, this type of activity alters the traditional dependency relationships governed by institutional criteria, and relies more on the competitive marketplace. It seems that commercial activities are causing concern for a host of constituents and therefore, it might be some time before this strategy becomes reality for The Centre. In the meantime, the current formula for diversification--seeking alternative funding sources--is helping to reduce the resource dependence caused by donation and grant-based income generating strategies.

Although external agencies have contributed to changes in the organization's structure, procedures, programs, policies and professionalism, the director seems to have the skills necessary to delicately balance the competing constituencies with their own

cultural philosophies. Results of this section revealed the importance of the collectivist nature of Aboriginal culture in embracing change where members can feel comfortable and accomplish, as a group, The Centre's strategic goals.

Research Question 3: What role do volunteers play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?

Nonprofit organizations depend on volunteers for human resources and for legitimacy. The Centre used to rely on many volunteers. But since the introduction of funding for paid staff, complemented by a director who has a financial background, the role of the volunteer has changed. Volunteers are still responsible for setting organizational policy at board and committee levels. Although management is considered the territory of professional staff, volunteers participate in determining procedures. Volunteers are in a position to have influence in determining structure and process. The Centre's Board of Directors, for instance, must consider reactions of government agencies, major donors, clients, the Aboriginal community and the general community when it makes decisions.

Volunteers formed the idea of a 'Centre'. When they first started, they had only one paid staff member. The remaining staff members were all volunteers. However, over the years the sector began to change, and in order to compete, staff was hired through grants and contracts to the point where all core staff is now paid. The Board of Directors has remained a volunteer board, but its role has changed. In the neo-conservative era, the board's principal role was that of fundraising and oversight of organizational operations. The board's success was directly related to the financial resources that it was able to attract for the organization. Today, the board's role is to represent and advocate for public

policy favourable to the interests of the organization and its people. The board used to take care of many administrative functions and liaison with stakeholders, but since the acquisition of the current director, they have been alleviated of some these duties. The current leadership agrees, “it is not healthy to have a board do administrative work anyway, a governing board is much better. Our board is very clear now as to their roles and responsibilities.” Similarly, one board member agrees that, “the board was getting too involved and now it is getting better again.” The more defined board role has helped to restore legitimacy for the organization.

Staff must adapt to many changes and trends - fewer volunteers and the increased needs of the clients. As a result, both management and staff have had to take on new and multi-tasking roles. One of these roles is the ‘staff as volunteer.’ They recognize that they have to fill their clients’ needs beyond those funded and in doing so, have hired a dedicated workforce to fill those gaps left behind by the community’s inability to pick up the slack. “At first I was the only paid staff member....It was good then, we had lots of volunteers and we had the church groups around and now I hardly ever see church groups around.” Unfortunately, their volunteer base has dwindled considerably over the years and as a result each staff must volunteer 15 hours a month at The Centre.

I was a volunteer at the organization and I did see evidence of how volunteers can influence The Centre’s structure and processes. Volunteers, whether paid or non-paid, play an important role in reinforcing social trust, educating the public, providing support for clients and reinforcing common values and a sense of common purpose that binds the Aboriginal community and gives them the resilience to cope with change.

The Centre follows the generally accepted rule of the nonprofit sector and the Centre field encourages a relatively diverse board of directors. Diversity increases the opportunity for the community to have a sympathetic hearing. A diverse board provides the appearance of a fair and representative body, hence providing legitimacy. Nonprofit boards perform governance and legitimization functions (Abzug & Galakiewicz, 2001). The Centre's board has the responsibility of ensuring that the organization lives up to its mission and oversees financial matters. The board also gains legitimacy as it adheres to the needs of the Aboriginal community (e.g. it has a youth representative). It also seeks to gain legitimacy through the appointment of two non-Aboriginal board members. According to Azbug and Galakiewicz (2001), an organization is legitimate if it represents the interests of different constituencies in the community. As one board member indicated:

Last year, during elections, there was only one white person. We had a Métis, so we recognize his status, but no one else was elected so he took that spot. But, this year, we wanted two non-Aboriginals. It was always two; I like to have it like that. We want to get to know all the people. They have knowledge that some of us don't have. Larry was a very good member (non-Aboriginal). He had relatives in the government and he had good relations with the government.

Increasing the representation of non-Aboriginal people to the board is a response to institutional isomorphic pressures in an attempt to make the organization appear more rational (Abzug & Galaskiewicz, 2001). Also, the president must be of Aboriginal descent, and must appear thoughtful, fair, willing to listen and knowledgeable about Aboriginal affairs. According to Abzug and Galaskiewicz (2001), identifying with the community provides the underlying basis for organizational legitimacy.

Research Question 4: What role does professional staff play in establishing organizational legitimacy or norms for the organization?

According to the literature, professional staff plays a key role in establishing organizational legitimacy (see Chapter 2). Normative isomorphism is a result of professionalization (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). One aspect of professionalization is “the resting of formal education and of legitimization in a cognitive base produced by university specialists” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991, p. 71). This process of institutionalism can make it easier for organizations to be acknowledged as legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Within the last four years, The Centre has hired a director who has an accounting and financial background and experience in the nonprofit sector (the new mandate for all centres in the association). Neo-institutional theory states that institutionalized organizations derive legitimacy as a result of isomorphism. The Centre has derived legitimacy from normative isomorphism resulting from practices institutionalized by The Centre’s mandates and the accounting and financial professions. Isomorphism, in this case, was critical to The Centre’s ability to develop revenue-based and cooperative strategies.

According to resource dependency theory, professionals help to secure valuable resources. Directors of organizations are resources that management uses to gain information on contingencies in the resource environment or act as agents to secure loans, donations, investments, or customers for the organization (see, e.g. Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

The director’s accounting and financial background helps The Centre establish legitimacy for itself. He is able to communicate his professionalism through his leadership abilities, and it is these leadership abilities that help lead the organization

through change. Specifically, “the motivation to innovate will be determined by the values of the executive leadership and the proactive stance they take toward their environment” (Hasenfeld, 1983, p. 231).

