“They Grow as Speakers, as Leaders”

A Case Study of Experiential Leadership in the Miss World Eskimo–Indian Olympics Pageant

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Abstract: This research explores the adaptation of traditionally objectified women’s spaces into an arena for community leadership. Indigenous pageants offer a place for women to become spokespersons on social justice issues without the sexual objectification associated with beauty pageants. Within Native nations, we see examples of youth creating a better life for their community through Indigenous pageants. There is a growing literature among Indigenous studies scholars on community-based women’s leadership. Wilma Mankiller offers a theory on Indigenous women’s leadership that centers the community at the heart of decision making. The winners of the Miss World Eskimo–Indian Olympics (WEIO) all share this common feature; they want to better their communities, and they view the pageant as an opportunity to do so. The women who undertake the weeklong experience participate in community service events in the Fairbanks region. These leaders are immersed in experiential learning, an invaluable opportunity that cannot be replicated through theoretical knowledge. The women are presented with situations in which they share cultural experiences and give advice cross-culturally and cross-generationally. Gaining the opportunity to be a voice for their peoples, the women must quickly consolidate their knowledge and sharpen their communication skills as they are repeatedly questioned about Native Alaskan societies. Using Wilma Mankiller’s ideas on community-centered leadership, this article explores the case study of community service events featured in the Miss WEIO contest to illustrate that Native Alaskan pageants can provide youth with an invaluable opportunity for experiential leadership that is intrinsically linked to promoting community well-being.

Keywords: leadership, language revitalization, beauty, objectification, role models, ambassadorship

They grow as speakers, as leaders.
—Alanna Gibson, Miss WEIO 2009

While the audience talks among themselves and the five contestants wait in anticipation, Carmen

Sears, the pageant coordinator, moves toward the microphone.[1] She welcomes the audience and explains the contestants' weeklong schedule. The list of places holds little interest for most people, as they carry on chatting to their friends. For those involved in the pageant, however, the activities hold a different meaning: a young girl who learned how to say "hello" in Yup'ik during a trip to the Noel Wien library, an elder who shared memories about life growing up in his village during the Fairbanks Native Association luncheon, or a young person struggling to overcome loss who asked for advice at the Presbyterian Hospitality House. The casual observer does not see the hours of community service events that have been carried out all week, work that has given these five women the opportunity to "learn leadership by doing leadership."[2]

The Miss World Eskimo–Indian Olympics pageant (WEIO) is a national contest that takes place annually in Fairbanks, Alaska, within the Indigenous Olympics. WEIO started as a local celebration and continuation of arctic games—such as the Ear Pull, the One-Foot High Kick, and the Nalukataq (Blanket Toss)—and now attracts audiences in the thousands.[3] Each July, athletes and dancers travel from across the state of Alaska and as far away as Greenland to come together and compete in the Indigenous games. The Olympics are organized in heats, with many finals happening in the evenings. Some of the categories are separated by gender, such as those in which competitors would be advantaged by height.[4] The evenings start with traditional song and dance performances from different Alaska Native cultural groups, as the games are presided over by a "lamp tender," usually a male or female elder. Within this culturally based activity, since its inception, there has been a contest to choose a woman to act as an ambassador during the games and for the subsequent year.[5]

Starting in 1961 with seven participants, the beauty contest took on the standard Western form of the time: women parading in black one-piece swimsuits, voiceless, with the winner chosen by the cheers of the crowd.[6] Bud Hagberg and Frank H. Whaley created the contest at the same time as organizing the Olympic Games. They put word out to the villages, asking them to send in their "queens" to compete along with dancers and athletes.[7] The idea was not to disenfranchise women from competing in the games; women were as much a part of the games as men.[8] Nor was this a bid to cast women as the "culture bearers of the Nation," as was the

notion in other Indigenous pageants.[9] Transmitting culture was at the forefront of WEIO, as the organizers were trying to promote cultural revitalization through the games, the dancers, and the values that WEIO promoted. Both women and men are dressed in traditional regalia and take part in the dance groups.[10] While we do not know why Hagberg and Whaley only created a female contest, we do know that Miss WEIO was started as a venue to honor a woman as the figurehead of the games.[11]

Within five years, the Western value systems of measuring beauty were abandoned after Daphne Rylander Gustafson, the winner from 1962, took over the running of the contest. It was from that point onward that a focus on community service and leadership started as the contest evolved into a cultural pageant.[12] Today, the focus is no longer on voiceless beauty but on strength and leadership, with the women's "talent" now focusing on a contemporary topic relating to the needs of the villages.[13] Most of the Miss WEIO contestants grow up attending the annual Olympics event, and several regularly win the games as athletes. Before the athletes arrive and the games begin, however, the Miss WEIO contestants travel to Fairbanks to start their six-day program of community service activities. It is these behind-the-scenes activities that will be the focus of this article.

Pageants are highly contested spaces. Scholars and media critiqued pageants' objectification and gender socialization during the second wave women's liberation movement and pageants' exotification of women of color during the latter half of the twentieth century, and they continue to criticize pageants' commodification and sexualization of children today. Miss WEIO started as just another swimsuit pageant in the 1960s and quickly evolved as Alaska Native women took control of the contest. Today, Miss WEIO is a space for Indigenous women to have a voice. Miss WEIO empowers Indigenous youth as a role model and illustrates to the outside world that Indigenous peoples are contemporary peoples through the social justice issues raised by the participants. While there are problems that need to be overcome in all pageants—

how the pageants are judged, the danger of women being objectified, women being cast as biologically and culturally reproducing the nation yet not politically able to do so—Miss WEIO has created and molded an Indigenous space to celebrate Indigenous women on their own terms. This research, therefore, explores this adaptation of a traditionally objectified women's space into an arena for community leadership.

Within Indigenous women's leadership theorists from Canada and America, there is a growing body of literature focusing on well-being and healing through women's community-based leadership.[14] As Verna Kirkness states in her foreword to *Living Indigenous Leadership*, "Leadership . . . is not the purview of the educated or the elected. . . . [We need to] rethink leadership, to give thought to the original philosophies and practices of our people and to give voice to these invisible leaders."[15] In other words, leadership is practiced by more than just politically elected people. In fact, the very notion of a centralized, self-nominated, and elected political leader is a Western construct, with Indigenous communities traditionally having many situation leaders for different purposes who are appointed by the community, with women oftentimes acting as the final gate-keepers of decisions.[16] While it is problematic that the political and the community have been gendered into male and female leadership, this article aims to illustrate that Indigenous women's leadership (community or political) takes a holistic look at community well-being.

Part of the reason why Indigenous women's leadership literature focuses more on community than politics is the lack of women in political leadership positions in the United States and Canada.[17] Indigenous nations have had female presidents, unlike the United States. However, the patriarchal systems of repression, that have been generated from federal government policies such as the boarding schools, have caused many nations to reinforce the

gendered spheres of leadership, resulting in women struggling to be elected into positions of power.[18] Historically, women in Indigenous nations have held positions of power that are often higher than positions held by males; however, once US systems of government became commonplace in Native nations and elected positions became the norm, women became relegated to community leadership.[19]

Jennifer Nez Denetdale writes about this problem in relation to Indigenous pageants when she argues that the very notion of the Miss Navajo Nation pageant relegates women's bodies to both biological and cultural reproduction while simultaneously disallowing political leadership, a position that Diné history warns against.[20] This issue is complex, and a thorough analysis of all Native nations' pageants would have to be conducted to see if this phenomenon occurs in every Indigenous nation across the United States. For those pageants that are linked to a cultural event such as a powwow or the Olympics, however, the political is entwined into the cultural. Within Alaska, arguably the gendered roles of leadership are broken, with women and men partaking in both community and political leadership. The role of "culture bearers of the Nation" is not solely reserved for women, as all genders embrace culture in their leadership.[21] This article will therefore focus on this use of this cultural leadership.