Leadership

According to Frideres (1998), leadership plays an important part in any organization’s ability to carry out sustained social action. “Organizational leaders must be adept to spanning boundaries at all times. They must monitor and control such factors as their clients’ needs, funding opportunities and even business prospects” (p. 284). Leaders, therefore, must be attentive to their client’s needs while at the same time maintaining their legitimacy in the eyes of external stakeholders.

Through the director’s style of leadership, The Centre has been able to manage the uncertainty of the Western world without sacrificing cultural values or organizational goals. Even through times of uncertainty, change and dissatisfying moments, individuals remain motivated by the values and social goals of The Centre. According to Frideres (1998), internal leadership of an Aboriginal organization is an important determinant of their effectiveness in achieving their goals. The management team supports their staff by recognizing that each member may value different facets of the Aboriginal culture; and encourages them through motivational strategies, such as autonomy, task identification, task identity and skill variety from Hackman and Oldham’s (1980) “Work Redesign” – as a result of professionalization.

The skills that emerged for future success, such as leadership and values may be holistic competencies needed by a manager in an Aboriginal organization. The

management team is supportive of their employees. Management felt that if their staff were valued and treated with respect, that they will be capable of performing the work:

For myself, I monitor all staff, if I feel that they are ready to handle something on their own, I just let them do it and if they are not ready, I walk them through it and support them until I know that they are ready for something. I guess pretty much, we have to know the staff, you know, what they are capable of doing, how much they can do.

And management, in turn describes the type of leadership employed:

We have a team of employees who think like a team and they are committed to a mission statement. Whereas before, no one even knew we had a mission statement. What I have done is made them aware that we do have a mission statement and the function that they do here has to comply with the mission. The managerial style I employ is an open door policy. It is a fair and upfront. But, I like to have fun and enjoy the job. I think that if they see me enjoying the job they will also enjoy their job and will in turn cause them to be productive.

They treat their employees well, which includes supporting them and challenging them.

They see this as a way to sustain one of their most valuable resources--human resources.

One way they do this is by encouraging their staff to become self-sufficient. Employees are given autonomy to make decisions as expressed below:

Self-sufficiency is the main thing that we want to teach them [staff]. Years ago this was not the case because we are Indians, we were taught not to have our own mind and to think. We were trained in residential schools. We were told what to do, when to eat and sleep and this is still going on. So, this is what we want to do with the staff, with all our people, so people will be self-sufficient. So, if someone comes in like they did last Monday and says, get The Centre ready for the shelter, they don't have to wait around for the board to meet, the staff can do it....we are a board that is building self-esteem with our workers.

Similarly, a stakeholder commented on a staff member's confidence and ability to make valued decisions:

I was having trouble with two young women on my caseload who didn't feel they needed to go to school and were mean to their mom. I sought out Janelle and asked for her help. She was very successful with these girls. She provided good ongoing support. She didn't just start something and then just shut it off. As a result of her confidence, they stabilized to the point where I closed the file.

The director also motivates his staff through task identification. The program coordinators are not just programming activities; they are now contributing to pre and post programming preparations. That is, they are now providing input at the proposal stage and are finishing off their programs by completing the financial requisitions. The management team felt that as The Centre moves to become more accountable, their staff should be accountable as well. They consider responsibility and accountability important concomitants of motivation, "I am teaching him [Leroy] how to do a reconciliation. They need to learn the skills, they need to learn how to be accountable for these dollars and records. This is a change I have implemented."

The management team has encouraged the staff to become multi-faceted. They now perform a variety of tasks related and unrelated to their positions. This approach can be seen as a motivational strategy as it offers staff with skill variety as opposed to performing the same tasks every day. As one staff explains:

When we were hired, we were a job role and mine is the recreation department. With that it includes all the recreational activities that happen in the gym. But, we are also told in the hiring process that we are going to be called on to help wherever needed. So, a lot of time we will be doubling up on tasks

However, equipping the staff with the ability to perform various duties can also be viewed as a survival strategy. One way of adapting to a number of pressures is to ask staff to perform additional duties. An employee interprets this situation as follows, "I think this experience of helping out other programs is only helping us to be prepared for when we do get into more and more stuff." In the event of re-occurring staff shortages from absenteeism or as the result of funding cuts, The Centre has equipped its staff to

adopt different roles, “everyone is multi-tasked at the centre. I can work for someone and someone can work for me. That is how it works around here - it is a team atmosphere.”

The last motivational strategy employed by The Centre is task significance. Staff are motivated to perform their tasks simply by knowing that what they do has an impact on lives of other people. The belief that one is performing worthwhile tasks and contributing to important social goals is an important element to the job. Even when some aspects of their job are dissatisfying, staff members appear to be motivated by the values and social goals of their organization. For example, all staff members honourably signed up to volunteer at the interim homeless shelter. The task was ominous and challenging, yet rewarding because they knew that the task was meaningful. I talked to a staff member about working at the shelter and she said that it was projects like this that highlighted the importance her job to the lives of others. Equally, another staff member recognized the fulfillment he received from the job, “I mean you are working for a cause, for your people, the job isn’t very stressful and there is flexibility as to how you plan your activities.”

The current leadership has taken the knowledge that Aboriginals adapt to their environment and has sustained their survivability through change, but in a way that respects their traditions, concepts and dignity. Employees guided by a stable leader are more likely to be motivated and hence embark on strategies that allow the organization to survive. The organization’s leadership acknowledged that no one else is going to solve their funding problems, except themselves, leaving them with no choice but to create their own strategies for survival:

We [The Centre] can’t rely on government funding forever because possibly down the road, it might not be there. So, we have got to do something now, when

the time comes to where we can generate our dollars. We have talked about down the road of buying some houses and become more self-sufficient.