Wilma Mankiller offers us a model for Indigenous women's leadership that centers the community at the heart of the decision-making process and provides a way to explore Indigenous youth leaders.[22] Although Mankiller's model was based on political leadership, this article aims to illustrate that it works equally well for community leadership. While the Miss WEIO contestants are not necessarily entering the pageant in preparation for political leadership,[23] there are similarities in the way women lead, regardless of whether the aims are political or community based. The winners of Miss WEIO all share a common feature: they want to improve

well-being in their communities, and they view the pageant as an opportunity to do so through the networking and subsequent financial support available to title holders.

This article therefore analyzes existing leadership literature by exploring the case study of community service events featured in the Miss WEIO pageant contest between 2011 and 2013.[24] This study combines Mankiller's applied theory of Indigenous women leaders with the community well-being model and Alaska Native values to explore how the Miss WEIO pageant promotes community-based leadership that can subsequently be used to achieve community well-being.[25] While it is not within the scope of this article to give an in-depth analysis of the pageant as a gendered space based on Western constructs (this is addressed in subsequent work), it is worth noting that this pageant takes place within a larger pan–Alaska Native cultural activity within which men, women, and children act as culture bearers and role models and therefore must maintain sobriety.[26] The research that follows begins with an overview of Mankiller's community-first leadership model as it relates to the Miss WEIO contestants, gives a definition of community well-being, and introduces the community well-being model. It continues with the importance of Alaska Native values in Alaska Native society. The community service events from the Miss WEIO pageants between 2011 and 2013 are subsequently analyzed to demonstrate that the contest provides an invaluable opportunity for experiential leadership, as the participants are placed in situations in which they are a voice for their people, communicating both cross-culturally and cross-generationally.

Community Well-Being

Mankiller explained that there are philosophical and policy differences that distinguish Indigenous leaders (both women and men) from non-Indigenous leaders. Women in general, she stated, have an interconnected approach to leading in governments. For example, women perhaps

link the economy to health and to children; their leadership style is collaborative and based on teamwork. Differentiating between Indigenous and non-Indigenous women's leadership styles, Mankiller explained that while non-Indigenous women recognize the interconnectivity of issues, they do so with the "family unit" or the "individual" as a central focus. In comparison, Indigenous women focus holistically on issues relating to whole community health for this generation and the generations to come: community well-being is the central focus.[27]

Fig. 1. The six indicators for measuring and monitoring well-being

A project led by an international group of scholars and researchers to monitor the well-being of the people living in the Arctic resulted in a report titled *Arctic Social Indicators*. The report suggested six separate indicators for measuring and monitoring well-being. These indicators were arranged into broad topics (Figure 1): health and population; material well-being in the Arctic; education; cultural well-being and cultural vitality; contact with nature; and fate control. Out of these six, learning your heritage language was critical to maintaining well-being in two categories, cultural well-being and cultural vitality, and fate control. The culture team identified the element of maintaining cultural identity as important for well-being. Defining culture further, the report identifies seven dimensions: "language (its use and retention); knowledge (and its transmission); communication (including education and performance); spirituality, such as religion and ritual; sociocultural events and media; economic and subsistence practices; social organization, institutions, and networks."[28] These dimensions are mirrored in the pageants of Alaska, as the contestants must be confident in their knowledge of Alaska Native cultures.

Fig. 2. The community well-being model for leadership

Thinking about Mankiller's ideas on the interconnectivity of women's leadership and her community-first approach to Indigenous women's leadership and reflecting on how we can measure well-being in communities, I propose the community well-being model as a model for leadership, promoting and understanding well-being in any community.[29] The community well-being model (Figure 2) accounts for the interconnectedness of language, ceremony, place, and sacred history, otherwise known as the "peoplehood matrix."[30] For example, in the ideal situation, the community's heritage language, part of their culture, would be spoken in the formal and informal education systems, the local shops (economy), and in health facilities (health). The option for children to learn their heritage language would tie into fate control, having agency over one's future. Ceremonies that are practiced by the community and that can be used to restore balance to the earth might also be practiced in one's heritage language. Thus, language becomes integral to all aspects of the community well-being model. In the same way, land, sacred history, and ceremony are all interconnected to language and to the six factors needed for a healthy community. If we look at the examples from the six-day program of community service activities that the Miss WEIO contestants participate in, then we can see the community well-being model enacted in both their conversations with the public and their social justice platforms.

Experiential Youth Leadership

Within the Miss WEIO pageant, there are several contestants for whom the pageant is merely the next step in their ongoing leadership experience. In my interviews with former Miss WEIOs, the women described their previous leadership positions and experience, such as being the ambassador for the Institute of American Indian Arts, a student government member, an attendee at the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), and the keynote speaker at the AFN Conference.[31] Carole A. MacNeil, national director of the 4-H Youth in Governance Initiative, coined the term

"youth in governance" to explain that "youth leadership development" is problematic because it assumes that leadership is a future goal and does not consider those youths who are currently serving as leaders. MacNeil explains that "youth in governance" is a better phrase, as it accounts for the development process as leadership in progress.[32] The Miss WEIO pageant is thus best understood as a week-long youth in governance program.

The Miss WEIO organizers arrange a dense schedule of events, including orientation; speeches and photographs with tourists at the Riverboat Discovery and the Alaska Salmon Bake restaurant; a photo shoot by a local photographer (which is then distributed to the local press); interviews at two local radio stations, KFBX and KIAK; a visit and questions with patients at the Denali Center; the chance to serve food to and learn from elders at the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) luncheon; a question-and-answer session with the local children at the Noel Wein Public Library; a chance to meet the WEIO board members at a potluck; a chance to share experiences with youth at the FNA Graf Rheeneenhaanjii; an opportunity to take part in the WEIO opening ceremony; a chance to formally introduce and share one's platform with Fairbanks locals at the Golden Days senior citizens lunch; a meet and greet with residents and the mayor of the North Pole at the North Pole hotel; an opportunity to give advice to troubled youth at the Presbyterian Hospitality House; a meet and greet with customers and staff at GCI phone company (one of the WEIOs sponsors); the WEIO coronation; and a classic car ride during the Golden Days parade.