The director is able to rely on intrinsic motivation and good leadership skills to motivate his staff to take them to a new level of organizational change.

Professionalization

The development of nonprofit management competencies is becoming the key to strengthening nonprofits (Drucker, 1995; Minzberg, 1996). One stakeholder comments on the nature of their changing relationship with The Centre:

We have partnered with them on projects. The main project is the diabetes prevention initiative....the diabetes prevention is a prevention and health promotion project. For that project, we receive funding from Health Canada.

Establishing new programs costs time, staff energy and money. The director is always thinking of ways to obtain funds to establish new programs, and realistically, to sustain their future. The Centre went from eight sources of generated revenue valued at \$275,189 in 1999 to 12 sources of generated revenue in \$438,387 in 2002 (see Table 1). A stakeholder attributes their ability to attract new sources of revenue to the director's professional background and to the way he presents himself in front of community groups and funding agencies, "I watched him do the presentation about the shelter to city council and it was very professional." This statement reaffirms that the credibility of the leader is thought to increase the perception of the organization's legitimacy.

Table 1: The Centre's Generated Revenue Sources

Generated Revenue Sources	Year	Year
Source	2002	1999
Core Funding	\$142,697.00	\$142,697.00
Summer Program	\$ 16,944.00	\$ 10,142.00
Alberta Social Services	\$ 17,663.00	\$ 13,262.00
International and Intergovernmental Relations	\$ 24,000.00	-
Aboriginal Affairs	-	\$ 19,013.00
Human Resources Development Corporation	-	\$ 3,744.00
Alberta Mental Health	\$ 14,800.00	-
Crime Prevention	\$ 12,000.00	-
Population Health	\$ 2,200.00	-
Community Foundation	\$ 2,152.00	-
Alberta Sport Foundation	\$ 1,347.00	-
Community Lottery Board	-	-
UAYP	\$153,384.00	\$ 2,500.00
YCP	-	\$ 25,910.00
Alberta Community Council on HIV	\$ 1,200.00	-
HSV	\$ 50,000.00	-
Urban Aboriginal Employment Initiatives	-	\$ 57,921.00
Total Revenue	\$438,387.00	\$275,189.00

In hiring professionals, organizations are usually thought to acquire the talent they need to manage and operate their technologies (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001). The director himself also credits his professional background in creating legitimacy for the organization, “my education has helped to guide the association, in terms of establishing vision for the future and recognizing that we have a mission to carry out.” One stakeholder holds the view that their professionalization has garnered legitimacy for the organization and helped secure funding, “I think they are getting more sophisticated and more professional over there [the Centre]. For example, they have been awarded the homeless shelter and I think this speaks highly of them. A lot of outside organizations have confidence in them.”

This chapter explored the many ways in which a nonprofit organization is affected by, and responds to changing institutional demands. The effects of institutional pressures

on this organization, and the associated strategic responses supported legitimacy concerns causing this organization to acquiesce, avoid conformity and manipulate institutional demands (Oliver, 1991). Each act was confronted by distinct sets of isomorphic pressures and a need to maintain legitimacy within the community. This section also revealed that components of the Aboriginal identity had a strong influence on the organizational culture, and it is this identity that helped lead the organization successfully through the change process and the ability to implement new resource strategies.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, limitations, areas for future research and recommendations.

In this research, I set out to understand the internal and external influences that affect organizational change in an Aboriginal nonprofit health organization. These influences have been interpreted using the complementary theoretical concepts of both resource dependence and neo-institutional theory. The theoretical concepts that were most closely examined were isomorphism, legitimacy, professionalization, and resource dependency. This study took an ethnographic approach involving participant observation, interviews, and document analysis of particular individuals' perception of institutional change within the context of one organization.

The main insights gained from the research have to do with specific organizational strategies and structures that resulted from both internal and external influences on the organization. Organizations must contend with many institutional demands. Organizations do not necessarily conform to rules because they are taken-for-granted, but because they are often rewarded for doing so through increased legitimacy, resources and survival capabilities (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). While some may seek to conform with demands (imitate existing programs to reduce uncertainty) or negotiate with authorities, other organizations may seek to avoid (buffer) and manipulate (co-opt) the institutional environment (Oliver, 1991). Although The Centre conformed to many institutional demands, they also tried to partner with institutional stakeholders, buffer and

co-opt with influential constituents. Approval to take on these new challenges and therefore legitimacy (by institutional authorities) is vested in The Centre to act in the best interest of the Aboriginal community. In short, isomorphism and legitimacy enabled the implementation of strategic responses.

An examination of The Centre's structure, professionalization, policies, procedures and programs revealed the impact of government, volunteers, clients, the CAC, the WCAC, and other external agencies on The Centre's structure and response strategies. Results show that The Centre is responding to the needs and interests of the community and the public sector. The Centre has been able to find a balance between traditional Aboriginal values and Western business concepts to survive in a competitive and volatile market. As such, the Centre's leadership was successful at reinstating cultural diversity within the institutional structure. Organizations need to have strong cultures to be able to adapt and change (Trice & Beyer, 1984). They were able to rely on their collective views to legitimize and facilitate institutional changes, by making modifications to the organization's structure and goals to obtain the resources needed to survive in a demanding environment.

Discussion

The Centre is continually changing and evolving due to economic, legal and political changes in the environment. Funding volatility and constraints, and diversified community needs have impacted The Centre. In the past, the organization has relied heavily on core funding from the government to sustain its existence. Traditionally, they focused too much on institutional survival rather than responding to changes in the

community. Therefore, in order for their services and programs to be viable, The Centre adopted various response strategies to overcome the organizational difficulties created by such an environment.

The neo-conservative view thrust the Canadian nonprofit sector into a new era of spending cuts. It saw the nonprofit sector as a solution to excessive government spending in social services. At the time, cuts in social spending seemed acceptable by government standards because nonprofit organizations could pick up the slack and service those in need. Such funding changes play a pivotal role for nonprofit organizations. New or expanded funding allows them to modify their basic orientations and expand program activities while, loss of funding often forces them to curtail or eliminate existing programs. The decentralization of federal programs results in increased attention to cooperative strategies. Therefore, nonprofit organizations were forced to look to other possible sources for funding and to develop cooperative strategies to compensate for potential and actual cuts in public funding.

It seems logical then from this research that in situations of government downsizing and funding constraints, organizations will adopt not only structures and policies of those that it depends on for funding, but also strategies to combat resource dependency.

Based on the findings of this research a number of conclusions may be drawn. First, it was noted that The Centre's organizational configuration is largely a result of coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism. Neo-institutional theory states that institutionalized organizations derive legitimacy as a result of isomorphism, replicating forms and procedures that have been rationalized in the wider environment. The Centre is

an institutional organization “characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy” (Scott & Meyer, 1991, 123). The Centre has done so as a result of coercive isomorphism, as a consequence of adopting structures, policies and procedures from the laws governing nonprofit organizations; mimetic isomorphism as a consequence of adopting structures, policies and procedures instituted in the CAC field; and, normative isomorphism resulting from practices institutionalized by professional groups. Therefore, it can be said that all of this resulted in The Centre being regarded as a legitimate organization by Revenue Canada, the CAC, the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community, funding agencies, and other organizations in the nonprofit sector. Hence, isomorphism not only explains the procedures and activities in place at The Centre today, but that it is was critical to The Centre’s ability to adopt strategic responses to institutional pressures.

Second, isomorphism was critical to The Centre’s ability to develop new revenue solutions and cooperative strategies. Support for these activities by external constituencies is one indicator of legitimacy. In addition, the director’s professional background, leadership capabilities and ability to present The Centre in a professional manner at community meetings are further indicators of legitimacy. However, The Centre’s legitimacy in turn helped to solidify their means of resource acquisition. The Centre adopted new strategies, such as partnering with government and non-government agencies, to attempt to secure the necessary resources for their future.

A third important discovery was that of cultural cohesiveness. Culture in this case, was influenced by the level of institutionalization. According to Zucker, “acts which are performed by an actor occupying a specified position or role are high on

institutionalization....personal influence is dependent on the particular unique actor” (1991, p. 86). The director transmitted the Aboriginal culture. There was a good deal of evidence to suggest that this organization is value driven, and that these values influence and shape the leadership style. The staff was aware of and motivated by these Aboriginal values and management practiced leadership in a way that was consistent with them. This is not to say that they were not motivated by more pragmatic considerations as well. The director did use intrinsic motivation to inspire his staff, but he did also practice conventional motivation as a result of professionalization, such as skill variety, task significance, autonomy, and task identity (see Hackman & Oldhman, 1980). The director held onto the Aboriginal values underlying the organization’s culture while formulating new response strategies. The director successfully re-cast those values and their mission to serve the community rather than as governance by members of the community. The cohesiveness of their culture gave them legitimacy in the Aboriginal community and the strength to adopt business strategies. Therefore, neo-institutional theory offered a reasonable explanation for the way in which The Centre was organized and the resulting procedures it adopted. It has also helped to explain why and how The Centre managed its environment through the components of resource dependency theory and the strategic responses to such institutional pressures (Oliver, 1991).

Limitations of the Study

Qualitative case studies have not, to this point in time, been commonly used to research organizational structure of nonprofit organizations. While this methodology allows the researcher to study many aspects of the organization, there are four

disadvantages. First are issues of reliability and validity. Because such studies are not based on large probability samples, generalizability of the findings is limited. This case study was intended to be exploratory, rather than representative. Findings from case studies “are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes” (Yin, 1989, p. 21). It is not posited that this study is generalizable beyond the organization studied in this research project for two reasons. The paucity of previous Canadian research in this area made it difficult to completely outline all of the challenges facing Canadian Aboriginal nonprofit health organizations. There was some difficulty obtaining the correct Aboriginal statistics for this area, let alone Canada. Bias and distortion can be introduced by the researcher if he/she asks leading questions or in some way imposes his/her beliefs on the respondents. Since I was a member of the organization under study, respondents may have been reluctant to give honest answers. The informants may have also been concerned about the confidentiality of their responses.

Second, qualitative studies cannot provide definitive answers to causal questions. Because this study was limited to one nonprofit organization and 30 members, it is difficult to generalize the findings to other nonprofit organizations.

Third, the perceptions of the researcher in the observation methods and the interpretation of the interview data also limit the research. Only one researcher using a subjective interpretation of the data conducted this research. Ideally, the research should consist of two researchers; whereby the first researcher would immerse herself/himself into the organization and the second would adopt a more objective role as an outside researcher.

Finally, the sampling design of this study was conducive to the goals at hand, but it has its limitations. Although previous employees and board members make up the history of the organization, their points of view were not assessed. Examination of their points of view could have provided another perspective and perhaps a more critical analysis of The Centre.

Implications for Further Research

In addition to these theoretical considerations, I believe my research generates several insights of practical value. Some of the results are consistent with the work of current researchers, and some are more amenable to the explanation of others. Regardless, the results provide useful additions to an important yet sparsely researched topic area.

Further research is needed to address some of the aforementioned limitations. For example, it would be useful to conduct similar ethnographic research involving more organizations in the field to test further transferability of the findings to other sectors. First of all, as neo-institutional theory looks at organizations as part of a larger system, there would be a benefit in conducting case studies with other CAC centres and to compare the results with this project. Future research could expand the sample size and the cross-section of organizations represented--to either a multiple case study design or to a study including Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations in the field.

Second, another study could be conducted along the same lines as above, but with Aboriginal organizations that are distinctly different from The Centre, i.e. led and funded by tribal nations, focused on serving the needs of those in rural/reserve areas. This would

provide us with a greater understanding of Aboriginal cultures that carry forward into organizational culture. The emphasis is notably even more important now during a time of increased interest in self-governance.