The youth who enter Miss WEIO are repeatedly given the opportunity to learn through this array of community service events, which have been chosen by the Miss WEIO committee to develop the contestants' confidence and communication skills and prepare them for the judged portions of the contest.[33] According to MacNeil, "Learning leadership happens experientially,

through involvement in opportunities to practice the skills, experiment with approaches."[34] Carmen Sears, who has been planning the Miss WEIO pageant since the late 1990s, creates opportunities for the contestants to gain experience. She explained that she incorporates community events into the pageant because the contestants "come from smaller villages" and are unable to practice leadership skills in front of large audiences.[35] Flora Roddy, who has been working with Miss WEIO for the past twenty years, confirmed that the development of skills and confidence in the contest is clearly visible by the end of the week.[36]

The pageant organizers choose events in which the contestants can have an impact in the community. While the first few days introduce the contestants to the Fairbanks community, the judged portions of the contest occur in the latter part of the week, thus separating out the community service events from the competition events.[37] Youth who practice leadership must have authentic experiences.[38] The pageant week provides such experiences at the community level, enabling the contestants to speak to people from the area. This experience enables the contestants to network with the Fairbanks community in an authentic way, furthering their leadership positions by becoming ambassadors in and for the Fairbanks community (for example, when they talk with troubled youth who are seeking culturally relevant advice and information or when they show children a traditional Iñupiat dance). The chance for the young women to consolidate their knowledge and sharpen their communication skills in front of large crowds is paramount to the duties of young leaders in Alaska, who must explain the complexities of village life to people unfamiliar with subsistence living.[39]

The pageant does more than just allow the contestants a chance to practice public speaking skills. The contestants are asked political, cultural, and personal questions by diverse community members over the course of the week; thus, they gain experience "where they have

voice, influence, and decision-making power" in the answers that they give to the public.[40] The women who enter the pageant gain experiential learning that cannot be replicated through theoretical knowledge (for example, when they speak on the radio, answering questions about what it is like to live in Kotzebue or what their point of view is on domestic abuse eradication). This experience gives the contestants a voice and direct influence in the lives of the Fairbanks community members; they are learning leadership by doing leadership.

Cultural Leadership: Alaska Native Values

Leadership theorists are greatly aware that each culture has its own leadership characteristics and expectations.[41] Native Alaskan cultures are extremely diverse, with communities having a list of values, a set of ideals that some Native Alaskan peoples strive toward. Such traditional values have endured through time. While each Native Alaskan group has a unique list of values, there are common themes throughout all these communities that can be recognized in oral traditions. The amalgamation of Native Alaskan cultural values are as follows:

1. Show Respect to Others - Each Person Has a Special Gift
2. Share what you have - Giving Makes You Richer
3. Know Who You Are - You Are a Reflection on Your Family
4. Accept What Life Brings - You Cannot Control Many Things
5. Have Patience - Some Things Cannot Be Rushed
6. Live Carefully - What You Do Will Come Back to You
7. Take Care of Others - You Cannot Live without Them
8. Honor Your Elders - They Show You the Way in Life
9. Pray for Guidance - Many Things Are Not Known
10. See Connections - All Things Are Related[42]

It is with these values in mind that cultural differences become apparent in leadership.

With culture and values being the benchmark for leadership within Miss WEIO, the process to enter the pageant may start several months, even years, before the initial application to the event. The participant's preparation includes developing mental, physical, and practical skills such as language fluency, history lessons, cultural awareness, and a demonstrable culturally relevant skill. Applicants also need to have a general understanding of Indigenous issues in the twenty-first century both for Alaska and for the United States more broadly. Family and friends all help, and in some cases the whole community comes together as the women get ready for the event. Items of regalia are gathered, and information is sought to accurately portray a community's culture to the wider audience and to the outside world.[43] Family and, more importantly, community support therefore becomes an invaluable part of the pageant process, again illustrating the practical application of Native Alaskan cultural values through the contestants' preparations.

WEIO observes the cultural leadership model by placing community in the center of the women's youth leadership experience and through adherence to these values in the community events that take place throughout the week. For the young women who are leaders in their Indigenous communities, behaving in accordance with cultural values is an essential element of leadership. Former Miss WEIOs have shown that family and traditional values are incorporated into their lives and their leadership, as can be evidenced by Miss WEIO 2012, Kelsey Ciugun Wallace:

> [I have been able to continually build upon] representing my people in the right way. . . . Before when I was running for Miss Kuskokwim . . . I knew where I was from . . . what we did . . . but along the way I've been taught . . . [so much. For example,] traditionally back when my elders were living the traditional lifestyle . . . how they were able to incorporate those values into everything

> that they were doing. That's something that's really changed for me. . . . [Now when it comes to] the really big decisions that I have to make, I remember [the] traditional ways that I've been taught.[44]

As can be seen in Wallace's example, culture becomes integrated into the decision-making process and therefore one's leadership style.

Putting the Needs of the Community First

Wilma Mankiller stated that Indigenous women leaders put the community first. In a similar way, the servant-leadership approach, coined by leadership theorist Robert K. Greenleaf in the 1970s, is used to describe leaders who draw their inspiration from "the people".[45] If we choose to think of "the people" as one's community, we can see that these two ideas are intrinsically linked. While the servant-leader approach has undergone many developments, Greenleaf's definition is still the most commonly used in the field.[46] The desire to serve is the root of servant-leadership, which mirrors Mankiller's community first approach. After the initial desire to serve comes the aspiration to lead, so that servant-leaders can help their people. The pageant therefore becomes the venue for participants to enact their community leadership.[47] Within the Miss WEIO contest, the women competing choose to enter because of an interest in helping their Native Alaskan communities; therefore, we can surmise that the contestants are being community leaders by adopting the servant-leader approach.

As with many pageants, each contestant has a platform that she highlights throughout the week. From year to year the platforms have included suicide prevention, language revitalization, subsistence hunting, drug and alcohol prevention, and domestic violence eradication, to name a few. These platforms have been chosen because of the lived realities of Native Alaskan life. The women often campaigned about these platforms before they entered the contest, and they look at the pageant as an opportunity to gain experience, organizational backing, and networking to

continue their work as servant-leaders. Alaska Native values have been correlated to Robert Greenleaf and Larry Spears's ten characteristics of servant-leadership and used as a tool for analysis of the community service events during the Miss WEIO pageant week.[48] The following table illustrates the previously mentioned Alaska Native values and their corresponding leadership characteristics.[49]

Native Alaskan cultural values	Correlating characteristics of servant-leadership
Honor your elders	Listening
Take care of others	Empathy Healing
Show respect to others Share what you have	Awareness Persuasion
Pray for guidance Accept what life brings Have patience Live carefully	Conceptualization Foresight
See connections Know who you are	Stewardship Commitment to the growth of people Building community

In the examples that follow, community service events are cross-referenced with both the Native Alaskan values and the servant-leader characteristics to illustrate that the contestants are following a servant-leadership model of Alaskan Native youth leadership.[50] Holistically, the use of values in these events show that the contestants are putting the community first, as highlighted by Wilma Mankiller, and practicing a community well-being model of leadership by integrating the six interconnected aspects of well-being.

Honoring Your Elders

The Native Alaskan value of honoring your elders can be illustrated through listening at the FNA luncheon, during which the contestants took the time to sit with elders. The contestants over the past few years have had the opportunity to meet with elders as they served traditional food to approximately twenty Fairbanks residents. After lunch, the young women introduced themselves and conversed one-on-one with the elders. This was a time to ask questions about

environmentalism, natural resource management, climate change, culture, history, ancestry, songs, dance, and language, as well as to sit and listen to what the elders wanted to share.

The conversations varied depending on the level of commonalities and shared experiences of the contestants and elders. An elder who was born in one of the contestants' villages especially enjoyed catching up on events back home, which led to a history lesson about his village and his ancestors. Another elder was keen to hear what the contestants had been doing during the week. Yet another was sharing her experiences of her early years in Fairbanks. The elders who shared their knowledge, histories, and culture gave a cross-cultural and cross-generational learning opportunity that could not be replicated through books. Here we can see an example of the integrated approach to community well-being that the elders embraced in their conversations with the youth. The discussions were not focused on one specific topic but integrated aspects of well-being—the economy, health, education, the environment—to give history lessons and talk about contemporary issues. Getting to know elders from various Alaskan communities and having the opportunity to sit and listen are central to both servant-leadership and Native Alaskan values and were promoted throughout the week on various occasions.