Third, while the longevity and the number of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal joint ventures is increasing (Ferrazi, 1989), it would be useful to study the implications of assimilation as an offset to these partnerships. Previous research has looked at Aboriginal commercial partnerships with non-Aboriginal society and the associated roles and benefits for Aboriginal people (Ferrazi, 1989; Newhouse & Chapman, 1996), but none has looked at partnerships in the nonprofit sector. This study is one of the few studies to examine organizational issues as they relate to Aboriginal nonprofit organizations. As Aboriginal partnerships between the for-profit and nonprofit sectors continue to increase, research in this area is needed to ensure that cultural values are not displaced for economic gains. If government is going to continue to promote these types of partnerships, they need to involve more Aboriginals in their implementation plans.

Finally, the eternal call for more longitudinal research cannot be forgotten. The work here examined one Aboriginal nonprofit health organization over a short period of time. Data collected over time can offer more convincing evidence of the effects (if any) of institutionalization on nonprofit organizations. It would be useful, for example, to embark on a more comprehensive examination to track and explain changes in professional roles. A look at possible differences in nonprofit organizations headed by directors trained in business administration compared to those with traditional backgrounds might also be interesting.

It is the hope of the researcher that this study may be used by those who are interested in the kind of organizational experiences and staff perceptions faced by today's nonprofit organization. While there is no perfect way to conduct a qualitative case study, this type of methodology guides and teaches us by allowing us to learn from the successes and challenges of others.

Recommendations

It is hoped that the material presented in this research project and the research methods used can steer government policy makers and researchers towards supporting further research that involves respect, compassion and dignity for Aboriginals. In this research, I have addressed a set of issues that will be increasingly crucial to public policy makers and Aboriginal economies. As Aboriginals continue their progress towards self-government and start to regain the responsibility they once had, new and more complex organizations will continue to be created to deal with processes, agreements, and structures never before encountered.

It would be helpful for the government to put together a program initiative, which encourages and rewards Aboriginal organizations to operate within the merits of their own culture. Public sector executives need to begin building linkages to these programs and to partner in developing mutually beneficial objectives and strategies for working with Aboriginal organizations.

As aforementioned, the organization in this study is not entirely representative of the nonprofit health sector, but their strategies may be useful to a plethora of organizations. Aboriginal organizations and the nonprofit sector, in general, might gain

some insights from this research project. If nonprofit organizations are to compete in a rapidly changing, uncertain environment they must be able to be flexible and responsive. This organization's resourcefulness and willingness to try new (even unconventional) resource strategies should serve as an example and encourage for-profit firms to reconsider established goals and objectives and the methods with which to achieve these goals.

While the trend of shifting some governmental responsibilities for social services to the nonprofit sector is likely to continue, nonprofit organizations will have to implement organizational changes to increase their revenue base and to sustain their future. As more public and private funders, especially health related, utilize the services of this sector, nonprofit organizations will need to shift paradigms and enter into era of new forward thinking to secure the resources they need.

REFERENCES

- Abzug, R. and Galaskiewicz, J. (2001). Nonprofit boards: Crucibles of expertise or symbols of local identities? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 30 (1), 51-73.
- Agar, M. (1980). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography*. New York: Academic Press.
- Alexander, J. and Weiner, B. (1998). The adoption of the corporate governance model by nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership San Francisco*, 8 (3), 223-242.
- Bernard, R. (1988). *Research methods in cultural anthropology*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications Inc.
- Bigelow, B. and Stone, M. (1995). Why don't they do what we want? An exploration of organizational responses to institutional pressures in community health centers. *Public Administration Review*. 55 (2), 1-15.
- Boje, D. (1991). The storytelling organization: A study of a story performance in an office-supply firm. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 36, 106-126.
- Brant, C. (1990). Native ethics and rules of behaviour. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 35, 534-539.
- Bush, R. (1992). Survival of the nonprofit spirit in a for-profit world. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 21 (4), 391-410.
- Butler, R. and Wilson, D. (1990). *Managing voluntary and non-profit organizations: Strategy and structure*. London: Routledge.
- CAC (2001). *CAC mission statements*. Retrieved April 5, 2002, from <http://www.CACcentres.ca/htm>.
- Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Daft, R. (1998). The external environment. In R. Daft (Ed.), *Essentials of organizational theory and design* (6th ed., pp. 46-70). New York: South-Western College Publishing.
- Dimaggio, P. (1986). Structural analysis of organizational fields: A blockmodel approach. In B. Staw and L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behaviour* (pp. 335-370). Greenwich, CN: JAI Press.

- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 147-160.
- DiMaggio, P. and Powell, W. (1991). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. In W. Powell and P DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*. (pp. 63-82). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Drucker, P (1995). *Managing in a time of change*. New York: Truman Talley/Dutton.
- Febbraro, A., Hall, M., and Parmegiani, M. (1999). *Developing a typology of the voluntary health sector in Canada: Definition and classification issues*. Ottawa: Health Canada.
- Federal, Provincial and Territorial Advisory Committee on Population Health (1994). *Strategies for population health: Investing in the health of Canadians*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.
- Ferrazi, G. (1989). Forging aboriginal/non-aboriginal partnerships: The joint venture model. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, IX (1), 15-32.
- Fogarty, T. and Dirsmith, M. (2001). Organizational socialization as instrument and symbol: An extended institutional theory perspective. *Human Resource Quarterly*, 12 (3), 247-266.
- Frideres, J. (1998). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Contemporary conflicts* (5th ed.). Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall Canada Inc.
- Galaskiewicz, J. and Wasserman, S. (1989). Mimetic processes within an interorganizational field: An empirical test. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 34, 454-479.
- Goodstein, J (1994). Institutional pressures and strategic responsiveness: Employer involvement in work-family issues. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 350-382.
- Government of Canada (1999). *Engaging the Voluntary Sector*. Ottawa: Voluntary Sector Task Force Privy Council Office.
- Greenwood, R. and Hinings, C. (1988). Organizational design types, tracks and the dynamics of strategic change. *Organization Studies*, 9, 293-316.
- Greenwood, R. and Hinings, C. (1993). Understanding strategic organizational change: The contribution of archetypes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36, 1052-1081.
- Greenwood, R. and Hinings C. (1996). Understanding radical organizational change:

- Bringing together the old and the new institutionalism. *Academy of Management Review*, 21 (4), 1022-1054.
- Gronbjerg, K.A. (1991). How nonprofit human service organizations manage their funding sources: key findings and policy implications. *Nonprofit management and leadership*, 2, 159-175.
- Gummesson, E. (2000). *Qualitative Methods in Management Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Hackman, R. and Oldham, G. (1980). *Work redesign*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hancock, T., Labonte, R., and Edwards, R (1999). Indicators that count. Measuring population health at the community level. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 90 (1), S22-S25.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (1983). *Human service organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, N J: Prentice-Hall.
- Hasenfeld, Y and Schmid H (1989). The life cycle of human service organizations: An administrative perspective. *Administration in Social Work*, 13 (4), 243-269.
- Hatch, M. and Ehrlich, S. (1993). Spontaneous humour as an indicator of paradox and ambiguity. *Organization Studies*, 14 (4), 1-15.
- Hatch, M. (1997). *Organization Theory: Modern symbolic and postmodern perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haveman, H. (1993). Follow the leader: Mimetic isomorphism and entry into new markets. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 38, 593-627.
- Hinings, C. and Greenwood, R. (1987). The normative prescription of organizations. In L. Zucker (Ed.), *Institutional patterns and organizations* (pp. 53-70). Chicago: Ballinger Publishing.
- Howard, S. (1999). Contemporary American Indian storytelling: An outsider's perspective. *American Indian Quarterly*, 23 (1), 45-53.
- James, J. (1977). Ethnography and social problems. In Weppner, R. (Ed.), *Street ethnography: Selected studies of crime and drug use in natural settings* (pp. 179-200). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Kraatz, M. and Moore, J. (2002). Executive migration and institutional change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43 (1), 120-143.

- Kramer (1987). Voluntary agencies and the personal social services. In W. Powell (Ed.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (pp. 240-257). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Lambert, E., Ashery, R., and Needle, R. (1995). *Qualitative methods in drug abuse and HIV research*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Institutes of Health.
- Linstead, S. (1985). Jokers wild: The importance of humour in the maintenance of organizational culture. *The Sociological Review*, 33, 741-767.
- Lipsky, M and Rathgeb-Smith, S. (1989-90). Nonprofit Organizations, Government and the Welfare State. *Political Science Quarterly*, 104 (4), 625-648.
- Macintosh, D, Bedeck, T., and Franks C. (1987). *Sport Politics in Canada: federal government involvement since 1961*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Marsden, D. (1994). Indigenous management and the management of indigenous knowledge. In S.Wright (Ed.), *Anthropology of organizations* (pp. 41-55). London: Routledge.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, B. (1995). *Designing qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mayan, M. (2001). *An introduction to qualitative methods: A training module for students and professionals*. Edmonton, AB: International Institute for Qualitative Methodology.
- Meyer, J. and Rowan, B. (1977). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83, 340-363.
- Meyer, J. and Scott, W. (1983). Centralization and the legitimacy problems of local government. In J. Meyer and W. Scott (Eds.), *Organizational environments* (pp. 199-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Meyer, J. and Scott, W. (1983). The organization of societal sectors. In J. Meyer and W. Scott (Eds.), *Organizational environments* (pp. 129-153). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meyer, J., Scott, W, and Deal, T. (1983). Research on school and district organization. In J. Baldrige and T. Deal (Eds.), *The dynamics of organizational change in schools* (pp. 409-425). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.
- Meyer, Scott, and Deal (1992). Institutional and Technical Sources of organizational structure: Explaining the structure of educational organizations. In J. Meyer and W. Scott (Eds.), *Organizational environments: Ritual and rationality* (pp. 45-70). Newbury Park: Sage publications.

- Mintzberg, H. (1996). Managing government: Governing management. *Harvard Business Review*, 74 (3), 75-86.
- Mizruchi, M. and Fein, L. (1999). The social construction of organizational knowledge: A case study of the uses of coercive, mimetic, and normative isomorphism. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, 653-683.
- Morse, J. and Field, P. (1995). *Qualitative research methods for health professionals* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Newhouse, D. and Chapman, I. (1996). Organizational transformations: A case study of two aboriginal organizations. *Human Relations*, 49 (7), 995-1011.
- Oliver, C. (1990). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: Integration and future directions. *Academy of Management Review*, 15 (2), 241-265.
- Oliver, C. (1991). Strategic responses to institutional process. *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (1), 145-179.
- Pfeffer, J., and Salancik, G. (1978). *The external control of organizations*. New York: Harper Row.
- Prus, R. (1994). Approaching the study of human group life: symbolic interaction and ethnographic inquiry. In M. Dietz, R. Prus, and W. Shaffir (Eds.), *Doing everyday life: Ethnography as human lived experience* (pp. 10-29). Mississauga, ON: Copp Clark and Longman.
- Rao, H. (1998) Caveat emptor: The construction of nonprofit consumer watchdog organizations. *American Journal of Sociology*, 103 (4), 912-961.
- Reed, P. and Howe, V (1998). *Publicly available data resources on the nonprofit sector in Canada, a working paper*. Statistics Canada and Carleton University.
- Salamon, L (1987). Partners in public service: The scope and theory of government-nonprofit relations. In W. Powell (Ed.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (pp. 99-117). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Salamon, L. (1989). The voluntary sector and the future of the welfare state. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 18 (1), 11-24.
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Scott, W. (1982). Health care organizations in the 1980's: The convergence of public and professional control systems. In A. Johnson, O. Grusky, and B. Raven (Eds.), *Contemporary health services: Social science perspectives* (pp. 177-195). Boston: Auburn House.
- Scott, W (1987). The adolescence of institutional theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 32, 493-511.
- Scott, W. (1998). *Organizations: Rational, natural, and open systems* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Scott, W (2000). *Institutions and organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Scott, W and Meyer, J. (1991). The rise of training programs in firms and agencies: An institutional perspective. In L. Cummings and B. Staw (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior* (pp. 297-326). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- Scrivner, L. (1999). *Charities take their cues from business: Dwindling grants, competition put on pressure*. The Toronto Star. November 30, first edition, page B1.
- Sharpe, D. (1994). *A portrait of Canada's charities*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- Sherer, P. and Lee, K. (2002). Institutional change in large law firms: a resource dependency and institutional perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45 (1), 102-119.
- Shortell, S., Gillies, R., and Devers, K. (1995). Reinventing the American hospital. *Milbank Quarterly*, 73 (2), 131-160.
- Singh, J., Tucker, D., and House, R. (1986) Organizational legitimacy and the liability of newness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 31, 171-193.
- Skloot, E. (1983). Should not-for-profits go into business? *Harvard Business Review*, 61, 20-27.
- Skloot, E. (1987). Enterprise and commerce in nonprofit organizations. In W. Powell (Ed.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (pp. 380-393). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Slack, T. and Thibault, L. (1988). Values and beliefs: Their role in the structuring of national sport organizations. *Arena Review*, 12, 140-155.
- Slack, T., and Hinings, C. (1994). Institutional pressures and isomorphic change: An empirical test. *Organization Studies*, 15(6), 803-827.