The listening trait is explained as a "learned discipline that involves hearing and being receptive to what others have to say."[51] Perhaps the most important element of sitting with elders and listening during WEIO is to hear what concerns the elders have about the future. One elder shared her conservation concerns, that there were few people left who could sing and dance the traditional songs and that someone needed to record them before they were gone. For the contestants to have the chance to hear such concerns and act upon them thus becomes central both to their roles as servant-leaders and to the cultural leadership model of Alaskan Native youth leadership.

For a young woman who comes from an Athabascan village, the opportunity to speak to a Yup'ik elder and learn the differences between various Alaskan environments and cultures is an invaluable experience. These opportunities may be a normal occurrence for some young people, but for others, this is a new and exciting opportunity. In many Indigenous cultures, the elders are the fluent language speakers who know dances and songs, who understand the land and seasonal cycles, who know the necessity of maintaining communities. Given the cultural knowledge that elders have gained throughout their lifetimes, they are ideal people to provide context in any given situation. Throughout WEIO, the contestants therefore gain advice and knowledge from the cultural experts in their communities.

Native Alaskan communities acknowledge the importance of elders within their societies and actively seek elders' advice on important issues affecting the community. Listening to elders is a community value that was and still is central to community survival.[52] Many leaders, especially youth, have a plethora of ideas aimed at bettering their communities but may lack the practical experience and institutional knowledge to put these ideas into practice. To overcome this disjuncture, a meeting was established within Alaska—Denakkanaaga, the Elders and Youth Conference—to enable both elders and youth to share experiences and knowledge with one another.[53] The elders have a chance to mentor Native Alaskan youth and holistically examine issues of concern to Native Alaskan societies, considering problems from a wider perspective. While the conference involves more youths than the Miss WEIO contest, the principle of youth and elders meeting and sharing ideas remains the same.

The transference of information from elders to youths is a vital link that was at one time the target of destruction by the federal government.[54] Starting with the federal boarding schools of the 1800s, educational policies that were in place until the 1970s forced children to attend

schools away from home.[55] In an attempt to strip away every part of their culture, children were punished for speaking their language, causing intergenerational trauma and a break in cultural continuity.[56] When the children finally went home, they had missed vital years of education in their home community, they did not know their elders, they had lost fluency in their heritage language, and they had missed important religious ceremonies; while they had been away, the rhythms of life in the community had changed.[57] The federal government has systematically tried to break cultural continuity in the hope that the younger generations would suffer an irreconcilable loss from which they could not recover, thus ending Indigenous culture in the United States.[58] In spite of the government's attempts, Indigenous nations found new and intuitive ways to continue teaching their culture to future generations. Organizations such as WEIO, with the yearly Olympic Games, are one such way that the transmission of culture continues in today's societies.

The contestant's actions during the community service events demonstrate Greenleaf's theory of listening being the first and foremost characteristic of servant-leadership. The FNA luncheon is just one example illustrating WEIO's youth leadership; however, all the examples that follow start with the act of listening before the contestants reflect, offer advice and cultural knowledge, and share their own experiences. Listening is the cultural anchor throughout the week, shaping the perceptions of the youth who decide to run for this pageant each year.

Taking Care of Others

The Native Alaskan value of taking care of others can be likened to empathy—seeing a situation from another's perspective—and healing—helping that person to overcome difficulties. Each year contestants have two or three opportunities to offer emotional support to troubled youth of all races. During a visit to the FNA Graf Rheeneenhaanjii and the Presbyterian Hospitality

House, the contestants, chaperones, and organizers shared their culture and knowledge with local youths, men, and women between eleven and eighteen years old who were encountering physical and emotional problems.

The youths listened to each of the contestants introduce themselves and then had an opportunity to ask questions and advice from the young women. This was a very emotional time, as everyone talked about issues close to their hearts such as alcoholism, drug abuse, suicide, and cultural loss. The level of mentorship varied from one-on-one conversations about overcoming personal problems to group question-and-answer sessions or talking circles with shared inspirational stories. The depth of expertise differed with each contestant based on her prior experiences and the level of comfort in sharing her personal experiences with others.

Servant-leadership explains that the healing process works both ways: "In helping the followers become whole, servant-leaders are themselves healed."[59] While the scope of this research cannot confirm or deny this aspect of servant-leadership, the emotional atmosphere in the activities was one of release and calm once the conversations had taken place. Throughout the week, there was resounding agreement from the contestants and the organizers that positive role models had made a difference in their lives, helped them overcome problems, and helped in their personal growth, inspiring their interaction with the youth at the FNA Graf Rheeneenhaanjii and the Presbyterian Hospitality House. Thus, the healing process came full circle as the contestants gave back to the local community.

In today's global society, young people are facing unprecedented issues as the discrepancy between what is realistically achievable and what the media dictates as "ideal" continually widens. For example, in terms of body image, record cases of anorexia nervosa and bulimia in both women and men are being reported in the United States.[60] At the same time,

obesity and diabetes are on the increase, causing health-related problems and fueling speculation that the parents of today's youth will outlive their children.[61] Among Indigenous youth in America, suicide is the second leading cause of death.[62] Illegal drug use is on the increase.[63] Today's youth who opt to matriculate at university face a lifetime of debt and job uncertainty. Thinking again about the holistic approach of the community well-being model of leadership, the youth participants draw from various themes to talk to the people in a bid to encourage a positive lifestyle. The younger generation would benefit from strong role models, preferably peers who have been through such pressures and can offer advice, reassurance, and coping strategies.

Although this role of caregiver could be interpreted as a gendered behavior and could be interpreted as perpetuating women in maternal or nurturing roles, this activity is one part of the community service activities that take place all week. In this capacity, the women are working as educators, ambassadors, and role models as opposed to political leaders. Miss WEIO gives women the opportunity to learn leadership by doing leadership; therefore, if we use the values as a basis for culturally based leadership, then we cannot differentiate them based on Western notions of materialism and nurturing. Breaking down the binary of male/female, Indigenous nations have been more fluid about who is categorized as a woman and a man, with third-gender peoples being deemed powerful, as they can negotiate across gendered boundaries. As such, it would be problematic if men never took on the roles of carriers of culture, taking care of others, or community healing. There is evidence, however, of men taking on such roles in today's societies, so we can assume that men are also following the values of their ancestors.[64] These characteristics should be perceived as useful to community leaders, regardless of gender.

Throughout the week, it became evident that the contestants were demonstrating empathy and healing, but not just through the advice given during the two events listed above. Each of the

community service events required an element of empathy with an audience who may not have known about Native Alaskan culture and who may have asked inappropriate cultural questions; this is especially true of children. While the women patiently answered questions and engaged in conversation, one can argue that healing and forgiveness were taking place in a truly cross-cultural sense.