- Statistics Canada (1991). *Census Variables: 1991 Census Handbook*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Catalogue No. 92-305-E.
- Statistics Canada (1996). *1996 Census Coverage Studies, and Demography Division*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- Statistics Canada (1996). *Census Variables: 1996 Census Handbook*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Catalogue No. 92-352-XPE.
- Steinberg, R. (1987). Nonprofit Organization and the Market. In W. Powell (Ed.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (pp. 118-138). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Thompson, J. (1967). *Organizations in Action*. New York, New York; McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Thorton, P. (2002). The rise of the corporation in a craft industry: Conflict and coformity in institutional logics. *Academy of Management Review*, 45 (1), 81-101.
- Tolbert, P. (1985). Institutional environments and resource dependence: Sources of administrative structure in institutions of higher education. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30, 1-13.
- Trice, H. and Beyer, J. (1984). Studying organizational culture through rites and ceremonails. *Academy of Management Review*, 9, 653-669.
- Weisbrod, B. (1988). *The nonprofit economy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Whipp, R., Rosenfeld, R., and Pettigrew, A. (1989). Culture and competitiveness: Evidence from two mature U.K. industries. *Journal of Management Studies*, 26, 561-279.
- Wilson, D. (1989). New trends in the funding of charities: the tripartite system of funding, in A. Ware (Ed.) *Charities and Government*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Wilson, D. and Butler, R (1986). Voluntary organizations in action: strategy in the voluntary sector. *Journal of Management Studies*, 23 (5), 519-542.
- Yin, R. (1989). *Case Study Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Zilber, T. (2002). Institutionalization as an interplay between actions, meanings, and actors: The case of a rape crisis center in Israel. *Academy of Management Journal*, 45 (1), 234-254.

- Zucker, L. (1977). The role of institutionalization in cultural persistence. *American Sociological Review*, 42, 726-743.
- Zucker, L. (1983). Organizations as Institutions. In S. Bacharach (Ed.), *Advances in organizational theory research* (pp. 53-111). New York: JAI.
- Zucker, L. (1987). Institutional theories of organization. In W. Scott and J. Short, Jr. (Eds.), *Annual review of sociology* (pp. 443-464). Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Zucker, L. (Ed.). (1988). *Institutional patterns and organizations: Culture and environment*. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.
- Zucker, L. (1991). The role of institutionalization in cultural persistence. In W. Powell and P. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 83-107). Chicago: University Press.

APPENDIX A

Centre Staff Interview Guide

- 1) Describe your organization as a place to work or volunteer at? What was it like then and now.
- 2) How does the organizational group decide which members will perform what duties (Task division)? Do you think that task assignment is fairly and appropriately divided? Are they written down (formalized)? Do you know your role (is it clear)? What kind of board is it?
- 3) How is your program evaluation carried out?
- 4) What training is provided to you in order for you to complete the required tasks at hand?
- 5) Do you think that in order to work at a nonprofit one has to be good at dealing with ambiguity?
- 6) If a new member (volunteer or paid employee) joins your organization, how is he/she welcomed into the organization (shown around, etc)
- 7) Have you every found that staff hired as a result of a short-term contracts or grants are seen as different from other staff? Like because it is so short term do they and the staff alike, not bother to form relationships?
- 8) Are your peers friendly and supportive of another? Give an example.
- 9) What about supervisor support - do you find that your supervisors are supportive of employees? Do they encourage employees to be supportive of one another?
- 10) Are employees encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions? Overall, has the decision-making responsibility changed over the past two years? How has it changed?
- 11) Describe a typical meeting at your organization? Who attends/who chairs/who takes notes/is there an agenda?
- 12) Can you describe some major changes in the program (or organization) over the past two years? Was there always UMAC programming? Was there always a program director? What are they and what about their impact on the organization? Why do you think there have been internal changes?
- 13) What do you think about the new types of activities that your organization is getting into? In your opinion, has the organization adequately prepared for such changes in

- 14) How has change been introduced to you? (i.e. new employee, new program) How did the organization prepare or prepare you for growth and changes?
- 15) Over the course of a few years, have you seen an increase in paperwork and documentation?
- 16) Have you noticed any changes to established policies over the past two years? If so, what are some examples?
- 17) Have any fs called and asked you how did you do this or that?
- 18) Do you find that there is a distinct culture at the organization? Can you describe and example of how there is a distinct culture?
- 19) What kind of culture might one find in your organization? (That is, can you think of a way a cultural artifact might be used to represent, for example, an objective for organizational members, for example, use of the talking stick at meetings)?
- 20) Is there a presence of obvious Native values or insights on the organizational culture? Can you give an example.
- 21) When you were first hired, can you think of a time when someone told a story of something that happened in the past at the organization (storytelling as a means of getting a point across)?
- 22) Do you view your organization as being related to the health sector?
- 23) Do you find that the voluntary sector is requiring more credentials (education) and experience than say 10 years ago? Or since you started years ago? Do you think that managers in nonprofits will professional designations or schooling is growing? Why and what affects does the extra education have on the internal structure, the goals, policies, budgets, etc.
- 24) Have you noticed if the level of client need has increased or decreased over the last two years? Why do you think that is?
- 25) Do you have diversification in your funding sources? If so, why? And why did you not do this in the past? Do you think this mix of funding sources is costly in terms of maintaining relationships or the organization's culture?
- 26) How do you think funders regard your organization?

- 27) How is the need for a new program or position explained to particular funding agencies?
- 28) Can you give me a specific example of how someone or something influenced your organization or affected your organization in any way?
- 31) What kinds of things, pressures do you find uncontrollable in your environment and which ones are controllable?
- 32) Who has been your most continuous and reliable source of funding?
- 33) Do some of your funders require you to match dollars with let's say non-federal sources?
- 34) Can you think of way or an example of a government pressure on the organization or your job?
- 35) Is the gov funding a restriction? That is, do they clearly stipulate what the funding can be used for?
- 36) Do local Native politics impact the organization? How?
- 37) What do you think of staff having to play duo-roles? That is paid staff and volunteer roles?
- 38) Do you see any imitating of similar organizations going on?
- 39) Can you think of some things that you do here or that the centre does that really has no benefit to the centre, but that you or the centre does anyway to maintain a positive corporate image?
- 40) Do you think you (personally) have had to adapt to survive in this organization? Why is that and how?
- 41) How long have you worked or volunteered at this organization? How many years have you served in your present position?
- 42) Has your role changed since you started here?
- 43) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- 44) Do you have a second job?

APPENDIX B

Stakeholder Interview Guide

- 1) What is your relationship with the organization?
- 2) What do you do with them (how are you involved with the organization)?
- 3) How long have you had a relationship with the centre?
- 4) How and why did the relationship commence?
- 5) Has your relationship/association changed over the past few years (give ex)?
- 6) Is your relationship formal or informal (that is, do you require that appropriate paperwork, hiring and evaluation processes be completed to your standards)?
- 7) Why are you a member of this organization? Were you asked to be by your's?
- 8) What do you think of the organization from your point of view?
- 9) Is there anything you feel you have to do differently because they are a Native organization (that is, do you have change your timelines, do you have to adhere to their values)?
- 10) Do you think they incorporate Native values into their organizational culture? Can you give an example of how they do? Oh yes, I think so.
- 11) Do you have to take on a leadership role as to directions (telling them what to do) or do you give them autonomy?
- 12) Are employees encouraged to be self-sufficient and to make their own decisions or do you find they have to always get back to you with an answer?
- 13) Can you think of a time when you had to change something in your program which caused a change in their programs?
- 14) How did they deal with the change?
- 15) What do you think about the new types of activities that the organization is getting into?
- 16) Have you noticed affects of these changes on the internal structure and workings of the organization (give examples)?

17) Do you find that the centre's functions are mandated by government laws, rules and procedures or pressured any other outside forces?

APPENDIX C

University of Lethbridge

Understanding Organizational Change: A Case Study of an Aboriginal Nonprofit Health Organization Consent Form

June 20, 2002

Dear _____;

I am writing to ask you to meet with me so that I may get your opinion on the role that an Aboriginal Nonprofit Health Organization plays in Alberta. The purpose of this study is to understand how external pressures affect and cause change at an Aboriginal Nonprofit Health Organization and the impact of the responses on the programs, policies, and procedures themselves.

It is my intention to keep the sources of the information confidential. Reports or published findings emanating from such a study will not contain specific reference to opinions attributed to particular interviewees. Those involved will be afforded the opportunity to review and approve relevant material. You will receive a summary of the findings upon completion of the study.

The research is being carried out in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, and University of Lethbridge policies. If you have any questions in this regard contact me or the Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge [Phone: (403) 329-2747]. Such that;

I agree to participate in the University of Lethbridge Study.

I understand that I will be asked questions relating to some demographics, understanding and opinions of the centre processes, organizational pressures and the impact of responses to pressures from the environment.

I agree to have the discussion tape recorded.

I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions and may terminate participation in the discussion at any time without any adverse consequences. Without prejudice to pre-existing entitlements and will be given continued and meaningful opportunities for deciding weather or not to continue to participate.

I have been informed that my employer will not be given access to any information I specifically provide to the interviewer.

I have been informed that the researcher will not report any information that will reflect my identity or the organization which I am affiliated.

I have been informed that direct quotes of what I say during the interview or the participant observation will not be used if the quotes may reveal my identity.

I am aware that the data obtained during the interview will be reported in professional and scientific publication.

I have been informed that a copy of the final report of this project will be provided to the centre where I am employed and that I may request a copy of the report for myself.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be stored in a secure place.

If you have any questions about the study, please call me at the University of Lethbridge [Phone: (403) 329-7143]. Questions of a more general nature may be addressed to the Office of Research Services, University of Lethbridge [Phone: (403) 329-2747].

Jill Finley, Master of Science in Management Student
Department of Management
University of Lethbridge

-----Detach and Return Signed-----

I consent to participate in the study entitled, "Understanding Organizational Change: A Case Study of an Aboriginal Nonprofit Health Organization" as described in the letter dated 2002 06 20.

Printed Name and Signature

Date_____