The act of gaining understanding and apologizing can be seen on a national level in Australia with their National Day of Healing, aimed to "focus on the healing needed throughout Australian society" as a result of the Stolen Generations.[65] Just as Australia needs to heal as a country for its citizens to be able to move on, so Alaska and the rest of the United States need to heal from the genocidal policies that took place against Indigenous peoples from first contact and that still exist today. While the empathy and healing during WEIO take place on a much more intimate basis, the shared cross-cultural knowledge that occurs between the contestants, the Fairbanks community members, and the tourists to Alaska creates a space for cultural understanding, which in time can lessen the power of stereotypes, lead to empathy, and start the long process of healing across the country.

Show Respect to Others and Share What You Have

The Native Alaskan values of show respect to others and share what you have are demonstrated when the contestants meet the public at the Riverboat Discovery, the Alaska Salmon Bake restaurant, and the Noel Wein Public Library. Within the servant-leader approach, awareness includes "understanding oneself and the impact one has on others" through being "acutely attuned and receptive to their [the leaders'] physical, social, and political environments."[66] As mentioned earlier, during the Miss WEIO contest the women are aware of their positions as ambassadors for their peoples and for the WEIO games. Throughout the week, the women meet

with a cross section of the Fairbanks community, as well as tourists who have traveled to Alaska from the Lower 48 and beyond. Every time the contestants meet with the public, they make sure that they are representing their people in the right way.[67]

As ambassadors, the servant-leader trait of persuasion, which is "a clear and persistent communication that convinces others to change," becomes apparent.[68] While the women are not political leaders, they do become cultural spokespersons, enlightening and educating (or persuading) the people they meet on Native Alaskan physical, social, and political matters.[69] The Native Alaskan values of showing respect to others and sharing what you have are demonstrated when the contestants meet the public. Throughout the encounters with the public at the Riverboat Discovery,the Alaska Salmon Bake restaurant, and the Noel Wein Public Library, the women patiently answer questions, have photographs taken, and use the opportunity to express their platforms to an eager public made up of tourists and local Fairbanks residents of all ages.

On the first day, after orientation, the contestants go on a short cruise on the Riverboat Discovery, which is followed by a meal at the Alaska Salmon Bake restaurant. These two events are predominantly tourist attractions, so there are a disproportionate number of photographs taken both with and of the women in their traditional regalia. Unfortunately, this activity illustrates the audience's lack of political understanding of Indigenous nations and highlights the "exotic other" concept that the women experience from the tourists. Before, during, and after the photographs, the holiday-makers ask questions relating to the women's culture, for example, "What are your parkas made from?" Some tourists, however, take a more political stance with their questions, asking, "How many of you speak your heritage language?" They want to know about language policies. Although short in nature because of the structure of the event, these questions spark discussions of a physical, social, and political nature that can be heard continuing

after the women have left the conversation.

At the Noel Wein Public Library's summer reading program, the contestants have the chance to speak with approximately 150 local children, from under one year to fifteen years old, and their parents. One of the librarians will ask the women to introduce themselves, demonstrate their talents, and ask them questions such as "Can you tell us what your gloves are made of?" and "Can you teach us three words in your language?" The contestants will take turns standing up and answering the questions before demonstrating how to use an Eskimo yo-yo or some traditional WEIO games. The young audience can also ask questions. Contestants were put on the spot when a young child asked, "Do you live in an igloo?" "What do you wear under your dress?" and "What do you keep in your handbag?" Again, these questions illustrate the lack of mainstream education about Indigenous peoples, as the questions are always about surface culture.

The local newspaper recorded and took photographs of the event, and afterward the eager young audience had their own chance to have their photographs taken with the contestants. Again, this is not without its complications. Young children today have fixations with Disney princesses that create unrealistic images of Native American women and women in general. When elementary and high schools fail to teach Indigenous studies, children turn to television and film to fill in the gaps. While today's multicultural Disney princesses such as Moana are more favorable than the over-stereotyped Pocahontas, who could talk to the wind and animals and had an unachievable body shape, the children who talk to the Miss WEIO contestants can at least see average-sized women of all skin tones who are dressed in jeans or leggings and a top: a realistic and relatable image. Furthermore, this image is not voiceless but has an active voice that answers questions and demystifies Indigeneity.

These events become the perfect opportunity for the contestants to show respect and share knowledge and information with audiences who may not have previously been introduced to Native Alaskan culture (showing awareness) while at the same time using the servant-leader trait of persuasion to give an accurate account of Native Alaskan culture.[70] For many people, the Miss WEIO contestants are the first Indigenous people with whom they have met and spoken. The contestants understand that their words might be construed as applicable across all Alaska Native nations or even Native American nations; the danger of reinforcing stereotypes is very real. There is a constant pressure for participants to portray their people in a culturally appropriate manner.[71]

Americans are fascinated by Indians and Eskimos. The exotic other has long been used by Hollywood and advertising campaigners to sell products.[72] Blockbuster films and popular television series use outdated ideas and imagery to represent Indigeneity. And while a plethora of Indigenous-made films exists, they are rarely, if ever, shown on main television stations or in cinemas. Scholars such as Stephanie Fryberg and colleagues have researched the adverse psychological effects the "stereotypical" Indian has on the self-confidence of Native American peoples, yet that is the image that is still on American butter cartons.[73]

It is crucial that Indigenous peoples receive the opportunity to self-represent to future generations to break this false stereotyping cycle. Miseducation about Indigenous peoples starts in the schools and therefore continues in the public.[74] As future generations learn Native Alaskan history and culture directly from the source, they will refer back to this knowledge when they continue into their future professions. Violence against Indigenous peoples and multigeneration historical trauma will not vanish overnight, but the healing process will begin when the injustice toward Indigenous peoples is stopped, and this is only possible through education. While

Indigenous pageants are not the prime solution to the miseducation problem, the youth who take part learn through the experience that acknowledging and fighting stereotypes is an integral part of being a Native Alaskan leader in the twenty-first century.[75]

Pray for Guidance, Accept What Life Brings, Have Patience, and Live Carefully

The Native Alaskan values of praying for guidance, accepting what life brings, having patience, and living carefully are comparable to the two leadership characteristics conceptualization and foresight. Conceptualization can best be described as looking at the whole picture and within leadership can refer to those people who are visionaries. Foresight is "an ability to predict what is coming based on what is occurring in the present and what has happened in the past."[76] These values can be seen as being integral to the community well-being model, as they illustrate the interconnectedness of all the conversations and experiences the contestants have throughout the week. Taken together, these Native Alaskan values and two servant-leader traits can describe the process used by contestants to determine their platforms.

As mentioned earlier, each of the Miss WEIO contestants promotes a platform, a social justice issue that she has usually witnessed firsthand and wants to promote during the week. This manifesto becomes a starting point when talking with people in the community, a way of introducing oneself. The philosophies are as diverse as learning to subsistence hunt and fish, overcoming addictions, graduating high school, or simply sitting and listening to your elders. Miss WEIO 2012, Kelsey Wallace, took the opportunity to talk about suicide prevention for her platform. Bethel, Alaska, is said to have some of the country's highest suicide rates.[77] Wallace has seen the devastation caused by suicide in her region and is a promoter of Drew's Foundation, a local organization that is "dedicated to saving lives."[78] By looking holistically at Alaska Native

communities, Wallace can see a pattern emerging with youth taking their own lives, and she wants to do something to break this pattern now. Platforms such as Wallace's arise from a desire to see Native Alaskan communities thrive; in other words, the youth leaders have the foresight to see what is happening in their community and have conceptualized a solution which draws from all aspects of life.

The messages and examples held in the platforms develop throughout the week as the women have the chance to enter cross-cultural and cross-generational conversations. Having an opportunity to speak in large groups and on a one-on-one basis helps the contestants solidify their messages of hope, survival, and persistence. This is especially true when the contestants speak with troubled youths, as mentioned earlier. After gaining experience in answering questions and learning what answers are the most helpful in any given situation, the contestants feel more at ease and can converse more precisely about their platform and their hopes for their communities.

Conceptualization and foresight are shown throughout the community service events by the contestants being positive role models for youths. Throughout the events, the contestants act as role models by sharing stories of hope with youths.[79] This is the perfect opportunity for the women to reach out to their peers and explain how they manage to stay happy and healthy or overcome temptations and deal with personal issues, thus using foresight to stop the trajectory of youths in crisis. The opportunity to interact with youths who are in a desperate situation, think quickly, give advice, and provide a success story from which young people can gain practical advice are indicative of both servant-leadership and Native Alaskan values.

See Connections and Know Who You Are

Throughout the community service events, the contestants use the Native Alaskan values of

seeing connections and knowing who you are, to become a steward for WEIO. Being a steward "is about taking responsibility" for the organization or community you represent. Commitment to the growth of people is about helping individuals in that organization or community achieve their best. Combining these two traits together, building community provides "a place where people can feel safe and connected with others" within that community.[80] These traits and values are perhaps more evident when the contestants speak at the Golden Days senior citizens luncheon.

To build a community that allows individuals to thrive, you need to have a distinctiveness that sets you apart while at the same time a commonality for people to share: culture. To the outside world, language is an instantly recognizable marker of belonging to a cultural group. Formal introductions are a means of identifying ancestry, thus situating oneself in a larger context and placing oneself within a community. The ability to formally introduce oneself, preferably in one's heritage language, is a cultural leadership skill that many young people need to learn. Although pageants such as Miss WEIO do not integrate a language requirement into the contest, participants often formally introduce themselves in their heritage language, many having learned their formal introductions for the contest.

The Miss WEIO contestants have several chances to give formal introductions via public events. Introductions differ, depending on the event and time restrictions, from one's own name and the names of parents and grandparents to a full formal introduction, including the areas from which family members originated. The fluency levels also vary with each contestant. In 2012 more than half the WEIO contestants were taking classes in their heritage language at a university or college. Contestants who have had no opportunity to learn their ancestors' language introduce themselves in English, whereas others whose language is widely spoken in the community give a full, formal introduction in their Indigenous language. Regardless of fluency,

all contestants are aware of the significance of formal introductions and the severity of language loss in Native Alaskan societies.

The contestants had a chance to formally introduce themselves at the Golden Days senior citizens luncheon. During this event, they stood onstage in front of 340 guests from the Fairbanks area; their only instructions were to introduce themselves and their platforms. Taking approximately three minutes each, the contestants told the audience who they were, where they came from, and what important issue(s) they were campaigning for during the pageant. This was the only time throughout the event in which the contestants were on a raised stage with a microphone in front of a captive audience. The contestants had had ample opportunities to speak in public, consequently developing their public speaking skills, and thus they felt confident speaking in front of large audiences. As the week progressed, the frequent use of introductions enabled a flawless delivery in front of the public. Many of the women did not speak their heritage language as their first language, and their introductions did not come easily in the orientation. The pageant thus offered them a culturally appropriate public venue in which to formally introduce themselves and thus demonstrate a sense of Native Alaskan community.

The federal government's assimilationist policies to eradicate Indigenous languages have left many communities with no heritage language speakers. Missionaries, boarding schools, and environmental factors have all led to a decrease in spoken Native Alaskan languages and their transmission to future generations. Public Law 101-477, the Native American Languages Act, passed on October 30, 1990, was introduced in an attempt to halt the deterioration of Indigenous languages. Since then, communities such as the Yup'ik have created immersion schools to reintroduce their heritage languages back into use in the home.[81] Today, out of the twenty-two languages once spoken by people of all ages in Alaska, only two are spoken by children in the

home environment.[82]

While the women gain respect from elders and community members for speaking their heritage language, the ability to speak a Native Alaskan language also offers a cultural cue to the audience, who automatically recognize that they have met someone from a different race upon hearing an unfamiliar language. Harmful stereotypical imagery is constantly applied to Indigenous people, while the accompanying voice is rarely heard. Often Indigenous people are not recognized as such unless they are wearing traditional regalia or "look" Indigenous. During Miss WEIO the women wear jeans and kuspuks;[83] thus, when the audience hears the accompanying voice speaking a Native Alaskan language, they store a new contemporary image to replace the previous stereotypical one. Creating a sense of community is difficult when there are multiple communities within Alaska. The use of language and introductions by the contestants is one way to show stewardship and strengthen communities from the village through the international level.[84]

Concluding Thoughts

The audience chats away as the list of places visited during the week comes to an end. You can see that the families of the contestants are excited and nervous as they stand ready to take photographs. The winners of each category are announced, and the women come forward to collect their prizes. Cheers from around the arena can be heard from the communities that send their youth year after year to participate in this great honor. The winner, the new Miss WEIO, humbled by being chosen, gives a speech thanking her family, her community, and the people who have supported her journey. The competition is nearly over, but the hard work is far from finished.

Although originating from a Western construct of gender, Miss WEIO has been

decolonized to create a space for women to work in their communities based on Alaska Native cultural values. WEIO itself places cultural revitalization and maintenance at the center of everything it does. While some may argue that the pageant, because of its very nature as a pageant, reinforces the regulation of women's bodies, one only has to go to WEIO to see that the women look the same and are treated the same as every other Indigenous person who is there. WEIO and Miss WEIO are therefore intrinsically linked, and it is this connection that allows the pageant to emphasize youth leadership.

Mankiller provides a theoretical leadership model that places community in the center of leadership. Throughout the weeklong activities, the women center their thoughts on the communities that they meet. In the Indigenous context, leadership skills are not isolated from social content, where people lead for the community good. WEIO follows this model by placing community in the center of each contestant's leadership. The WEIO winners have proven that traditional values are incorporated into leadership; community support becomes invaluable in the pageant process. Within this community leadership, if we examine the events through the community well-being model, we can also see evidence that the contestants are gaining these leadership skills. We see the interconnected approach that the contestants are using in order to integrate their platforms with the well-being of the community.

The youth leadership experience does not stop when the winner is crowned with a baleen and ivory crown. The experience is not over when the people leave the arena and head home to their communities. The week has given the newly crowned winner and all the contestants the experience and the confidence to talk to large groups about Indigenous issues, to network with the people in the Fairbanks community, and to speak to the media. The winner must now plan her year so that she can continue her social justice issue, talk with youth and elders, and share her

culture with others.

The crown and sash now act as a symbol that shows communities near and far that this person has been chosen as an ambassador to represent WEIO and its organizational values. Offers arrive throughout the year for the ambassador to talk to schoolchildren, address the Alaska Federation of Natives (a pan-national political organization), emcee at the Fairbanks Festival of Native Arts, and represent Alaska and WEIO at the Gathering of Nations Pow Wow. The skills that have been continually developed throughout the contest week continue to be used throughout the ambassador's yearlong tenure.

Since the first pageant in 1961, the women who have competed have continued to be leaders in their communities. Some went on to become successful businesswomen; some went into governance, becoming regional and village corporation leaders;[85] others went into resource management and academia; and some became keepers of culture. When I talked to previous winners, they attributed their success to some of the key skills gained during the contest week. There is no doubt that the contest gave women confidence to publicly talk about key issues in Indigenous societies.

The skills gained placed them in stronger positions to fight for their communities, suggesting that the pageant is doing more than preparing women for gendered leadership styles and responsibilities. It is also preparing women to become leaders equal to men. The youth leadership opportunities provided by the pageant, however, are steeped in cultural relevance. The development of servant-leaders in the context of community service events during the contest week illustrates how contestants can self-develop their own culturally unique leadership style. The competition week for Miss WEIO is intense and exhausting, but those who compete take away an experience that will be etched in their memory for a lifetime. More importantly, they are

given an opportunity to learn leadership by doing leadership.

Caroline Williams graduated with her PhD in American Indian studies from the University of Arizona in 2013. Williams is currently working at the University of East Anglia, England. As an ally of Indigenous peoples, she examines Native American women's strategies to maintain healthy communities. Focusing on social justice issues through the exploration of role modeling, ambassadorship, and normative beauty ideals, Williams researches this topic through participant observation with contemporary youth leaders and examines their approaches used to promote well-being among Indigenous youth through arenas such as language, culture, and identity.

Notes

This article comes from a larger project that examines the Miss World Eskimo–Indian Olympics from three perspectives: the women who take part, the members of the audience who watch the pageant, and the members of the public who meet the pageant contestants. See Caroline Williams, "It's Not a Beauty Pageant! An Examination of Leadership Development through Alaska Native Pageants" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2013). This research was conducted with the generous support of the National Science Foundation's grant #110751. Thanks to all those at Miss WEIO for allowing me to do research and hang out at the pageant in 2011, 2012, and 2013. I am grateful for the feedback given in the peer-review process; it has enhanced the ideas proposed in the draft stages. The origins of the pageant and the problems with using a Western socially constructed system to choose women representatives are explored in more depth in the my forthcoming book.

1. Within this research, "pageant" refers to the contest week that the women undergo to compete for the reigning title.
2. Carole A. MacNeil and Jennifer McClean, "Moving from 'Youth Leadership Development' to 'Youth in Governance': Learning Leadership by Doing Leadership," *New Directions for Youth Development* 109 (2006): 99–106.
3. WEIO, http://www.weio.org/.
4. WEIO Results, https://www.weio.org/results.
5. For an explanation of the evolution of Miss WEIO, see Caroline Williams, "The Evolution of Beauty Pageants: Miss World Eskimo Indian Olympics," *Journal of the West* 52, no. 3 (2013): 22–30. A more detailed explanation of the methodology for this research is given in Williams, "It's Not a Beauty Pageant!"
6. The concept of showing off one's body, however, was embarrassing, and many of the women later commented that it contradicts Native values.
7. The theory of why they wanted a beauty contest is still being researched; however, it perhaps was the idea of Muriel Hagberg (Bud Hagberg's older sister) based on her experience in the Miss Alaska

contest. Or perhaps Whaley, looking back at Muriel's success in the Miss Alaska contest, thought that there should be an Indigenous alternative after pageants in Alaska had become segregated.

8. The Olympics are separated by gender, however, with men's and women's heats. Some games that were traditionally men's games are only open to women if they ask to take part; see https://www.weio.org/gender-the-games.
9. Jennifer Nez Denetdale writes about the disenfranchisement of women in the Diné Nation, as the pageant places women in a maternal role, responsible for transmitting culture, and reinforcing Western gendered ideas of women, which are to place women in a separate sphere from the political realm. These separate spheres are a problematic distinction unique to the Diné Nation, as traditional narratives inform political roles. Thus, the role of Miss Navajo Nation is to embody the perfect Diné women (Changing Woman) while sitting next to but not participating in the political life of the government.
10. While WEIO was never intended as a political movement, it can be argued that the political is always a part of the lives of Indigenous peoples.
11. Fairbanks, Alaska, has a long history of choosing people to preside over events. In 1934 the Fairbanks Winter Carnival choose a Carnival King and Queen, as well as a Pioneer King and Queen. The Winter Carnival no longer runs; however, the Men's Igloo No. 4 and Women's Igloo No. 8 were instrumental in creating the Golden Days celebrations, in which WEIO was created; see https://www.pioneersofalaskafairbanks.org/about/.
12. Williams, "The Evolution of Beauty Pageants."
13. Examples of talents include anything from talking about resource management, cutting fish, showing artwork, performing a story, or singing an original song.
14. Kim Anderson and Bonita Lawrence, eds., *Strong Women Stories: Native Vision and Community Survival* (Toronto: Sumach Press, 2003); Carolyn Kenny and Tina Ngaroimata Fraser, eds., *Living Indigenous Leadership: Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012); Wilma Mankiller, *Every Day Is a Good Day* (Colorado, Golden: Fulcrum Publishers, 2004); Devon A. Mihesuah, *Indigenous American Women: Decolonization, Empowerment, Activism*, Contemporary Indigenous Issues (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Cheryl Suzack, Shari M. Huhndorf, Jeanna Perreault, and Jean Barman, eds., *Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010).
15. Verna Kirkness, foreword to Kenny and Fraser, *Living Indigenous Leadership*, ix.
16. Although this is not what the pageant winner is, the notion of having a woman as an overseer is an age-old tradition.

17. Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox, Eileen Luna-Firebaugh, and Caroline Williams, "American Indian Female Leadership," *Wicazo Sa Review* 30, no. 1 (2015): 82–99; Cora Voyageur, "Out in the Open: Elected Female Leadership in Canada's First Nations Community," *Canadian Review of Sociology / Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 48, no. 1 (2011): 67–85.
18. I use the term "presidents" here because there is no universal word for the leaders of Indigenous nations. For instance, in the Cherokee Nation the leader is a principal chief, whereas in the Diné Nation the leader is a president. For non-Indigenous studies readers, the word "president" usually automatically implies greater respect than the term "principal chief." Cora Voyageur's research highlights some of the reasons why it is difficult for Canadian First Nations women to become elected in politics and how the majority of women become political leaders in their midforties because of a desire to better their communities.
19. This is not to diminish community or grassroots leadership. In fact, I believe that to enact change, it needs to come from a local level—bottom-up leadership.
20. Jennifer Nez Denetdale, "Chairmen, Presidents, and Princesses: The Navajo Nation, Gender, and the Politics of Tradition," *Wicazo Sa Review* 21, no. 1 (2006): 9–28, 9–10.
21. Denetdale, "Chairmen," 9; Caroline Williams, "Their Way of Life: A Case Study of Leadership at Denali River Cabins & Kantishna Roadhouse" (MA thesis, University of Arizona, 2009), ProQuest (ATT 1464655).
22. Wilma Mankiller, American Indian Women Leaders class, University of Arizona, October 30, 2008.
23. There is no indication that the women enter to prepare for a political career; however, some of the women have become political leaders.
24. These data were gathered from participant observation research conducted between 2011 and 2013. The research was conducted with the generous support of the National Science Foundation's grant #110751.
25. Mankiller, American Indian Women Leaders class; the community well-being model was first proposed in Williams, "It's Not a Beauty Pageant!"
26. WEIO and Miss WEIO both have a zero tolerance for drugs, tobacco, and alcohol.
27. Mankiller, American Indian Women Leaders class.
28. Joan Nymand Larsen, Peter P. Schweitzer, and Gail Fondahl, eds., *Arctic Social Indicators* (Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers, 2010), 92, http://library.arcticportal.org/712/1/Arctic_Social_Indicators_NCoM.pdf.
29. The concept of community is loosely defined here as people having multiple communities. For example, your cultural community can be defined further by your band, clan, nation, or geographical location. With the majority of Indigenous peoples living in urban areas, however, communities are

also those we have at school and at work, in social activities, or within families. While the model works for promoting well-being in Indigenous communities, it also makes a useful model to promote well-being anywhere and furthermore works as a useful educational model for teaching Indigenous studies.

30. Tom Holm, J. Diane Pearson, and Ben Chavis, "Peoplehood: A Model for the Extension of Sovereignty in American Indian Studies," *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 1 (2003): 7–24.
31. The women who held these positions are, respectively, Crystal Worl, interview by the author, Fairbanks, AK, 2012;

Mary Sattler, interview by the author, Bethel, AK, 2012; Jolene John, interview by the author, Bethel, AK, 2012; and Kelsey Ciugun Wallace, interview by the author, Fairbanks, AK, 2012.

32. MacNeil and McClean, "Moving."
33. Flora Roddy, interview by the author, Fairbanks, AK, 2012; Carmen Sears, interview by the author, Fairbanks, AK, 2012.
34. MacNeil and McClean "Moving," 99.
35. Sears interview.
36. Roddy interview.
37. To win Miss WEIO, the women are individually interviewed; perform a "talent" based on Indigenous society; and answer impromptu questions about contemporary issues in Indigenous societies in front of an audience. Prizes are awarded for several categories—Miss Talented, Miss Traditional, Miss Congeniality, Miss Photogenic, third place, second place, and Miss WEIO—from Indigenous artists who are vendors at the WEIO. The overall winner is chosen based on who gains the most points in the judged events. Sears interview.
38. MacNeil and McClean, "Moving," 99.
39. Judy Brady, "Beauties from Bush Vie for Queen Title," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, July 22, 1966, 1; Wallace interview.
40. MacNeil and McClean, "Moving," 100.
41. Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice,* 7th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2016), 427.
42. Alaska Native Knowledge Network, "Alaska Native Values for Curriculum," accessed May 21, 2017, http://ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR/Values/index.html.
43. Sattler interview.
44. Wallace interview.
45. Robert K. Greenleaf and Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 2002).

46. Northouse, *Leadership*, 226.
47. Greenleaf and Spears, *Servant Leadership*, 27.
48. As quoted in Northouse, *Leadership*, 227.
49. Alaska Native Knowledge Network, "Alaska Native Values for Curriculum."
50. Northouse, *Leadership*, 227.
51. Northouse, *Leadership*, 227.
52. Velma Wallis, *Two Old Women: An Alaska Legend of Betrayal, Courage, and Survival* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994).
53. Denakkanaaga, accessed May 21, 2017, http://www.denakkanaaga.org/.
54. The systematic genocidal policies of the US government are well documented throughout all American Indian studies scholarly literature.
55. Specifically within Alaska, the policies arguably ended with the passing of the Molly Hootch case in 1976, which determined that students could finally reside in their home village to attend high school.
56. The punishment for speaking one's first language in school has been well documented by scholars in the field.
57. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley, "Alaska Native Education: History and Adaptions in the New Millennium," special issue, *Journal of American Indian Education* 2, no. 39 (1999): 31–51.
58. This is commonly known as the assimilation era in federal Indian law.
59. Northouse, *Leadership*, 228.
60. *Killing Us Softly 4: Advertising's Image of Women*, directed by Sut Jhally, Jean Kilbourne, and the Media Education Foundation, video/DVD (Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation, 2010).
61. Joyce M. Lee, Subrahmanyam Pilli, Achamyeleh Gebremariam, Carla C. Keirns, Matthew M. Davis, Sandeep Vijan, Gary L. Freed, William H. Herman, and James G. Gurney, "Getting Heavier, Younger: Trajectories of Obesity over the Life Course," *International Journal of Obesity* 34, no. 4 (2010): 614–23; Lawrence M. Schell and Mia V. Gallo, "Overweight and Obesity among North American Indian Infants, Children, and Youth," *American Journal of Human Biology* 24, no. 3 (2012): 302–13.
62. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Suicide Facts at a Glance," accessed May 21, 2017, http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.pdf 2015.
63. National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Drug Facts: Nationwide Trends," last modified June 2015, http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/nationwide-trends.
64. See *Dakota 38* for an example of men who have taken on the role of carriers of culture and organized a healing event: http://www.smoothfeather.com/dakota38/.
65. Australian Government, Sorry Day and the Stolen Generations, http://www.australia.gov.au/about-

australia/australian-story/sorry-day-stolen-generations.

66. Northouse, *Leadership*, 228.
67. Sattler interview.
68. Northouse, *Leadership*, 228.
69. Diné scholar Jennifer Nez Denetdale argues that Native American pageants such as Miss Navajo Nation are nonpolitical and that the very act of having a pageant separates out the spheres of political/men and nonpolitical/women. I argue that this pan–Alaska Native pageant is just one of many ways that women can gain/hone leadership skills on a par with men.
70. There have been many conversations recently that highlight why it is not the responsibility of the oppressed to explain their culture or ideologies; instead, it is up to the individual to research and become more aware of other cultures. The pageant performs an interesting task, as it is promoting the Olympic Games while engaging in community service events. Therefore, the contestants encounter people who did not know that they were going to meet Indigenous peoples and can ask questions, which is perhaps why a lot of the questions asked are about surface culture. This is part of a much wider issue with Indigenous peoples in which the mainstream representations (read TV and film) depict imagery from the past without voices from the present.
71. Sattler interview.
72. *Killing Us Softly 4*.
73. Stephanie Fryberg, Hazel Markus, Daphna Oyserman, and Joseph Stone, "Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2008): 208–18; Land O'Lakes product list at https://www.landolakes.com/products/.
74. Michael W. Simpson, "The Marshall Trilogy and Federal Indian Law in 21st Century High School U.S. History Textbooks: Progress (?) Yet Little Has Changed" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2014).
75. This is not dissimilar to President Barack Obama fighting stereotypes about black presidents.
76. Northouse, *Leadership*, 228.
77. Charles Enoch, "Suicide PSA Features Local Mushers," accessed May 21, 2017, http://kyuk.org/local-suicide-prevention-organization-releases-psa/.
78. Drew's Foundation, accessed May 21, 2017, http://drewsfoundation.org/; Wallace interview.
79. My previous study showed that the audience of Miss WEIO saw the winner as a role model; see Williams, "It's Not a Beauty Pageant!"
80. Northouse, *Leadership*, 228.
81. Ayaprun Elitnaurvik, "History," accessed May 21, 2017,

http://sites.lksdonline.org/ayaprun/?page_id=182.

82. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, "Native American Languages Act Amendments," 106th Cong., 2nd sess., July 20, 2000.
83. A kuspuk, traditional Yup'ik summer attire, is a long-sleeved hooded top or tunic made with a lighter fabric and with either a deep joining pocket or two pockets in the front.
84. For example, the Gwich'in peoples have villages in Alaska and Canada; therefore, they have local village communities and the Gwich'in Nation, which crosses through international boundaries.
85. In Alaska land claims were settled in 1971 through ANCSA, which created thirteen regional and over two hundred village corporations, turning Alaska Native peoples into shareholders.